

ACTIVITY: Diving

CASE: **GSFAF 2002.12.21**

DATE: Saturday December 21, 2002

LOCATION: The incident took place on the wreck of the *St. Paul*, three miles northeast of Moreton, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
27 00.25S, 153 29.83E

NAME: Jai Hennessey

DESCRIPTION: The diver, a 26-year-old male, was wearing swimmers, wetsuit and scuba gear. He is from Advancetown, Queensland.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, December 20, 2002

SEA CONDITIONS: Water temperature on the site ranges from 18° to 27°C, and underwater visibility averages 20 metres.

ENVIRONMENT: The diver was on the wreck of the French steamship *St. Paul* which sank in 1919 after hitting Smith's Rock. The wreck has disintegrated and little remains today except her twin boilers and engines. The wreck lies on a sandy bottom and is visited by a number of large pelagic species.

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: 42 metres

NARRATIVE: "I got down to the bottom and there were a few sharks around and this one was coming straight towards me and had a go at me," said Hennessey. "He came at me four or five times. I slapped the shark away and kicked it a few times."

"I pushed it away again and it still came back, grabbing on to my vest this time. Then it came up behind me and latched on," he said, its small fang-like teeth ripping through his swimsuit and wetsuit. He said he couldn't believe the creature had attacked him because wobbegongs were usually very placid unless they were provoked. "You don't usually see them that deep either," he said. "It was really bizarre."

INJURY: The diver's crotch was bitten.

TREATMENT: Six stitches were needed to repair the wounds.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The incident involved a wobbegong shark about a metre in length.

SOURCE: GCOonline.com

NOTE: Three weeks before this incident Jai was scuba diving when a two-metre wobbegong latched onto the edge of his swimfin. "I don't know why it's happened twice in such a short period," he said. "Maybe it's just a frequency I give out."

On the same week-end (12/21/2002), a diver at a popular Sydney shore diving site some 1100 kms south of Brisbane was also seized in the crotch by a wobbegong. Although suffering no permanent damage to vital portions of his anatomy, the diver required nine stitches to the affected area.



Bite mark in Jai Hennessey's wetsuit