

ACTIVITY: Wading

CASE: GSAF 1942.01.04

DATE: Sunday January 4, 1942

LOCATION: Egg Rock, six kilometres from the old Roseville Bridge near Bantry Bay, Middle Harbor, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. 33°47'S, 151°0'

NAME: Zita Steadman

DESCRIPTION: She was a 28-year-old female, a private secretary to J. Proud of Prouds, the Sydney jewelers.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a hot, hazy day and the air temperature was 106.4°F.

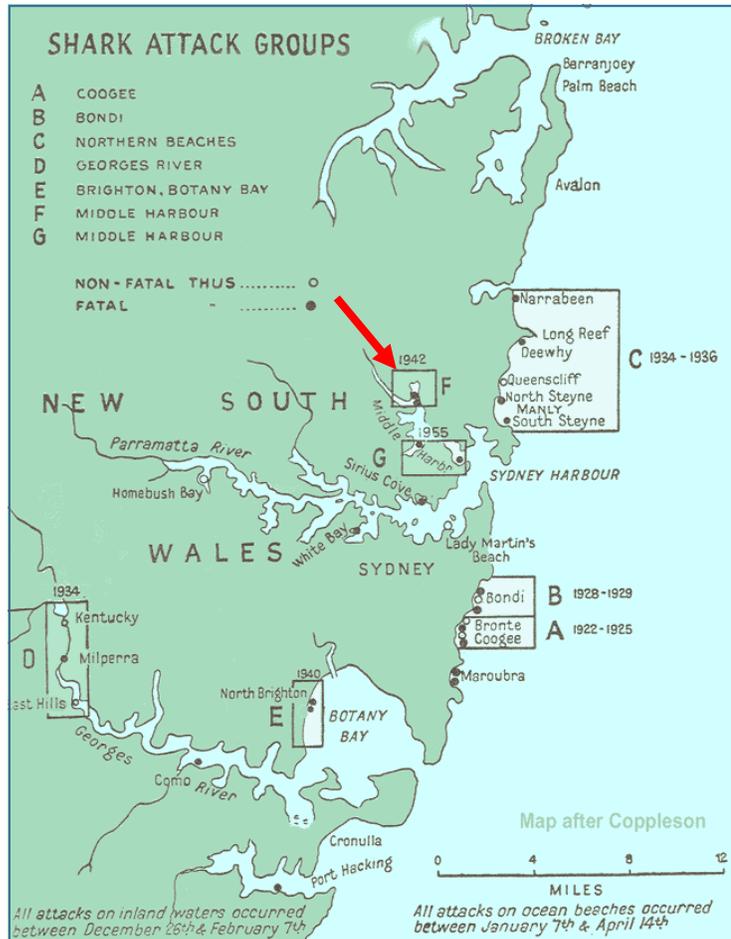
MOON PHASE: Full Moon, January 3, 1942

WATER CONDITIONS: The sea surface temperature was 74°F and the water was clear inshore.

ENVIRONMENT: A shelf extended 25 feet from shore and then there was a steep drop-off.

DEPTH: Waist-deep

TIME: 15h00



NARRATIVE: Zita Steadman arrived by motor launch with a group of friends for a picnic at Egg Rock. They were all in the shallows but she was a little farther out than the rest when she was attacked by the shark. One of the men in the party, Mr. Bowes, grabbed an oar from the boat and beat at the shark. The shark struck the young woman repeatedly, dragging her into deeper water. Bowes leapt into a rowing boat and tried to ram the shark, and was finally able to grab the young woman by the hair and free her body from the shark.

INJURY: Fatal. The shark bit her in two.

SPECIES INVOLVED: According to the Australian Shark Attack File, the accident involved a bull shark. The shark was said to be four metres in length.

SOURCES: The Canberra Times, Monday, January 5, 1942, page 2; ng Bulletin (Rockhampton, QLD), Tuesday January 6, 1942, page 4; Victor M. Coppleson (1958), pages 70 & 235; Alan Sharpe, page 72

Woman Victim Of Shark Attack

Body Bitten In Two

SYDNEY, January 5.

Zeta Steadman, 28, single, of Ashfield, was killed by a shark while standing in shallow water in an upper part of Middle Harbour on Sunday. Miss Steadman was so shockingly mutilated that only the upper part of her body could be recovered. The remains were dragged from the jaws of the shark by Frederick H. Bowes, of Ashfield, who said later that the shark was 14 ft long.

Miss Steadman was a member of a picnic party. The other members were Mr and Mrs Bowes and Mrs Reeve, mother of Mrs Bowes. Shortly before 3 o'clock Mr and Mrs Bowes and Miss Steadman entered the water to bathe while Mrs Reeve watched them from an elevated position on the shore.

Mr and Mrs Bowes were standing in the water, waist high. Miss Steadman was from 10 ft to 12 ft further out and in slightly deeper water. Mr Bowes called to her not to go so far out and she turned to come back. Suddenly she threw up her hands and cried in terror. Mrs Reeve saw a shark attacking Miss Steadman and screamed out to her son-in-law.

IGNORED BLOWS WITH OAR

Bowes grabbed an oar from a motor launch they had hired and endeavoured to drive away the shark, which, in repeated attacks on Miss Steadman, was throwing itself out of the water. Bowes could make no impression on the shark with the oar, and gradually the shark drew its victim towards deeper water. Bowes then jumped into the boat, started the engine, and steered the boat at the shark, with the intention of ramming it. This plan having failed, Bowes then jumped to the side of the boat and grabbed Miss Steadman by her long hair. It was obvious, however, that she was dead. Bowes, who is a man of 15 stone, had to exert all his strength to free the upper portion of the body from the monster's jaws. He saw the remainder of the body disappear into deep water.

SHARK VICTIM

Woman Dies After Attack

SYDNEY, Sunday.

Mrs. Zeta Stedman, 30, of Ashfield, died after being terribly mauled by a shark at Bantry Bay, Middle Harbour, this afternoon.

Mrs. Stedman was a member of a launch party to Middle Harbour and after their arrival at Bantry Bay, she waded into the waist when the shark attacked her. Fixing its teeth into her waist, the shark dragged her into deeper water. One of the men in the party, named Bowes, went to her assistance and seized her as she was being dragged past the launch and hauled her on board. She was terribly injured and died while being conveyed to hospital.