

# COMETS ON THE AFRICAN SAFARI

...IN FULL COLOR!

# HOT ROD

EVERYBODY'S AUTOMOTIVE MAGAZINE



JUNE 1964 50¢ 60¢ IN CANADA

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## EVERYBODY'S AUTOMOTIVE MAGAZINE

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### COVER:

The first public showing of Craig Breedlove's Spirit II dragster will be at Hot Rod's Championship Drag Meet, June 12, 13 and 14 at Riverside. It's V8-powered rather than jet but will hopefully live up to the reputation set by Spirit I. For details, see page 62. Photo by Eric Rickman.

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**BY RAY BROCK** ■ Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa — The twelfth edition of the East African Safari is now complete and this event, billed as the world's toughest rally, lived up to advance publicity well as only 21 cars out of a starting field of 94 finished the 3188-mile grind. The Safari is unlike any other rally in the world, for penalty points are awarded only if contestants are late at time controls, not if they are early. The natural result of this type scoring, plus the fact that hard driving is required even on most "easy" sections to meet time allowances, turns the Safari into a race against the clock.

We personally participated in the 1964 Safari as a member of Lincoln-Mercury's Comet team, drove many thousands of practice miles plus the rally itself and can attest to the fact that this is surely one of the most

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unique motoring events anywhere in the world. The Safari traverses the worst collection of roads and trails to be found in the countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, and organizers of the event chuckled with glee whenever a contestant would return from a practice trip and describe the hardships he had encountered. There are a number of good roads in these countries, many of them paved, but they were used only when necessary to transport competing cars from one twisting, rut-filled section to another.

What does a car-killer event such as this prove? You only have to drive the highways of East Africa and note the more common brands of automobiles to understand what the Safari proves. VW's, Mercedes and Peugeots are quite popular in the three countries we vis-

*(Continued on following page)*



## EAST AFRICAN SAFARI



ited, and they are all past winners. Potential automobile buyers in East Africa know from firsthand experience how bad the roads can be and they choose cars which have been proven durable in the Safari.

What did Comet hope to prove by competing in the Safari? They have no sales organization in Africa so their aim was to tackle the most demanding event known and prove to the world that Comets are able to absorb brutal punishment, yet keep going undaunted. If Comet won the Safari, national advertising would give American car buyers the message in no uncertain terms. Comet did not win the Safari, however. They did prove to have a durable automobile with one time-costing exception. But let's go back to early March when we first arrived in Nairobi, start and finish of the Safari and base of operations for competing teams.

There are six classifications of cars under Safari rules: Class A, up to 1000 cc; class B, 1000 to 1300 cc; class C, 1300 to 1600 cc; class D, 1600 to 2000 cc; class E, 2000 to 3000 cc; and class F, over 3000 cc. Although cars compete against those of similar displacement for class honors, the contestant collecting fewest penalty points is declared overall winner despite class. Seemingly unfair due to vast differences in power, small cars often emerge overall winner due to their light weight and relative ease with which they can be pushed, pulled or otherwise persuaded through deep mire and washed-out sections.

A total of 94 cars were entered in the '64 Safari. Eleven factory teams were also listed to compete for the Manufacturer's Award. A manufacturer may enter from 3 to 5 cars as a team and points lost by the best three finishers of each team determine team effort. Factory teams were entered by Saab (Sweden), Renault (France), Con- tessa (Japan), Morris (England), Datsun (Japan), Cedric (Japan), Peugeot (France), Volvo (Sweden), Cortina (England), Zodiac-Zephyr (England),

