

ACTIVITY: Swimming (or Scuba diving)
CASE: [GSAF 1954.12.11](#)
DATE: Saturday December 11, 1954
LOCATION: Point Lonsdale, Victoria, Australia.

NAME: Lawrence David Burns
DESCRIPTION: He was a 23-year-old male from Strathmore.

BACKGROUND
MOON PHASE: Full Moon, December 10, 1954
DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 300 yards.
TIME: Morning. After 11h00

NARRATIVE: He was attending a weekend outing of the Victorian Undersea Fishing Association. He was seen thrashing the water. Then, as he was swimming towards the beach, he disappeared beneath the surface.

INJURY: Fatal.

SPECIES: Shark involvement prior to death was strongly suspected, but was not officially confirmed because his body was not recovered.

SOURCE: The Sydney Morning Herald, Monday December 13, 1954, page 1; Cairns Post, Friday December 17, 1954, page 7

Man Believed Drowned After Shark Attack

MELBOURNE, Sunday.
—A man is believed to have been drowned after having been attacked by a shark off Point Lonsdale on Saturday morning.

The man, Lawrence David Burns, 23, single, wood machinist, of Strathmore, a Melbourne suburb, was attending a week-end outing of the Victorian Under-sea Fishing Association.

Soldiers at Point Lonsdale Army camp said they saw Burns enter the water off the Queenscliff-point, Lonsdale Bight, about 11 a.m., in ordinary bathing togs.

They later saw Burns thrashing the water about 300 yards from shore. He swam towards the beach, but when
The body has not been recovered.

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The first tragedy among aqua-lung divers has hit Melbourne hard. Melbourne, in a half-fearful, half-superior way prides itself on its freedom from sharks.

Now tragedy has struck. Lawrence Burns (23), a resident of an outer suburb, on a lone diving expedition, has disappeared off Point Lonsdale near the entrance to Port Phillip Bay. He is reported to have been seen struggling and thrashing the water, 300 yards off-shore. He is believed to have been a shark victim.

Five of his comrades, all aqua-lung divers, are searching for his body.

Tragedy it may be, but there is something splendid in the adventurousness of such young men, and in the comradeship that leads to his friends disregarding all danger in the search.

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*Cairns Post,
Friday December 17, 1954, page 7*



Point Lonsdale beach, Barwon Heads in the distance

This camera picks up the view of Bass Strait and Point Lonsdale beach. At night, the lights of Barwon Heads (left) and Ocean Grove (right) may be seen. The image updates frequently.