

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 2007.01.05

DATE: Friday January 5, 2007

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean off the Pacific Missile Range Facility at Major's Bay, just north of Kekaha on Kaua'i, Hawaii, USA.
21°58'18"N, 159°42'59"W

NAME: Rich Reed

DESCRIPTION: The surfer is a 24-year-old male from Waimea.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: Lihue reported visibility of 10 miles [16.1 km] and a few clouds at 2400 feet. The air temperature was 78°F, dew point 68°F [20°C], humidity 71%, sea level pressure 30.04 inches [1017 hPa] (falling), and wind was from the northeast at 12 mph [18 km/h].

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 94% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated.

SEA CONDITIONS: At 10h00, Lihue reported wind waves of nine feet. The northwest swell was three feet, east swell was 22 feet, and there were scattered showers throughout the day. A Small Craft Advisory was issued through Saturday night.

ENVIRONMENT: Majors Bay is an exposed beach and point break that can work at any time of the year. Ideal winds are from the northeast. Most of the surf here comes from ground swells and the best swell direction is from the south. The beach breaks offer right-handers and are sometimes crowded. Surfers and swimmers are cautioned to watch out for dangerous rips. In recent weeks, due to sightings of sharks at Kekaha and Salt Pond Beach Park, the county had closed access to those beaches.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 50 yards

DEPTH OF WATER: Five to six feet

TIME: 10h15

NARRATIVE: Missile range information officer Tom Clements said that the surfer had a permit for surfing in the waters fronting the base, and was surfing alone at a break known as



This 13-inch-wide chunk of surfboard floated onto the beach on Kauai off the Pacific Missile Range Facility shortly after the surfer left the facility.



Photos courtesy of Tom Clements/ Pacific Missile Range Facility.

Housings, a Westside surf break, when the shark took a piece out of the front of his board. The surfer immediately left the water, then drove away in his vehicle before security personnel were alerted. The man talked to a resident of the base before leaving, and she reported the incident to base officials, Clements said. Security personnel then closed the beach for 24 hours, standard procedure when a shark has been sighted.

After the man left, officials said the chunk of board washed up on the beach.

Kauai staff members of the Department of Land and Natural Resources interviewed the man at his home shortly after the incident, said Tarey Low, the DLNR Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement Kauai branch chief.

INJURY: The surfer, although shaken, was not injured.

DAMAGE TO SURFBOARD: The shark removed a chunk from the front of the surfer's board. The fragment of the surfer's board that washed ashore consisted of a semi-circle with ragged edges and measured about 13 inches wide and 6 inches deep from the board rim to the middle of the bite.

SPECIES: According to the surfer, the shark was between six and eight feet in length. The slanted closely-spaced tooth impressions in the fragment of surfboard that washed ashore suggest the incident involved a tiger shark eight to 10 feet in length.

SOURCES: Jan TenBruggencate, Honolulu Advertiser Kaua'i Bureau, January 5, 2007, <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2007/Jan/05/br/br0128946375.html>, and <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070106/NEWS0102/701060334/1004/NEWS>

Tom Finnegan, Honolulu Star Bulletin, January 6, 2007
<http://starbulletin.com/2007/01/06/news/story01.html>

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<http://www.kgmb9.com/kgmb/display.cfm?storyID=10127>

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