

Obituary.

LATE RICHARD HAMILTON.

After a long period of uncertainty, the fate of the above has been finally established by a telegram received by Mr. F. Hamilton from the Minister of the Army:—Lieut. Richard Hamilton, previously reported missing, believed deceased, is now reported drowned as result of torpedoing of Japanese transport near Nagasaki at midnight on June 24, 1944, whilst prisoner of war."

The late Richard Hamilton, at the time of his death, was 28 years of age. He entered the Guildford Preparatory School in 1925, and completed his education at the Grammar School. During his period at the latter school he was for three years champion athlete, his records for 440 and 880 yards still standing. Richard's school career throughout was outstanding, passing from prefect to house captain to captain of the school in his final year, 1933. He was also a member of the first 18 football team, a member of the first 11 cricket team, captain of both in certain years, and was also captain of the athletic team. After leaving Guildford, Richard entered the firm of Elder, Smith, and Co. for two years, gaining stock and commercial experience. From there he went to York Peninsula, South Australia, for further farming experience. Returning to Warwick Park, he began work under his father, where he continued until the outbreak of the war. Answering the call, Richard was one of the first to join up. His first unit was the 25th Light Horse, transferring later to the 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion, of which he subsequently became intelligence officer. After the usual extensive training, the unit embarked on a famous French ship for the Middle East, where action was seen throughout the Syrian campaign. The 2/3rd was one of the first to be diverted from the Middle East to meet the Japanese menace. As is now well known, the unit was captured in Java, after fierce fighting, on March 9, 1942. Richard

fighting, on March 9, 1942. Richard became camp adjutant, and was respected even by the Japanese for his stubborn refusal to co-operate with them. In the usual interrogation, "Dick" refused to answer any questions. It is interesting to note in this connection that, knowing the location of Richard's home, the Jap. commandant produced a detailed map of the Moora and Dandaragan district, and requested information on the nature of the roads and countryside. On his refusal to give this information, he was threatened with death. He was placed in solitary confinement, but the threat of execution did not materialise, and, after two and a half months, he was released to re-join his unit in the P.O.W. camp, and was surprisingly treated well by the Japs.

Dick remained in the Java camp until a visiting Jap officer picked him out with others to proceed to Japan, others of the camp being sent to Thailand. It was on this trip that the ship was torpedoed within 20 miles of its destination (Nagasaki) by an American submarine. Only about 200 men of the approximately 750 crowded together on that ship escaped. One of the men who escaped who knew Lieut. Hamilton has recently written to Mr. Hamilton, giving further information concerning the ill-fated voyage.

The late Richard Hamilton, member of a well-known and respected Western Australian family, was a young man of great promise. With regret, but also with pride, we publish this brief account of his life.