

Rhino Charge



Bruce and Dave,

Thanks again for all of your support helping out Car #42 in the 2011 Rhino Charge. This being our first ever attempt at it, my goals for the Charge were pretty modest - everyone stays safe and we can drive the car home. In that respect it was quite successful although we only managed to complete two of the 13 checkpoints on the course. That was mostly due to some poor route planning on my part and a few navigational issues. The whole event was a great learning experience and ended up being significantly more difficult than I was expecting, partly due to the aforementioned route planning issues. If nothing else, the big lessons that I came away with were to pay extra attention to the features on the topographic map that they provide and make sure you have more water than you think you'll need.

Even though we found ourselves in some of the most difficult driving situations I've ever faced, at no point did I ever feel that there wasn't something we couldn't do. For this I owe you guys a huge thanks, the training that OEX provided me gave me the confidence to drive sections that were downright challenging but also to know what was possible and what should be avoided. In particular Dave's lesson on an improvised anchor to keep the tail end of the vehicle sliding out while winching on a slope proved to be very, very useful on a number of occasions. It also proved a little difficult to explain to my teammates the first time I was perched on the sideslope, hard on the brakes and hoping they

understood what I was saying. There certainly is some value in getting everyone together and training them before the event, but given our varied schedules and work commitments it just wasn't possible.



For a team of four guys who have never done anything like this before (including some who had never used a winch) and were working on about four hours of sleep, we made a pretty good showing of the event. It's true that we only went about 3.7 kms and it took us 10 hours to do it but what ever we got ourselves into, we were able to get out of and safely if not very rapidly. While I'd love to compete in the Charge again, I'm moving to Russia this summer and probably will not make it back for another. I am, however, now seriously considering one of your Mongolia trips for next year's adventure since I'll be in the region. We certainly would not have been able to do this without your training and assistance and for that I'm sincerely grateful. I've attached a picture of Team Bessy's Revenge, and Bessy looking a little worse for the wear, at the end of the Charge and also one of us working our way through one of the boulder fields. I'll send along more pictures of us in action as soon as I can round them up from the rest of the guys. As I spent most of the time in the car, directing the show while leaning on the brakes, I wasn't able to get too many photos myself. Thanks again and I look forward to training with you all soon.

Warm regards, Doug