

D-542061

WORLD NEWS -- 3

"Operation Ditch" -- a realistic re-enactment of an airplane disaster at sea -- finds a transport's fuselage floating in twenty-five feet of water off Norfolk, Virginia.

A raft and survival kit is launched automatically from outboard compartments while volunteers, ranging from children to grandmothers, jump into the inflated raft.

Under typical disaster conditions, the passengers -- some escaping onto the wing -- are providing information on the safest and speediest way to transfer to the rafts.

While the water engulfs the cabin, the rafts are quickly filled in the operation -- sponsored by the Civil Aeronautics Administration, the Armed Forces and the aviation industry.

A grim rehearsal that may pay off some day is survival at sea.