

MISSING MISSIONARY.

EXECUTED BY JAPANESE.

Sequel to 1943 Sinking.

BRISBANE, Oct. 8.—Mrs. L. H. Kentish of Paddington, Brisbane, was told yesterday for the first time officially that her husband, the Rev. Kentish, chairman of the Methodist Mission in North Australia, was executed by the Japanese at Dobo in the Aru Islands in 1943. Mrs. Kentish is left with her three young children, all under 12 years. Her husband had been in Japanese hands since January, 1943. Mr. Kentish, who was 39, was well known in Queensland Methodist circles, and was minister in a number of circuits including Townsville and Taringa.

The Secretary of the Department of the Interior (Mr. J. A. Carrodus), in an official report to the Rev. T. C. Gribble, assistant-general secretary of the Methodist Overseas Missions, stated the matter had been the subject of continuous investigations. Information was received from a combined army and air force search party that Mr. Kentish was taken aboard a Japanese float plane off Wessel Island on January 22, 1943, following the sinking of the naval supply vessel, H.M.A.S. Patricia Cam.

His movements from that date until April 13, 1943, when he arrived at Dobo, were not known. He was held prisoner at Dobo until May 4, 1943, on which date, it was regretted to state, he was executed there by the Japanese.

The remains of Mr. Kentish have been recovered and handed over to the Australian War Graves Unit. They will be transported to Ambon and be buried in the internees' cemetery.

The message further stated that the name of the Japanese officer who is alleged to have ordered the execution has been ascertained, and steps are being taken with a view to tracing him.

[H.M.A.S. Patricia Cam sank almost immediately when struck by a bomb from a Japanese float plane off Wessel Island on January 22, 1943. She was engaged carrying supplies to isolated missions and coastwatching stations along the coast of Arnhem Land, and Mr. Kentish had taken passage from Goulbourn Island to Yirrkalla near Melville Bay. After the ship sank the Japanese dropped their second

Melville Bay. After the ship sank the Japanese dropped their second bomb amongst the survivors in the water, and then circled round machine-gunning the survivors, most of whom were clinging to a raft. The plane then made off, but returned about 10 minutes later. Seeing the plane returning, and thinking that the pilot intended to resume his strafing, Mr. Kentish and several other men swam away from the raft in order to offer a less effective target. However, the plane alighted and taxi-ed around the circle of wreckage until it came to Mr. Kentish, who, being a strong swimmer, was well out in the open. He was covered with a revolver and ordered to swim to the plane. While the rear gunner re-loaded his machine gun and touched off a few rounds at the other survivors, the other two Japanese in the plane clambered out on the float and dragged Mr. Kentish aboard. He was hustled into the plane which

then took off and disappeared in a northerly direction. After about 12 hours in the water the remaining survivors got ashore on an island of the Cumberland Group just south of Wessel Island, where they remained for a week before being rescued and returned to Darwin. The attack on the Patricia Cam was one of a number of attacks made by Japanese float planes on shipping between Thursday Island and Darwin. The Japanese were believed to have been operating from bases in the Aru and Tenimber Islands.]