

CHARLES (CHARLEY) FOX 1920-2008

Nicknamed "The Flying Fox", Charley Fox was one of the greatest Canadian flying aces during World War II. He attended Guelph Collegiate, where he participated in most of the sports teams and was considered a very bright student. However, he didn't graduate, as war broke out while he was working to obtain his final two credits.

Fox joined the RCAF in 1939 and graduated from their training program near the top of his class in 1941. He remained in Canada to train other pilots until 1944, when he joined the Canadian 412 Squadron as flight lieutenant. His victories throughout the war were numerous. He destroyed 4 enemy airplanes and damaged 5 more. On the ground, he destroyed a total of 153 enemy vehicles.



He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on two separate occasions. Fox's greatest wartime accomplishment occurred on July 17, 1944, when he strafed a German staff car, causing it to crash. The accident severely injured one of its passengers, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, "The Desert Fox", one of the most famous Nazi officers, causing him to leave the war early.

His contributions to Canada after the war are just as important. Fox started The Torch Bearers, a group dedicated to telling the stories of soldiers who died in the war. Affable, modest and loyal, he spoke in numerous schools and worked to ensure that Remembrance Day assemblies took place annually. Fox died suddenly on October 18, 2008 in a car accident. He was 88 years old.

Charley Fox will be remembered not only for his war victories as a spitfire pilot, but also for his lifelong dedication to ensuring that Canada remembers and honours its veterans.

Meghan Reid
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