

NEW WORLD RECORD FOR DISTANCE

by Geoff Tuck

THE TEAM

Peter Garoni:	Builder and Pilot
Geoff Tuck:	Relief Pilot
John McGrane:	FAI Observer
John Weston:	FAI Observer
Michael Baer:	Driver, pilot vehicle
John Bentley:	Driver, equipment vehicle
Brian Berg:	Navigator
Lois Berg:	Provisions Manageress
David Feather:	Treasurer

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PARCS, WPMAC, VARMS,
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PROLOGUE

After reading about John Marquette's distance record attempts in The Pioneers of Model Aviation in Australia, Peter Garoni, a relative newcomer to RC flying, decided that he wanted to have a go at breaking the Distance Record himself.

As a result, on 21st November, 1993, Geoff Tuck piloted a model, designed and made by Peter Garoni for long dis-

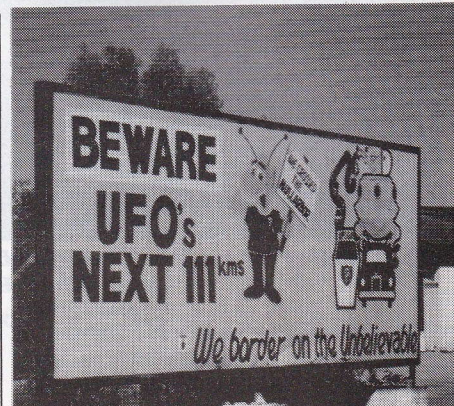
tance flying, from Birchip to Carwarp in Victoria, to set a new Australian RC Distance Record of 180 km. The aircraft was powered by an OS 46 SF glo, and proved the concept for an attempt on the World Record. The only change was to use an OS 40 SF converted to diesel operation by Mick Male, who died shortly before the expedition set off for the Nullarbor crossing.

SETTING OUT

We met at Peter's home in Mornington at 5 am on Saturday 14th May, 1994. The three vehicles, towing their respective loads, set off in rain and wind for Ballarat, where we met Johnno McGrane and John Weston at 7.30 am. That day and the next were spent driving, and we reached Ceduna, in South Australia, at about 4 pm on Sunday 15th May.

The plan was to be up and ready early the next morning and, if conditions were right, to make the first attempt flying east to west. We were out at a pre-arranged take-off point just after sun-up and, as conditions seemed to be reasonable, we decided to have a try.

After going through the fuelling up and weighing procedure, we took off at 9 am. We had not travelled far before we realised that we would be lucky to average 40 kph, as a westerly had sprung up just after take-off so, turning around, we



Warning to future record breakers!

flew back to our take-off point, packed up and headed west, en route for a whistle-stop called Balladonia, in Western Australia.

We decided on a point about 10 km east of Balladonia, a very old, deserted homestead, for the departure point, and a motel and garage at a place called Border Village for the touch-down. The garage had a large truck parking area just across the highway which was well within the 500 metre radius and would be big enough to get the model down. The road distance we would travel was approximately 530 km, and the straight line distance, as we now know, was 493.168 km.

Arriving at Balladonia at about lunchtime on Tuesday, we booked into the motel to get a good night's sleep, and during the afternoon Mike assembled his old Hustler for a bit of relaxed flying. There just happened to be a very long airstrip right behind the motel.

THE FLIGHT

18th May, 1994

I had noticed an air of expectancy among the Team late on Tuesday afternoon and evening, and I felt that we all knew that conditions would be suitable for our assault on the record the following day.

Our team leader, Peter, aroused us all at 4 o'clock, and within one and a half hours we had showered and eaten and were in convoy, on our way to the homestead. We went through the process of assembling and fuelling, and our two officials weighed the model in at 4.987 kg. As by this time the light was good enough, we decided that the time had



The record breaking team, L to R: John Weston, Peter Garoni, Geoff Tuck, John Bentley, Mike Baer, Brian Berg and John McGrane (who holds the Australian RC Duration record).