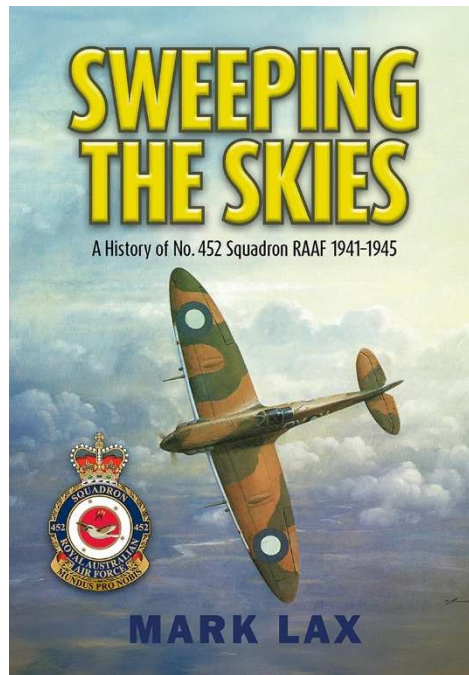


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Sweeping the Skies

A History of No. 452 Squadron RAAF 1941-1945

Avonmore Books

Mark Lax; softcover; 250 x 176mm, full colour, fully illustrated, 136 pages, Avonmore Books, 2026. ISBN 9781764193771 RRP \$39.95

Sweeping the Skies is the story of No. 452 Squadron, an RAAF fighter unit formed in the UK in April 1941. Equipped with the superb Supermarine Spitfire, the squadron soon deployed to bases south of London and was in the thick of fighting against the Luftwaffe over England, the Channel and northern France.

Remarkably, between August and November 1941, No. 452 Squadron held the Fighter Command record as the top-scoring unit in Britain. This was largely due to the exceptional skills and leadership of some outstanding ace pilots, including Irishman Wing Commander Brendan "Paddy" Finucane and well-known VFL footballer Squadron Leader Keith "Bluey" Truscott.

In 1942 the squadron moved to Australia and became part of No. 1 Fighter Wing defending Darwin. The following year was spent intercepting sizeable formations of Japanese fighters and bombers. These heated combats incurred some cost including the loss of commanding officer Squadron Leader Ray "Throttle" Thorold-Smith. In the final period of the war the squadron advanced north to Morotai and Borneo in the Netherlands East Indies.

No. 452 Squadron was rightly lauded by the Australian media and deserves to be remembered as one of the foremost RAAF wartime units. However, as a "400" series squadron raised in the UK it is often overlooked.

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