

ACTIVITY: Bathing

CASE: GSAF 1948.02.12

DATE: Thursday February 12, 1948

LOCATION: Stockton Beach, Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia. 34°54'S, 151°48'E

NAME: Ronald Johnson

DESCRIPTION: He was a 16-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, February 10, 1948

SEA CONDITIONS: On February 25 off Port Stephens the water temperature was 71°F.

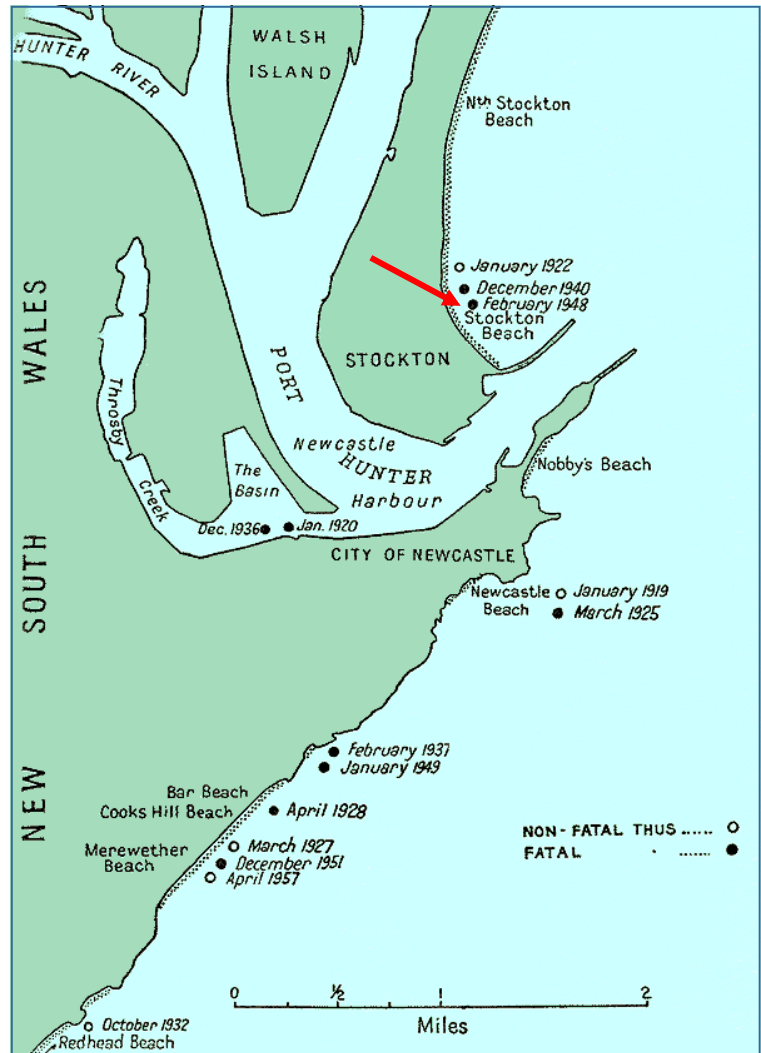
DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 45 metres

NARRATIVE: He was with nine others when the shark alarm sounded. They caught a shoot, but Johnson missed the wave. As he floundered toward the beach he was seized by the shark. Lifesaver Albert Linich brought him to shore with belt and line.

INJURY: Fatal. His right thigh and leg were severely bitten. He died of blood loss and shock in the ambulance room soon after rescue.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The fin of a shark was seen by look-out immediately before the attack and a warning given. A 3.7 metres [12 foot] shark appeared a few yards from shore soon after the attack.

SOURCES: The Canberra Times, February 13, 1948, page 2; The Hartford Courant, February 13, 1948, page 4; Gilbert P. Whitley (1951), page 193; Victor M. Coppleson (1958), page 236; Alan Sharpe, page 83



Lifesaver Killed by Shark.
Sydney, Feb. 12—(AP.)—Ronald Johnson, 16, a lifesaver, was mauled to death by a shark at Stockton Beach, near Newcastle, today. The shark struck him 40 yards from shore. A fellow lifeguard brought him to the beach, but he died moments later.

YOUTH MUTILATED IN SHARK ATTACK NEAR NEWCASTLE

NEWCASTLE, Thurs.

Ronald Johnson, 16, milk carter, was mutilated horribly when attacked by a shark off Stockton Beach, near Newcastle, and died 10 minutes after being rescued.

He was mauled while swimming about 40 yards from the shore in 6ft. of water.

When the shark struck, Johnson screamed in agony.

His club mate, Don Linstrom, 17, of Stockton, was only 10 yards away.

Beach Inspector Harry Stephenson, who was watching the swimmers from a shark tower, said he saw the tail and dorsal fin of a shark near Johnson.

Johnson then screamed and shouted, "A shark has got me."

Albert Linich courageously rushed into the surf and pulled Johnson away from the shark.

Stephenson said that Linich's act was one of the bravest he had ever seen.

The lad was carried into the ambulance room with blood pouring from his injuries.

He died soon after from loss of blood.

Before he died, he gasped: "I never had a chance."

The beach was closed immediately and the shark could be seen cruising near the first line of breakers until fired at with a heavy rifle.

This is the second shark attack at Stockton Beach since 1940, when on December 28, Clarence Ernest Hammond was killed.

Sharks are more plentiful in Newcastle and Sydney waters this summer than for many years.