

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE GSAF 1901.07.30 / SA-027

DATE: Tuesday July 30, 1901

LOCATION: The attack took place in the Indian Ocean at Windmill Beach in Simon's Town, False Bay, about 92 kilometres from Table Bay in the Western Cape Province, South Africa.

34°12,5'S, 18°26'E



NAME: John Hendrick Adrian Chandler

DESCRIPTION: John Chandler, prisoner number 5316, was a well-built 29-year-old white male from Ladybrand, Orange Free State.

He was one of the men captured by the British at Paardeberg and, like the rest of the prisoners, was bathing in the nude when he was attacked.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was sunny.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, July 30, 1901

SEA CONDITIONS: A channel was present.

ENVIRONMENT: The incident took place off a sheltered sandy cove strewn with large granite boulders, many of which are separated from the beach even at low tide.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 20 metres

DEPTH: Deeper than one metre

TIME: 14h15

NARRATIVE: During the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) there was a Boer Prisoner-of-War camp on the site of the present-day golf course at the Boulders. The British authorities allowed the prisoners to bathe in the adjoining sea for recreation.

A number of prisoners were in the water when Chandler and another man climbed out on a boulder that was detached from the rest. Chandler jumped in the water and began swimming. When he was about nine metres from the rock, the shark grasped him, dragging him beneath the water. He surfaced further seaward and then a wave washed Chandler and the shark back into the gully between the rocks. Captain C.H. Bayley R.N., who witnessed the attack, said the shark bit Chandler at least twice: "The first bite took his right arm and the second took one of his legs. But Chandler was a powerful fellow and fought with the brute and nearly dragged it ashore." Then, in water less than a metre deep, the shark released him and one of the other prisoners helped him climb on to the rocks.

INJURY: An inquest was held next day during which Chandler's injuries were described by Dr Walter Adam, the medical officer in charge of the Boer camp:

"His right leg was almost completely bitten through the ankle joint except for a piece of skin by which it retained its continuity. About ten inches (25,4 centimetres) above this was a large lacerated wound almost encircling the junction of upper with middle third of the leg and probably severing the main blood vessels of the leg...One bone of the leg was broken below the knee. There was a very severe bite of the right forearm causing a

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compound fracture of both bones and obviously causing severe haemorrhage. The muscles were very much lacerated and his right arm was almost torn off. There were also lacerated wounds on the dorsal surface of the right hand. The man died from shock and haemorrhage accompanying the injuries described.”

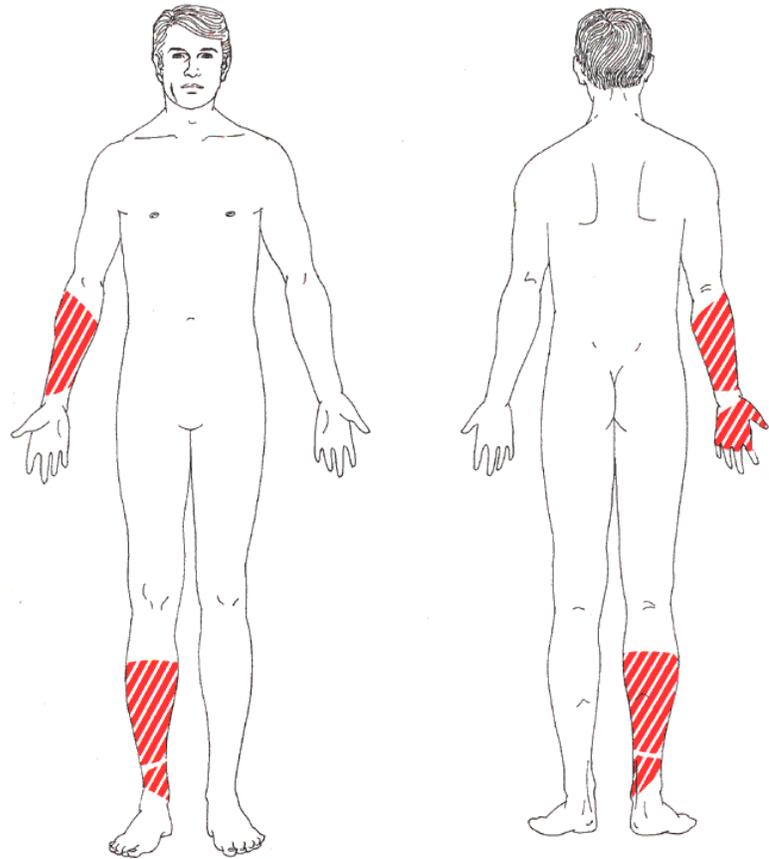
FIRST AID: When Chandler crawled on to the rocks “blood was spurting from his wounds and he fainted”. Five minutes passed before he could be taken to shore and, according to a witness, “he was not bleeding much then”. The other prisoners carried him at once to the camp hospital.

