

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 1958.04.03 / SA-124

DATE: Thursday April 3, 1958

LOCATION: The attack occurred at Port Edward, a resort 158 kilometres southwest of Durban on the KwaZulu-Natal coast of South Africa.

31°02,5'S, 30°13,6'E.

NAME: Nicholaas Francois Badenhorst

DESCRIPTION: The swimmer, a 29-year-old male, had an “average build” and was wearing goggles. He was a policeman and had just arrived at Port Edward for a holiday.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: Reports are conflicting: witnesses report that the sky was sunny, but according to meteorological records the sky was completely overcast, humidity was 92%, and barometric pressure was 30,21 inches. Temperatures ranged from 17° to 21°C, and there were light three-knot northwesterly airs.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, April 4, 1958

SEA CONDITIONS: According to most of the press reports the water was “crystal clear,” however, some accounts claim that the river was in flood and the water was murky. The incident took place an hour before mean high tide and a day before spring tides.

ENVIRONMENT: The accident took place in a channel which ran parallel to the beach. Immediately before the accident a large pod of dolphins was seen offshore.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: Some witnesses claim that Badenhorst was ten metres from the beach, others state that he was 20 metres seaward of about 200 bathers who were concentrated closer to the shore.

DEPTH: 1,2 metres

TIME: 13h30

NARRATIVE: Nicholaas Badenhorst, his brother, Andries, and a friend had been swimming together, but according to some accounts, Nicholaas' two companions caught a wave to



shore, and he was alone when he encountered the shark. However, in *Man is the Prey*, James Clarke reports an interview with Andries Badenhorst a day after the incident:

“I was swimming near my brother when he shouted "Shark!" and I saw him kicking at something in the water. The water immediately turned red and I saw my brother's leg was practically off above the knee. I swam toward him. He punched at the shark and it took his arm off. He then rolled over and punched with his other fist and it took that arm off too. Just then a Zulu swam past me and grabbed my brother and carried him to the beach where he died. ”

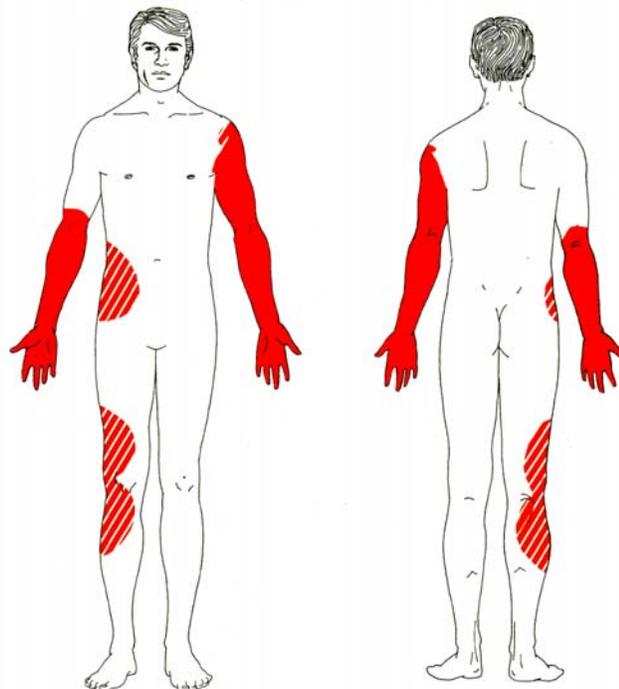
All accounts agree that the shark continued to assault Nicholaas repeatedly until 55-year-old Zephaphiri Messeko, a Zulu lifesaver, waded into the sea, fought the shark, dragged Badenhorst's body from its jaws and carried him from the water.

INJURY: Badenhorst's left arm was severed at the shoulder, his right arm was severed above the elbow, and his abdomen and right leg were mauled. A coroner's inquest was held at Pietermaritzburg; R.G.J. Geldenhuys, returned a verdict of “death due to shock and haemorrhage due to multiple injuries”. Badenhorst was buried in Maraisburg on April 9, 1958.

SPECIES INVOLVED: From 1978 to 1987 the Natal Sharks Board caught 26 white sharks in their nets at Port Edward, and even more were caught at Mzamba, the net installation immediately south of Port Edward. This, together with the nature of the injuries, particularly the severance of the humerus, and witnesses reports that the shark was three to 4,5 metres in length, suggests that the incident involved a white shark, *Carcharodon carcharias*.

SOURCES: Natal Mercury, April 4,9, 11 & 12, 1958; Natal Witness, April 8, 1958; Daily News (Durban), August 8, 1958

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Marie Levine



Shark Victim
Buried 1st.

JOHANNESBURG, Tuesday.— About 200 relations and friends attended the funeral service in Maraisburg today of Mr. Nicholas (Manie) Badenhorst, the 29-year-old Roodepoort man who was killed by a shark at Port Edward last Thursday.

Among the mourners were his widow, Helena, two children, Hennie (5) and Nicoleen (2), and other members of the family. —(Sapa.)

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SHARK VICTIM'S
FATHER SEEKS
NATIVE †

JOHANNESBURG, Friday. — Mr. H. J. Badenhorst, father of 29-year-old Nicolaas Badenhorst who was killed by a shark last week at Port Edward, is trying to trace the Native who attempted to save his son's life. April 12/58

Mr. Badenhorst said: "We are determined to contact this Native whose name is believed to be Zepha Masseko. He is grey-haired and fairly old I believe.

"My family and I have been too distraught to do anything about it until now. The Native waded into the seas and fought the shark and then dragged my son from its jaws and carried the body from the water. He must have known that by attempting to rescue my son he was running a grave risk to himself.

"It is very important that we trace this brave man. I would like to appeal to all the people of Port Edward, who have helped us so much already, to help us again. Somebody there must have heard of this Native and must know. Will they please contact me," he said.

"Apart from the Native," said Mr. Badenhorst, "I would like to thank through the Press all the thousands of people throughout South Africa, especially in the Port Edward area and our home town area of Maraisburg, for their generosity."—Sapa. WITNESS