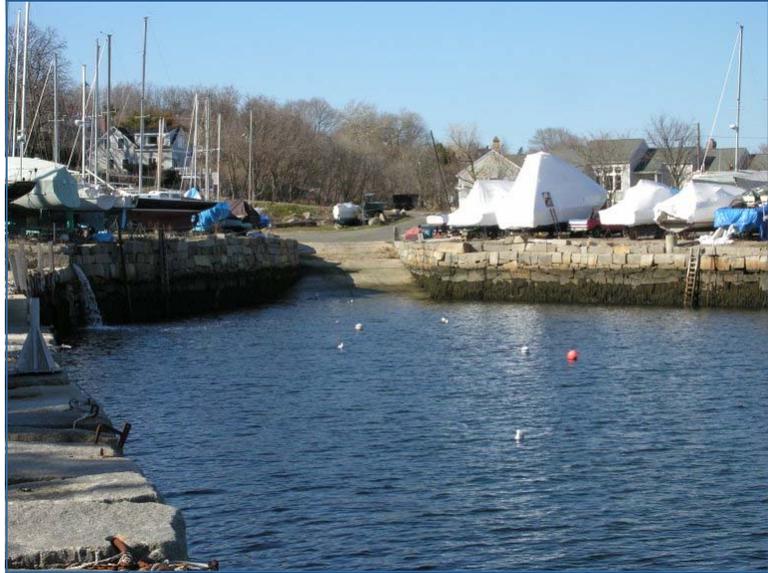


ACTIVITY: Scuba diving
CASE: **GSAF 1965.02.04**
DATE: Thursday February 4, 1965
LOCATION: The accident took place off Granite Pier, Rockport, Essex County, Massachusetts, USA.
42°40'N, 70°40'W



NAME: Ronald R. Powell

DESCRIPTION: He was an 18-year-old male from Wakefield, Massachusetts, an Airman Apprentice with the US Navy. He was wearing a black 3/16" wetsuit and a set of double cubic-inch tanks. He was a

member of a Navy frogman reserve unit and a member of the Bay State Aqua Club and the Massachusetts Council of Diving Clubs.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a cold, bright and sunny day. The air temperature was 20°F.

MOON PHASE: New Moon, February 1, 1965

ENVIRONMENT: Rockport is located approximately 25 miles northeast of Boston at the tip of the Cape Ann peninsula. It lies directly east of Gloucester, Massachusetts, and is surrounded on three sides by the Atlantic Ocean.

SEA TEMPERATURE: The water was murky and very cold, approximately 30° to 37°F.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 100 yards from the eastern side of the pier.

DEPTH OF WATER: 60 feet

TIME: 14h30

NARRATIVE: "I began the dive in my usual fashion. This was to swim to the position where I would think the best diving would be, and then start my descent from there," said Powell. "I had been searching for lobsters and other marine life for about half an hour when I spotted an extremely large [lobster] in a crevice. I reached in to grab it and it was at this time that I felt something hit me. I turned around to see what it had been and I saw a shark swimming past me. I kicked at it. It swam away in one direction and I swam in the other as fast as I could."

INJURY: The diver sustained numerous small lacerations and punctures on the anterior left thigh.

DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT: The leg of the diver's wetsuit was torn.

FIRST AID: When Powell reached shore he was bleeding profusely and his two companions, Keith Johnson and Richard Martin (both of Wakefield, Massachusetts) took

him to the hospital.

TREATMENT: At Hunt Memorial Hospital in Danvers, Massachusetts, the diver's wounds were disinfected, cleaned and examined. "The wounds healed completely in about two weeks and at the present time only small scars remain," said Powell.

SPECIES: Not identified, but Powell said the shark was about 1.2 metres [four feet] in length.

SOURCES: Ronald R. Powell
Boston Traveler, February 11, 1965
H. David Baldrige, page 184



Shark May Have Bit Diver At Rockport

By RICHARD VAHAN

A Wakefield diver has been attacked by what may have been a small shark off Rockport.

The attack is under investigation by the Massachusetts Council of Diving Clubs.

Ronald Powell, 19, of 8 Grove St., suffered six-inch cuts on one leg while diving in 50 to 60 feet of water off the Granite Pier, Rockport, Sunday afternoon.

Reports indicated Powell saw a fish about four feet long, kicked at it, then felt a bump. He thought no more of it until co-divers told him he was bleeding and that his foam rubber diving suit was torn down one leg.

He was treated at Hunt Memorial Hospital, Danvers and released.

David Miller, curator of biology at New England Aquarium said it was possible that a shark did attack Powell.

"But so far," he said, "there has never been an authenticated shark attack on a human north of Cape Cod."

Miller said the cold water—around 37 degrees—was only one factor causing him to question the possibility it was a shark that bit Powell.

"But I certainly don't want to dispute the victim's observation. If he saw a shark, it was a shark that bit him.

"Frequently, though, an underwater swimmer may have only a fleeting glimpse of a fish, especially under the circum-

stances described here," Miller said.

Miller said it could have been any of several other types of fish and the attack could have been a mistake on the part of the fish.

He named the wolf-fish as possibility.

Powell is a member of a Navy frogman reserve unit and a member of the Bay State Aqua Club and the Massachusetts Council.

1355 4 Feb 1965 R. R. Powell Rockport, Mass. Non-fatal
Hit by 4-ft shark while lobster fishing at 60 ft. Water temperature 30-37°F. Kicked at shark. Numerous small bite marks on upper front of thigh.