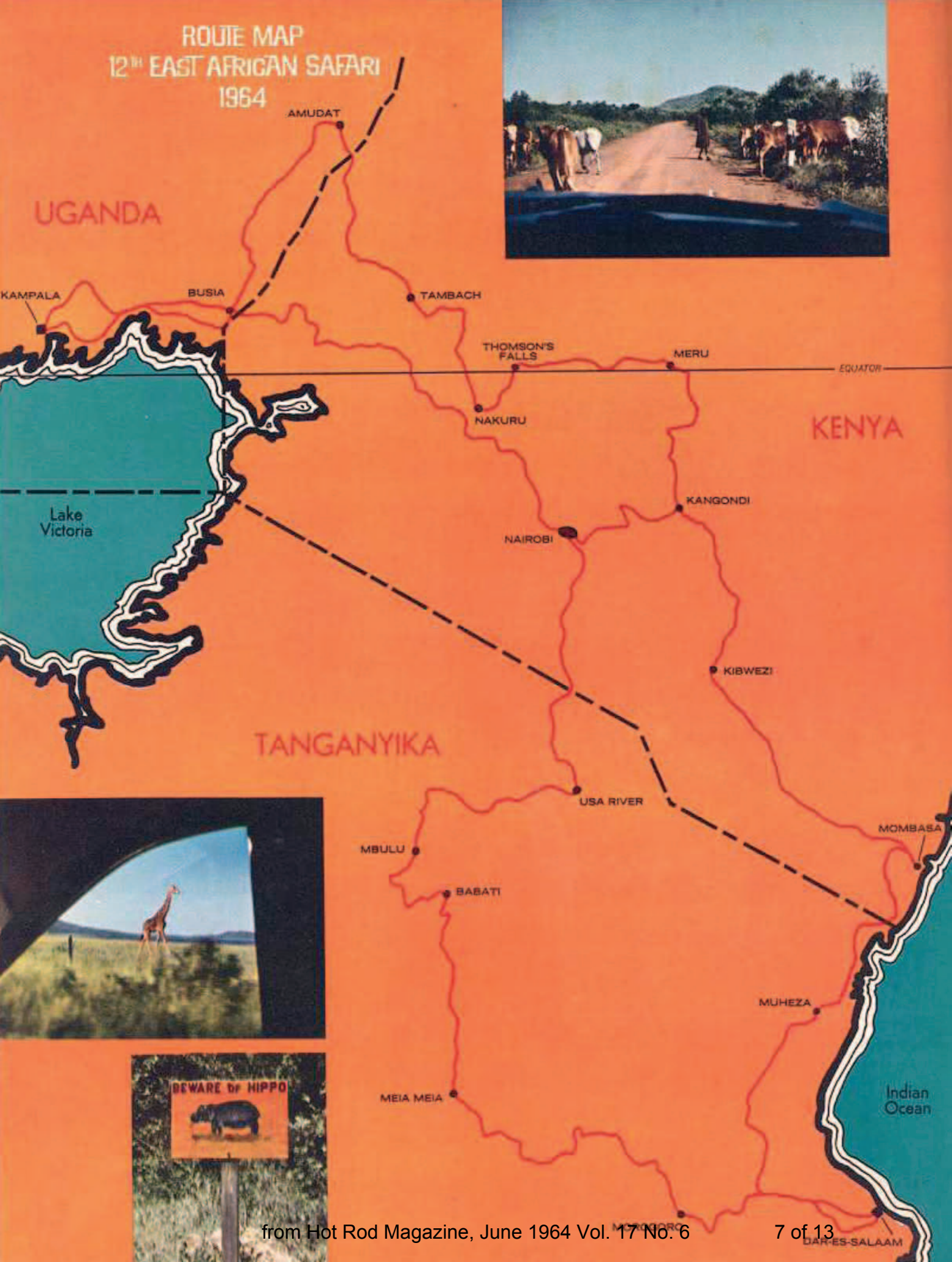
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*Shown in a variety of settings on these pages, Comets negotiated East Africa's worst roads at a rapid pace prior to shock mount troubles. They were especially quick in hill climb and straight sections where their power could be fully used. Wherever the Comets stopped, they drew crowds of curious viewers due to meticulous preparation and a flashy paint job.*

photos by  
Ray Brock  
and Mercury  
Division



# ROUTE MAP 12<sup>TH</sup> EAST AFRICAN SAFARI 1964



# EAST AFRICAN SAFARI

continued

and Comet (USA). In addition to official factory teams, numerous private entries broadened the field to include such brands as Hillman, Vauxhall, Austin, NSU Prinz, Anglia, DKW, Fiat, Morris, Citroen, Mercedes and VW.

A drawing was held February 28th to determine class starting positions. Another drawing determined starting positions within each class. Class C was the first group scheduled to leave the starting line, followed by classes A, D, E, F and B. The luck of the draw placed favored and potent Cortinas at the head of the pack with the factory team drawing starting positions of second, third, fourth, seventh and tenth. The first Comet was assigned number 73.

Practice sessions for the Safari are not limited to any specific time period. The general route of the course remains the same from year to year with slight variations and the complete 1964 route was announced in January of '64 so contestants had plenty of time for practice. For the simple reason that familiarity with the roads is all-important, the majority of the drivers in the Safari are residents of Kenya with a few from Uganda and Tanganyika. Even those factory teams from faraway countries obtain the services of local drivers for the most part.

