

OUT OF THE BAY, AN AÉROPLANE...

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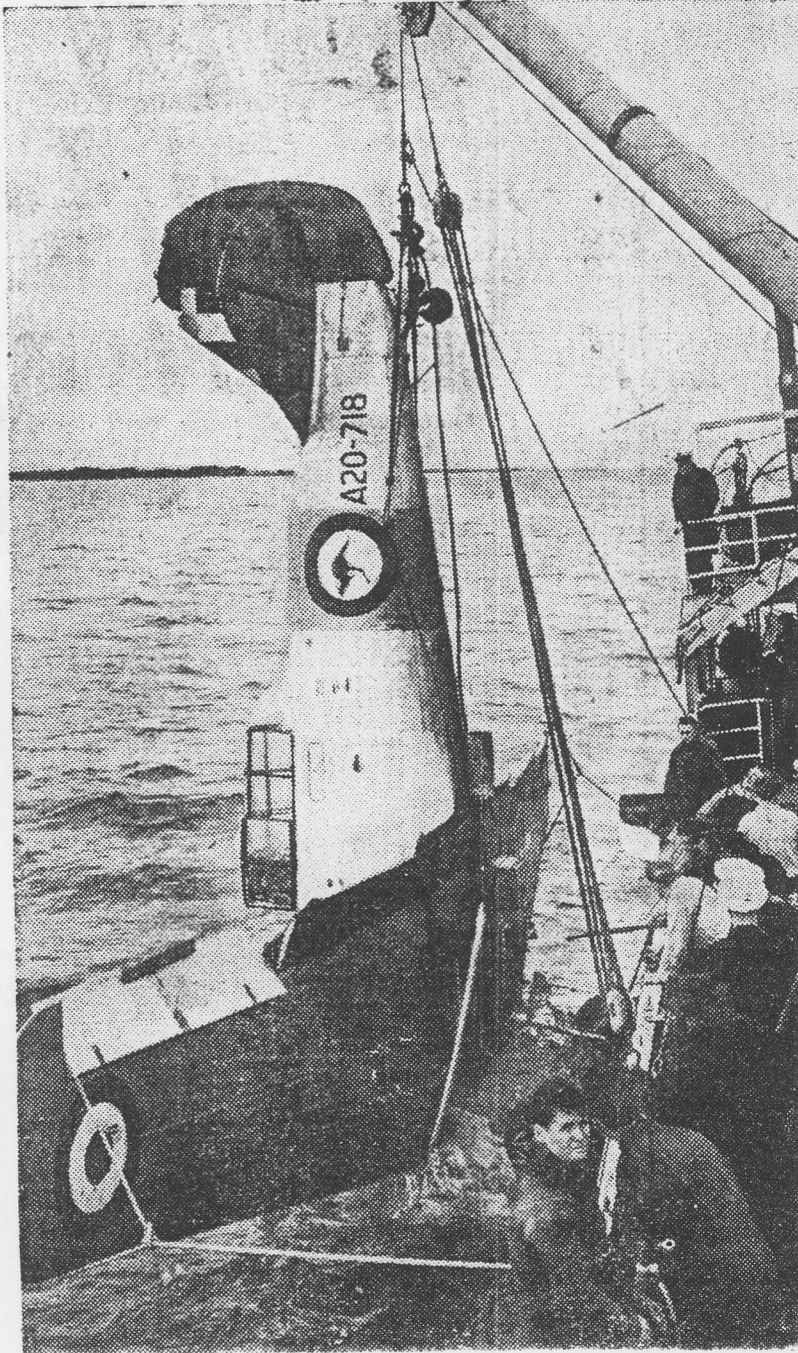
THE R.A.A.F. Wirraway "ditched" in the Bay last Thursday spent last night in a hangar at Point Cook — locked up.

A Navy lighter, H.M.A.S. Lonsdale, salvaged the trainer from 15 ft. of water near the mouth of the Werribee river yesterday.

R.A.A.F. personnel in a crash boat also took part in the operation.

Today experts will examine the Wirraway to determine the cause of Thursday's engine failure, which caused trainee Navy pilot John Robert Franklin, 21, of Wau, New Guinea, to ditch the plane.

The Wirraway took about four hours to salvage.



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AIRMAN DITCHES

A young Fleet Air Arm pilot ditched his Wirraway training plane in the Bay near Werribee today.

The pilot, John Robert Franklin, 21, had radioed that he was in trouble. He was picked up unhurt 15 minutes later by an Air Force crash boat, which found him floating half a mile out from the mouth of the Werribee River.

The plane sank in 15ft. of water a minute after Franklin ditched it.

But he climbed out of the cockpit, inflated his Mae West suit, and swam away from the plane just before it slithered into the sea.

Franklin, who comes from Wau, New Guinea, is a probationary naval airman attending the Applied Flying Training School at Point Cook.

Trainee Pilot "Ditches" in Bay

A 21-year-old Fleet Air Arm trainee pilot had a lucky escape from injury when he was forced to "ditch" his Wirraway aircraft in the Bay yesterday.

The pilot, John Robert Franklin, of Point Cook training station, panicked the aircraft one mile south of the Werribee River after his engine

was sufficient fuel to ensure his return to base.

"I realised I was not close enough to glide in, so I gave the distress call, and ditched," he said. Franklin and another pilot

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Wirraway Salvaged from Bay



● AIR FORCE AND NAVY combined operations yesterday to salvage the Wirraway aircraft which a trainee pilot "ditched" in the sea near the Werribee River last Thursday. Here, the Wirraway is hauled from the water.

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