

ACTIVITY: Boogie Boarding
CASE: GSAF 1999.07.15 / SA-436
DATE: Thursday July 15, 1999
LOCATION: The attack took place in South Africa, in the Western Cape Province at Buffels Bay, nine kilometres [5.6 miles] south of Knysna Heads and 97 kilometres north of Mossel Bay.
34°04'S, 22°59'E



Buffels Bay

NAME: Hercules Pretorius

DESCRIPTION: The surfer was a 15-year-old male from Knysna. Strong and unusually sturdy for his age, the red-haired, freckle-faced youth was a brilliant student who also loved the outdoor life. As well as being a boogie-board fanatic, he was a gifted rugby centre, thought by many as good enough to some day don a Springbok jersey. His uncle, Knysna fire chief Dries Pretorius, recalls how Hercules played for Southwestern Districts in last year's Craven Week at Stellenbosch and how his success was a source of great pride to his father. "My brother Harry never missed a game or a practice," Dries says. "He absolutely lived for his son. Now Harry, who owns an abattoir in Knysna, is left only with memories to share with wife Lizette and daughter Luzydha, as they try to come to terms with their loss."

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: Air temperatures ranged from 6°C to 20°C, humidity was 67%, the barometer was 1012,1 hpa (rising), the wind was from the southwest with 20 knot gusts.

MOON PHASE: Waxing Crescent, 7% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. New Moon, July 13, 1999.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea surface temperature was 16°C and the attack took place at low tide.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 50 metres

TIME: 11h15

NARRATIVE: Hercules Pretorius was surfing with pals Zack Mells and Marius van der Mescht who tells what he witnessed:

"It was low tide the whole time, and there were big waves. I started getting cramps in my legs and I left the water. Then I saw Zack come out of the water and throw his board on the beach. I saw the wave red with blood. Hercules was floating on his stomach on his board and Zack and I rushed in to help him, but he was looking funny and his eyes were rolling in his head. We were scared there were more sharks in the area, but we got him out. We tried to get him to say something but he never did. There was a loose piece at the edge of his board. He had pulled himself back on to it after the attack."

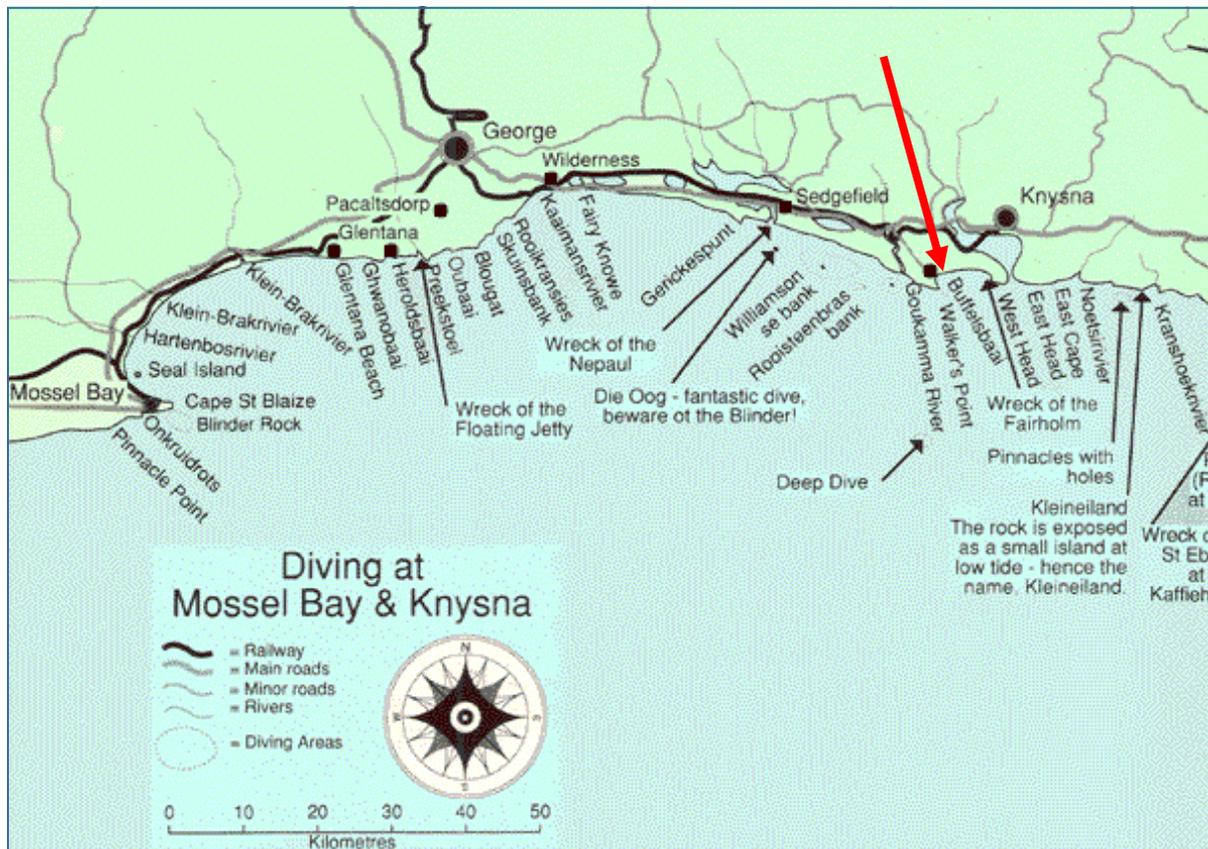
INJURY: The shark bit the surfer's right side.

DAMAGE TO SURFBOARD: It was damaged by the shark but the extent of damage is unknown.

FIRST AID: Within seconds, a crowd had gathered on the beach. When ambulance

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supervisor Esra Marellach arrived on the scene 10 to 12 minutes after the attack the boy was dead; the boy died before medical assistance arrived according to Captain Eddie Cronjie, a police spokesman.



THE TIMES, FRIDAY, JULY 16, 1999 3

Shark kills surfing teenager

A shark killed a South African teenager surfing at the east coast holiday resort town of Knysna yesterday, police said.

Hercules Pretorius, 14, was about 50 metres from the shore surfing with his friend Zaack Mells when he was attacked, Captain Michelle Lesch told Reuters.

"It was a sizeable bite between his hip and ribs on the right hand side. It was big. There is nothing left there," Lesch said.