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Bear shot by hunter bites back, dies

HARRISBURG, Pennsylvania (AP) -- A black bear bit and clawed a hunter who had just shot it four times in what game authorities said appeared to be a first for the state.

Samuel H. Beauchamp, 47, said he was approaching the downed 320-pound bear in Rothrock State Forest in central Pennsylvania on Monday, the first day of bear-hunting season, when it came after him.

Beauchamp, of nearby Newville, had just shot the bear with a .444-caliber rifle and was within 15 feet of it. He turned to run, but the bear put a claw around his hip and bit him twice, once in each thigh, before dying.

"The bear wasn't attacking 100 percent. I mean really, it was dead on its feet when it came up. If it would have been 100 percent I wouldn't have been standing there," Beauchamp said Friday.

Other hunters heard a growl and came to Beauchamp's aid.

"It was shock at first. It's like he came alive, like 'boom.' I guess he growled, like the other people heard. That motivated me to turn around and start running away," he said.

Game commission bear biologist Mark Ternent said the attack was the first case known to state officials in which a bear had attacked a hunter who had just shot it and was attempting to recover it.

Beauchamp was released from the hospital after about two hours of treatment. One bite went down to the bone.

"I didn't feel any pain after it happened," he said Friday. "I'm a little sore now."

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