

ACTIVITY: Shipwreck

CASE: [GSAF 1991.07.18](#)

DATE: Thursday July 18, 1991

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Gulf of Mexico off Crystal River, Florida, USA.

NAME: Larry Myers

DESCRIPTION: He is a 42-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waxing Crescent, 50% of the Moon was illuminated Full Moon, July 26, 1991.

NARRATIVE: Larry Myers, and 46-year-old Dennis Hampton, both of Crystal River, left on Monday (July 15, 1991) to go grouper fishing on the wooden vessel *Regina*. The boat was already taking on water when they set sail, but the men thought the pumps could handle the flow.

On Wednesday, with 10 feet of water in the boat, they radioed a distress signal. A hand-held flare set the boat on fire and it eventually burned to the water line. Before the boat sank, the two men climbed onto a makeshift raft consisting of three 200-quart Gott coolers lashed together. The coolers were lashed together but quickly filled with water and barely bobbed above the surface, providing barely enough buoyancy to keep them afloat.

The two men survived on peanut butter, some Pepsi and some water they salvaged as the boat was sinking. "We weren't really hungry. We made each other eat peanut butter," said Hampton. They rationed their water and tipped their heads back to drink in the rain when storms passed over. "Two sips in the morning and two in the evening," Hampton said.

On Thursday, as Myers left his cooler to retrieve a life vest that had floated about 10 feet away, he was bitten by a shark. "I had just made my turn when the shark bit me," he said. "I yelled 'Shark!' and I swam my ass off back to the raft." Myers said he tried to push the shark away after the attack. "It felt big enough for me. I never saw that shark and hope to never see him again," Myers said. "I don't know how much I was bleeding because I was afraid to take my pants off."

Several boats passed nearby but did not see the shipwrecked men in the choppy seas. They were rescued on Sunday afternoon about 150 miles from Crystal River by a pleasure boater who spotted their raft. The two men were suffering from exposure and dehydration.

INJURY: Myers was bitten on his lower right abdomen and groin. He sustained two deep puncture wounds, each about a centimetre in diameter and a centimeter deep, reported Dr. Howard Rodenberg.

TREATMENT: Both Myers and Hampton were taken to Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Florida.

SPECIES INVOLVED: It was suggested that Myers may have been bitten by a blacktip

shark about six feet in length.

SOURCES: Orlando Sentinel, July 23, 1991, page A1; Seattle Post-Intelligencer, July 23, 1991, page A3; Stars and Stripes, July 24, 1991, page 7

Pair rescued after floating for days in ice chests

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Two fishermen who survived five days sitting in ice chests they had fashioned into a raft in the Gulf of Mexico said Monday that they never gave up hope even when a shark took a bite out of one of them.

Larry Myers, 42, and Dennis Hampton, 46, were rescued Sunday when a boater discovered them.

Both were in stable condition at a Gainesville hospital, despite having suffered exposure and dehydration from floating in 200-quart coolers since early Wednesday morning.

"For people who had been drifting on

the coolers, they looked better than we expected them to," said Dr. Howard Rodenberg, the first doctor to see them when they were flown to a Gainesville hospital.

Myers was recovering from the shark bite on his lower right abdomen and groin area.

He said he was attacked Thursday, when he left his cooler to retrieve a life vest that had floated about 10 feet away.

"I had just made my turn when the shark bit me," Myers said. "I yelled, 'Shark!' and I swam my ass off back to the raft."

George Burgess, a shark expert at the University of Florida, said the bite wounds indicated that Myers had been attacked by a 6-foot-long black tip shark, which is primarily a fish eater.

"He was lucky there was no serious tissue loss," said Burgess, theorizing that the shark may have mistaken Myers' shiny belt buckle for a fish.

Myers said he tried to push the shark away after the attack, adding, "I don't know how much I was bleeding because I was afraid to take my pants off."

Their ordeal began two days after they went fishing on the wooden vessel Regi-

na. It was already raking on water when they set sail, but the men thought the pumps could handle the flow.

On Wednesday, with 10 feet of water in the boat, they radioed a distress signal. Then a hand-held flare accidentally set the boat on fire.

The two men abandoned the boat and climbed into the coolers. Although they said they never lost hope of being rescued, it was discouraging to see boats passing nearby.

"That would get me all riled," said Hampton, who would scream, "You've got to see us!"