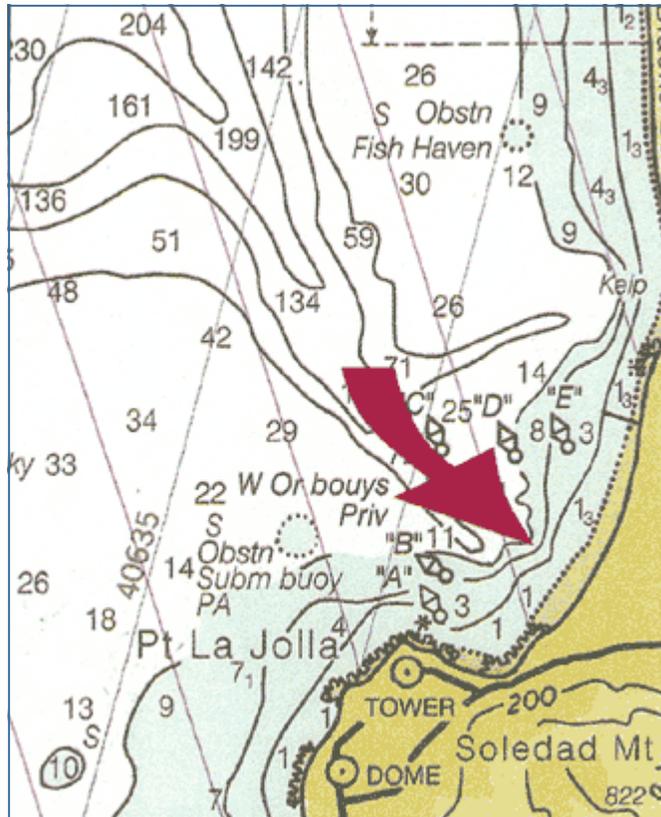


ACTIVITY: Free diving
CASE: **GSF 1959.07.28**
DATE: Tuesday July 28, 1959
LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean near Alligator Head at La Jolla, San Diego County, California, USA. 3
2°51.5'N, 117°16'W

NAME: Verne Fleet
DESCRIPTION: A 25-year-old male, a San Diego County lifeguard. He was wearing a black wetsuit, mask and hood, green snorkel, red swim fins, a white glove on his left hand, and carried a homemade wooden speargun.

BACKGROUND
SEA CONDITIONS: The water temperature was 20°C and underwater visibility was seven metres.
MOON PHASE: Third Quarter, July 27, 1959
ENVIRONMENT: The incident took place in the kelp beds.
DEPTH OF WATER: Five to seven fathoms
TIME: 19h30 - sunset



NARRATIVE: The diver had been in the water for 30 minutes when he speared a California barracuda, *Sphyaena argentea*, and attached it to a stringer on his belt. He swam slowly up-current towards Casa Pool in hopes of finding additional fish. He was inside the kelp beds off Boomer beach when he saw a school of Pacific bonito, *Sarda chiliensis*, below. He dived and shot at a fish but his line became fouled.

The diver was resting on the surface, attempting to untangle his line, when he felt pressure on his left leg. A shark had grabbed the diver's thigh and vibrated for several seconds before release him. Fleet rolled over and saw a hammerhead shark swimming away. The shark swam a short distance, then turned and headed back in the diver's direction. Fleet dived to keep the shark in view. The shark continued to swim towards him until it was three to four metres away. Then the fish began swimming in a figure-8 pattern. "The shark did this back-and-forth figure-8 maybe three or four times," said Fleet. The diver did not strike the shark or respond with aggression, and the shark swam away.

INJURY: The diver sustained 15 puncture wounds to the left thigh and his wetsuit was ripped.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: The diver treated his injuries and did not required medical treatment or hospitalization.

SPECIES: Conrad Limbaugh interviewed the diver and concluded the incident involved a hammerhead shark, *Sphyrna zygaena*, about two metres in length.

NOTE: This incident took place within 300 metres of the site where Robert Pamperin was fatally attacked by a shark.

SOURCES: Ralph Collier (2003), pages 24-25

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Ralph Collier

Boatman Tells Battle With Shark Off La Jolla



LA. JOLLA, July 30 — A Jolla, and Verne Fleet, a city sport fisherman today said he struck a 10-foot white shark twice with pistol shots and then drove a six-foot metal spear into its head after the fish attacked his small outboard motorboat in the kelp beds off La Jolla.

James L. Randles Jr., 30, of San Diego, a plumber, said the shark smashed against his boat while he was pulling up anchor. As the shark sounded, Randles noticed that a cloth sack with several yellowtail, barracuda and bonito, hanging from the boat's side, had disappeared.

"It returned 10 minutes later, and I maneuvered the boat within about 15 feet from it," Randles said. "I fired four shots from my 38-caliber revolver. Two of the shots hit him, and I saw blood in the water."

The enraged shark charged at the boat again, and Randles slashed at it several times with a razor-sharp spear, drawing more blood. "Then I jammed it into his head," he said. "It disappeared with the spear sticking out of its head."

Robert Pamerin of Pacific Beach was devoured by a 20-ft. white shark last month while skin-diving off La

Jolla, and Verne Fleet, a city lifeguard, was attacked by a six-ft. hammerhead shark in the same vicinity Tuesday night, suffering 15 puncture wounds on the upper left thigh.

Los Angeles Times, July 30, 1959