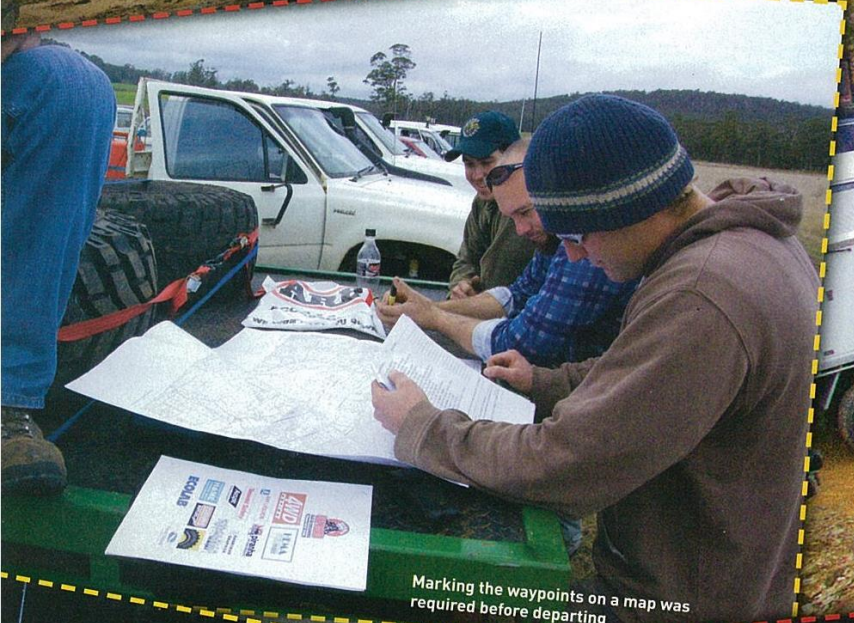
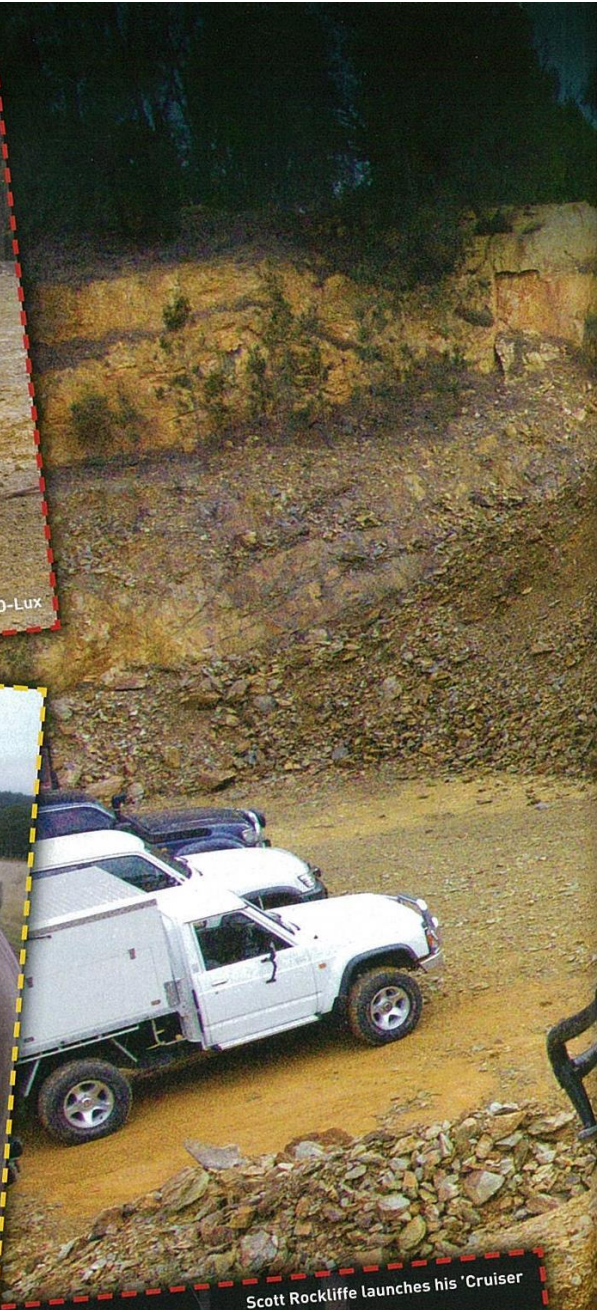




