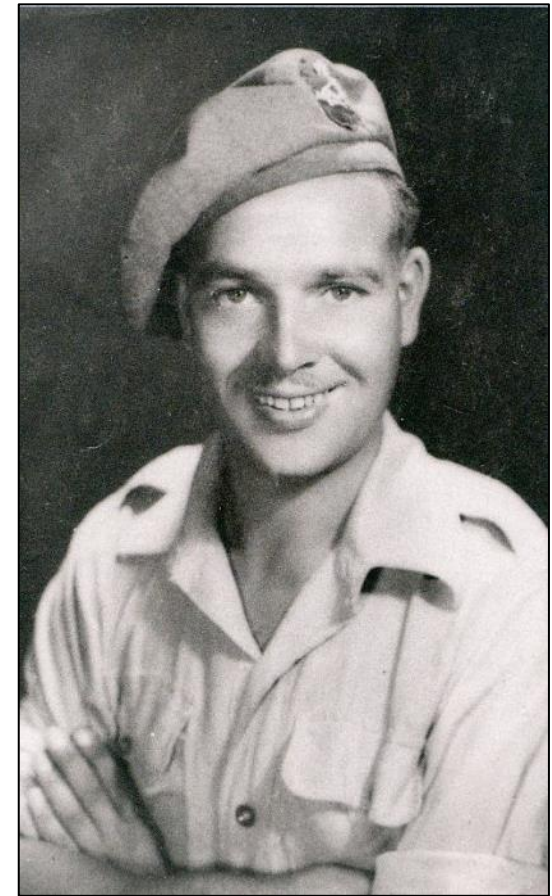



William Frederick (Bill) Ripper (20 Apr 1916 - 8 Jun 1974)

5626035


Service Record in HM Armed Forces 1940-1946




<p>02 Apr 1940</p>	<p>Having received his call-up papers Bill reported, as required, to the Army Reception Centre in Plymouth. He was given the rank of private and was posted to 7 Company of the 6th Devonshire Regiment in Exmouth. At the time he gave his occupation as a machinist, he was working in the Dolcis shoe factory in Great Dover Street, London SE1.</p> <p>Bill was just two weeks short of his 24th birthday when he signed his attestation papers and had been married to Mary for just 10 months. Their first son, named Bill after his father, was yet to be born, Mary being just 2½ months pregnant at the time. It is possible that when he received his call up papers that she was unaware that young Bill was on his way. They were living with the Ripper family at 262 Alderminster Road in Bermondsey.</p> <p>He was 5'7¼" tall and weighed 10½ stone. He had blue eyes and brown hair with a 35½" chest which would expand by a further 3½". He gave his religious denomination as Church of England and his birthplace as Bermondsey. He had a distinctive heart shaped scar on his right shin. This had been caused by a scalding accident when he was younger and had been living with his grandmother, Louisa Miller, in Compasses Court off Tower Bridge Road in Bermondsey.</p> <p>His medical rated him as Grade 1 (One).</p> <p>The 6th spent the war first on the east coast in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, then in Suffolk and Essex before a period of training in Northern Ireland in 1943. The rest of the war was spent in Sussex, supplying drafts to other units.</p> <p>He was to remain in service in England for 3 years and 360 days until he was posted to North Africa on 28 Mar 1944.</p>	 <p>DOLCIS</p> <p>The World's Leading Fashion Shoe Store with over 200 Branches in London, Suburbs and all big Towns and Cities throughout the United Kingdom</p> <p>The DOLCIS SHOE Co. DOLCIS HOUSE, GT. DOVER STREET, LONDON, S.E.1</p> <p>90</p>
<p>25 Jun 1940</p>	<p>Posted to D Company at Baldslow near Hastings in Sussex.</p>	
<p>3 Jul 1940</p>	<p>Posted to HQ Company at Pett, near Hastings, Sussex</p>	
<p>21 Sep 1940</p>	<p>At this time he was stationed in Hastings and had news that his son had been born. His army record being updated on this date to show the birth of his son who had been born, according to the army record, on 10 Sep 1940 (this date was incorrect, the birth occurred on the 11 Sep 1940). Having asked for permission to go to see his wife and son, and having had that permission denied, Bill travelled to London regardless of the consequences. At 2300hrs Bill went 'Absent without leave'. He stayed in London for a week before returning to his base camp.</p>	

