

**ACTIVITY:** World War II

**CASE:** GSAF 1943.05.01.R

**DATE:** Reported May 1, 1943

**LOCATION:** Indian Ocean, 400 miles off the African coast.

**NAME:** Clarence B. Master

**DESCRIPTION:** He was a merchant mariner.

**NARRATIVE:** When Master's ship was torpedoed he was blown into the water by the explosion and clung to a hatch door. At first he drew the interest of a 13-foot shark, then a second smaller blue shark. The second shark bit Master's leg and part of the hatch door at the same time, but he was able to drive the fish away. Then the same shark, according to Master, "came back with a pal" and bit his left foot and arm.

After six days Master and the other survivors were sighted by a British freighter and rescued.

**INJURY:** The sailor's leg, right arm and left foot were bitten by the shark.

**SPECIES:** A blue shark

**SOURCE:** St. Petersburg Times, May 1, 1943, page 12

# Sailor, Bitten by Sharks, Frets About Chapped Lips

(By International News Service)

ASTORIA, Ore.—A merchant mariner who was mangled by sharks as he clung to a floating hatch door in the Indian ocean still is telling how a British doctor's eyes bulged when he asked for treatment for his chapped lips.

The sailor, Clarence B. Master, now is a member of a Columbia river dredge crew.

Master's ship was torpedoed 400 miles off the African coast. Blown into the water by the explosion, he climbed aboard the door and clung there for 22 hours.

First a 12-foot shark attacked him, only to be driven away by a smaller blue shark. The second assailant clamped its jaws on Master's leg and got part of the door at the same time. The

sailor got rid of the fish temporarily by gouging its eye with his thumb.

The same shark, accompanied by a pal, attacked again in a few minutes, however, and mangled Master's right arm and left foot.

A British airplane, circling overhead, meantime directed a lifeboat to rescue Master and after six days the survivors were sighted by a British freighter.

Aboard the rescue ship the wounded sailor was treated by the ship's doctor. When he asked for something for his chapped lips the physician exclaimed:

"Well, I'll be damned. Here you are half eaten up by sharks and all you want is something soothing for your chapped lips. You Americans beat me!"