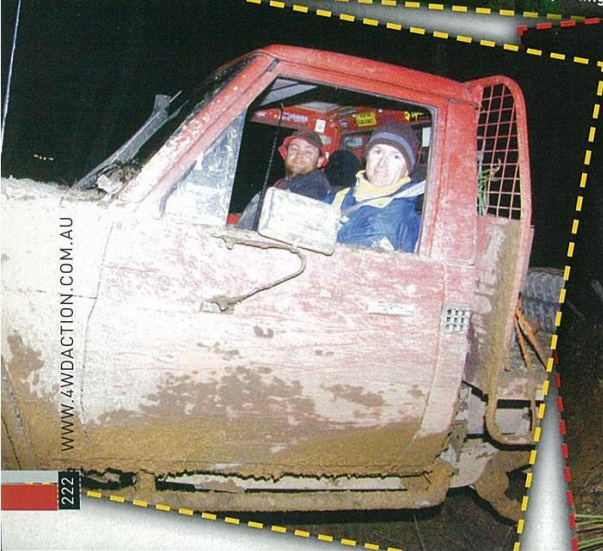
Overall winners, Team D-Lux



Marking the waypoints on a map was required before departing



Scott Rockliffe launches his 'Cruiser'



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4WD COMPETITION
North West Offroad Tassie Challenge



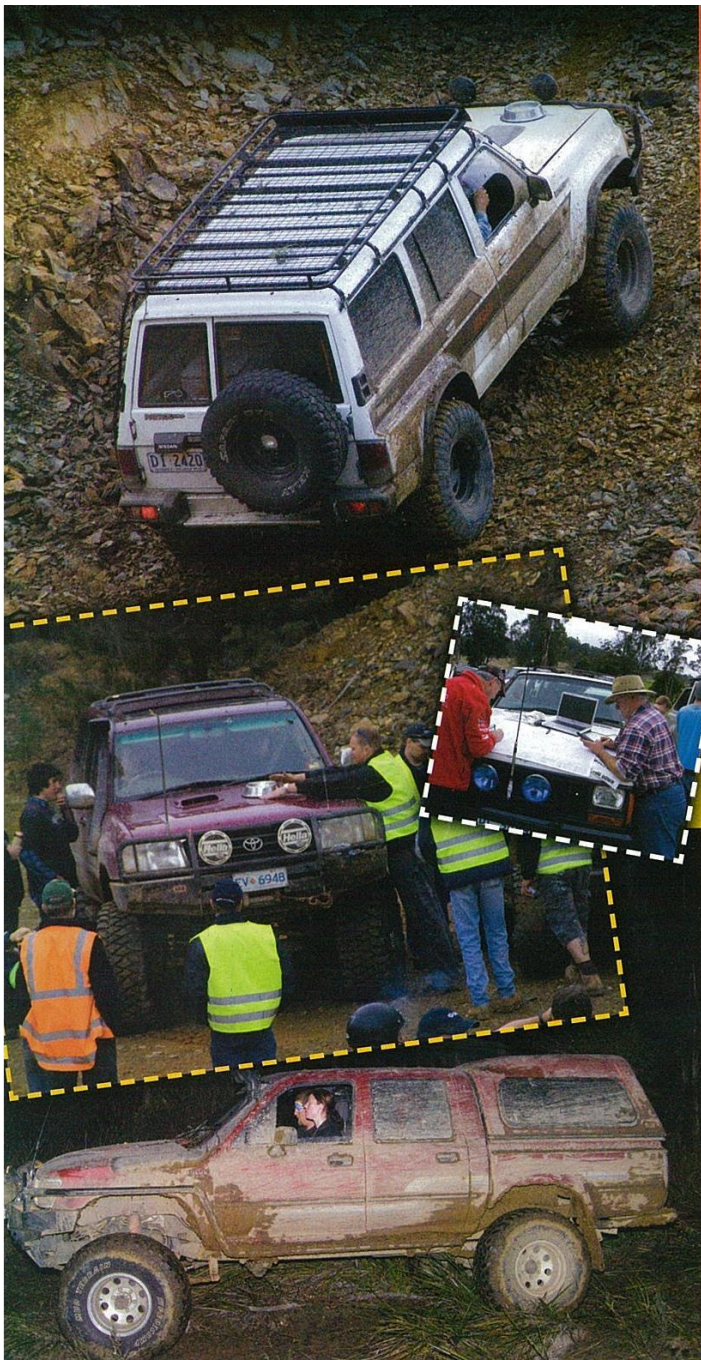
THE

CHALLENGED

Challenge by name, challenging by nature ■ WORDS BY GLENN WILLIAMS PHOTOGRAPHY BY JARROD LEONARD ■

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The sun has just risen over the quiet farming community of Sassafra, situated on Tasmania's sunny

north-west coast. The sky is blue and the morning sun shines radiant warmth on your face. You turn to watch two black swans feeding on the mirror-like dam and marvel at the wonder of it all.

