



## The Royal Tank Regiment (Cap & Badge)

The Royal Tank Regiment (RTR) is an armoured regiment of the British Army. It was formerly known as the Tank Corps and the Royal Tank Corps. It is part of the Royal Armoured Corps and is made up of two operational regiments, the 1st Royal Tank Regiment (1RTR) and the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment (2RTR). The official regimental motto is Fear Naught while unofficial motto (signified also by the colours of the tactical recognition flash) is "From Mud, Through Blood to the Green Fields Beyond."

The Corps changed to its present title in 1939, with the formation of the Royal Tank Regiment. The RTC had, up until 1928, been entirely responsible for all "armour" in the British Army. Its schools began the mechanisation and training of the cavalry, and the RTR itself expanded between 1935 and 1938 into eight regular battalions.

From the outset of World War II, both Sir Winston Churchill and Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, made it clear that they wished to be associated with the Royal Tank Regiment - the value of the tank as a decisive battlefield weapon was being recognised.

By the end of the Second World War, the tank had once again proved itself a major battle winner, and having fought in most of the major engagements in Europe, North Africa, the Middle and Far East, the Regiment had battalions spread all over the globe. Two more VC's had been awarded, together with countless other decorations, to men who, "...cheerfully went to war in tin cans, closely surrounded by a lethal mixture of petrol and ammunition.

At the outbreak of war, the Regiment consisted of eight regular battalions.

- 1st & 6th RTR was part of the Heavy Armoured Brigade (Egypt)
- 2nd, 3rd & 5th RTR were part of the 1st Heavy Armoured Brigade
- 4th, 7th & 8th RTR were part of the British 1st Army Tank Brigade

In addition, there were a large number of territorial battalions, as well as hostilities-only battalions such as 9 RTR.

The regiment was again expanded such that there were numerous units of the RTR that took part in countless battles in World War II, including the Battle of Dunkirk, El Alamein and D-Day. Field Marshal Montgomery would frequently wear the Regiment's beret, with his Field Marshal's badge sewn on next to the Regimental cap badge, as it was more practical whilst travelling on a tank than either a formal peaked hat or the Australian slouch hat he previously wore. Higher-numbered battalions of the Regiment included the 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, and 51st Royal Tank Regiment, and battalions were redesignated as regiments in 1945.

11 RTR formed part of 79th Armoured Division (aka Hobart's Funnies), equipped initially with CDL (tactical searchlight) tanks, but converted not long after D-Day to Buffalo (US LVT aka Amtrac), and participated in the assault crossing of the Rhine. Prime Minister Winston Churchill was ferried across the Rhine in a Buffalo from 'C' Squadron 11RTR.

### **Dunkirk**

Both 4th and 7th RTR fought in France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. At Arras, on 21 May 1940 they smashed into the rear of Rommel's 7th Panzer Division with good effect. However, both regiments suffered heavily in the end and the survivors escaped via Dunkirk.

Three other RTR regiments fought in Western France as part of the British First Armoured Division.

### **Alamein**

Throughout the desert war, elements of the RTR saw almost continuous action. In particular the great victory over the Italian at Beda Fomm. The RTR was heavily committed at El Alamein in October 1942, not only in conventional tanks but also in mine-sweeping flail tanks called Scorpions. While Montgomery's Eighth Army pursued retreating Axis forces across Libya, a new Army under General Eisenhower landed in Tunisia. Here RTR crews in Churchill tanks met and defeated the mighty German Tigers.

### **D-Day**

Major General Sir Percy Hobart, an RTR officer since 1923, is best known as commander of the famous 79th Armoured Division. Equipped with special purpose tanks known as Funnies this division spearheaded the British attack on D-Day, 6 June 1944 and continued to support Allied forces in Europe until the end of the war. Once again the RTR played a vital part, notably in such events as the attack on Le Havre, the fantastic six-day dash from Normandy to Belgium and the crossing of the river Rhine in March 1945.