Comet entered six cars in the Safari with all but three of the twelve drivers from Kenya. The three non-residents were American mechanics LeRoy Neumayer and Don Bailey in Comet number 76, and your reporter with Kenya-based British Army Warrant Officer Norm Greateorex in Comet number 73. The other teams were comprised of: Morris Temple-Boreham and Cliff Collinge in number 74; Bill Coleridge and Colin McNaughton, number 79; Joginder Singh and Jaswant Singh, number 80; and Viscount Kim Mandeville and Peter Walker, number 81. Originally, Louie Unser and Jack Conley, two of the mechanics who helped prepare the Comets at Bill Stroppe's shop, were scheduled to drive also but their entries were withdrawn so that a pair of service cars could be outfitted to follow the Comets in the Rally and provide assistance in the event of a breakdown. Iain Grant accompanied Unser and John Proctor co-drove with Conley in the service cars. Grant and Proctor are both from Kenya.

Since familiarity with the rally route is so important, most entrants cover

the entire route at least once, listing the tough spots. As time permits, drivers may make several trips over rougher sections to learn the road and make detailed notes. It was on one of these pre-race practice sessions that your reporter got a quick lesson on the perils of rally driving. Co-driver Norm Greateorex and I were practicing a section of road through rolling hills some 250 miles north of Nairobi with road surface dirt but in good shape generally. We rounded a sharp turn into a short downhill section that ended in a horse-shoe bend to the left with a narrow wooden bridge in the middle of the horseshoe. I had been using the brakes hard through this section as we had to maintain a 50 mph average and as I braked on the downhill section approaching the bridge, the right front brake grabbed just enough to pull the car to the right. To correct this situation, I had to release the brakes and by this time the car was into the curve,

even shaken, thanks to the seat belts, shoulder harness and roll bars.

We crawled from the car and surveyed the situation. The right front suspension was crunched, the top was bent in and the windshield was broken. Also the right side fenders were bent a little. Within 5 minutes several Africans who had been working on nearby tea plantations gathered on the scene. With Norm's knowledge of the local language (Swahili) we organized a work crew and turned the Comet over onto its wheels to keep oil, hydraulic fluid, gasoline and battery water from draining out. This left the car right side up but in a ditch about eight feet deep.

Our volunteer work crew kept growing in size and we had several of them with chopping hoes and pangas (machete-like knives) carve a ramp from the edge of the road down into the ditch where our car rested. After this ramp was complete, we attached our 70-foot



*Peter Hughes and Billy Young, winning Cortina drivers, had to carpet deep mud with brush for traction through flooded area near Dar Es Salaam. Sliding sideways here, car is also moving forward.*

I was still way too fast and there was only one thing to do at this stage: downshift, toss the car into the left turn and stand on the throttle.

The front wheels caught the bridge OK but unfortunately a Comet going sideways won't fit a one-lane bridge. The right rear wheel missed the bridge altogether and the Comet then did a roll off the bridge. The right front wheel dived into the soft stream bank, then the Comet toppled over onto its top on a thick matting of grass and vines. Norm and I were not injured or

nylon tow strap and the enthusiastic bystanders all grabbed hold. With about 100 Africans pulling to the rhythm of a harambee (work together) chant, they dragged and lifted the Comet back up to the shoulder of the road. With many thanks and some East African shillings passed out among the crowd, we went to work on the suspension.

All Comets were equipped with tool boxes so we stripped off the right front suspension, went to work with a 2-pound hammer and a nearby rock as an anvil to straighten things out to where the wheel pointed in approximately the direction we wished to move. About three hours after that strange feeling of hanging upside down in shoulder straps, we were underway again and on the way back to Nairobi for repairs.

*(Continued on following page)*

# EAST AFRICAN SAFARI

*continued*

We left our damaged practice car in the hands of Mercury's Performance Manager Fran Hernandez, and since all of the other practice Comets were being used, borrowed an English Zodiac from team member Peter Walker to use for further practice. Most practice mileage was registered during daylight hours so that we could check the terrain and make notes so it took 3 days to complete the northern leg which starts in Nairobi, goes into Uganda close by Lake Victoria to Kampala, then loops back into the northern frontier area of Uganda, down by Thomson's Falls, around Mt. Kenya and back into Nairobi from a northeasterly direction. This leg is 1435.4 miles long and covers a variety of country.

I discovered on our northern practice loop that Kenya is surely one of the most beautiful countries in the world. The area around Thomson's Falls is incomparable and although the Falls are almost directly on the equator, the average high plateau elevations of 5000 to 6000 feet keep the temperature at a perfect 75-80 degrees during the day, around 60 at night. The temperature was warmer in the northern section of Uganda for elevations were lower and the country was more desert in make-up with scrub brush in the sandy soil and a low annual rainfall. This area was used for the first time by the '64 Safari on a just-completed section of road in what had previously been wilderness. We were surprised to see Africans in this region clothed in only a feathered headpiece and a spear—and even more surprised at their interest in rally cars.

