

SWEEPING THE SKIES

in Europe - a remarkable achievement. It had over 3,000 operational aircraft and nearly 3,000 trainers. RAAF members served in every theatre of operations and by the war's end the RAAF was considered the fourth largest air force in the world.

To achieve these amazing statistics from a country whose wartime population was around seven million, required sound organisation and willing volunteers. Australia like Canada, New Zealand and Rhodesia contributed men to a new scheme - the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) - a massive training organisation set up to provide Britain with the men it badly needed to fly and fight. The EATS is a remarkable story on its own, but not for these pages. However, under the scheme, the RAAF also promised eighteen fighting squadrons, known as Article XV squadrons from the respective article in the EATS charter. Seventeen eventually formed, and these saw service in Europe, the Middle East and the Pacific.

This is the story of one of those squadrons.



RAAF Hawker Demon biplanes in the 1930s. A tiny force prior to WWII, the RAAF would see extraordinary growth during the war. (Author collection)