



**HISTORIC IMAGE:** Max Carland has flown planes for more than 60 years. He captured this image from his Mustang on the way to Japan after the end of the Second World War.

# Flying, in war and peace

**M**AX Carland of Nhill first learnt to fly in 1942 as a fighter pilot in the Second World War. Now more than 65 years later Mr Carland, who has been a member of Wimmera Aero Club since 1952, still loves to get up in the sky even if it's not as much as he used to.

with heart



**Jo Morris**

"I love to fly," he said. "I'm still on the committee at the club, they're very kind to me and have let me stay on. "And I still fly a little bit." Mr Carland said his love of flying stemmed from his time with the 76th Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force which he served with from 1942 to 1949. "I was with the 76th Squadron and we were army co-op mostly," he said. "There were no enemy aircraft where we were — there were some on the ground but we didn't catch any in the air. "We were just looking for targets along the New Guinea coast; targets of opportunity, whatever they happened to be. "At the end of the war I went to Japan and did three years with the 76th Squadron. "We were training mostly and patrolling the Sea of Japan between Japan and Korea." Mr Carland said while not everything about war had been good, he had seen his seven

years of service as a time of great adventure. "You don't worry about anything when you're 18," he said. "You join up because everybody else is joining up and you just did things everyone else was doing. "When you were attacking a ship or something it was quite impersonal, like a training exercise. You fire your guns and you drop your bombs and you go home." Mr Carland said there had been some hard times but mostly he remembered the war as a time where he learnt to fly and a time where he gained some great mates. "I enjoyed the flying part of it, I didn't like getting shot at but the flying part of it was good. And finding your mates around all the time. All your friends in the war, they were



**ON THE RUNWAY:** Max Carland at Horsham Aerodrome this week. He retains his passion for flying after six decades. Picture: PAUL CARRACHER

pretty important because you had to fly with them every day. "Ninety per cent of it was boredom and 10 per cent of it was pure terror — I got pretty scared sometimes. But we had some funny times." Mr Carland said he joined Wimmera Aero Club in 1952 after coming back from the war and finding he missed his life of flying.

"The club was founded in 1945; it was started by air force people coming back after the war. They bought a couple of Tiger Moths from the government and started the club. I was still in the air force until 1949 and then I came out and I joined the aero club then, when I came back to civilian life," he said. Mr Carland said he became

president of the club in his first year, a position which he held for 28 years. "Being the president in a time of expansion was quite exciting. We went from having two Tiger Moths to about seven aeroplanes and when I left being president we had four instructors," he said. Mr Carland said he had always been heavily involved

in the club, having taught between 80 and 100 people to fly, as well as fulfilling his duties as president. "I used to go out every weekend, I was an honorary instructor so I didn't get paid for all the work I did. I ran a business during the week and I used to fly at the weekend," he said. "As president I had to keep the aerial planes in good order, had to make sure we had enough instructors as well as purchasing new aircraft." Mr Carland said he gave up his role of president after almost three decades in the post because he thought it was about time somebody else took over. He continued to teach until 1972. "It's a great thing, particularly for young people," he said. "With flying you're getting up in the air and you're on your own and you can do what you like. "It's freedom, that's what it is. When you're flying little planes it's just good fun." Mr Carland said he thought anyone could fly if they were willing to put in the hours. "They go up for between 40 and 60 hours to get a private pilot's licence," he said. "We show them the controls and then teach them to do it themselves. Then they fall in love with it, that's what happens."

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