

Wing Commander Dick Cresswell DFC

Wing Commander Cresswell joined the RAAF in 1938. Promoted to Squadron Leader he was appointed commanding officer of the recently formed No 77 Squadron which in August of that year, was deployed to Darwin to provide air defence against Japanese attacks.

Flying his personal P40 aircraft (A29-113) on night patrol, he intercepted a formation of Betty bombers one of which he shot down. Dick was the first Australian pilot to destroy an enemy aircraft over Australia.

Wing Commander Cresswell served with distinction in Korea with his old squadron No77, flying Mustang and Meteor aircraft. Whilst in Japan, Dick flew a USAF F-86 supersonically becoming the first Australian pilot to break the sound barrier. After the Korean war Dick was instrumental in developing the Operational Training Unit which trained fighter pilots and combat fighter instructors. When the Sabre was introduced into the RAAF, Dick was OIC of the Sabre Trials Flight to evaluate the aircraft for Australian conditions. He also flew Sea Furys off the carrier HMAS Sydney.

His civilian flying career saw him pilot aircraft in extremes of operating conditions. In the early 1960s he flew Beavers in the Antarctic. Later he was to fly JU52s in Papua New Guinea.

Today Dick is remembered by 77 Squadron with F/A-18 A21-50 bearing his signature four- flag design that adorned his Kittyhawk No 13.

Dick will be speaking to the Australian Aviation Club about his military and civil flying career.