29 Sep 1940	Bill arrived back at base camp at 2200hrs and was duly arrested for his misdemeanour – absent without leave for 7 days 23 hours. Family lore says that he was taken to an army base in Yorkshire where he was locked up ‘in the glasshouse’ until his case was heard. Is this true? No evidence on service record that I can see. He was ultimately admonished and punished by the loss of eight days’ pay.
6 Jan 1941	Forfeited two days pay for absence without leave. He had spent this time at home in Bermondsey. At the time he was posted at Epworth in Lincolnshire.
1 Feb 1941	Transferred to A Company at Conisborough. Mary knew he was at Conisbrough at this time and his service record affirmed that.
3 Apr 1941	Granted 7 days leave in Henley, Oxfordshire. Mary and young Billy joined him and they stayed in a house in Henley.
6 Sep 1942	Transferred to HQ Company of the 6 th Devonshires at Bradwell.
13 May 1943	Axis Powers surrender in Tunisia
11 Nov 1943	Passed the Standard Trade Test for a driver/mechanic, Class (II)D at the NI (Northern Ireland?) Vehicle Maintenance School.
20 Nov 1943	Appointed unpaid lance corporal
25 Dec 1943	Appointed acting corporal, initially unpaid but pay was backdated
28 Jan 1944	Attended a ‘Carrier Main Course’ (6 th /32/44) at the Standard Motor Company which lasted until 9 Feb 1944. He achieved an 80% pass mark.
24 Mar 1944	Granted substantive rank of warranted corporal
28 Mar 1944	Posted to North Africa – 111 days
09 Apr 1944	Part of Civil Resettlement Unit (CRU) X4 British North Africa Force. Where was this? What were they doing?
28 Apr 1944	Transferred to the Royal West Kent regiment and was made up to Corporal. Why? Was this preparatory to landing in Italy? Where did they land?
14 May 1944	He may well have been injured at Cassino. 78 Inf Div were part of the breakout force during the May 44 Fourth Battle. They crossed the Rapido on 14 and 15 May 44 and took up the lead from 4 Inf Div. At the time, 6 RWK were part of 36 Inf Bde In 78 Inf Div. Is this correct? If not, where was he?

<p>15 May 1944</p>	<p>British 78th Division came into the XIII Corps line from reserve passing through the bridgehead divisions to execute the turning move to isolate Cassino from the Liri valley.</p> <p>Bill returned some years later and stood on the same spot on the overlooking hill as he had been when he saw the ruins of Monte Cassino on this day in 1944.</p> <div data-bbox="376 376 1563 1007" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="1592 376 2033 1007" data-label="Image"> </div>
<p>18 May 1944</p>	<p>The 78th Division and Polish II Corps linked up in the Liri valley 2 miles (3.2 km) west of Cassino town. On the Cassino high ground the survivors of the second Polish offensive were so battered that "it took some time to find men with enough strength to climb the few hundred yards to the summit." A patrol of Polish 12th Podolian Polish cavalry Regiment finally made it to the heights and raised a Polish flag over the ruins. The only remnants of the defenders were a group of thirty German wounded who had been unable to move. "The Poles, on their second try, had taken Monte Cassino, and the road to Rome was open."</p>
<p>17 Jul 1944</p>	<p>Posted to Middle East. Taken on the strength of the Allied Army in Italy (AAI) – 52 days</p>

