



ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: **GSAF 1980.11.18**

DATE: Tuesday November 18, 1980

LOCATION: The incident took place at Lancelin, Western Australia

NAME: Glen Bohan

DESCRIPTION: The swimmer, a 26-year-old male, is a specialist navy diver, an Able Seaman stationed on *HMAS Stirling* at Garden Island.



BACKGROUND

ENVIRONMENT: Lancelin, an hour's drive from Perth, is nestled between a large bay with two large rock islands and extensive sand dunes. Its gusty afternoon seabreezes provide superb windsurfing conditions and it is known for its rock lobster fishing.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 60 metres

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: Chest-deep

NARRATIVE: Glen Bohan was swimming with navy friends, Bill Papp and Wayne McGrath. They were cooling off after their regular run along the beach.

"We waded out on a sand bank into water about chest deep and I dived into the white water of a wave which had just broken. Then it hit me. It was pretty solid. It stood me up, then a wave crashed down, knocking me off my feet. When I surfaced I knew something was wrong. I looked down and there was blood streaming from my shoulder."

Although feeling no immediate pain, Glen realized he had been bitten by a large shark. Fearing the shark might return, he called out to his friends for them to get out of the water. Neither Glen or either of his friends had seen the shark. He was able to get back to beach by himself.

INJURY: He was bitten on his right shoulder. There were also puncture wounds across his chest and deep cuts and slashes on his back.

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FIRST AID: "Pappy helped me back on the shore and Wayne ran up ahead to our post near the beach to alert them," said Glen. "We didn't have far to go and there was a first aid officer on hand to help me while they rang for the helicopter." He was flown by RAAF helicopter to Perth city and transferred by ambulance to Royal Perth Hospital.

TREATMENT: His wounds required more than 50 stitches to repair.

COMMENT: Later in recounting, Glen was able to very clearly analyze the attack:

"I would say that the shark was probably feeding in the shallows when I dived right into its path. It would have been a million to one shot and the shark must have got as big shock as me."

NOTE: Nineteen years later, after a long break from diving, Glen decided to take a dive with sharks. Together with a group of friends, and a Scuba World instructor, he enjoyed the experience of diving where people and sharks can meet in a neutral environment. In the Underwater World aquarium all of the confusing elements of a low visibility encounter are eliminated. People can come into very close contact with these most interesting of creatures as well as a large variety of other marine life.

"At first the idea of a shark dive seemed just plain dumb. But as I thought about it I came to realize that it would be a challenge that I was looking forward to. The pre-dive instruction was very professional and helped settle the butterflies. The dive was a great experience and I might just start diving again."

SOURCES: <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~scubawld/glen.htm>
A. Sharpe, pages 133-134; et al