

MacColl, Donald Duncan

Age: 20

Nationality: Canadian

Rank: Sergeant

Unit: No. 32 OTU

Occupation: Wireless Operator/
Air Gunner

Service No: R/91224

Birth: 5 March 1922
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Home Town: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Death: 29 May 1942

Crash of Bristol Beaufort N1026
In Sea near Sidney, BC Canada

Burial: Resthaven Memorial Garden,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Others: F/S G. Hall (WAG); Sgt M. O'Brien (WAG);
Sergeant S. Stillwell (RAF) (Pilot)



Biography

At school in Toronto, the only hobby Donald McColl claimed was 'sport'. A rugged boy, he was a superb athlete, playing on winning hockey teams for both his city and his province and excelling at baseball, basketball and rugby. In school he received good reports for manual tasks but had no interest in academic pursuits. After three years of high school he transferred to Danforth Technical School for an 'Industrial War Emergency Course', when he studied draughting and sheet metal work. His plan for after the war was to take night school courses in draughting.

Donald applied for admission to the RCAF in 1940, when he was 18 years old, hoping to make air crew as an observer or gunner. He was submissive and immature, but clean-cut and of a pleasing personality. His academic standing and limited experience did not rank a commission but his practical capabilities allowed him to be accepted for training as a wireless operator/air gunner.

The training Donald took was in Calgary. On the wireless course his marks were below average though he finished not much below the middle of the class. He was awarded his Wireless Operator badge in August 1941. On the air gunnery course he was, as might be expected, better at the practical tasks than at written answers and was judged to have little initiative or sense of responsibility. However, he passed and received his Air Gunner badge in September 1941.

In January 1942, Donald was at Penfield Ridge, New Brunswick when he lost two days pay and received a reprimand for being absent without leave for almost two days. On March 3rd he was posted to Patricia Bay.

Donald MacColl was the air gunner in a crew of four on Bristol Beaufort N1026, on 29 May 1942, when it plunged into the sea off Sidney, Vancouver Island, just after take-off. He died instantly from multiple head injuries. He was buried at Resthaven Memorial Garden in Toronto, Ontario, and a temporary wooden cross was erected.

Donald was born on 5 March 1922, to Paul MacColl and Mary Barclay MacKie Duncan, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Both parents were Scottish and had emigrated separately to Canada before marrying in 1921. They had one other child, a daughter, Betty.

Details of Crash

On 29 May 1942, Bristol Beaufort N1026 took off at 1:15 pm carrying a crew of four airmen:

Flight/Sergeant	George Graham Hall
Sergeant	Donald Duncan MacColl (Air Gunner)
“	Martin Joseph Patrick O’Brien
“	Stanley Howard Stillwell (RAF) (Pilot)

Almost immediately after take-off and while the aircraft was still climbing over Sidney, BC., at about 500 feet, smoke was noticed coming from the port engine. The aircraft was then seen to be losing height with the port engine on fire. It started to roll over to port, according to some eyewitnesses, doing an almost complete roll, and crashed into the sea about a quarter of a mile off Sidney with one wing down.

The fuselage sank immediately in about 19 fathoms. The marine section immediately began to salvage the wreckage.



The cause of the crash was found to be failure of the port engine and Beauforts of this type were grounded until the reason for the failure was determined.