We completed the northern loop and arrived back in Nairobi just in time to help put the finishing touches on the Comet we'd flipped, then fired it up and struck out on the southern loop of the Safari down into Tanganyika. This loop was 1753 miles long and covered roads which defy description. When I first heard experienced drivers talking about a section of road near the village of Mbulu, Tanganyika, where ruts were 3 feet deep and mud sometimes extended halfway up the car's doors, I laughed. On the practice trip to Mbulu, most famous mudhole in Africa, I became a believer.

The high-wheeled lorries (trucks) that transport staples to this remote area often leave ruts like the fellows said: 3 feet deep. When you break over the rise of a hill at about 50 mph and

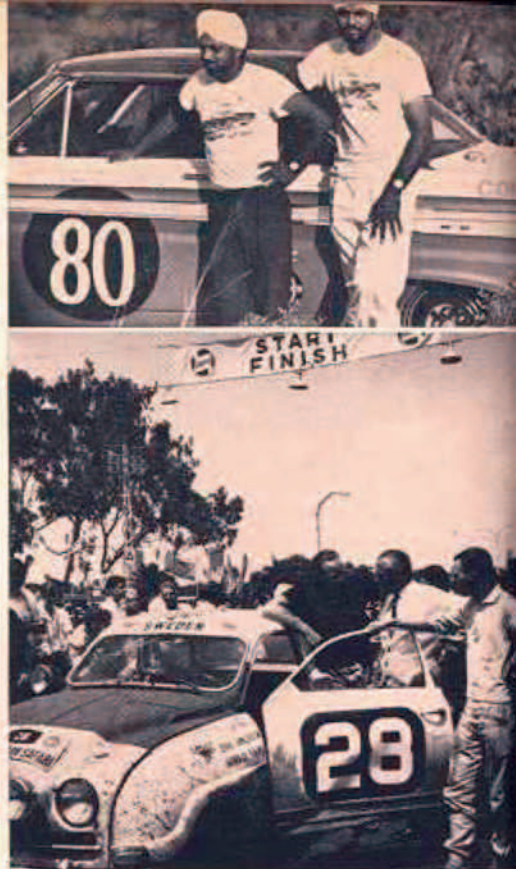
see one of these ruts directly in front of you, your pulse doubles in one jump. It's like trying to straddle a grease pit. Sometimes you avoid bad ones only to fall into others. All you can do then is hope inertia and the skid plates beneath the car will keep you sliding until the wheels get hold of something again.

We completed the southern loop in three days with its furthestmost point of Dar Es Salaam, capital of Tanganyika on the Indian Ocean. Outside Dar, with sea level elevation and swampy areas, we got the true African jungle treatment with humidity sometimes so high that the inside of the windshield would fog with side windows open, a clear sky and temperatures well above 90°. This particular area was later to prove our Waterloo during the actual Safari.

We had no trouble keeping the car on the road while on the southern leg and arrived back in Nairobi four days before the Safari was to start, March 26. Originally there had been five practice Comets for the team members to use and five new run cars arrived in Kenya two weeks before the start of the Safari. With six cars entered, this meant that one of the practice cars had to be checked thoroughly and refitted with new suspension components, engine, driveline parts, etc., to put it in perfect shape for the rally. Some of the practice cars had in excess of 12,000 miles on them and except for shock absorbers, periodic oil changes and air cleaner elements, they hadn't required any work.

During all of the practice miles registered prior to the Safari, the only problem to show up in the Comets had been shock absorbers. Ford's Autolite Division made the shocks and the problems were strictly a matter of severity of control. The original set with which the practice cars were equipped were not severe enough. So Autolite made up some stronger ones. These, too, were not severe enough for the unbelievable punishment to which the 3800-pound Comets subjected them. Still stronger shocks—same problem. Communications between East Africa and Detroit are bad—five or six days for air mail, one or two days advance booking for a radio-phone call with poor reception at best—and the engineers at Autolite could not believe that the shocks they had prepared weren't strong enough. By their calculations, the shocks should have easily handled a Greyhound bus.

