



South Australian Aviation Museum *Aircraft Profile*

VAN'S RV-4 VH-NOJ

Single engine two-seat light sport aircraft (homebuilt)

History of VH-NOJ

In 1989 Jon Johanson was working as a charter pilot and became interested in building his own aircraft. After investigation, he decided to build a Van's RV-4. Jon said, "This thing was just the ticket – rugged, simple, went fast, went slow, and could handle bush strips. But I didn't know anything about metal or how to build with it, and I didn't want to get into something I couldn't handle, so I didn't do anything for a time." The building process was slow, but was completed in 2,000 man-hours. A permit to fly VH-NOJ was issued in January 1992 and two days later the aircraft flew for the first time.



Following a visit to the Sport Aircraft Association's Mangalore fly-in in 1992, Jon started plans to fly to Oshkosh, USA. Long-distance flying started in 1994 and the first world trip occurred in 1995. Jon departed Parafield on 26 June for the USA and Oshkosh. After a stay of a few days, he headed across the Atlantic Ocean for Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and then back to Parafield, where he arrived on 4 September. The total flight time was 198.20 hours, the distance 26,350 nm (48,800 km), and the average ground speed was 133 kts (246 kph). Jon undertook two further world trips in 1996 and 2000, and more flying records were broken.



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On 6 December 2003 Jon left Parafield for Invercargill, New Zealand, and then the following day for Ushuai, Argentina, via the South Pole. He diverted to McMurdo after crossing the South Pole, landing 26.5 hours after departing New Zealand and becoming the first person to fly a fixed-wing single engine aircraft over the Pole. (The second person ever to fly solo over the South Pole.) After a delay in being able to receive fuel, he subsequently returned to Invercargill, Hobart and Parafield.

In 2005 Jon was honoured as a 'High Flyer' by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) in Paris. He received the world's highest aviation award (the 2004 Gold Medal) in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the development of aeronautics in sport aviation.

The RV-4 was retired and transported by road to SAAM in September 2009. Following 18 months of fund raising, the Museum acquired the aircraft for permanent display.



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The pictures below show the RV-4 in Antarctica and the Museum cabinet containing several of Jon's major awards.



VAN'S AIRCRAFT

Technical Specifications

Engine: Lycoming O-320 160 hp

Maximum take-off weight: 681 kg

Length: 6.198 m

Wingspan: 7.21 m

Height: 1.651 m

Cruising speed: 157 kts (290 kph)

Range: > 8,550 km (4,750 nm)

Capacity: 2 pilots, or 1 pilot and a long-range fuel tank installed in the rear cockpit