And then you hear it...

A distant noise, more of a rumble really. As you strain to identify it, you feel the earth shudder. By the time you have arrived to tell the others, it was already upon you – a continuous line of 4WDs, lasting what seemed like hours, were weaving their way down the hill. Tassie Challenge IV was here!

Nothing else to do but enjoy it, and enjoy it we did! But not on our own, as the fun was shared with over 150 competitors and more spectators than had ever been seen before.

A competitor briefing was held at 11.30am outlining what was expected and what challenges lay ahead. Looking into the crowd, I noticed many blank faces and looks of 'what did he just say?'. The phrase 'lambs to the slaughter' came to mind.

The first task at hand for competitors was a map marking exercise, with 21 points to be marked out. Some seasoned teams were obviously a bit complacent with this small challenge as they fared quite poorly, while a few newcomers showed how quickly they can learn and scooped up some valuable points before leaving base camp.

Following that, competitors were free to leave base camp and head off to find the 21 waypoints and compete in special stages throughout the day. Rest assured that the waypoints were placed in

some of the hardest to reach places that the surrounding terrain had to offer, and the special stages would really get the brain – as well as the right foot – moving.

The first special stage was the Air Liquide SS1 consisting of two parts:

Up first 'A Dog's Breakfast', where one car had a dog bowl attached to the bonnet with a tennis ball placed inside. Drivers were timed while driving a course consisting of side slopes, steep up and down hills and rocky parts. More than one navigator had to run to retrieve a runaway tennis ball before they could continue, much to the delight of the crowd.

Part two was the 'Do I Look Fat In This Patrol?' challenge, where drivers instructed their navigators how far apart to place two markers from a distance of 10m. Once placed, the cars were then parked between them to be measured, with points going to the closest. Some drivers obviously were confused as to whether they were driving a mini or a Mack truck, judging by the distances measured.

Following SS1, teams continued to collect the info from each waypoint they had located and record it on their answer sheet, with the hope of piecing together a sentence from all the waypoints found.

During the afternoon, reports started trickling in regarding teams winning for hours at a time to free themselves from the deep muddy bogs. There were also quite a few mechanical failures that led to some very impressive bush mechanic antics to get themselves up and running again.

Importantly, everyone was having fun, with the exception of one competitor who threw his GPS out the window in a fit of frustration. More frustrating was that he couldn't find it again when he got out to look. Apparently, he

