



ACTIVITY: Spearfishing

CASE: GSAF 1967.12.21.R

DATE: Reported December 21, 1967

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Coral Sea off a small island near Port Moresby, Central Province, Papua New Guinea.

NAME: Bob Valentine

DESCRIPTION: He was a 32-year-old male from Auckland, New Zealand..

NARRATIVE: The shark simply made a threat display and the diver shot the shark.

INJURY: No injury

SPECIES: A 14' mako shark, according to the diver.

SOURCES: The Age, December 21, 1967, page 4; H. David Baldrige (1994) SAF Case #1649

Spear-fisher tells of shark ordeal

PORT MORESBY. — "We saw a few fish around and it looked a nice bit of water. So we jumped in," New Zealand spear-fisherman Bob Valentine said.

"But when I saw the shark coming I told Stan to get the hell out of it. There was no point in us both getting mauled."

Mr. Valentine, 32, from Auckland, was talking yesterday about his narrow escape from a 14-foot blue pointer shark in waters off Port Moresby last weekend.

Mr. Valentine and fellow motor mechanic Stan Carney, about 26, from Brisbane, were returning from a fishing expedition south of Port Moresby when they decided to stop off at a small island to look for coral trout.

"We had barely entered the water when I saw the shark," Mr. Valentine said yesterday.

"As Stan headed off for the boat the shark came at me at a fair pace.

"I wasn't sure whether he was going to attack or was just inquisitive. But he was a few feet below me and my legs were dangling down, so I tried to prod him away with the speargun as he swam past.

"But he was much too strong. He lifted me clean out of the water, circled around and came back flat out," Mr. Valentine said.

"I must have misjudged his speed because when I fired, the spear went in behind his gills. He was so close the spear didn't fully leave the barrel. There was blood everywhere.

"He dragged me down to the bottom and the shaft of the spear caught me under the armpit and knocked me over. He was really angry now and my face mask had been ripped off and I was out of wind.

"I hung on to the gun. It was my only protection.

"He dragged me around, trying to shake off the spear; then the rope snapped like cotton. It was about 150 lb. breaking strain, but he broke it like it was nothing.

"Next thing I knew, Stan was in the water beside me. He was unarmed, but he pulled me into the boat. I

had a stomach full of water and was just about done," Valentine said.

"I didn't think about it at the time. It all happened so fast.

"I didn't feel too good at all when I was back on the boat. I guess I was pretty lucky. Stan is just learning spearfishing and I reckon he was pretty game jumping in there."

Skin divers familiar with Port Moresby waters say shark attacks here are extremely rare.

Valentine said he had been spearfishing for years in Fiji and North Queensland. This was the first time he had run into "a big one."

"We occasionally see small sharks about four feet round the reefs, but they don't give us any trouble," he said. "Anyway, I'll be a bit wary when we go out again on Boxing Day." — AAP.