Finally, just prior to the start of the Safari, a shipment of shock absorbers arrived from Autolite which really did the job. All teams made trial runs with their new cars and reported they handled perfectly. There were some long hours put in by Hernandez, Unser, Bailey, Neumayer and Conley to get the



TOP—Singh brothers, Joginder, left, and Jaswant, drove hard and were near leaders when shocks broke loose on rear.

ABOVE—Second place winners, Erik Carlsson, left, and Gunnar Palm, right, tell Safari chairman Eric Cecil how they rolled their Saab from Mbulu mudhole.

RIGHT—Mandeville-Walker Comet survived shock troubles, finished 18th. It's considered a feat to complete rally.

six cars plus a pair of service cars prepared for the Safari but when the inspection period arrived, all were ready. There was some slight discussion over the legality of the Comet roll bars with a few persons suggesting that they strengthened the body, but after a conference between Hernandez and Safari officials, it was decided that removal of a short section of cross bracing would eliminate the possibility of a protest by other contestants. Fortunately, removal of this section did not materially lessen the safety efficiency of the bars.

Conversation among contestants during pre-race practice sessions had been centered on two sections of the course, the Tambach section in the northern loop and the Mbulu section in the southern loop which we've already mentioned. Tambach is a small village halfway down an escarpment which drops from nearly 8000 feet to 3600 feet in less than 15 miles. The road is a steep, twisting, hairpin turn-infested, one-lane track with rickety wooden bridges over deep gorges and is so narrow that you'd



swear a Comet wouldn't fit between the cliff on one side and the steep drop on the other in many places. Once down off the steepest section of the escarpment, the road undulates over the valley floor with a series of stream beds and rock outcroppings. On this 23.5-mile section, the cars *only* had to maintain a 38 mph average to avoid penalty points. You should try it!

Once beyond this Tambach section, the road really gets interesting. For the next 50 miles, the one-lane road snakes up and down a series of escarpments with tight hairpin turns, deep drifts (stream bed crossings, often filled with water), and rock-strewn surfaces. Again, the conditions encountered defy description and yet, over all this, the average at which all contestants were aiming was 45.5 mph for the first 20.5 miles and 38.2 mph for the next 29.8 miles. By the time you added the three control sections together, starting with Tambach, total mileage was almost 74 miles and a driver's head was spinning at a pretty good clip from the seemingly thousands of turns by the end of the 74.

All drivers agreed after covering the entire rally circuit in practice that this could well be the champion car-killer of all time, depending upon weather conditions. Pre-race polls showed the favorites to be Cortinas, Saabs and Comets. All had shown excellent speed and staying power in practice. The Cortinas, with a number of experienced East African rallyists driving and the enviable early starting positions, were given

the most votes to win outright honors. Saab, with world champion Erik Carlsson and his very capable wife, Pat Moss Carlsson, in a pair of cars, was given a good chance, too. Carlsson led last year's Safari by a good margin until he experienced suspension trouble late on the southern loop.

The Comets were respected for their speed and excellent preparation but many veterans thought they might be too large to snake rapidly through tight sections like Tambach. In the mud, the Comets had a decided advantage over many of the other makes with excellent road clearance, limited-slip differential and good traction given by the Firestone dirt track-type tires.

At a driver's briefing the evening before the start of the 12th East African Safari, a local weather forecaster gave contestants the cheery news that they could expect rain over a good portion of the route. As the Safari started Thursday, March 26, with the first car departing at 6:00 p.m., the Nairobi area was dry but there was already a report of rain at the first tight control section 100 miles from Nairobi. The cars left the start at three-minute intervals.

Our starting time, as the first Comet, was 9:36 p.m. so we were quite some time behind the lead car when we arrived at this wet section, a short 8.8-mile hill climb with an average speed allowance of 53 mph. By the time we started through, rain had stopped but the road was very slick and well chewed up by the 72 cars ahead of us. As we

pulled into the control at the top of the section, we were three minutes late so lost three points, the first of many we were to lose. Although we had made the section within time easily on a dry road during practice, the slippery mud had hurt speed plenty. Even with a three-minute loss, we were in good shape for none of the earlier contestants had gone through without lost time and most were later than three minutes.

A total of 78 time control points, manned by volunteers of East African sports car clubs, were used for the entire 3188-mile length of the Safari plus another dozen passage controls to keep contestants from taking short cuts. As each entry left a time control, their route card was marked with departure time, time allowed for the section ahead, and time due at the next control. If the car was on time, no penalty points were awarded. If late, penalty was one point per minute.

You could not leave a control point until at least three minutes after your time due. If you were early, you waited. You could only gain positions in the rally if a car you passed earlier did not arrive at its time due. If you were both late and the car that had been passed did not arrive before your assigned departure time, then you were sent out on the next leg ahead of him. There was no possible way to gain time on a car that met the time requirements.

