Patrick Samuel O'CARROLL (1917 – 1943)



404932 Sergeant

P.S.O'CARROLL

Navigator

1657 Heavy Conversion Unit

Royal N.Z. Air Force

10th February 1943

Age 25



Photo credit: Puke Ariki Museum
New Plymouth, NZ

Patrick Samuel O'Carroll was born on 19 May 1917, the son of Gerald Eustace and Ethel Winifred O'Carroll of New Plymouth, Taranaki, New Zealand. He was a brother to Alice, Claude and Jack.

Before the war, Patrick was a primary school teacher at Moturoa. Moturoa is in the coastal town of New Plymouth, in the North Island of New Zealand.

Like other recruits to the RNZAF, Patrick completed his training in Canada, attending the 6 Air Observer School in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan where he graduated on 3 January 1942 before further training at the 3 Bombing and Gunnery School in MacDonald, Manitoba and the 1 Air Navigation School in Rivers, Manitoba.

He was posted to the RAF in England as a Sergeant, Navigator most probably as a crew member of a medium bomber, as in February 1943 he was undergoing some training with the 1657 Heavy Conversion Unit based at RAF Stradishall. He had already logged two hundred and sixty nine flying hours.

With the introduction of the new heavy bombers, the 4-engined Short Stirling, Avro Lancaster and Handley Page Halifax, into service, the Royal Air Force introduced Heavy Conversion Units. The role of the Heavy Conversion Units was to qualify crews trained on medium bombers to operate the heavy bombers prior to assignment to an Operational Training Unit where they would gain further experience before final posting to the operational squadrons. This HCU training was generally a three – four week course.

Almost immediately after taking off at 0939 hrs from RAF Stradishall, Stirling N6008, suffered the total loss of two engines due to a fuel supply failure. The aircraft continued to fly in a south-westerly direction with its undercarriage still locked down. Unable to climb the Stirling struck high tension cables before hitting some buildings at 8 Kings Hill in Kedington. It crashed through village allotments bringing power lines down before settling in a field beyond killing four of the crew and injuring two.

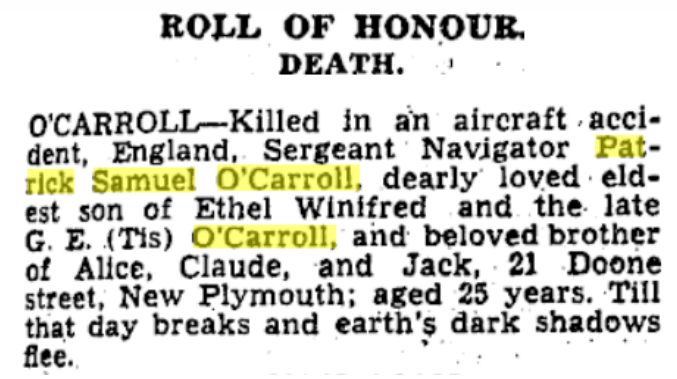
Those killed were pilot Sgt Sidney Clifford Rogers, navigator Patrick Samuel O'Carroll, flight engineer Sgt Trevor Pierce and Sgt Robert William Smith. The crew who survived were Sgt Hector Howells and Sgt B S Smith.

Local man, George Smith, aged 20, of 25 Haverhill Road, a Stockman and member of the Home Guards, rushed to try to reach the crew but was electrocuted and also lost his life.



Photo credit: Aircrew Remembered; photo on left courtesy of Keith Howells and family

Patrick Samuel O'Carroll was buried at Haverhill cemetery, Suffolk, England, grave 195, section U.



ROLL OF HONOUR.

DEATH.

O'CARROLL—Killed in an aircraft accident, England, Sergeant Navigator Patrick Samuel O'Carroll, dearly loved eldest son of Ethel Winifred and the late G. E. (Tis) O'Carroll, and beloved brother of Alice, Claude, and Jack, 21 Doone street, New Plymouth; aged 25 years. Till that day breaks and earth's dark shadows flee.

The Press, Volume LXXIX, Issue 23878 published notice of Patrick's death on 22 February 1943.

P.O Sidney Clifford Rogers whose parents lived in Burgess Hill, Sussex, was also buried in Haverhill Cemetery, Sec. U, Grave 144.
Sgt George Trevor Pierce was buried in Llandudno Head Cemetery, in his home town.
Sgt Robert William Smith was also buried in Haverhill Cemetery, Sec. U, Grave 246. His parents lived in Amersham, Berkshire.

Patrick Samuel O'Carroll - Online Cenotaph - Auckland War Memorial Museum (aucklandmuseum.com)

Patrick Samuel O'Carroll was the grandson of Dr Patrick Joseph O'Carroll.

Photo credit: Puke Ariki Museum New Plymouth



Patrick Joseph Felix Valentine O'Neil O'Carroll was born at Castlepollan, county Westmeath, Ireland. He was educated at St Vincent's College, Castleknock; St Stanislaus College, Rahan; and Dublin University. He completed his medical training at St Cecilia School, the Royal College of Physicians, Dublin.

Dr O'Carroll sailed to Melbourne aboard the Queen of the South in 1862. The following year he accompanied a party of Australian military settlers to Auckland. He was appointed first to the Auckland Militia and then to the Waikato Militia. While stationed with the Waikato Militia he was present at several battles, including the attack on Gate Pa.

In 1865 he was ordered to Taranaki where he was placed in medical charge of the mounted troopers and accompanied General Chute on his march around the east side of Mt. Taranaki. Dr O'Carroll maintained his links with the military throughout his time in Taranaki and was awarded the New Zealand Medal, Imperial long service decoration and the Victoria decoration.

Dr O'Carroll also had a long association with New Plymouth Hospital, first as a surgeon and later as medical superintendent. W.H.Skinner in his book, Pioneer Medical Men of Taranaki, describes him as, "One of the best known and popular surgeons of his day and generation in North Taranaki." Skinner goes on to say Dr (Paddy) O'Carroll was, "A typical Irishman, full of humour, of abounding hospitality, and generous to a fault, he was beloved by all classes of the community."

He married Alice Carrington, the daughter of Octavious Carrington, in 1869 and they lived for many years in a large house at 228 Devon Street East (town section 1448) - later converted to the Devon Boarding House.

Dr O'Carroll suffered a serious stoke in 1897 and made only a partial recovery. Eventually he returned to Ireland where he died on the 14th of August,1903, aged 60.

Credit: Mike Gooch (Kete New Plymouth (Peoplesnetworknz.info))