

ACTIVITY: Air / Sea Disaster

CASE: [GSF 1955.09.23.b](#)

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: R.C. Olsen

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: Olsen was fatally bitten by a shark while awaiting rescue.

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