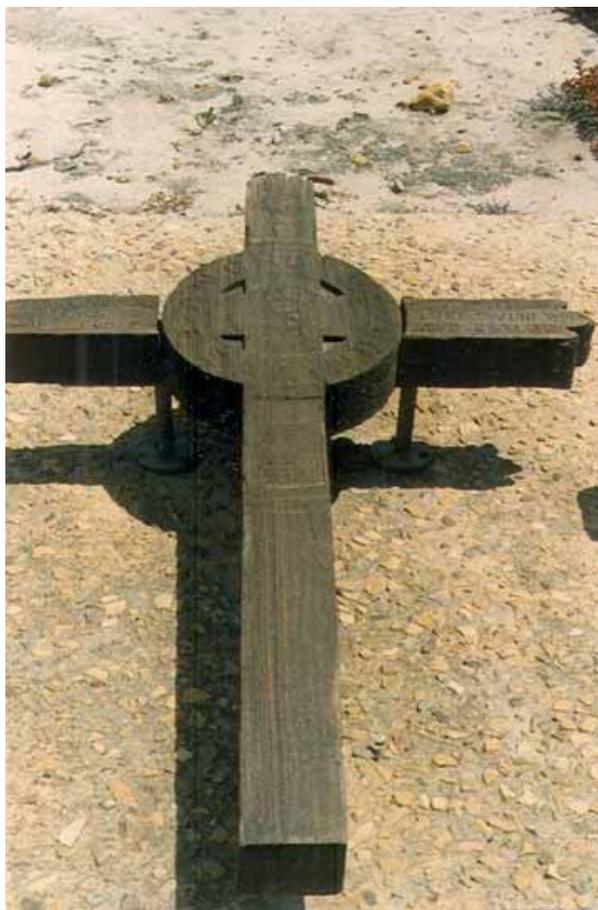
TREATMENT: Chandler was examined in the camp hospital by Dr Adam 30 minutes after the incident. Tourniquets had been applied, but Chandler was in shock; his breathing was laboured and he was pale and restless. He died at 14h55 and was buried in the cemetery at Simon's Town.

SPECIES INVOLVED: It was believed this incident involved a white shark, *Carcharodon carcharias*.

SOURCES: Archives of the Simon's Town Museum; Inquest Report in the Cape Archives, Cape Town, South Africa (attached).

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Marie Levine





Chandler's Grave Marker in Simons Town Cemetery

KILLED BY A SHARK.

Captain C. H. Bayly, R.N., informed the "Cape Times," of August 5, of a fatal encounter between a Boer prisoner of war and a shark in Simon's Bay. On Tuesday, July 30, the prisoners were bathing. One of them (Chandler, by name), dived off a rock, and was immediately seized by a large shark, which first of all bit his right arm off, and then one of his legs at the thigh. Chandler, being a very powerful man, fought with the brute, and actually nearly dragged him ashore, but he let go in about three feet of water, and Chandler managed to crawl on to a rock. He was then carried to the hospital in the camp, where he died about half an hour afterwards.

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*Boer Prisoners-of-War — Seaforth Area, Windmill Beach
Courtesy: Simon's Town Museum*