



# 35 Miles from Shore: The Ditching and Rescue of ALM Flight 980

*Emilio Corsetti III*

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On May 2, 1970, a DC-9 jet with 57 passengers and a crew of six departed New York's JFK International Airport en route to the tropical island of St. Maarten. The flight ended four hours and thirty-four minutes later in the shark-infested waters of the Caribbean. It was, and remains, the only open-water ditching of a commercial jet. The subsequent rescue of survivors took nearly three hours and involved the coast guard, navy, and marines. This gripping account of that fateful day recounts what was happening inside the cabin, the cockpit, and the helicopters as the crews struggled against the weather and dwindling daylight to rescue the survivors who have only their life vests and a lone escape chute to keep them afloat.

"Mr. Corsetti left no stone unturned in his detailed book of this accident and the rescue that followed. His description of the aftermath of the crash, the anguish of the survivors after the ditching, brought the reader right into the midst of the action." William Phenn *Readersviews.com*

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