

ACTIVITY: Wading

CASE: GSAF 1963.01.28

DATE: Monday January 28, 1963

LOCATION: The incident took place in Sugarloaf Bay in Middle Harbour, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

33°48'S, 151°E

NAME: Marcia Hathaway,

DESCRIPTION: A 32-year-old female from Milsons Point. She was an actress and had played in music halls with touring troupes as well as radio serials. She landed a leading role in a movie, *The Shadow of the Boomerang*, produced by World Wide Pictures, part of the Billy Graham organization in which she played the part of an Australian mission nurse.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a bright and sunny, hot sultry day. The air temperature was about 80°F and there was a slight north-northeasterly breeze.

MOON PHASE: New Moon, January 25, 1963

SEA CONDITIONS: The water was murky.

ENVIRONMENT: The *Sydney Morning Herald* warned Australia Day holidaymakers that sharks were in the area. Beach patrol aircraft had sighted 66 sharks off the Northern Beaches, shark alarms were sounded at eight beaches and Narrabeen was closed for two-and-a-half hours. A former shark net contractor was quoted as saying that 95 per cent of shark attacks around Sydney occurred between December and February. "Surfers and harbour swimmers should take particular care for the next few days," he warned.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 20 feet

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: 30 inches

TIME: 13h30

NARRATIVE: Marcia Hathaway, her fiancé Frederick Knight, and four friends arrived at Sugarloaf Bay onboard the cabin cruiser *Valeeta* for a picnic. Two of the group were on the rocks gathering oysters and others were on the beach when Hathaway and Knight entered the water. Just five minutes later, Hathaway screamed that she had been bitten — by an octopus, she thought. Knight was close to her when the shark bit her right leg below the calf, then bit her a second time on the thigh. As others from their party rushed to help, Knight pulled Hathaway from the shark and carried her to the boat.

INJURY: The second bite caused the most damage; it severed Hathaway's femoral artery



Marcia Hathaway

Image Source: News Limited

and nearly severed her leg. She suffered a gaping wound on the anterior of her right thigh, a gaping wound on the buttock, and lacerations on the right calf, medial surface of the left thigh, and there were defense wounds on her left hand.

FIRST AID: The cruiser went to the nearest boat shed. Knight dived into the water and swam to the closest house where he telephoned for help, and an ambulance was waiting at the jetty when the boat arrived. The ambulance burned out its clutch climbing the hill despite efforts of volunteers to push it over the rise. A second ambulance was called but arrived too late. She died enroute to Mater Misericordiae Hospital in North Sydney from blood loss and shock.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Tooth fragments of the shark were recovered and identified as those of a “whaler”, but their whereabouts are unknown. Most researchers believe that the incident involved a bull shark, *C. leucas*.

SOURCES: Dr. P.R. Coyne, Mater Misericordiae Hospital, North Sydney

Alan Sharpe, *Down Under-Shark Attacks in Australian Waters*. pages 7-12

Hugh Edwards, *Shark, The Shadow Below*, pages 102 & 108

Peter Munro, The Age, January 28, 2013; <http://www.theage.com.au/nsw/fifty-years-since-fatal-shark-attack-in-sydney-harbour-20130127-2dey8.html>



Marcia Hathaway, actor, was killed by a shark in Sydney Harbour



Actor Marcia Hathaway was killed by a shark in Sydney Harbour.

Source: News Limited