05 Aug 1944	Commenced leave in Egypt, probably in Cairo.	
10 Aug 1944	Concluded leave in Egypt	
07 Sep 1944	Posted to Central Mediterranean Forces (CMF) – 172 days	
15 Sep 1944	The 6th Battalion returned to Italy after only six weeks' rest in Egypt. . . while it was there, the battalion was brought up to full strength by drafts from reinforcement depots and other units in Egypt. Disembarkation took place at Taranto on 15 September 1944. Training of the newcomers then began in earnest, with the emphasis on platoon and section work. - The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment 1920-1950 by Lt Col H.D.Chaplin (Naval and Military Press)	
23 Sep 1944	Joined Civil Resettlement Unit 3CRU on list X4.	
08 Nov 1944	Returning to the Royal West Kents.	
13 Dec 1944	<p>Wounded in action. Shrapnel in his thigh. The 8th Army was slowly gearing up to the winter line on the Senio River and the 78th Division was in action at that time. Admitted to 217 Field Hospital (BC – battle casualty?) on list X2. Family lore says that he was sent to hospital in the Middle East, possibly, Egypt. Is this correct? Is there evidence of this on the service record?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>STEWART, SHAUN Citation: The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Shaun Stewart, Major, Royal British Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy while serving with 6th Battalion, The Queen's own Royal West Kent Regiment, in action near Camaggio, Italy on 13 December 1944. When his battalion was ordered to attack an enemy strongpoint and one company had been driven back, Major Stewart with his automatic weapon blazing fire into the enemy, led his company forward over exposed muddy ground, covered by enemy mortar and machine gun fire, and seized the objective. On the objective he organized his men and in spite of intense enemy fire from a position which overlooked his, Major Stewart disregarding the enemy fire toured the area encouraging his men. On two occasions he went alone ahead of the company to investigate suspected</p> </div>	

	<p>enemy movement. Although badly wounded by a burst of machine gun fire when he suspected an enemy counter-attack was about to begin he personally controlled the artillery fire and caused considerable casualties to the enemy. His outstanding gallantry, courage, and devotion to duty was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service.</p> <p>Headquarters: U.S. Army-Mediterranean Theater of Operations, General Orders No. 101 (June 25, 1945)</p> <p>Home Town: South Croydon, Surrey, England</p>
08 Jan 1945	<p>Bill's home address was changed to 77 Vauban Estate, Spa Road, Bermondsey, SE16.</p>
	<p><i>Family lore tells us that he was part of a group scouring the mountains around Langenfeld in Austria looking for either Nazi sympathisers or Russians not wishing to return to communist Russia. He was also based at Lienz as well for a time. Is there evidence for this?</i></p>
22 Aug 1945	<p>Whilst still part of the CMF he was reported to CO for: "WOAS (Whilst on Active Service) having dirty passes (brasses?) on Guard Mounting Parade". For this he was severely reprimanded by the CO two days later. <i>What are dirty passes shown on the service record?</i></p>
08 Feb 1946	<p>Awarded the medals shown here (L-R), presently with Ken Ripper (2015):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1939–45 Star was a campaign medal of the British Commonwealth, awarded for service in the Second World War. The medal was awarded for operational service between 3 September 1939 and 2 September 1945. The ribbon has three vertical stripes of dark blue, red and light blue. The dark blue stripe represents the Naval Forces and the Merchant Navy, the red stripe the Armies and the light blue stripe the Air Forces. • The Italy Star was a campaign medal of the British Commonwealth, awarded for service in World War II. The medal was awarded for operational service (on land) in Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Pantelleria, the Aegean area and Dodecanese Islands, and Elba at any time between 11 June 1943 and 8 May 1945. The ribbon for this medal, along with those of the other Second World War campaign stars, is reputed to have been designed by King George VI. Equal width stripes of red, white, green, white and red represent the colours of the Flag of Italy. • The Defence Medal was a campaign medal of the British Commonwealth, awarded for service in World War II. It was instituted to recognise both 

	<p>military and some types of civilian service. The ribbon is flame coloured in the centre flanked by stripes of green to symbolise enemy attacks on Britain's green and pleasant land, with narrow black stripes to represent the black-out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The War Medal 1939–1945 was a British medal awarded to those who had served in the Armed Forces or Merchant Navy full-time for at least 28 days between 3 September 1939 and 2 September 1945. The ribbon is 1.25 inches wide and consists of 7 coloured stripes: red, dark blue, white, narrow red (centre), white, dark blue, and red, representing the colours of the Union Flag
26 Feb 1946	Posted back to England – 80 days
27 Feb 1946	O.163YC to RP What is this?
17 May 1946	Posted to Class Z (T) Reserve
10 Feb 1954	Discharged on completion of engagement and allocated to the Army General reserve until the age of 45.
30 Jun 1959	Discharged from Reserve Liability
26 Feb 1982	War Medals requested but final notifications not sent.
11 Jan 1994	War Medals issued