Our first setback of the Safari came on another tight hill climb section between controls 4 and 5, a 16.6-mile section starting 160 miles from Nairobi. Here again, heavy rains had made the road very slick and the surface had been well rearranged by earlier cars. About 12 miles through the short section, I got a little overconfident at the ease with which we were negotiating the mud and bobbled just enough to land the left rear wheel in a ditch alongside the narrow uphill road. The next car behind us was Comet 74 so Norm Greator and I hurriedly tried to rock the car out of the ditch. Before we could get clear, car 74 came along and we got out to direct him around our car which was partially blocking the road. The Comet caught the opposite ditch but Morris Temple-Boreham kept the car moving and Norm and I started pushing. About 100 feet up the hill, the car bounced back on the road and kept going in good shape.

Another car came along at this point, a Zodiac we had passed earlier, and he fell into the ditch directly opposite our car, leaving only a four-foot gap between cars. He was stuck securely and couldn't get loose. The next four cars due were the remaining four Comets and we had the road blocked. If we

*(Continued on page 108)*



didn't do something, we would mess up the chances of the rest of the team so Norm and I grabbed the front of our Comet, started bouncing and pushing. We inched the car over a couple of feet until the left front wheel caught the ditch too and then the car slid completely off the road, leaving an eight-foot gap between us and the Zodiac. Our teammates all made it through in good shape but we were hung up down the complete length of the car's underside.

It wasn't until all contestants had gone through that a four-wheel drive Rover came along to check out the section and gave us a tow back onto the road. In the remaining 4 miles to the control point, we counted 11 more contestants off the road waiting for help. We arrived at the control exactly 2 hours after our time due so lost 120 points. Total time loss allowed for the northern section was 4 hours so we had used up half of our allowance in one mud hole. We had to be careful from here on or be time-barred.

We arrived at our first fueling stop, Busia, 350 miles from Nairobi, on the border between Kenya and Uganda, just after dawn. Our service cars were

waiting and also Neumayer and Bailey with Comet 76. They had been making good time up to this point but on a rough section shortly before Busia, both rear shock absorbers had broken loose. The latest shocks from Autolite had worked fine but they had imposed so much strain on the mounts that sections broke from the frame crossmember above the rear axle even though it had been reinforced. In the remote area around Busia, arc welders and other needed materials were not available so Comet number 76 dropped from the running.

We proceeded on into Uganda and the capital city, Kampala, where a one-hour rest period was mandatory. A cold shower and quick breakfast and we were underway again. At Kampala we learned that the Singh brothers, Joginder and Jaswant, were in third spot with a total of five points lost. Two Cortinas were leading, one with 8 and the other with four points lost. A second Comet driven by Kim Mandeville and Peter Walker was only 2 points behind the Singhs and tied for fifth spot. Comet 74, Temple-Boreham and Collinge had lost 16 points. Both remaining Comets, Coleridge and McNaughton and ours, were well back in the running since we had both lost a couple of hours in the mud.

We learned later that the Singh Comet had broken shock mounts on the way back to another fuel stop at Busia and had stopped at a Ford garage for repairs. Then we got a report that Mandeville and Walker had broken shock mounts and were proceeding on the loop up through northern Uganda without rear shocks. Our service crews cut across the course before Tambach to arrange for a welder and materials to repair the Comets on the return from the Northern Frontier District. By the time the Temple-Boreham-Collinge car got to this service area, it had broken the brackets from the frame. Coleridge and McNaughton joined the service crew with broken mounts, too.

At our second fuel stop in Busia we had heard the other Comets were experiencing the same problems encountered by Neumayer and Bailey. We could not afford to lose time in repairing shocks since we were already more than 120 minutes behind, so Norm and I decided to ease slightly through the rough sections to save the shock mounts. Even eased up, we went through the Tambach section with only a 4-minute time loss and didn't do too badly on the following two rough sections.

As we pulled back into Nairobi near noon on Saturday, about 38 hours after leaving, we were ready for sleep. Car

repairs were not allowed during any of the stops, only when the car was competing against the clock, so our Comet was impounded and we were given a starting time of 6:15 p.m. that same evening. Less than 7 hours to eat, get some sleep and prepare for another 38 to 40 hours of driving. Our car was still in good shape and only needed a tire change and fuel, which was scheduled on the way out of Nairobi, to start off on the southern leg. We still had the original shocks and checks showed the mounts to be intact. Only 62 of the original 94 starters were still in the running.

