

ACTIVITY: Scuba diving

CASE: GSAF 1982.02.07.a

DATE: Sunday February 7, 1982

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean near Stillwater Cove north of Fort Ross, Sonoma County, California, USA.

38°32.6'N, 123°18.3'W

NAME: Donald "Harvey" Smith

DESCRIPTION: He was clad in a full neoprene wetsuit, hood, boots, mask.

SUPPORT BOAT: A four-metre Achilles inflatable boat

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waxing Gibbous, 99% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. Full Moon on 8 February 1982

SEA CONDITIONS: The underwater visibility was poor. "The visibility was very, very bad," said Smith, "and I considered aborting my dive because of it."

ENVIRONMENT: The incident took 30 metres from a kelp bed and adjacent to a drop-off to more than 20 metres.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 450 to 500 metres

DEPTH OF WATER: 48 to 50 feet

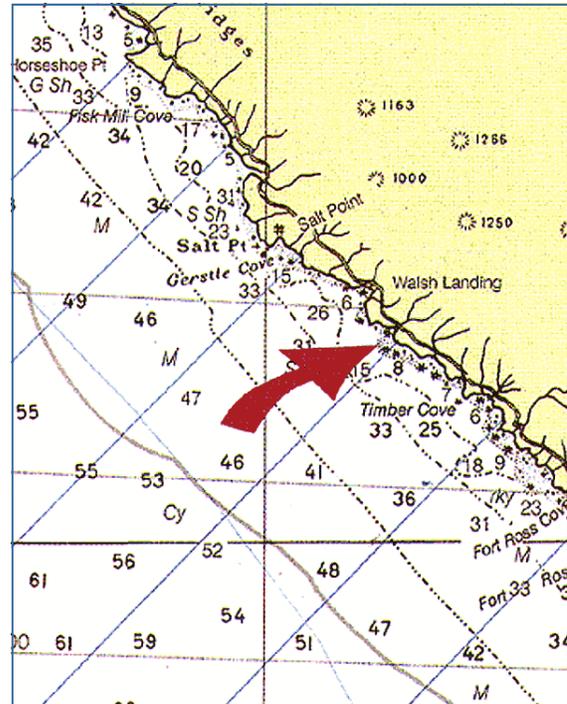
TIME: 11h00

NARRATIVE: Donald Smith entered the water and his dive buddy, Ken Shimizu, followed shortly afterwards. Smith was following the anchor line to the bottom. He had reached a depth of 36 to 42 feet when he felt a sudden and strong grasping of his calf. "It felt like my leg got tangled in an anchor line and I was being pulled by a boat," said Smith. He turned in time to see the head of a white shark. The shark grabbed his right calf for several seconds, momentarily released the diver, and then bit his right ankle, removing his swim fin.

Smith felt no pain as he ascended rapidly toward the surface. Neither Smith nor his dive buddy saw the shark afterwards.

INJURY: The wound to Smith's thigh was crescent-shaped and spanned 38 cm. Lea and Miller reported the shark had bitten the leg to the bone.

FIRST AID: Shimizu rendered first aid to Smith on board the inflatable boat as they made for the beach at Stillwater Cove. When they reached the beach, a regional park ranger was summoned for assistance. He rendered first aid and summoned a helicopter, which transported Smith to Sonoma Community Hospital in Santa Rosa. From the time of the incident until his admittance to the hospital's emergency room, 60 minutes elapsed.



TREATMENT: The severity of the injury required surgery to repair damaged muscles, tendons, and several vascular vessels.

SPECIES: During surgery several tooth fragments were retrieved from Smith's leg, positively identifying his assailant as a white shark. The wound measurements were comparable to dentition measurements of a white shark five metres in length.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Ralph Collier