

HOT LINE

Over The Top

IF YOU happen to come across three green trailer-toting Land Rovers and a white ABC LandCruiser wandering around the most remote parts of northern Australia closely shadowed by an army helicopter, during the next 12 months, don't worry about it, it's just the ABC going 'Over The Top'.

Well, that's the name of the television documentary series the ABC crew will be filming.

'Over The Top' will be a series of 10 separate expeditions with the narrator of the series, the Australian army's expert on bush survival, Major Les Hiddins.

Hiddins has spent the past 10 years in northern Australia, cataloguing and studying native flora and fauna for their food value and availability and studying the survival techniques of the Aborigines, some of which have been in practice for over 30,000 years.

Each episode of the series will tell a different story, by following the footsteps of an early explorer, or recounting the events surrounding a more recent expedition or survival incident.

Survival techniques in different terrain and climatic conditions will form the crux of each episode, but the series will also take a close look at four-wheel-driving techniques, the history of the north and the lifestyles of various Aboriginal communities.

The 10 episodes will take a total of 13 months to film, during which time the crew and their vehicles will cover some 70,000 kms, as much of it off-road as on!

JRA have made the filming of the series



The ABC's two specially equipped Land Rover 110 diesels.

possible by donating two brand new Land Rover 110 County diesel wagons, which have been specially equipped with a complex array of extras that the average owner dreams of.

JRA have equipped both

vehicles with army issue batteries and heavy duty springs, and bolt-on holders for extra equipment. Off Road Equipment have supplied heavy duty bullbars and Thomas PTO winches, and fabricated a special roofrack designed to use all of the 110's sloping roof space.

Add long range fuel tanks and jerry cans which give the vehicles a range of 2000 kms, a complete set of recovery gear from Opposite Lock, tents from Eagles Camping, window tinting, Cibie driving lights, a 100-litre Trailblazer fridge and 60-litre fridge/freezer, special internal fabrication of trays and storage racks courtesy of the ABC's engineering department, a Codan SSB 99-channel Royal Flying Doctor Service radio and an AM CB unit, and you've just about got it covered.

The two JRA Country's, being driven by Scott Feeney and David Tunnell, will carry all the crew's

equipment and supplies and be accompanied by Les Hiddins' army 110 ragtop. Each vehicle will also be towing a half-tonne army trailer.

The ABC's HJ60 LandCruiser will carry the film crew and camera gear and tow a specially designed trailer provided by Specialist Trailers.

An army Kiawa helicopter will also accompany the crew on each of the six trips, averaging about eight weeks, from which the 10 episodes will eventually be made.

The first stage of the expedition begins in Townsville, from which the vehicles will visit Cape York, Arnhem Land, Gove, Darwin, Port Keates, Tanami, the Simpson Desert, Alice Springs, Prince Regent's Gorge, Kalumburu, the Arafura Sea coast and Nhulunbuy, before returning to Darwin and later to Sydney after more than a year on the road.

Henty show

HENTY, near Albury on the NSW/Victorian border, is holding its annual agricultural field day on September 22, 23 and 24 this year.

This huge event should interest four-wheel-drivers, machinery operators, road transport and mining companies, as well as farmers.

Albury's best-known man in the 4WD business, John Hossack, will have a large display at the field day to show off his range of off-road products.