

AMAZING EPISODE.

PLANE SINKS SHIP.

A Survivor Taken Prisoner.

(From Our Special Representative.)

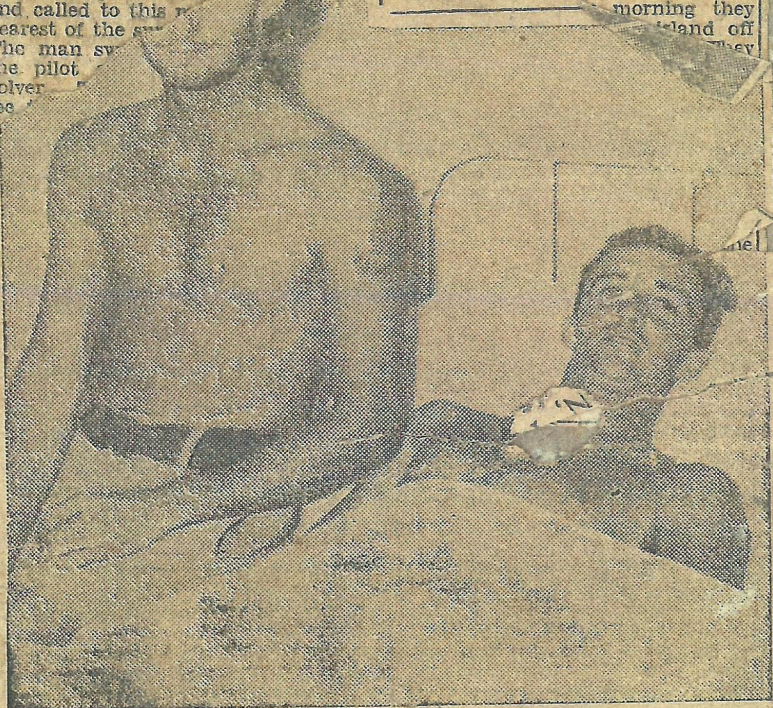
SOMEWHERE IN AUSTRALIA, Feb 26.—An amazing episode, believed to be unique in the war, followed the sinking by an enemy plane of a small naval vessel, HMAS Patricia, near Wessell Island off the north-east tip of Arnhem Land. After sending the ship to the bottom with a direct hit and bombing and machine-gunning the survivors in the water, the enemy plane alighted on the sea and took prisoner one of the personnel of the ship. He was wearing only a pair of shorts and was moreover hard of hearing.

The Japanese pilot clambered out of the cockpit on to one of the rafts and called to this man, the nearest of the survivors. The man swam to the plane and the pilot, who was wearing a revolver, saw him.

Crew Bombed in Water.

While the crew was struggling in the water—most of them were suffering severely from the effects of the explosion—the plane dropped another bomb in among them, killing a rating and 2 native members of the crew. It then circled over the men for half an hour machine-gunning them, but by diving under the water all escaped serious injury. The brutality of the attacks removes the possibility that in taking a prisoner from the water the Japanese were acting from a humanitarian motive.

After the plane had made off the survivors put the more seriously wounded men on a damaged raft which had been blown off the ship and improvised other rafts from flotsam to which they clung from time to time. Wessell Island was visible, but after paddling and swimming for 4 hours the survivors found themselves no nearer to it. At nightfall however a strong current carried them southwards and in the morning they



Survivors from a small Allied ship sunk off the Australian coast after they had been landed at an Australian port. Seated: Ordinary Seaman D. Murray of Mackay, Qld., and in bed Able Seaman M. R.