



Errol Flynn

June 20, 1909 - October 14, 1959

Vancouver, undefined

Errol Leslie Thomson Flynn, the Tasmanian-born actor who became Hollywood's definitive swashbuckler and an American citizen in middle life, died of a heart attack in Vancouver, British Columbia, on October 14, 1959. He was fifty.

He was born in Hobart, Tasmania, on June 20, 1909, the son of Theodore Thomson Flynn, a marine biologist and later a university professor, and Lily Mary Young. Restless and athletic, he knocked around New Guinea as a young man, worked as a plantation overseer and gold prospector, and drifted into acting after appearing in the Australian film *In the Wake of the Bounty* (1933). Warner Bros. signed him, and *Captain Blood* (1935) made him an overnight star opposite Olivia de Havilland.

The Adventures of Robin Hood (1938), *The Sea Hawk*, *They Died with Their Boots On* and *Gentleman Jim* fixed his screen image: reckless, charming, lethal with a sword and somehow still in on the joke. Off screen his life matched the legend - yachts named *Sirocco* and *Zaca*, multiple marriages, and a 1942-43 statutory-rape trial in Los Angeles that ended in acquittal but never left the gossip columns. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1942.

By the 1950s the studio system that had built him was fading, and so was his health. He kept working in Europe and on American television, and in the last year of his life he appeared with Beverly Aadland in the autobiographical *Cuban Rebel Girls*. He collapsed in Vancouver while promoting a film and visiting the young actress; the coroner cited myocardial infarction, with thrombosis and liver disease among contributing conditions. He is buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California. For a generation of moviegoers, the laugh in the duel and the leap from the chandelier still belong to him.

Services

Died in Vancouver, BC, October 14, 1959, aged 50. Portrait: Studio publicity photograph (public domain), hosted by Notice Nearby.

NN-OBIT-2026-H279

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