

Motor Industry News Leyland Australia

June, 1972



TRANS AMERICAS EXPEDITION SUCCESS

Two specially equipped Range Rovers have succeeded in their bid to make the first ever unbroken land crossing of the American Continent from north to south, a total distance of about 18,000 miles.

Three months of the six-month long journey was spent in crossing the hitherto unpassable Darien Gap, a 250 mile stretch of dense jungle, swamps, rivers and mountain ridges separating North and South America.

The Gap represents the last obstacle to the completion of the Pan-American Highway which otherwise runs unbroken from Alaska to the tip of Chile.

The Range Rovers faced thick snow and ice and temperatures as low as minus 45 degrees, as well as tropical heat and jungle.

The Range Rovers were crewed by men from the 17th/21st Lancers. Rally driver Captain Gavin Thompson who, with Captain Jeremy Groves, led the vehicle party, said at journey's end: "It has been a fantastic experience.

"We are absolutely delighted with the performance of the Range Rovers."

Although badly battered bodily after the gruelling trip, the Range Rovers were examined and were pronounced "in excellent mechanical order."

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CARS	AUSTIN	BUSES	COACHES	FOUR WHEEL	TRACTORS	ROAD ROLLERS
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The Expedition took place in three stages. The first was the 7,000 mile drive along the Pan American Highway from Alaska to Panama.

After grouping there, and meeting other army personnel and scientists, the Range Rovers began crossing the 250 miles of the Darien Gap, a trek which took three months at an average rate of three miles a day.

The expedition emerged after three months in the jungle and, on April 23rd, signalled the United Kingdom: "Mission accomplished", marking the first time the Gap had been conquered by man and vehicle.

After a break for servicing and cleaning in Bogota, the Range Rovers, with the same army crews, set out on May 12 on the final 8,000 mile leg to Tierra Del Fuego. They then travelled a further 2,000 miles back up the east coast of South America to Buenos Aires for shipment back to England.

The expedition passed through 15 countries, on one stage cruising comfortably at 90 mph on a straight desert road.

Both Range Rovers were specially prepared for the journey and modifications included; fitting of winches, spot and fog lamps, additional instruments, partitioned stowage lockers and a special five-gallon water keg for use in the jungle areas.

Other equipment included hand winches, extensive tool kits, full first-aid kit, shovels and ground anchors for recovery work.

Both vehicles were also fitted with electric coffee percolators and cookers made specially for use in moving vehicles, while one of the Range Rovers even had a built-in safe for the crew's money, passports and other valuables.