After five hours of sleep, we once again pulled away from the starting line in front of Nairobi's city hall and picked up the southern loop down into Tanganyika. We passed through big game country south of Nairobi, had a near miss with a giraffe about 25 feet tall that loomed up out of the darkness, sidestepped a couple of members of the antelope family and a hyena, and headed toward Tanganyika's most challenging roads. We made good time on a tight section between 15,000-foot Mt. Meru and 19,000-foot Kilimanjaro, then headed off for an unavoidable meeting with the mud of Mbulu.

We arrived at Mbulu early in the morning hours and just before checking into the control, ran into a barrage of huge rocks lobbed off roadside banks by some fun-loving local residents. There does not seem to be political overtones behind these rock-tossing incidents, which happened several times along the route, only juvenile maliciousness. We just missed getting a cannonball variety rock through the passenger's window as the missile neatly flattened the drip molding on that side.

Our trip through the Mbulu section was a nightmare. We got stuck but fortunately a group of Africans were standing by, waiting for this to happen, so a couple of shillings had us on solid ground and underway again in a few minutes. Several miles down the road, just as I was congratulating myself on a fine job of driving, we were circling around a section of impassible ruts in grass-covered rolling hills when, all of a sudden, the bottom fell out. We were in a bottomless mudhole with all four wheels well shy of solid ground. Again, a crowd of the local residents swooped down upon the scene with hands out for shillings. Mbulu residents make more money annually pushing rally cars through the mud than they do by any other means. They've also become pretty well spoiled by the Safari windfall each year and it can be pretty costly to get out of a mudhole.

The push and pull experts of Mbulu

*(Continued on following page)*

## EAST AFRICAN SAFARI

*continued*



are not too well coordinated, however, and their usual operation is to surround a car and everybody push — in. It's a wonder they don't crush a car like a paper cup. After lots of yelling and motions, we finally got half of them on the tow rope and half behind the car but they couldn't get their muscles going together and although there were at least 50 men on the payroll, they couldn't move the car. Fortunately, a British Army Rover happened upon the scene and took over the pulling operation while the locals pushed. We finally got out but had lost another 40 minutes.

The two Cortinas which had been in the lead at Kampala on the northern leg were still setting the pace as the rally progressed on down into Tanganyika and third spot had been taken over by Carlsson's Saab. Carlsson had also been mired on the Mbulu section and hadn't been able to push or pull the car free so he recruited a gang of spectators and had them help him and co-driver Gunnar Palm roll the Saab out of the hole. That's right, they actually rolled the Saab one complete turn over onto solid ground, then Erick and Gunnar jumped in, fired up the car and took off. They lost very little time with this maneuver and the Saab sustained only minor bent sheet metal and a cracked windshield.

Just outside of Morogoro, Tanganyika, we joined the predicament of the rest of the Comets as one of the rear shocks tore loose. We stopped, removed the shock, then continued on. As we neared Dar Es Salaam, dark storm clouds covered the area and we went through some periods of heavy tropical rainfall. At Dar, we pulled into the control area set up at the local football stadium where we had a mandatory one-hour rest period. As we showered and ate, we learned that the section just outside of Dar was well flooded and only three cars, the two leading Cortinas and a Peugeot, had negotiated the 74.5-mile loop that started in Dar and dropped down through a swampy jungle area before coming back up to join the main road between Dar and Morogoro. These three cars had all lost nearly two hours going through this section.

There was conjecture that perhaps this stage would be tossed out but officials at Dar kept sending cars out as their departure time came up since no word had arrived from the Safari headquarters in Nairobi. As our time came up, it was just turning dark and the entire Dar Es Salaam area was well soaked. We started out on the course

and had gone about 48 miles, surviving numerous deep mud sections and flooded areas, when we were stopped by a lineup of about 10 cars. We proceeded on foot to see what the holdup was and found that a primitive bridge over a flood-swollen stream had collapsed.

The first dozen or so cars through the area had managed to make their way across the bridge but conditions had finally gotten so bad that a rebuilding party was organized by following crews. The bridge was originally made of palm logs covered with brush and dirt. The flood waters had washed away the dirt and also loosened the footings where the logs were anchored so that the cars which had managed to cross the bridge had knocked the logs loose and spread them apart, leaving wide gaps between those logs which remained.

