

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 1998.01.14 / SA-0425

DATE: Wednesday January 14, 1998

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Indian Ocean at Ponta do Ouro, southern Mozambique.

NAME: Roberto Zornada

DESCRIPTION: The surfer, a 23-year-old male, was wearing a wetsuit. It is not known if he had any injuries prior to the incident.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: Overcast and drizzling.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, January 12, 1998

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was turbulent, and the water was discolored (brown).

ENVIRONMENT: Through the preceding week, large fish were observed in the waves, feeding on baitfish.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: Seven metres

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT

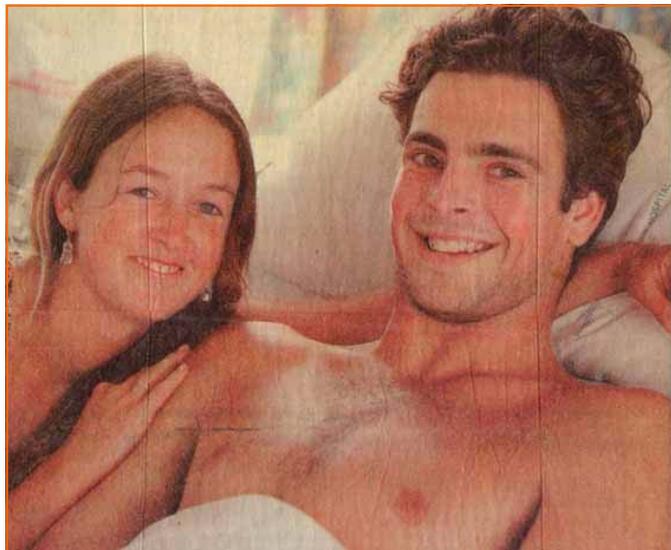
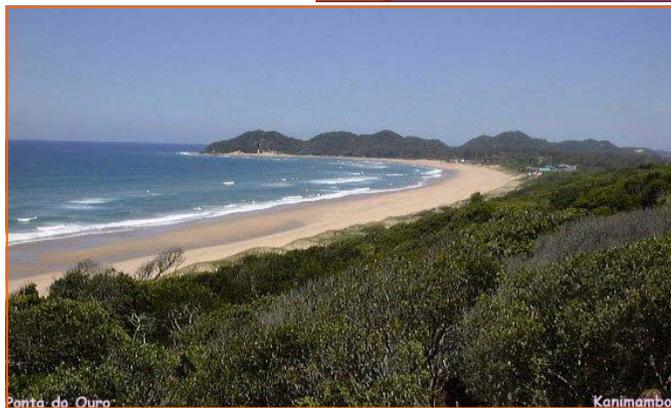
SITE: One metre

TIME: 13h15

NARRATIVE: Roberto Zornada was surfing at the point which forms part of the bay at Ponta do Ouro. He was lying prone on his board and paddling shorewards when the shark bit his right leg.

INJURY: Dr. Grant Golombick, who was on the beach at the time of the incident, described the surfer's injuries as follows: "The bite mark on the right leg had a diameter of approximately 20 centimetres. There were puncture marks and longitudinal lacerations similar to those caused when slipping on coral. There was no major arterial bleeding and the injury could not be classified as serious or life-threatening. The victim was not in shock and was completely lucid."

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: According to press or television reports, the surfer was treated at Manguzi Hospital, then



SHARK VICTIM: Roberto Zornada, with his companion Jody Baker, is determined to return to his favourite sport. Picture: ANTHONY McMILLAN

airlifted to Richards Bay, South Africa. From there, he was transferred to St. Augustine's Hospital in Durban. Some 85 sutures were required to repair his injuries.

SPECIES: Based on the nature and extent of the surfer's primary injuries, a number of eyewitnesses to the event were of the opinion that the species most likely to be responsible for the injury was either a small blackfin or dusky shark, and the bite was accidental and not "premeditated.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Andrew Gifford, Shark Research Institute-South Africa

South African surfer survives Mozambique shark attack

DURBAN -- A top Durban surfer is lucky to be alive after being attacked by a shark at Ponta do Ouro on the southern Mozambican coast.

Mr Roberto Zornada, 24, was in a "satisfactory" condition in the Bay Hospital yesterday with bite wounds on both legs.

He was airlifted from Manguzi Hospital to Richards Bay, where he underwent surgery on Wednesday night.

His father, Mr Joe Zornada, said his son had pulled his right leg out of the shark's mouth, tearing muscles, flesh and ligaments.

"He told me he was paddling in a metre of water about seven metres from the shore when the attack happened. He managed only to glance at the shark and cannot say for certain what type it was.

