



**Percy Gilbert Mercer**  
**59<sup>th</sup> Heavy Regiment**  
**Royal (Newfoundland) Artillery**  
**Regimental No. 971438**  
**World War II**

**Born:** 02 Apr 1919

**Died:** 03 Jul 2007

**Place of Birth:** Beachy Cove, Bay Roberts,  
Conception Bay, Newfoundland

**Parents:** Bethlehem (Beth) and Sophie Blanche  
(nee Norman) Mercer

Percy grew up in a large family of ten children born to Bethlehem (commonly know as Beth) and Sophie Mercer of Beachy Cove, Bay Roberts, Newfoundland.

According to entries in the 1921 Newfoundland general census, there were just six (6) children listed as being at home. Isaac L. 11, Harry 10, Frank 8, Hayward 6, Percy 2, and Ellen 5 months.

Grandmother Fannie Mercer aged 65 is also living with Beth and Sophie.

By the 1935 census, the number of children reached ten with the additions of Lewis, Bertha, Jean, Florence, and Doris. Five boys and five girls in all.

It is interesting to note that of the ten Mercer children, five would see military service, including Hayward, Lewis, Bertha, Harry, and Percy. Harry would serve in the US Army and died in January 1945 in the Philippines. Having one, two or even three children enlist to serve was unusual but to have five was certainly unique to say the least.

Percy would enlist in the 59<sup>th</sup> Heavy Regiment Royal Newfoundland Artillery. The 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion of the Regiment was formed in 1940 and Percy may have been part of that Battalion. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1940, Percy is found as a recruit on the troopship SS Nerissa with 166 other recruits arriving at Liverpool via St. John's Newfoundland, Halifax, Nova Scotia and New York, USA destined for Ardingly, Sussex, England.



**S.S. Nerissa**

31 March 1944 - 04 April 1944

The only troopship to lose Canadian troops en route to England in World War 2.

The S.S. Nerissa lies about 100 miles northwest of the coast of Donegal, Ireland.

Torpedoed by U-552 under the command of Erich Topp, the Nerissa sank within 4 minutes.

All but 84 of the ship's complement of 290 passengers and crew were lost.

In April 1944, Percy married Eunice June Bint at Hampstead, England. Hampstead is an area of North London.

Surprisingly, Percy appears in the 1945 Newfoundland census as being at home in Beachy Cove, Bay Roberts but there is no mention of a wife. In any event, Percy is listed in several UK Electoral Registers census like 1951, 1961. He is at home in the Dale, Keston, Kent in 1960.

Percy passed away in 2007 at the age of 88 at Kent, England. His ashes are buried in the New St. Matthew's Anglican Cemetery, Bay Roberts.

## Serving With The Royal Artillery



**Percy G. Mercer**

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Beth. Mercer, Bay Roberts. Percy is a graduate of Memorial University and is now serving overseas with the Royal Artillery.

From Bay Roberts Guardian 14 Mar 1942

Kent, England,  
Jan. 12, 1942.  
Secretary, W. P. A.,  
Bay Roberts.

Dear Madam,— Please convey my sincere appreciation to all members of the W.P.A. for the 10 shillings received today.

I might say it was a good idea to send money instead of more comforts because of the latter we have plenty. Each of us got a parcel from headquarters Christmas and whenever we go up to London there is plenty of socks, etc., to be had at the Commissioner's office. To give you an idea how effective your work is I can add that I have advised my parents to send no more woollen comforts for at least a year.

Apart from what we get in individual parcels and at the Commissioner's office there is always a supply of W.P.A. goods here in our own Battery stores so anyone suddenly finding himself without a pair of socks can get some just for the asking.

Your work is appreciated I assure you, especially among those who are so unfortunate as to have no one back home to send them things.

We are all quite comfortable and none the less contented.

Yours very sincerely,

PERCY G. MERCER.

From Bay Roberts Guardian 10 Feb 1945

## SERGT. PERCY MERCER NOT SERIOUSLY WOUNDED

Mr. Beth Mercer received further information yesterday that his son, who is with the 59th Nfld. Heavy Regt. on the Western front, is not seriously wounded. His wounds were caused by a German land mine which blew up three feet from him. Part of his clothing was torn and he has several pieces of shrapnel in his left thigh. He was in hospital in Belgium when the air mail letter was written on January 25th.

From Bay Roberts Guardian 10 Feb 1945

## CASUALTY REPORT

MERCER, Percy Gilbert, 971-438, L/Sgt., R.A., wounded, left thigh, as the result of bomb explosion (Europe). Next of kin, father, Mr. Bethlehem Mercer, Bay Roberts. (Wife in United Kingdom).