A group of about seven crews decided that they would combine their efforts to rebuild the bridge, then assist each other in the crossing. They all took pangas, started cutting down nearby palm trees and brush, and patched the bridge. It was decided that the first car to cross would be the Comet of Mandeville and Walker since it had good traction in the mud and could help tow following cars across. The Comet made it and then the job began of pulling one car at a time over the jumbled mass of logs, brush, mud and water. Five smaller cars were towed across the gap and then the final car of the seven was the Singh brothers' Comet. As Mandeville gave a tow, Joginder Singh approached the gap with as much speed as he could gain, went crashing across and through the bridge. Just as the car made the other side, the makeshift bridge collapsed completely and the Comet's tail section fell into the water.

It looked hopeless at first but crew members from the seven cars plus others who had arrived on the scene all lifted and pushed until the Comet was back on solid, although muddy, ground. But what had jokingly been called a bridge was gone. Just a few logs at odd angles remained. The rest of the bridge had gone downstream.

This was the scene that greeted us as we walked by the string of parked cars to see what was holding things up. Another group of drivers had decided that they, too, would try to rebuild the bridge but they doubted if it could be made strong enough to support another Comet. Both Coleridge-McNaughton and our Comet were in the lineup of cars and we talked it over, finally deciding to retrace the route back to Dar Es Salaam, and approach the control point on the other side of the broken bridge from a different route. We turned back and were joined by four or five other crews entertaining the same idea.

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We raced all the way back to Dar and west again along another route. The route covered was well over 100 miles and when we got to the control area we learned that officials had just closed the control. We proceeded to the next control—same story. Then the next and the next—each time we were just too late. Finally, at Muheza, we called the Mombasa control and learned that we were definitely out of the rally. Those crews which had stayed to rebuild the bridge were even later than our group and they were out, too. All together, at least 15 cars were time-barred due to the lateness caused by the broken bridge.

From Muheza, we took a direct route back to Nairobi and arrived there as the 21 survivors were checking in. The overall winners were Peter Hughes and Billy Young in a Cortina. Although they had lost considerable time in the section below Dar, it had later been declared a neutral section and time lost was tossed out. With this change, Hughes and Young had lost only 63 points for the entire rally over the worst roads in the world. They had absolutely no mechanical problems.

Carlsson and Palm were a close second in their roll-over Saab with 74 points lost. Third was another Cortina with Mike Armstrong and Chris Bates with 78 points lost. Fourth place overall was taken by a team which everybody agreed did the finest job of all, Lucille Cardwell and Jill Lead in a Mercedes 220E. These gals conquered the same miserable conditions thrown at the champion male driving experts and lost only 151 points even though driving a large, heavy car.

Another feminine team did well, too. Pat Moss Carlsson and Joyce Mayers finished ninth with a total penalty of 219 points. Cortinas won the Manufacturer's Team Award with Peugeot second and Saab third.

The two finishing Comets, Mandeville-Walker and the Singhs, finished 18th and 21st. The Singh brothers had the dubious distinction of being the final car to finish the Safari, just as they were the last to get over the bridge outside Dar before time ran out. Except for the broken shock mounts which required lengthy time loss for repairs, neither of the finishing Comets had experienced any other mechanical troubles. The two time-barred Comets, Coleridge-McNaughton and ours, had no mechanical problems other than broken shock mounts. The fifth Comet still in the running at Dar Es Salaam, Temple-Boreham and Collinge, caught

a bad hole just a few miles before the collapsed bridge and snapped a front suspension bolt. By the time a service car reached them and made repairs, they were also time-barred.

Our final comments on the East African Safari are that this is the *most* rally that's ever been devised anywhere. We aren't an authority on rallies but those international rally drivers with whom we talked in Africa all agreed that this was the toughest of them all on machinery. I enjoyed the experience and would like to try it again. Believe me, I was a lot better rough road driver when I left Africa than when I arrived. My original intentions of shooting pictures during the rally flew out the window early. First of all, it's impossible even when you're not driving; you are too busy with charts and notes. Secondly, Safari officials have a way of planning the rally so that the roughest sections, those roads you'd like to record on film, are all run in the dark.

We don't know yet what Mercury's plans are for the 1965 East African Safari. Everybody connected with the rally thought they made a good showing considering their size and, except for the shock mount problems, they surely would have been somewhere near the leaders. Many lessons were learned by participating in the Safari and it is a certainty that some of them will show up in Comets of the future.

There's one thing of which we are sure. Any American automobile manufacturer who's looking for the toughest conditions in the world has to try Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. If you were to combine the worst features of all the proving grounds owned by Ford, Chrysler and General Motors, and run a car over these roads for thousands of miles, you'd never be able to equal one quick trip over the sections of road near Tambach and Mbulu. ■■

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