

Royal Canadian Air Force



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News Article - Canadian War Museum displays hockey jersey from RCAF's legendary gold medal-winning team

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From the Canadian War Museum

The Royal Canadian Air Force Flyers hockey team was the underdog at the 1948 Winter Olympic Games in St. Moritz, Switzerland, and went on to win the gold medal. A jersey belonging to a member of this team will be on display in the lobby of the Canadian War Museum until March 16, 2014.

Many of the RCAF Flyers were veterans of the Second World War, which had ended less than three years earlier. Formed at the last minute with 17 Air Force and ex-Air Force players, the team lost several exhibition games and was not expected to do well in the medal competitions. Defying the odds, the Flyers won six games in a row before registering a scoreless tie with Czechoslovakia, the team heavily favoured to win. In their final game, against the host Swiss team, 22-year-old goaltender Murray Dowey helped the Flyers to a 3-0 shutout win and a historic gold medal for Canada.

The RCAF Flyers jersey on display is number 18, worn by team forward, Wing Commander Hubert Brooks, M.C., C.D. In 1942, Commander Brooks, who served with 419 Squadron, was shot down near Oldenburg, Germany, and made a prisoner of war. In 1943, he escaped to Poland where he joined the underground army. He was subsequently awarded two Polish medals.

The light blue wool sweater, which has dark blue and red stripes, bears the RCAF roundel on the front with the word CANADA below the maple leaf. The back has the number 18 in dark blue.

The RCAF Flyers were elected to the Canadian Forces Sports Hall of Fame in 1971 for outstanding achievement in hockey. In 2000, the team's gold medal win was cited as "the greatest moment in Canadian Forces sports history." The RCAF Flyers were inducted into the Canadian Olympics Hall of Fame in 2008.

The Canadian War Museum is Canada's national museum of military history. Its mission is to promote public understanding of Canada's military history in its personal, national, and international dimensions.

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