

ARMED FORCES RACE CHALLENGE 2015

Located in the Lincolnshire Wolds, in a steep sided valley Cadwell Park is one of the most technical circuits in the UK. With its wooded section through Hall Bends and elevation changes at Gooseneck and The Mountain the circuit has gained the nickname of Mini-Nurburgring. Originally used by the land owner's sons to race motorbikes against each other, the weekend of 20/21 June saw the Armed Forces Race Challenge come to Cadwell. Initially the plan was for the AFRC to run again as part of the Roadsports series, but such was the demand that the 750 MC offered the AFRC a slightly shorter independent race on the Sunday, which was accepted.



Chris Camp through Hall Bends

Most competitors were able to transfer their entries to the Sunday race, unfortunately for Sqn Ldr Darren Howe (RAF) this wasn't an option. Anyway with a third in the Roadsport series at Silverstone he had a position to maintain. Joining



Darren Berris in the Westfield V8

Darren Howe, but running in the Sports Specials, Sqn Ldr Darren Berris (RAF) in the V8 powered Westfield was able to run both days. After practice Darren Howe was mid-pack on the grid, tenth in class. In the race Darren made steady progress through the grid, finishing thirteen overall and fourth in class. In the Sports Specials, Darren Berris was also having a good time, qualifying sixth overall. In the race, a bad start dropped him down to eighth, but managed to get back to sixth before a crashed car

brought out the red flags. A better start second time he maintained position finally finishing fifth overall.

Sunday for the AFRC was to be the main day. With an early practice most competitors arrived on the Saturday to a welcoming curry provided by Sgt Chris Slator (RAF), who would be driving the Peugeot 306 in the AFRC.

Sunday would be a day when the gremlins would be out in force. First time through the scrutineering bay is always a worrying time for a new car and for PTO Steve Hutchings (Navy) Peugeot 106 it was not a happy one.

Unfortunately for Steve the scrutineer had found things that were not correct, and he could not race. Luckily with a huge help from Richard and his friends the necessary work was completed and the all important sticker issued before practice started. The other newcomer Sgt Will Ashmore (Army) had no such



Steve Hutchings in the Peugeot 106

problems as his ex-Honda Civic Cup Car had raced previously.

SAC Adam Twine (RAF) was on his first outing of the year with his new car a Honda Integra. Also taking time away from the Toyo Tires Pre '05 Touring Car Series, Paul Waterhouse (RAFMSA) had come for a fun days racing. After his successful day on Saturday, Darren Berris reported that the car didn't quite feel right but put this down to the track and assumed it would be better in the race. Next to succumb to the



Tom, Chris and Dan at the hairpin

gremlins was Tom Pearce's Mitsubishi Lancer EVO VI (BAMA) when the turbo pipe came off causing a loss of power. Lt Cdr RN Richard Scott (RNRMSA) also had to return to the paddock when the Locost's engine started to misfire. Apart from that the usual niggles needed fixing, Chris Camp (BAMA) still can't find a location in the Lexus where the transponder gives a reliable signal to the time keepers.

Fastest driver on the grid was a guest driver, Wayne Rothwell in the

very rapid Tiger ZR6.

As the race was mid-afternoon there was plenty of time for fettling of the cars and more importantly, the drivers could pack in the carbs in the form of burger, chips and large ice creams. By race time both drivers and cars were ready, although the longevity of the Locost was very much in debate as only temporary repairs could be undertaken with no access to the required spares. From the lights the Tiger ZR6 left everyone standing. Darren got an average start and then proceeded to set nothing faster than a 1:44 and was being left behind Will in the Civic on the straights, barely breaking 100 mph, so he knew something was wrong. Behind Darren, Sgt Chris Wood (Army) and Ed Mckean (RAF) in their BMWs were having a blast. Chris was having a lonely race as his nemesis Daz Smeed couldn't make it to Cadwell.

The battle for French honours was lead by Chris Slator in the Peugeot 306, followed by Paul in the Peugeot 205 and Steve in the Peugeot 106. Steve followed Paul for a few laps and once had the racing lines managed to pass going through the start/ finish. The last battle was between Sgt Dom Benfell (RAF), in an Esprit, Chris Camp, SAC Dan Smith (RAF) in a Fiesta and Adam Twine.



The battle for French honours

Unfortunately for Richard in the Locost the temporary repairs hadn't worked and although he came out for the warm up lap he was unable to take the start.

On lap seven going into the hairpin Dan made a small

mistake and slid into the tyre wall. Despite the yellow flags a racing incident occurred that meant the retirement of not only Dan but the guest driven Porsche 944. During the safety car period most of the competitors took the decision to take the mandatory pit stop, regrettably Wayne Rothwell missed the pit window when he stopped which would encore a penalty dropping him down the final order.

After the good luck of Silverstone, Cadwell Park proved to be a bit of a car breaker with a total of six AFRC drivers not taking the checkered flag. Back in the paddock Richard Scott's Locost was still misfiring, Adam Twine's, Honda Integra had lost a bung from the exhaust system causing the engine to run roughly and Daniel Smith's Ford Fiesta was looking very sad with rear corner damage. The throttle adjuster on Darren Berris's usually bullet proof Westfield V8 had started to unwind,



Chris Wood at Barn corner

so at best he only had half throttle, which was getting worse by the minute. Steve Hutchings's, Peugeot 106 had developed a fuel leak and Will Ashmore's Honda Civic was another car with a misfire. To cap it all Tom Pearce reported that the clutch had packed up and he had done most of the race without it. So all in all a very eventful Sunday, plenty of action and the weather keep reasonably dry for the whole day. Congratulations to those that finished and commiserations to those that had their problems. With a couple of months till the next race it's hoped that those with problems who can get them sorted will be back out for round 3. Snetterton in September will hopefully be an all AFRC grid again and with a bit of luck as many competitors will attend as were at Cadwell Park.

Pictures by Nick and Mark Rogers