

ACTIVITY: Standing

CASE: [GSAF 1961.12.28.c](#)

DATE: Thursday December 28, 1961

LOCATION: The accident took place in the Coral Sea at Lambert's Beach, Mackay, Queensland, Australia.

NAMES: Margaret Hobbs

DESCRIPTION: She was an 18-year-old female, a student schoolteacher. Steffens and Hobbs were engaged to be married.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a sunny day and the air temperature was 82°F.

MOON PHASE: Third Quarter, December 30, 1961

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was clear and the water temperature was 82°F.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 15 to 20 feet

DEPTH OF WATER: Less than three feet

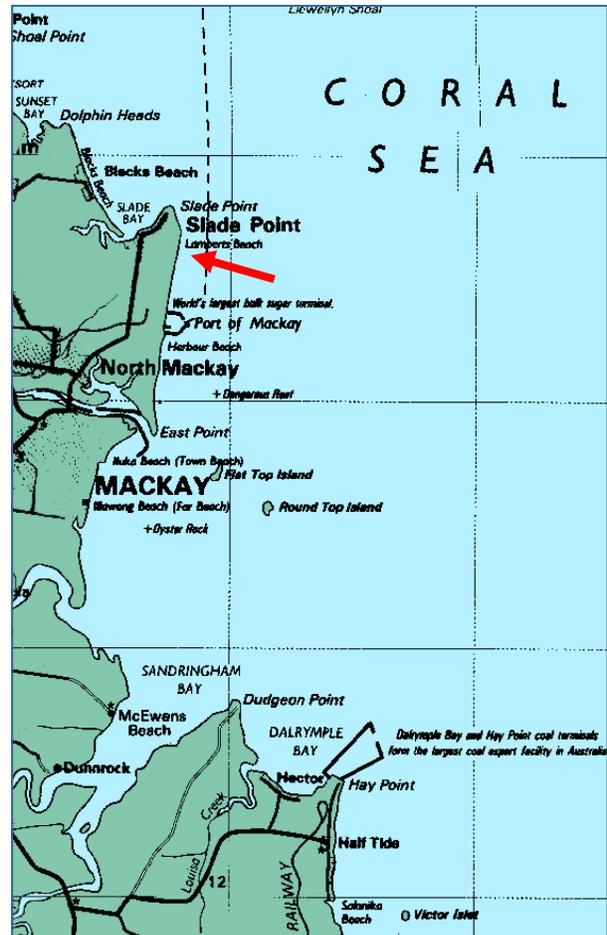
TIME: 16h15 [4:15 p.m.]

NARRATIVE: Steffens and Hobbs had just entered the water to wash sand off, and were frolicking. Steffens was facing north and Hobb's was on his right and slightly behind him when Steffens heard noise in the water and felt a sharp pain in his right hand. Then he was pulled into the water by the shark, screamed out and struggled to pull his hand from the shark's mouth. He freed his hand then saw the shark streak towards Hobbs, who suddenly disappeared beneath the surface. Steffens began beating at the shark while reaching under the water in attempt to rescue Hobbs. Graham Robert Jorgenson had been sitting on the beach and saw the shark attack the couple and raced to their assistance. Jorgenson and Steffens succeeded in driving the shark away from Hobbs and carried her out of the water.

INJURY: Hobb's right arm was severed at the shoulder, her left arm was severed just below the elbow, and her right thigh was severely bitten.

FIRST AID: A nurse who was on the beach applied tourniquets and the couple was transported by ambulance to Mater Hospital in Mackay.

TREATMENT: Hobb's injury proved fatal. Her right leg was surgically amputated. Hobbs blood type was rare; she was A positive, and people flocked to the Red Cross Blood Bank that evening in answer to a call for donors, but she died at 18h55 on December 30 as result



**Hans Martyn Steffens
& Margaret Hobbs**

of “toxemia and secondary shock”.

Steffens' right arm was surgically amputated above the wrist. The attending physician was Dr. W. Bolton.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The shark was about three metres [10'] in length. It remained in the vicinity of Lambert's Beach for about an hour after the attack. A number of sharks were later caught at the beach, however, there is no evidence to suggest that the shark involved in this incident was one of those caught. Three of the sharks that were caught had been bitten/partially consumed by other sharks.

NOTE: Largely as a result of this incident, contract meshing (gill netting) for sharks was approved for Queensland beaches. In November 1962, nets were laid from Southport to Coolangatta on the south coast beaches, and from Caloundra to Noosa on the north coast.

SOURCES: Constable F.P. Long; Victor M. Coppleson (1962), page 246; Alex MacCormick, pages.19-21;



GIRL SHARK 30 DEC 1961 VICTIM DIES

MACKAY (Queensland)

Saturday.

A ROUND-THE-CLOCK battle to save the life of an 18-year-old girl who lost both arms when attacked by a shark in waist-deep water near here last Thursday ended to-day when she died.

The attack occurred when the girl, Margaret Hobbs, was swimming only a few feet from the shore.

Doctors at Mackay Hospital amputated one of the girl's legs, badly mauled in the attack.

A man who received injuries to a hand and forearm when attacked by the same shark was reported to be in a satisfactory condition in hospital to-day. —