

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 1947.11.08.b

DATE: Saturday November 8, 1947

LOCATION: The attacks took place near Port Macquarie, 430 kilometres north of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. According to Coppleson, the incident took place in the Maria River, 12 miles from the river mouth. Sharpe puts the site of the incident in the Hastings Tributary, 20 miles inland.

31°24'S, 153°E (Port Macquarie)

NAME: Edwin Elford

DESCRIPTION: He was a 12-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Third Quarter, November 6, 1947

ENVIRONMENT: Brackish water

TIME: 16h00

NARRATIVE: The four Elford brothers were swimming in the river just 50 metres from their home. Suddenly Rupert screamed and kicked frantically at the shark. The shark released Rupert and turned to Edwin, seizing him by the knee. The eldest brother, 22-year-old Stanley, reached Edwin almost immediately and tried to pull him away from the shark. The shark severed the boy's leg at the knee and disappeared with it.

INJURY: Fatal.

SPECIES INVOLVED: It was thought that a bull shark was involved in this attack.

SOURCES: The Canberra Times, Monday November 10, 1947, page 1; Gilbert P. Whitley (1951), page 193; Victor M. Coppleson (1958), page 86; Alan Sharpe, page 86



BOY KILLED BY SHARK

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SYDNEY, Sunday.

A shark killed one boy and mauled his brother yesterday in the Maria River near Port Macquarie.

The shark severed the leg of Edward James Belford, 12, who died almost instantly, and tore flesh from the leg of Rupert Belford, 13, who was rushed to hospital where doctors are striving to save his life.

BOY KILLED BY SHARK

Heroic Effort To Save Brother

SYDNEY, November 9.

Edwin James Elford, 12, of Hack's Ferry, was killed by a shark in the Maria River near Port Macquarie, on the north coast area, late yesterday while making an heroic bid to save his 13-year-old brother Rupert from the shark.

The two boys were bathing in the river with their two other brothers when the shark appeared among them. The boy who was attacked first is in Port Macquarie Hospital in a critical condition.

The attack took place almost 20 miles from the sea. It was the first shark attack in the history of the district.

Rupert had just dived into the river when he screamed out that a shark had a grip on his leg. The shark had only a side-on grip, and the boy, struggling violently, managed to free himself.

Edwin dived to his aid and reached him just as the shark released its grip. It immediately turned on Edwin and sank its jaws into his right leg, severing it completely.

The two other boys also disregarded the danger and went to the assistance of their brothers. Edwin was dead when they got him to the bank, while Rupert was badly injured.

*The Advertiser (Adelaide)
Monday November 10, 1947, page 3*

Shark Victim May Retain Limb

SYDNEY, November 9.—Rupert Elford, aged 12, victim of a shark in the Maria River on Saturday, tonight was still in a critical condition, but it is believed his badly mauled leg will be saved.

The two boys, Edwin and Rupert, had their brothers, Stanley, 22, and Charles, 9, also bathing nearby at the time of the attack. Stanley tried to pull Edwin away and suddenly the boy was free as the shark made off with his leg—bitten off at the knee.

Stanley brought him to the bank, where he died almost immediately.

In the meantime, Rupert, with severe gashes in both thighs and the lower part of his leg, ran 600 yards to their home.

Stanley carried his dead brother home in his arms and then walked a mile to the nearest telephone.

The Hastings ambulance took the injured boy and the body of his dead brother to Port Macquarie Hospital.

Stanley said he saw only part of the shark, but it seemed to be a big one.

Fishermen have set traps for it.

The Elford family are well known on the Hastings, where they have been farming for some years. There were nine children in the family.

*The Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, QLD)
Monday November 10, 1947, page 1*