

Donating History

Captain Robert Fleck donates his historic 1941 Tiger Moth to an Ontario museum

The generosity of **Captain Robert Fleck** will play a major part in aviation history thanks to his donation of a 1941 de Havilland Tiger Moth biplane to the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in Mount Hope, Ontario.

"The Tiger Moth helps to tell the amazing story of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, so it should be in a place where thousands of people can see it and learn about this history. Due to the aircraft's basic design structure, it is also a great tool for teaching young Canadians about science, technology, engineering, physics and math," says Rob, who is also a former fighter pilot with the Canadian Armed Forces.

The Air Training Plan he refers to was one of Canada's most important contributions to the war efforts. It involved building more than 100 airports across Canada, including Toronto Pearson, and involved more than 10,000 training aircraft to help turn in about 50,000 pilots or 210,000 flight crew in total, in just four years in the 1940s.



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Captain Robert Fleck donated his 1941 Tiger Moth to the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum. The biplane, which flies at about 75 mph, is in pristine condition and he flew it from Ottawa to Hamilton this May.

During the Second World War, this specific plane was used to train Royal Canadian Air Force pilots in Winnipeg. After the war, it was sold and flown privately for several years. About 15 years ago, it went through a major rebuild and six years ago Rob bought it.

"I took a temporary special leave of absence from Air Canada in August 2009 to become president of Vintage Wings of Canada (VWC). Their Tiger Moth had an accident and they needed a new one. So I purchased this one from Bill Neelin in Alberta who rebuilt it and then loaned it to VWC," he says.

While there, it was flown by many volunteer pilots including Air Canada **Captain Dave Hadfield** and Robert's son, First Air Captain Douglas Fleck. It was also used for taking RCAF Air Cadets for aviation familiarization missions across Canada. The Tiger's top speed is 75 mph, so it takes a long time to get anywhere.

"I flew the Tiger for about 30 hours last year to various events in Ottawa, including a fundraising event for Dreams Take Flight when I took a Second World War vet flying," he says.

"The Tiger spent last winter in a hangar at my farm north of Ottawa where no one saw it except some lonely mice. So my wife Pat and I decided to donate the plane to the museum and I flew it to Hamilton from Ottawa in May," he says. "It was the right thing to do and we're thrilled it has a great home."