

ACTIVITY: Swimming, pushing an oar

CASE: [GSAF 1959.12.19.b](#)

DATE: Saturday December 19, 1959

LOCATION: The incident took place off Wynnum in Moreton Bay near Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. *28°7S, 153°E*

NAME: Stanley Arthur Mullen

DESCRIPTION: He was a 29-year-male from North Wynnum

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, December 15, 1959

WEATHER: Heavy seas

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: A mile and a half

TIME: 06h00

NARRATIVE: Stanley Mullens and Raphael Bishop were on a crabbing in a dinghy. Mullens lost an oar and dived overboard to retrieve it. As he was pushing the oar and swimming back to the dinghy, he screamed and disappeared beneath the surface without a struggle. As no shark had been seen at the time of the tragedy, it had been speculated that his death might have been due to cramp or heart failure.

INJURY: Fatal. Mullens' body was found on December 21 close to where he had disappeared by Desmond Birks, a professional fisherman. Mullens' arm had been severed and there were wounds on his body. A doctor reported to Wynnum Police that Mullens had been attacked by a shark.

SPECIES: It was thought that Mullens was killed by one or more bull sharks.

SOURCES: Terry Mullens (daughter); Gilbert P. Whitley, Australian Museum, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia; Courier-Mail, October 2, 1992, page 2.

Note: All sources list the date of the incident as December 19, 1959. The exception is Mullen's daughter who writes that her father died on December 29, 1959.



Man torn by a shark-pack

From Our Correspondent
Canberra, Monday.

The body of a man who dived overboard in Moreton Bay, Brisbane on Saturday to recover a lost oar was found today, badly torn by sharks.

He was Stanley Mullens, 29, father of five children.

A man in the boat said Mr. Mullens screamed as he was swimming back with the oar.

Fishermen said it looked as if the body had been ravaged by not one, but a pack of sharks.