"It was about two metres long," Mr Zornada said. "His right leg is pretty bad and has 85 stitches."

Mr Zornada said Roberto received first aid on the beach before he was driven in a 4x4 to Manguzi. "It was a long and obviously very painful journey. They started operating on him in Richards Bay at 8pm," he said.

SOURCE: Daily Dispatch, Friday, January 16, 1998,
<http://www.dispatch.co.za/1998/01/16/PAGE1.HTM>

Shark attack victim tells of miracle escape

Survivor
18.01.98

FIDEL MBHELE

Durban surfer Roberto Zornada, 23, who was attacked by a tiger shark at Ponta do Ouro in Mozambique on Wednesday, has made a full recovery and expects to be discharged from hospital today.

The shark – identified by experts as a tiger shark – tore muscles, ligaments and flesh on both Roberto's legs, with severe damage to his right leg, which had tendons torn and the ankle bones crushed. Speaking yesterday from his bed in the orthopedic ward at St Augustine's hospital, Zornada said he was lucky to be alive.

He said he was eight metres out and paddling to the shore when the shark attacked.

Dragged under

"I felt my legs being dragged under, turned on the board and saw the shark," he said. "I pulled my leg from its mouth. The shark went under but I knew that he would return so I again started paddling before it could take a second bite.

"I felt the flesh around my right leg flapping but did not know if my foot had been taken off."

There were few people on the beach that day and almost all the surfers had returned to the shore. Zornada made it to the shore, then to a nearby campsite where a group of Pongola farmers on a fishing trip treated his injuries.

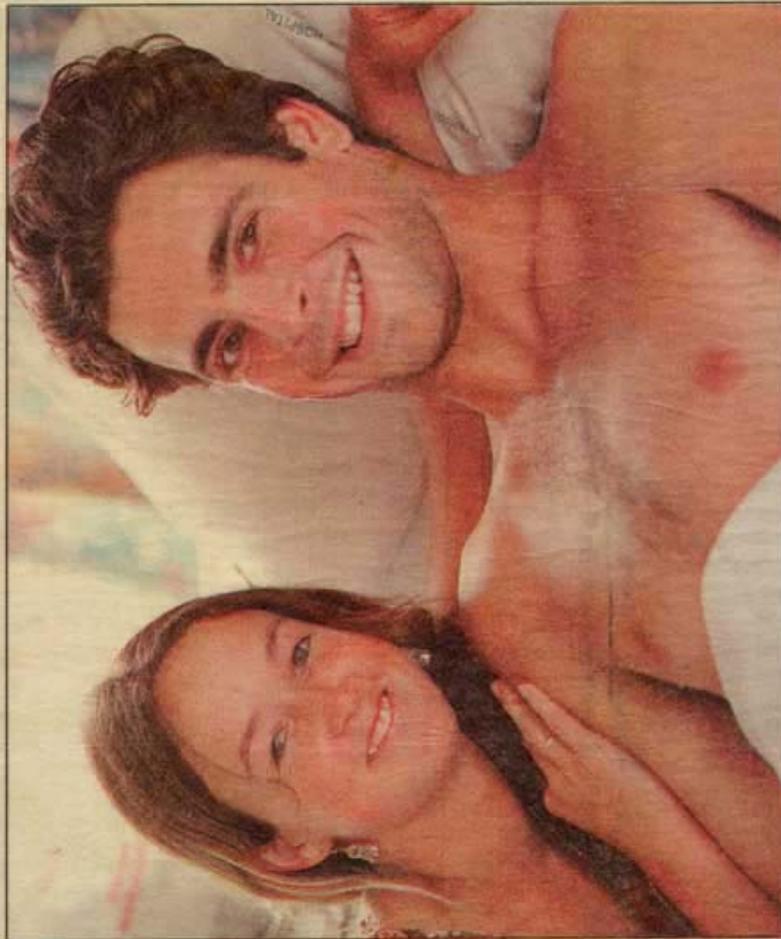
Taped together

"The skin and bone around my ankles were taped together with a bandage," he said.

The Pongola group arranged for Zornada to be taken across the border to Manguzi clinic. At the clinic he refused stitches as he feared that some of the bones might be broken.

A medical rescue helicopter airlifted him to Richards Bay hospital seven hours later. On Friday he was transferred to St Augustine's in Durban.

Determined to return to his favourite sport, he said, "I have been surfing and diving for close to 12 years and I know what the sea is like. A shark attack can happen anytime to any surfer, one just has to have respect for the sharks."



SHARK VICTIM: Roberto Zornada, with his companion Jody Baker, is determined to return to his favourite sport. Picture: ANTHONY McMILLAN