



Lady Julia Percy Island

ACTIVITY: Spearfishing

CASE: GSAF 1964.11.29

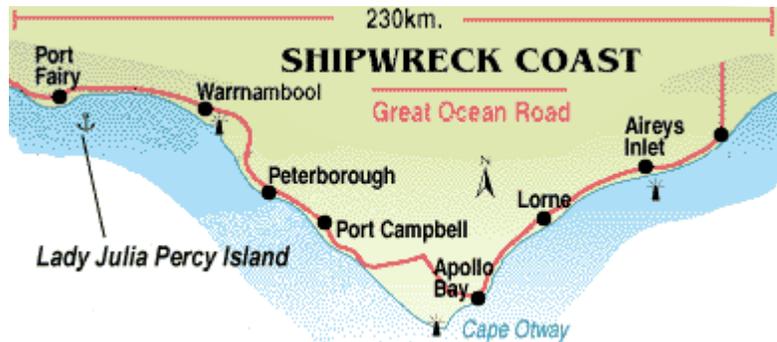
DATE: Sunday November 29, 1964

LOCATION: The incident took place at Lady Julia Percy Island, Victoria, Australia.

NAME: Henri Bource

DESCRIPTION: He was a 25-year-old male. He was a saxophonist, the leader of a Melbourne rock-and-roll band, and a keen underwater photographer. He was wearing in a hooded black full wetsuit, mask and swim fins.

SUPPORT BOAT: The fishing boat *Raemur-K* out of Port Fairy skippered by Walt Kelly.



BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Third Quarter, November 26, 1964

SEA CONDITIONS: Underwater visibility was poor.

ENVIRONMENT: Lady Julia Percy Island is an uninhabited volcanic outcrop 17 kilometres off Port Fairy and about eight kilometres offshore. The island is surrounded by almost vertical cliffs which range in height from 32 metres to 46 metres. It is home to rookeries of muttonbirds, kestrels, swamp harriers, sooty oystercatchers and blue penguins. The island is a seal rookery. There were about a thousand seals on the island that day.

DISTANCE FROM BOAT: 50 yards

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: 30 to 35 feet

TIME: 14h30

NARRATIVE: There were about 40 divers from the Victorian Aqualung Club on the boat.

Bource entered the water at 12h45 and shot a roll of film and swam back to the boat. At 13h30 he returned to the water and was free-diving and filming a bull seal with two other divers: Dietmar Kruppa and Fred Arndt, both of whom had short handspears.

Suddenly the seals disappeared. "The water was quite empty," said Bource. "There was a split second of eerie silence, and our instinct as divers warned us that something was wrong. They dived down to 10 metres hugging the bottom. Unable to locate the seals, the divers ascended. As Bource's head broke the surface he was hit with tremendous force. "I threw my arm up in the diver's signal for 'Help!' and screamed 'Shark!' I was torn through the water with enormous power and dragged below. The force of the attack ripped off my mask and snorkel. I could only make out a blurred shape, a huge shadow, as the shark took me down to the bottom, gripping my leg.

"As it dived deep, the shark shook me the way a dog would shake an old slipper. . . I found myself reaching for the shark's eyes. . . but I could barely reach my arm around his

gigantic snout, and I just scabbled helplessly across the monster's muzzle. There was another sensation in which pain and fear were almost forgotten. I was drowning. I needed air —suffocating as I was tugged and rolled from side to side. Then suddenly it all stopped. The shaking and the turmoil ceased. There was a moment almost of peace. Then I realized, as I groped for the surface, that I had just had my leg bitten off. The air was wonderful as I gasped on the surface. Then I felt down to the remains of my left leg. I was quite calm. Shock, perhaps. But I found it hard to focus clearly. There was a curious division in which my body tended towards natural animal panic. But my mind remained quite detached."

Dietmar Kruppa and Fred Arndt reached Bource. The shark came back at least five times, but Arndt and Kruppa drove it away with their light handspears. The spears were twisted and bent from hitting the shark, but the fish displayed no aggression toward either of the two men.

The dive boat, dragging its anchor, sped toward the men in the water. Bource's girlfriend, Jill Ratcliffe, grabbed the safety line, jumped into the water and swam to the men and was followed by other divers.

INJURY: The shark severed Bource's left leg below the knee.



Henri Bource

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: Bource was lifted onboard the dive boat and carried to the middle of the deck where a tourniquet was swiftly applied. People were still on the island, and a decision was made to head for port, and return for them later. Captain Kelly broadcast a Mayday, telling Bource's blood type and asking for a doctor and ambulance to meet them at Port Fairy with blood for transfusions. A doctor and ambulance met the boat at the Port Fairy landing. Bource had lost 3.5 litres of blood and transfusions were given as he was rushed to Warnambool Hospital.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The incident involved a white shark, about 2.4 metres in length. The shark severed Bource's leg but apparently didn't consume it because Kruppa saw it floating in the water.

NOTES: 1) Bource had been petting a dog on the beach and in the boat, and Kruppa speculated that the scent of the dog on Bource may have attracted the shark to him. 2) Sharpe and Edwards list the date of this incident as November 26, 1964, while Green lists it as November 29, 1964. 3) Bource was back in the water within weeks. In 1968 he assisted with a shark documentary film, *Savage Shadow*, in which the incident was simulated. He continued to dive and film sharks and other marine life.

SOURCES: Sydney Morning Herald, November 30, 1964; Hugh Edwards, pages 67-71; Alan Sharpe, pages 115-116; Jack Green, page 35.



This attack was one of the few ever captured on film.