

ACTIVITY: Snorkeling

CASE: GSAF 1997.06.15

DATE: Sunday June 15, 1997

LOCATION: The attack took place off a small uninhabited island five kilometres west of Tavenui (opposite the Garden Resort), Fiji Islands.

NAME: Elizabeth Rogers

DESCRIPTION: She is a 47-year-old female from Christchurch, New Zealand. She was 5'6" tall and weighed 58 kilograms. She was wearing diamond rings, a green face mask and white swim fins, and was clad in a black one-piece swimsuit with bright teal/blue trim and a white T-shirt. She had no injuries prior to the attack and did not have her menstrual period.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The air was mild but the sky was overcast and a light rain was falling.

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, June 13, 1997

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was calm but grey, and the water became darker and cloudy with the rain. At the time of the incident underwater visibility was about 25-feet and the estimated water temperature was 25°C.

ENVIRONMENT: The Rogers were told that locals fish in the area. The nearshore/beach environment of the island consisted of shingle and sand that sloped to a seabed of coral. The incident took place 20 feet from a 600-foot drop-off. The tide changed while Liz was snorkeling and there was debris on the surface.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 20 metres

DISTANCE TO ROCKS: There were rocks to the side of the beach, 30 metres away.

DEPTH OF WATER: 10 feet

TIME: 14h30 [2:30 pm]

NARRATIVE: Liz and John Rogers were on a short scuba diving trip to Fiji. They had been diving the previous day but were snorkeling on the surface when the incident took place. Two other people were in the water but were approximately 300 metres away when the attack took place. Liz had been in the water about 30 minutes when she felt a bite and a tug. It was described as a deliberate bite of two seconds duration. The shark did not attempt to pull Liz beneath the surface. Neither Liz nor John saw the shark.

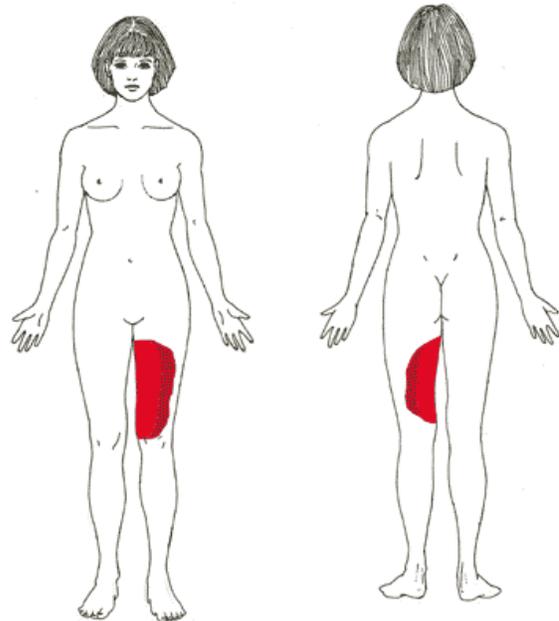
INJURY: The patient's left leg was bitten. All tissue was removed from the medial thigh from



Liz Rogers

three inches below the groin to the knee joint. The femoral artery was severed and the femur was completely exposed.

FIRST AID: John Rogers applied a tourniquet (Hermes silk scarf) and the patient spent two hours on the beach waiting for the boat to return and transport the divers back to the mainland (Taveuni). Then the patient was loaded onto a truck and taken to a local clinic where the wound was treated with a tin of Savlon disinfectant (no antibiotics were available). At the clinic, the patient was given oxygen, plasma and received a blood transfusion from John Rogers. Unable to get a helicopter in after dark, the patient spent the night in the clinic. Next day she was airlifted to Nadi for the early morning flight to New Zealand. On arrival in Auckland, she was transported to Middlemore Hospital in Auckland, New Zealand. The surgeons were Garth Poole, M.D. and Neil Officer, M.D.



TREATMENT:

16-Jun-1997 – 27-Jun-1997: IP_A_SHARK BITE L INNER THIGH_ICD9-CMA_INJURY_8901 (MIDDLEMORE).

27-Jun-1997 – 14-Jul-1997: IP_A_OTHER LATE AMPUTATION STUMP COMPLICATION_ICD9-CMA_INJURY_99769 (CHRISTCHURCH)

Sepsis set in prior to the patient's arrival in New Zealand, some 24 hours after she was bitten by the shark. Two surgical procedures were performed to debride the wound and reconstruct the cardiovascular system of the leg and foot. During a third procedure the patient's leg was amputated above the knee.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Local fishermen reported that a tiger shark, *Galeocerdo cuvier*, approximately nine feet in length had been seen in the vicinity. According to the Rogers, the size of the bite suggests a shark of the same size was involved in this incident. Photographs of the wound will confirm the species involved.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Richard D. Weeks, Global Shark Accident File

SOURCES: Otago Daily Times, Tuesday June 17, 1997, page 2; Otago Daily Times, Wednesday June 18, 1997, front page; Otago Daily Times, Thursday June 19, 1997, page 3 (Source: Dunedin Public Library); GSAF Questionnaire completed by John & Liz Rogers, received July 20, 2005; <http://nzals.govt.nz/our-stories/amputees-stories/liz-rogers-story/>