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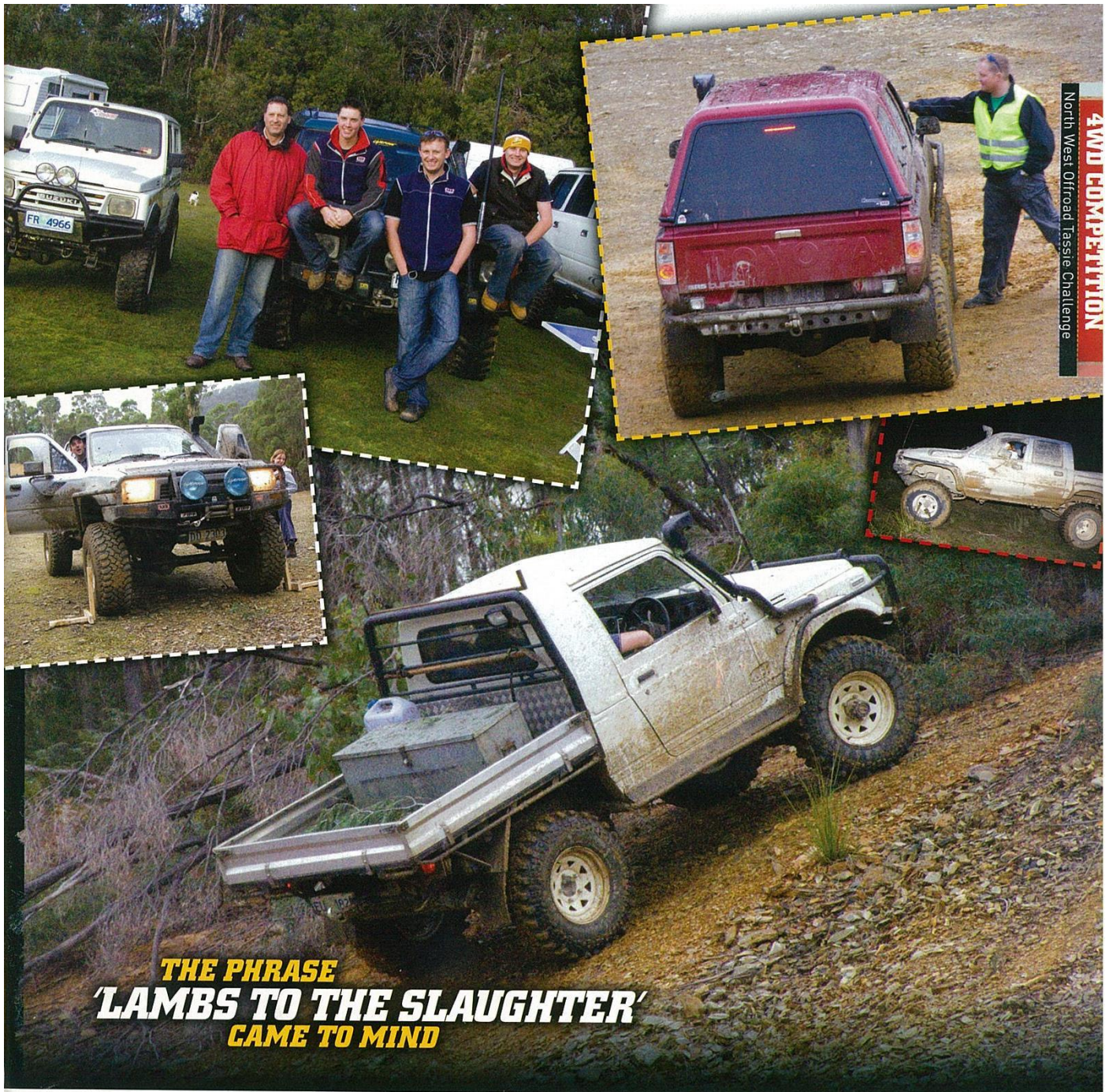


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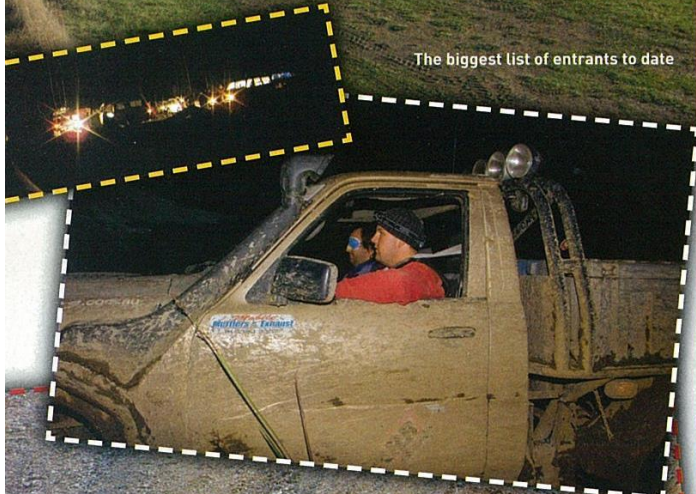


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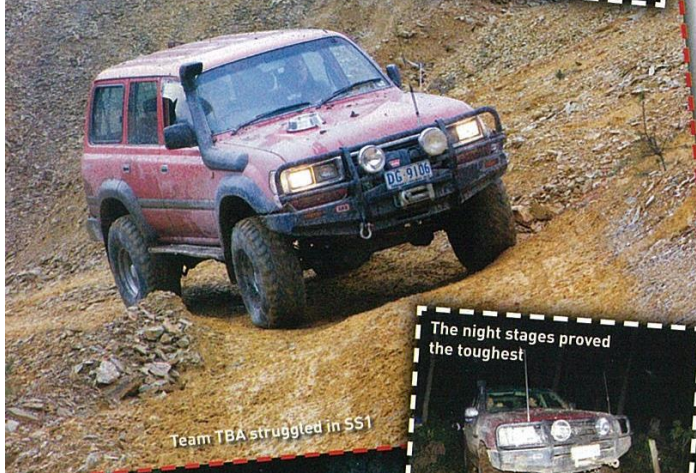
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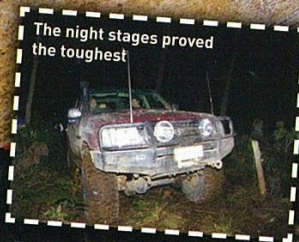
The biggest list of entrants to date



