

ACTIVITY: Free diving for trochus

CASE: GSAF 1934.02.24

DATE: Saturday February 24, 1934

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Coral Sea in the Adolphus Channel, Queensland, Australia.

NAME: Rixon

DESCRIPTION: He was an aboriginal male.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, February 21, 1934

ENVIRONMENT: Crayfish were being speared in the vicinity.

DISTANCE FROM REEF: 40 yards

DEPTH: 18 feet

TIME: 12h00

NARRATIVE: Aware that the splashing and noise of those hunting crayfish attracted sharks, Rixon was returning to the reef when he saw two sharks swimming towards him. One was a small shark about five feet in length, but the other was a tiger shark 11 feet in length. The shark swam in a circle, then charged him. Rixon tried to meet the charge with his feet, and managed to avoid being bitten, but sustained gashes on the inside of his right knee. The shark turned and attack again and he warded it off with his left foot, which was badly gashed. Then the shark swam away.

INJURY: Rixon sustained six deep razor slashes on the inner aspect of the right knee, three through the sole of the foot near the heel, one of which extended to bone. At regular intervals on the foot there were deep puncture wounds.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: He was admitted to Thursday Island Hospital, and recovered.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified



Adolphus Channel or Albany passage is a channel at the northeastern end of the Cape York Peninsula / southeastern section of the Torres Strait. It runs between Albany Island and Mount Adolphus Island.

1934. 24th February.

Afternoon. RIXON. Aboriginal. Adolphus Channel. Lat. 10° 40'S. Recovery.

Diving in 3 fathoms about 40 yards from reef, where some other boys spearfishing crayfish. Decided to return to reef as knew splashing and noise of crayfish attracted sharks. Saw two sharks swimming towards him—one small shark about 5 feet long, the other a big tiger shark about 11 feet. Shark swam in circle, and then made rush at him. Tried to meet attack with foot, managed to avoid being bitten, but sustained nasty gashes on inner side of right knee. Shark turned to attack again and met with left foot, which badly gashed. Shark then swam away. Injuries: six deep razor slashes on inner aspect of the right knee, three through sole of foot near heel, one extending to bone. At regular intervals on foot, deep punctured wounds. Admitted Torres Strait Hospital, Thursday Island.

Victor M. Coppleson (1958), page 243

THE GALVESTON NEWS—PAGE 2—APRIL 21, 1947

Flour Saves Life Of Maimed Diver

Sydney, Australia—AP—A bag of flour is credited with saving a maimed pearl diver from bleeding to death near Thursday island.

Rixon, a "skin-diver" (one who dives without helmet or diving dress) had his leg seized by a large shark. He jammed his thumbs in the shark's eyes and forced it to let go. Then he struggled to the dinghy and was hauled aboard.

In the absence of anything that would make a satisfactory ligature, it seemed that he might bleed to death. He yelled for a bag of flour. The maimed leg was thrust in and the dough that formed staunched the blood effectively until the lugger reached Thursday island, where doctors closed the wound.

The Galveston Daily News, Monday April 21, 1947