

A GALLANT OFFICER.

DEATH OF MR. J. MINCHIN, D.S.O., M.C.

Mr. James Basil Minchin, D.S.O., M.C. who served with distinction in the Great War, died at his home in Beverley on Saturday as a result of war injuries, at the age of 42 years. He is survived by a widow and son.

The late Mr. Minchin enlisted in the 16th Battalion as a private in September, 1914, at the age of 20 years. Although only 5ft. 5in. in height and of slight physique, he was some times mentioned in dispatches and rose to the rank of lieutenant in 1917. He was awarded the M.C. in March, 1918, for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty and for showing fine leadership and courage in a heavy barrage in France. In May of the same year he received the D.S.O., Field-Marshal Earl Haig stating in Army Orders that Lieutenant Minchin had shown conspicuously gallant conduct during an attack. On this occasion he led his men on to the first enemy positions, capturing an officer and 20 men of other ranks, a machine gun and a heavy flame-thrower. Continuing his advance, he captured another machine gun and its crew and then, discovering that his company commander had been killed, assumed command and brilliantly completed the task assigned to the company.

The awarding of a D.S.O. to a lieutenant is rare, there being only one other instance in this State. The distinction was usually reserved for officers of higher rank, and its award to Mr. Minchin was in recognition of a particularly distinguished and gallant action.

Tribute from State R.S.L.

"The death of Lieutenant Basil Minchin removes another figure who was prominent in the fighting history of the 16th Battalion, A.I.F.," said the State Secretary of the Returned Soldiers' League (Mr. D. M. Benson) on Tuesday.

"His record with the A.I.F. is comparable with those of Colonel Murray V.C., Major Percy Black, D.S.O., and many others who helped to place this famous West Australian unit in the forefront of all the Allied front line troops," said Mr. Benson. "His death is also a reminder that the great men of the A.I.F. are rapidly fading out.

"The sympathy of league members with the widow and bereaved family has been conveyed by telegram and we asked Mr. G. C. Curlewis, secretary of the Northam sub-branch, to represent the State executive at the

tary of the Northam sub-branch, to represent the State executive at the funeral.

"Lieutenant Minchin was a member of the Beverley sub branch, and, he and his family were highly respected in the district."