



Michael Joseph Lawlor BEM

59th Heavy Regiment

20th Battery

Royal Newfoundland Artillery

Regimental No. 971244

World War II

Born: 20 Jul 1916

Died: 25 Jul 1985

Place of Birth: Clarke's Beach, Newfoundland

Parents: Edward and Mary Lawlor

Michael J. Lawlor was born in Clarke's Beach on July 28th, 1916. He was the third child born to parents Mary and Edward Lawlor.

Michael enlisted in the army on September 8th, 1940, about a year after the Second World War began. Michael was 25 years old at the time of his enlistment. He became a member of the Royal Newfoundland Artillery. Michael left Clarke's Beach on a boat and spent the remainder of the war fighting as a gunner overseas.

During his time in the Second World War, Michael was a member of the 59th (Newfoundland) Heavy Regiment. The 59th Heavy Regiment was very important to Canada's history in WW II because they fought alongside Canadian forces in Normandy to liberate France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

In France on July 17th, 1944, when he was 29 years old, Michael received the British Empire Medal for Gallant Conduct in the line of duty at Norry-en-Bessin, France. His name appeared in the London Gazette on Tuesday, 12th December 1944, along with another Gunner from Newfoundland, John Maloney.

The London Gazette of that day reads as follows:

' The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the award of the British Empire Medal (Military Division), in recognition of gallant conduct in carrying out hazardous work in a very brave manner, to the undermentioned: —

No. 971244 Gunner Michael Lawlor, Royal Regiment of Artillery (Conception Bay, Newfoundland)."

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It is interesting to note that according to records that during WW II, 1236 British Empire Medals (BEM) were awarded. Of this number only 34 were awarded for Gallantry. Michael Lawlor's medal was one of these.

After his service in the war, Michael returned to Newfoundland. In 1946, Michael married Kathleen (Costello)

He secured work in mining and spent the next years of his life as a driller at the Bell Island mines working for Dosco (Dominion Steel Company)

The following pictures include Michael taking part in Remembrance activities during the time he worked on Bell Island.

Memorial Day Service Held



On Sunday, July 4th, the annual Memorial Day Service was held. Ex-service men of World Wars I and II and of the Korean War, members of the Army Cadet Corps, the Church Lads Brigade accompanied by the bugle bands of the Cadet Corps and the C.L.B. and the brass band of the Loyal Orange Association paraded to the war memorial where hundreds of citizens had gathered to take part in the service which was held in respect of those who died in the cause of freedom.

Shown above are a group of ex-service men who made up the Firing and Colour Parties: Kneeling, left to right, John Fillier; Frank Ryan; Hubert French; Rene Pearle. Standing: left to right, Gerald Tucker; Peter Rees, Granville Martin; Ernest Miller and Michael Lawlor, M.M.



Back row, left to right: 1. ?Luffman?; 2. Gerald Tucker; **3. Michael Lawlor**; 4. Ernest Miller; 5. Hubert French.

Front row, left to right: 1. Lloyd Rees; 2. Gerry [or Leo?] Galway Sr.; 3. Peter Rees; 4. Eldred Rees; 5. Gordon Tucker.

[WW2 Veterans Group Photos - Historic Wabana \(historic-wabana.com\)](http://www.historic-wabana.com)

On July 25th, 1985, at 69 years of age, Michael Joseph Lawlor passed away in North River and is buried in the Roman Catholic Cemetery there.

Over the years he has been commemorated and acknowledged for his bravery throughout the Second World War.



Medals Awarded

(Left – Right)

1. British Empire Medal (BEM) ERII Military. Oak Leaves for Gallantry.
2. 1929-1945 Star
3. The France and Germany Star
4. The Defence Medal (United Kingdom)
5. British Service Medal
6. Newfoundland Volunteer War Service Medal

Below are newspaper clippings from two local papers. The first is from The Bay Roberts Guardian and is dated 30 Dec 1944 and the second is from The Evening Telegram and is dated 21 Feb 1953. Both mention the award of the British Empire Medal.

**ARTILLERYMEN WIN
AWARDS FOR BRAVERY**

**Two Boys From Conception Bay
Win British Empire Medal**

Information has been received from the War Office that Gunner Michael Lawlor of Clarke's Beach, Newfoundland, and Gunner Richard J. Maloney of Holyrood, Newfoundland, have been awarded the "British Empire Medal (Military Division)" in recognition of gallant conduct in carrying hazardous work in a very brave manner. They are both serving with the 59th Newfoundland Heavy Regiment, Royal Artillery. These awards appear in the London Gazette Supplement dated 12th December, 1944, No. 36837.

Gunner Michael Lawlor is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lawlor, of Clarke's Beach, Newfoundland. Gunner Richard J. Maloney is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Maloney of Holyrood, Newfoundland.

**Winner British Empire
Medal Visits Here**

Michael Lawlor, B.E.M., of Clarke's Beach, and presently residing at Bell Island, was a recent visitor to his brother, Mr. William Lawlor, Bay Roberts.

Michael is the holder of the British Empire Medal which was awarded during the second World War for bravery in the face of extreme danger. The story, as we have it, is that Mike's unit, under General Montgomery, was withdrawing from a front-line position, but intensive enemy action made it impossible to get Mike and his buddy out of the frontlines. While his buddy was wounded, Mike manned the two heavy guns, keeping up a steady stream of fire. So convincing was his gunnery that about ten thousand Germans thought fit to surrender. However, Mike was alone and decided he could not handle all these surrenderers, so he kept on firing. In the meantime his superiors who had withdrawn were observing what was going on through field glasses. They immediately came to his rescue, and for his daring action Mr. Lawlor was awarded the British Empire Medal.