

**ACTIVITY:** Air / Sea Disaster

**CASE:** [GSF 1955.09.23.a](#)

**DATE:** September 23, 1955

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean, 1,000 miles west of Hawaii between Wake and Johnston Islands.

**NAMES:** Robert C. Hightower

**NARRATIVE:** When three of its four engines quit, a Flying Tiger Airline transport plane ditched in the open sea. Onboard were five men: pilot Tony Machale, co-pilot Robert C. Hightower, Warren F. Gin, R.C. Olsen and Dominic Ventresca. Ventresca drowned, and Gin and Olsen died while awaiting rescue. After 43 hours in the water, Hightower and Machale were rescued by the freighter *Stell Advocate*.

**INJURIES:** Hightower was bitten several times by sharks, but survived.

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** Survivors said two species of sharks were involved: oceanic whitetip sharks, *Carcharhinus longimanus*, and another species.

**SOURCES:** Bridgeport Post, Tuesday, September 27, 1955; Letter from Captain Raoul G. Rehrer in letter to G.A. Llano in *Sharks and Survival*, pp. 381-382; V.M. Coppleson (1962), p.257



© Global Shark Accident File, 1991. All rights reserved. This report may not be abridged or reproduced in any form without written permission of the Global Shark Accident File.