

Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995), Wednesday 25 May 1994, page 1

Car rally to continue, despite deaths



A police officer examines the wreckage of the Ferrari which slammed into an official's car on Tuesday. Four people died.

By PAUL GOVER at Uluru

Despite four deaths, the high speed Cannonball Run will go ahead as planned with another two days of open road competition on the unrestricted Stuart highway between Ayres Rock and Darwin.

Champion racing driver Allan Moffat, who heads the Cannonball organising team, announced last night that the run would continue despite the deaths of two Japanese competitors and two territory officials early on the third day of the Cannonball.

He said the decision had been taken after speaking with the Northern Territory's Chief Minister, Marshall Perron.

The fatal crash was the first incident in the Cannonball, a Government-sanctioned competition inspired by an illegal coast-to-coast dash across America which also spawned several B Grade movies.

It had been opposed by a num-

ber of groups in the territory, but attracted a well-heeled field of 140 starters in a wide range of exotic and high performance vehicles. On each day of the Cannonball they competed in a flying mile contest over a closed section of highway, a number of timed Cannonball stages, with untimed touring sections.



A Ferrari F-40.

ber of groups in the territory, but attracted a well-heeled field of 140 starters in a wide range of exotic and high performance vehicles. On each day of the Cannonball they competed in a flying mile contest over a closed section of highway, a number of timed Cannonball stages, with untimed touring sections.

The Ferrari F-40 — which led the event from the start in Darwin, clocking speeds as high as an officially timed 285km/h — ran out of control at the end of Tuesday's first timed speed section 100km

Control at the end of Tuesday's first timed speed section 100km south of Alice Springs. Millionaire

Tokyo dentists Akihiro Kabe and Takeshi Okano had just overtaken a Porsche 911 Turbo when the incident happened. Braking for the finish control, Kabe lost control of his \$750,000 exotic vehicle and ploughed into two parked cars.

The officials, who were along side one of the vehicles, had no chance. Kabe, 22-year-old Tim Linklater and 31-year-old Keith Pritchard, were killed instantly.

National Library of Australia

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article118213636>

Canberra Times (ACT : 1926 - 1995), Wednesday 25 May 1994, page 1

Pritchard, were killed instantly. Co-driver Okano, attended by medical teams who were on scene within minutes, died soon after.

"I just can't imagine what took place," Moffat said. "There are

100,000 other spots on the highway where you could have believed this could have happened. This certainly wasn't one of them.

"You couldn't actually believe how anybody could be killed in it."

The fatal crash was watched from a light aircraft by a local mechanic and occasional racer, Mr Bill Yan, who estimated that the Ferrari had been travelling at close to 300km/h shortly before the incident.

Advanced driving instructor and Bathurst champion Gregg Hansford, a competitor in the event, said the tragedy had rocked the remaining Cannonball cruise.

"He made a big mistake — actually a couple," he said of Kabe. "Not having the control set up off the road, in case something happened, was also a mistake".

"Unfortunately, you have to learn from your mistakes, and this was a gigantic mistake."

National Library of Australia

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article118213636>