

ACTIVITY: Spearfishing
CASE: GSAF 1962.12.09
DATE: Sunday December 9, 1962
LOCATION: Carrickalinga, South Australia.

NAME: Geoffrey Martin Corner
DESCRIPTION: He was a 16-year-old male and the South Australian junior spearfishing champion.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was clear, the day was warm and a wind had come up.

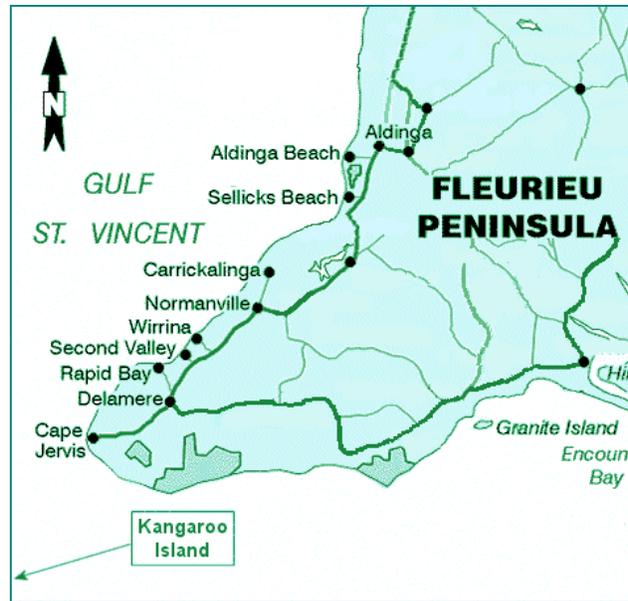
MOON PHASE: First Quarter, December 5, 1962

SEA CONDITIONS: Underwater visibility was limited, and the water was described as "dirty".

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 180 metres

DEPTH OF WATER: Eight metres

TIME: 14h30



NARRATIVE: Geoff Corner and Allen Phillips were taking part in the Underwater Skin Divers and Fishermen's Association's South Australia competition at Carrickalinga Head, some 22 kilometres south of Aldinga where Brian Rodger was bitten the previous year (GSAF 1961.03.12). All of the divers had exited the water except for Corner and Phillips. The pair were swimming with a surf ski. Phillips was looking for crayfish when he saw a disturbance in the water and thought Corner had speared a large fish. When he saw the tail of the shark break the surface, he assumed the shark was after Corner's catch, until he saw a large cloud of blood in the water. Phillips swam to the surf ski, then paddled to Corner. He tried to pull Corner on to the ski but the shark was still gripping Corner's leg. The shark tugged Corner from Phillips' grasp and pulled him below the surface under the ski. Then Corner surfaced on the other side of the ski, "I caught him by the shoulders," said Phillips. "The shark still refused to let go, and I banged it with the paddles. Hard. Then for no especial reason it released its grip and just lay on the surface watching us."

Phillips again tried to pull Corner onto the ski, but he was apparently dead. Phillips cut the fish off the float and threw them over to distract the shark, but the shark appeared to take no notice of them and kept watching the two spearfishermen. Corner's handspear was stuck in his 'good' leg and Phillips jerked it free and prodded the shark with it, but the shark didn't appear to notice. Unable to get Corner onto the ski, Phillips hooked one leg round his body and paddled towards shore, the shark following.

Murray Bampton, a member of the Knights of Neptune Underwater Club, had just brought another spearfisherman in shore. He paddled over on his ski and struck the shark with his paddle to hold it off while Phillips paddled towards the beach. When they were in a few feet of water, two women carried Corner on the ski to the shore. A nurse who was on the beach, Heather Jones, raced over to assist, but the boy could not be revived. Dr. R.J. de N. Souter who was summoned to the beach, said Corner had probably died within 30 seconds of

being bitten.

INJURY: Fatal. His right leg was severely bitten from mid-thigh to calf, and his left leg was gashed.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Phillips saw the shark clearly and identified it as a white shark 4.25 metres [14'] in length.

SOURCES: Jon Wadrop, witness; David Baldrige, page 197; Hugh Edwards, page 63; Alex MacCormick, pages 91-93; Alan Sharpe, page 124