

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 1988.06.01

DATE: Wednesday June 1, 1988

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean next to the Main Street Pier at Daytona Beach, Volusia County, Florida, USA.

29.2°N, 81.0°W

NAME: Etienne DeCora

DESCRIPTION: He is a 25-year-old male from Daytona Beach, a former Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University student. He was wearing bright multi-colored surfing shorts – no wetsuit, shirt or leash.

SURFBOARD: He was using a 6'4" longboard made by Town and County Hawaii. The board was white with a black and white logo on the undersurface.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a clear, sunny day.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon

SEA CONDITIONS: Small waves (one to three feet), clean surf, sea surface temperature was approximately 85°F.

DEPTH OF WATER: Three to six feet

TIME: 08h57

NARRATIVE: Etienne DeCora was surfing north of the Main Street Pier with three companions: John Ellis, Tim Tice and Paul Tice. The three surfers were offshore waiting for waves. DeCora was paddling with his foot dangling from his surfboard when a shark apparently grabbed his foot. He did not see the shark but said "I felt the teeth in my foot and ankle and knew it was a shark." Lifeguards helped him to shore.

In a report submitted to Shark Attack Survivors, DeCora said the accident took place at 08h00. He writes: "I rode a wave in and was paddling back out. The shark was spotted on the other side of the pier and took an aggressive immediate U-turn and attacked me, (According to some of my friends fishing on the pier). My friends were yelling but I couldn't hear them in the surf. I never saw it coming until it hit me. The shark hit me at a high rate of speed with great force. I was grabbed by the foot and the shark shook its head. The shark then went to bite again and I was able to remove my foot. At this point I was turned around on my surfboard. The shark came at me again and I hit it on the snout and it went away. I then paddled in with my foot in the air."

INJURY: There were cuts to the surfer's right foot and ankle that appeared to have been caused by a shark, according to Tom Renick, the Beach safety chief. There was no major



damage.

FIRST AID: “Luckily the lifeguards were running drills that morning and were on hand to dress the wounds,” writes DeCora.

TREATMENT: The surfer was taken to the Halifax Medical Center. “I had two operations and 275 stitches to repair tendon damage,” said DeCora. “It took about six months to get back to normal. I continued surfing and have surfed the same spot many times since. My guess would be that the attack was a territorial attack not mistaken identity because of the aggressive U turn and lack of baitfish.”

SPECIES INVOLVED: It was thought the incident involved a shark six to eight feet in length. The surfer believes he was bitten by a bull shark.

SOURCES: Orlando Sentinel, June 2, 1988, page B.2. and June 3, 1998, page D.2; SharkAttackSurvivors.com.