

A FINE SECOND WAR TANK COMMANDERS IMMEDIATE M.M. GROUP AWARDED TO A SERGEANT, 6TH BATTALION, ROYAL TANK REGIMENT, FOR HIS GALLANTRY DURING THE ASSAULT AND CAPTURE OF THE EAST BANK OF THE RIVER SENIO, 9 APRIL 1945



MILITARY MEDAL, G.V.I.R. '7921330 L. SGT. G. E. MACLEOD. R. TANK. R.'; 1939-45 STAR; AFRICA STAR, 1 CLASP, 8TH ARMY; ITALY STAR; WAR MEDAL 1939-45, Mounted court-style for display

M.M. *London Gazette* 23 August 1945:

'In recognition of gallant and distinguished services in Italy.'

The original Recommendation states: *'On the evening of 9 April 1945, Sergeant George Edward MacLeod, 6th Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment, was a tank commander of a troop of tanks supporting the infantry who were to assault and capture the East bank of the River Senio at MR 313319. At 1935 hrs the assault started but owing to the extremely heavy Spandau and Mortar fire from the bank, the infantry were forced to "go to ground". The troop then attempted to engage the enemy fire positions but due to the failing light and close country this was not effective. Sergeant MacLeod was the leading tank in the troop, he was determined to give the infantry all the support possible for the attack. The area in front was known to contain mines, was close and had not been cleared by the infantry. Without hesitation Sergeant MacLeod went forward, unable to be covered by other tanks because of the close nature of the ground. When he arrived at what he thought was the mined area he dismounted, still under heavy mortar and Spandau fire, and guided his tank safely through in the growing darkness. This tank was now in a position to deal with the Spandau posts on the river bank and due to Sergeant MacLeod's brave effort the infantry were soon able to capture the objective.'*

George Edward MacLeod was born on 28 July 1911 and served during the Second World War with the 6th Battalion, Royal Tank Regiment, R.A.C. as part of the 7th Armoured Brigade, 2nd Polish Corps. At the time of Sergeant MacLeod's gallant action, his battalion had recently converted from Sherman's to Churchill tanks, the later being more suited to the terrain the battalion were fighting on in Italy.



The following outstanding website gives details of 7th Armoured Brigade, including 6th Tanks, service during 1945. Other pages give War diary transcripts etc:

<http://www.desertrats.org.uk/bde/7thAB1945.htm>

The following taken from the above website:

6TH BATTALION, ROYAL TANK REGIMENT, ROYAL ARMoured CORPS

“When the Mobile Division was formed in 1938 6th RTR was one of the original units that formed what was then called The Heavy Brigade which was then to become 4th Armoured Brigade in December 1939. It took part in the British offensive in late 1940 which re-captured Sidi Barrani from the Italians, and then patrolled the Tobruk - Bardia area during most of January, before being taken out of the line on 18th January 1940, handing over its vehicles to 1st and 2nd RTR. It then spent a month in Cairo before returning to Tobruk in mid February 1941. It then took over a large number of Italian M13 tanks captured at Beda Fomm in late February, spending most of March in the Beda Fomm area learning to handle these captured tanks. At this time it came under the command of 3rd Armoured Brigade and was involved in a fighting withdrawal when Rommel first attacked in April 1941. During this withdrawal which many of the captured Italian M13 tanks had to be destroyed as they were in poor shape and unlikely to make the journey back to Tobruk, let alone Egypt. The regiment fell back on Tobruk with the last of it embarking on 14th April 1941, returning to Alexandria two days later. Here it re-equipped returning to the desert in June of that year under the command of 4th Armoured Brigade. It then served in 7th Armoured Brigade, during the 'Operation Battleaxe' and later during Operation Crusader. During the battles at Sidi Rezegh they were virtually wiped out by German 88mm anti-tank guns on 21st November 1941, but the survivors continued to fight on under 'Jock' Campbell's command.

In mid February 1942 6th RTR joined 1st Armoured Brigade and was re-equipped with Honey and Grant Tanks ready for the Gazala battles of that year at one time being amalgamated with 1st RTR due to losses. It fought near the 'Knightsbridge Box' before withdrawing with the rest of the 8th Army to El Alamein. It was still re-equipping during the Battle of El Alamein, and in December 1942 to moved to Jordan and then Iraq, where it served for all of 1943, with brief periods in Syria and Palestine, joining 7th Armoured Brigade upon its return from Burma, in September 1943.



SERGEANT MACLEOD ON LEFT OF PHOTO

As part of 7th Armoured Brigade, 6th RTR arrived in Italy landing at Taranto on 4th May 1944. It then took over from 40th RTR in supporting 10th Indian Division. It then served as a 10 Corps unit with both 4th and 10th Indian Divisions, serving alongside the 2nd and 8th RTR, in 7th Armoured Brigade, for the rest of the war. It continued to fight its way through Italy, find itself near Padua when the German forces in Italy surrendered in May 1945. It then moved onto Austria as the rounding up of the surrendering German Army continued. This was the end of 6th RTR's war. There is one final epitaph to the work 6th RTR did with 10th Indian Division, because on 21st May 1945, 6th RTR received a letter from Major General D. W. Reid CBE DSO MC, Commander 10th Indian Division:

'Will you please excuse the grave delay in writing to you. I think this is now the third time you have worked with 10th Indian Division. I think you know what our chaps, British and Indian troops alike, think of you and your very fine fellows in the 6th Royal Tank Regiment.'

'It has always been a case of smiles on all faces when it has been known that it was the 6th Royal Tank Regiment who were going to play with us. Many, many thanks to you all for all you did for us last winter and again in this last recent and final affair. Will you please tell your officers and men how grateful we all are in 10th Indian Division. In the meanwhile, all good fortune to you all and the very best of luck'.

According to the National Archives website, MacLeod's service records will become available on 1 January 2027

Sold with an original group photograph featuring the recipient taken in Beirut in 1943



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A fine WW2 tank commanders award