

A Day at Tallarook training ground on Saturday March 28

Jim and I received an invitation to attend a training session for driving instructors.

After much discussion and at a weak moment we agreed to attend with a couple of provisos; if Jim attends then I shall also attend and visa versa

Jim and I met in Benalla at around 7:15 bells and by a tad after 0830 we were at the training ground somewhere in the hills near Tallarook, yes we stayed somewhere around the speed limit as you must when the fine sergeant is in the car.

Most of the day consisted of theory but there were a couple of practical exercises to keep the body moving

1. First exercise was to learn about the electronic gizmos on a new Jeep KK some one had loaned Robert Pepper. I must say all these electronic thingies work very well, the controlled hill decent can be set at different speeds the slowest being 1.6k/hr. Ground clearance was an issue with this model Jeep especially with four people all my size negotiating bush tracks complete with biggish boulders.
2. Exercise 2 was retrieving a Land Rover after a roll over. The idea was to use two vehicles with winches to gently roll it back onto its wheels. Volunteers were called to operate the vehicle and a couple of guys put there hand up as they had participated in the exercise before. So next was a call for someone to lead the recovery. I said I had done a simular recovery for real and I should be exempt from being leader, apparently it does not pay to open ones mouth. Guess who was nominated by the group to lead the recovery – bugger, so where's my mate Jim during all this, Oh there he is blending in with the trees. A long lonely story shortened we successfully completed the task in

about 15 minutes. Mike Smith (an owner of several Land Rovers) asked if we could reposition the vehicle for the next group, as the Landie was pushed onto its side I made the comment that I always wanted to do that to a Land Rover Disco.

3. Exercise 3 was negotiating steep rutted rocky slopes with risk of tyre damage and possible roll over. Volunteers were called for preferably with vehicles with winch and diff locks, again no one was coming forward so rather than watch someone else have fun the Nissan was put to use as a demonstrator.
4. Mike Smith was the instructor on the most difficult section and he chose yours truly with the Ute to have a go under his instruction. Maybe Mike was getting back at me for the Land Rover comment. We decided to run the obstacles of highway tyre pressures (about 40psi) to demonstrate the adverse effects of not reducing tyre pressures. First obstacle both diff locks were not permitted to demonstrate the limitations of wheel travel and of course when a wheel was lifted all forward travel ceased. Mike proceeded to talk and answer questions for some time in the mean time my brake foot was screaming in pain from fatigue. Finally I was allowed to key start in reverse. At about this time Jim is trying to run a book on whether the Ute would make it up, (you will need to ask Jim the outcome of the book). Taking a more suitable line with both diff locks engaged the vehicle climbed the boulder with ease. See you don't need to let tyres down. Next obstacle was a rut whilst climbing a boulder. Mike said NO diff locks this time and I must follow his guidance or a roll over is possible. Yes I'm almost sorry for the Land Rover comment but here

goes. Surprise, surprise, after a little bit of scrabbling and driving at the lowest engine revs as possible without stalling, the Ute climbed to the top. Now I can go home without pumping up my tyres. Mike then asked if I would do it again with a passenger, so round we went again without hick up. What most of the fellow instructors were interested in were the Gas/Diesel set up and the big exhaust.

More theory followed so about 1515 hrs Jim and I made our apologies and retreated to the Hume Hwy again

I know Jim used to word "hoon" on one occasion but I'm sure it was not pointed at me so no fines for the day

Stan

Edi Cutting Family Weekend

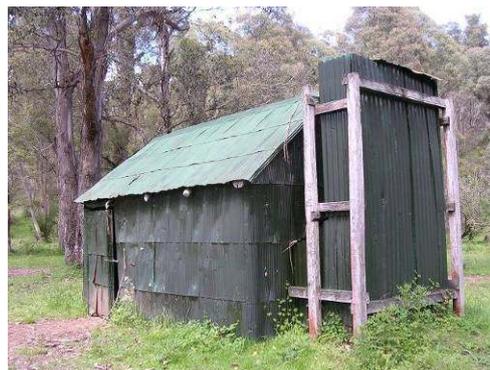
A trip report was not available for this weekend, so Robbo offered to put something together for me – thanks Robbo for doing this at short notice.

The camp at Edi cutting was interesting although the caravan club didn't come out on the night drive. Rob Holden drove my truck to the Top Crossing hut at quite a rapid rate and the other three trucks did manage to keep up even though Ron was in the middle of the convoy and Craig was tail end Charlie.

Lots of roos about and some close encounters with those and bunnies (one bunny did commit suicide at one point although we risked our lives to try and avoid the poor little darling).

There were some campers at the hut and we stopped for a brief few moments before I lead the drivers back. The creeks were low and at the second creek we played a practical joke on Ron and became tail end Charlie. Then Craig decides to cross sandy creek and climb the track on the other side for an alternative route back to camp. Good drive enjoyed the company.

Cheers Robbo



Fire Recovery Update

(provided by David early April)

So far, two weekend workparties by the Wang 4WD Club with assistance on one from the representatives of the NSW 4WD Association and assistance on the other from the Swan Hill 4WD Club have removed about 10 km of fire-damaged fencing on three properties in the Mudgegonga area. This is a great effort but as we all appreciate the task of fire recovery, even in this relatively small fire-affected area of the state, is still enormous.

We have been working very closely with the Alpine Shire Volunteer Coordinator in undertaking our workparties and have developed a strong relationship with Hugh Forrest who is carrying out this role although living and farming in the fire-affected area himself.

We have also registered with 4WDVic for towing of donated caravans into the fire-affected areas; the first tow (by myself) is happening this Friday from the staging area at Seymour to the recipient in Reedy Creek.

We have been in contact with several other clubs (Albury Wodonga and GV) who are also considering becoming involved in the fire recovery work, but haven't committed to dates as yet. However, the good news is that the NSW Association will definitely be coming down over Easter with possibly up to 25 vehicles, so this will make a big impact on a number of properties in the area.