Team TBA struggled in SS1



The night stages proved the toughest



A soft lean over, but the recovery delay caused SS2 to be downgraded

also threw out his navigator/wife during the afternoon, but she was later reported alive and well, back in the passenger seat.

Some hours later, after the sun had gone down, the *Australian 4WD Action SS2* opened up for competitors to try to gain some valuable points. As the Special Stages were not compulsory and not all teams entered them, it was a great way to gain some points over those teams still out chasing waypoints.

SS2 again consisted of two parts, the first named 'Glass Half Full'. One team car had to pass a glass of water under one of its tyres. The way in which this was achieved was entirely up to the competitors, with some teams digging holes in the rocky ground and others trying the traditional jack. Some spent more time planning than actually doing, and as a result, times for this stage ranged from under two minutes to nearly 15.

The second team car had to contest 'Show Me A Sign'. This was quite a difficult track that required a tulip map to negotiate, while recording symbol markers placed along the course. Due to the heavy rain in the days leading up to the event, the course became very difficult, with most teams needing to winch at some point. Team McCoy Automotive looked like driving the whole course without the need to winch, until their big horsepower, turbo LandCruiser destroyed its front diff on the last rocky hill climb.

This SS eventually was downgraded after Terrence Ward turned his 80 Series 'Cruiser on its side halfway through. This little incident won Terrence a place on the 'In The Poo' poo-petual trophy.

Although officials were quick to respond and recover the tired 80, it was decided to cancel the rest of this stage and award average points to all teams that entered SS2.

By now, it was well into the night and teams were getting cold, tired and hungry. Only a couple of hours remained to find those last few waypoints, which were becoming more difficult to reach as 70-odd cars had passed through the wet boggy tracks. The onset of darkness had slowed vehicles down and made spotting the waypoint tags very difficult. Most teams now were finishing up out on the trails and trying to find their way back to base camp by the 10pm deadline to compete in the final special stage.

The final SS was the 'Hema Maps Driving Blind', where each team lined up both cars and navigated their way around a rough bush course. The twist was that the driver of each car was blindfolded and given instructions by their navigator. Judging by the vast difference in times, some teams had a lot more trust issues with their navvies than others. The fastest times were around the two-minute mark and the slowest time was nearly 10.

Following the last special stage, competitors made their way back to head office at base camp, where they handed in all their paperwork for marking. While they awaited for the results to be tallied, they were fed a nice hot BBQ and given the chance to warm by the fire pots, and of course relive some of the day's events. And relive they did, because an experience like that was not easily forgotten.

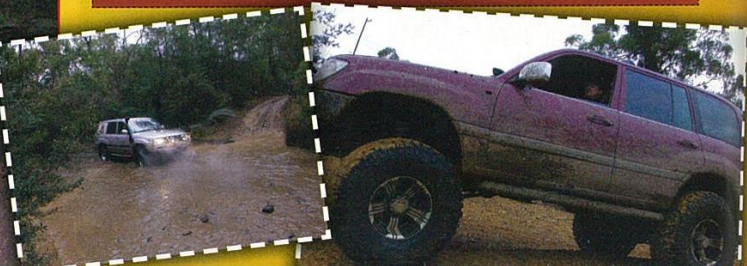
So, want to compete? Check out www.tassiechallenge.com.

THANKS

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**DO I LOOK FAT
IN THIS PATROL?**

RESULTS

Team Name	MAP	SS1	SS2	SS3	Triv	Wpt	Lock	Bonus	Sentence	SUB	Ded	TOTAL
D Lux	85	80	50	25	14	525	0	15	50	844	0	844
Tassie Boys	20	25	50	60	31	525	21	15	50	797	0	797
TBA	40	20	50	100	16	500	0	0	0	726	0	726