

HOW SECOND LIEUTENANT JEPSON-TURNER WON HIS D.S.O.

June 14 was a hot day in more ways than one for 2nd Lieutenant Richard L. Jepson-Turner of the Rifle Brigade and the crews of his two 6-pdr. anti-tank guns, which formed the little section under his command in the Western Desert.

Having satisfied himself that the new position he had taken up was one likely to give trouble to the advancing Hun, he strolled backward and forward from gun to gun, mopping his brow and perhaps contrasting the barren waste with his beautiful home town, the quaintly named Nether Wallop in Hampshire, England, fresh and green amid the trees and fields.

He was ready for anything that might come. It did - and swiftly. Out of the setting sun, now almost obscured in clouds of Libyan desert dust, came tank after tank in battle formation. The attack was on.

Straight towards the little section rolled the Nazi columns of steel, now belching fire and shell.

Richard Jepson-Turner took post, directing fire and encouraging his boys. So great was the din of bursting shell, and charging tanks that he was shouting at the pitch of his lungs to make his orders heard.

But now the oncoming tanks were getting his range. Shell after shell burst close alongside his guns. A direct hit on one gun blew it askew, killing the entire crew.

Not for one moment did Richard Jepson-Turner hesitate. Laying the gun himself, he loaded and fired it single handed, scoring hits on no fewer than six enemy tanks.

The enemy fire was becoming ever fiercer and more concentrated. A terrific burst of high explosive struck the little gun and its heroic server.

With his right arm shot off and blood pouring from his wound, 2nd Lieutenant Jepson-Turner coolly strode across the intervening space to his remaining gun. One of his men gave first aid to his shattered arm; then, refusing to leave the field, he stood by and continued to direct the fire of his remaining gun.

Under the terrific shelling, the desert sand was spurting into fountains on every side. The single gun and its crew could not survive for long against such a bombardment. At last a well-directed shell found its target. The remaining gun and its gallant crew were silent.

Then and not till then, did 2nd Lieutenant Jepson-Turner consent to leave the field. He walked off calmly to seek medical attention. For his day's work he had won the Distinguished Service Order.