

A WW2 'IMPHAL' MAY 1944 BATTLE FOR 'SHENAM SADDLE' M.M. GROUP WITH A FINE FIGHTING CITATION AWARDED TO RIFLEMAN, 5/6TH RAJPUTANA RIFLES FOR HIS GALLANTRY UNDER HEAVY SMALL ARMS AND MORTAR FIRE DURING WHICH HE INFLECTED MANY CASUALTIES ON THE ENEMY

MILITARY MEDAL, G.V.I.R. '27852 RFN. MOHAMMED. SHARIF. 6 RAJ. RIF.' OFFICIALLY ENGRAVED NAMING; 1939-45 STAR; BURMA STAR; WAR MEDAL 1939-45; INDIA SERVICE MEDAL

M.M. *London Gazette* 31 August 1944. The original Recommendation for an immediate award states:

'On the night of 23/24 May 1944 the Jap made a very strong attack upon a position in Palel-Tamu Road, which was held by "A" and "B" Companies of 5/6 Rajputana Rifles. No 10 Platoon's position, which was between "A" Company and the remaining 2 platoons of "B" Company was over run and occupied by about 200 Japs, and "A" Company H.Q was left open and unprotected. Under heavy fire from mortars and light machine guns, No 27852 Rifleman Mohammed Sharif and No 17206 Rifleman Zaman Ali took up a position between Company H.Q and the enemy. Their position was in the open and there was no kind of shelter anywhere near them. Throughout the night under continuous heavy mortar and small arms fire they maintained their position inflicting many casualties on the enemy. By his courage and determination, Rifleman Mohammed Sharif successfully held off the enemy, inflicted many casualties and gave him the impression that Company H.Q was heavily defended.'

Rifleman Mohammed Sharif served with 5th (Napier's) Battalion, 6th Rajputana Rifles during the Second War. The battalion formed part of the 49th Indian Infantry Brigade from November 1941 until the end of the War.

"On May 7th, 1942 the 5/6 Rajputana Rifles as part of 49th brigade, was ordered to Imphal and the battalion began to arrive in the Palel area from May 11th. The brigade was ordered to block the minor approaches north and south. The battalion was sent to hold the route through Litan. One company was sent to Ukhrul but was later relieved by a company of the 3/10th Gurkha Rifles. At the end of June 1942, the 49th Brigade was located at Palel with the battalion in reserve at Imphal. Units were reduced during the monsoon season due to illness and the brigade was still located at Palel in September. During the autumn of 1942, the brigade moved down the main road to Tamu to cover road-making operations for the first Chindit expedition. Two companies of the battalion took over the forward position at Moreh on October 6th, 1942. The brigade was located in the area of Sibong near Tamu at the end of November and the road was opened on December 20th, 1942. The battalion was located at Minthami at the start of January 1943.

The brigade was withdrawn to the Pantha area on April 10th, 1943 from the Tamu area. The battalion was sent to Wangjing in May 1943 and then to Shuganu to protect the Imphal Plain. It remained there until September 1943, when the 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry relieved it. The battalion then joined the brigade at Imphal to train.

In late January 1944, the brigade left Imphal for the area of Ukhrul and then Litan on January 21st. The 49th Brigade relieved the 50th Indian Parachute Brigade on March 12th. The battalion withdrew from the Ukhrul area on March 15th to MS 82 on the Tiddim Road with the 49th Brigade HQ and the 6/5th Mahratta Light Infantry. By the end of March, the brigade held covering positions at Torbung. The rest of the brigade moved to Kameng on April 22nd and operated at the 'Sausage' and 'Pinnacle' features. Into May, the brigade continued to hold its base and clear the surrounding hills. From May 13th-16th, the 23rd Indian Division, which included the brigade, took over from the 20th Indian Division and the battalion was attached to the 37th Indian Brigade at Shenam Heights. On the 15th/16th of June, the 49th Brigade withdrew through the Bishenpur position and held the road back to Imphal open. The battalion was in clashes with the Japanese on June 23rd. The 23rd Indian Division then organized to breakout of the Shenam position and the 49th Brigade advanced to Sibong ridge overlooking Lokchao Bridge. By July 27th, 1944, operations were over for the division.

On August 10th, 1944, the 23rd Indian Division withdrew to Palel for a day's rest and then moved to Shillong on August 24th. It left Shillong in December 1944 and the 49th Brigade moved to

Kharakuasla Reserve near Poona. It moved to Nasik in January 1945 and remained there until it sailed for Malaya on September 1st, 1945."

Condition; contact wear and EK's. NVF or better. Medals mounted with original ribbons, the group clearly having been worn by the recipient.

A really very fine fighting citation for this award