

### Leg 3 Day 7 Lanzau to Quin'an

Later start today – breakfast was a mix of Chinese and European; noodles, rice, fried eggs and cakes. Fully refreshed, the team set off en-route towards Xian – one of the largest cities in China. Barren areas to the sides that we had experienced previously, gave way to fields being utilised for agriculture; now also showing evidence of being habited as various farms cropped up along the way. The roads were very busy with nose to tail trucks and vehicles – evidence that we were now starting to head into more densely populated areas.

Even with the route being a main thoroughfare, they were amongst some of the worst that we had experienced, progress additionally hampered by road repairs.

Convoy was going well however with the radio communication giving everyone valuable up-dates / essential information.

Unfortunately however, disaster struck and one of the Defenders went off the road. The training that the team had received via Prometheus and Land Rover, ensured that team safety was paramount whilst the whole team worked together to sort out the situation. Luckily, initial assessment confirmed no personal injuries or additional dangers, so vehicle extraction could take place. The vehicle was on it's side, so first stage via winching was to get it up-right. This was successfully done by using the winch from the other Defender. It would not re-start as fuel pipes had been severed, so we had to winch it onto the main carriageway. Power had been lost for a self winch so we once again utilised the other winch to bring it forward by utilising a tree across the opposite side of the road which with a little luck was in direct line of the vehicles when parked side by side.

In addition, we had to facilitate a high lift jack as two wheels had come off their rims and needed replacing before we could move the vehicle forward. This also involved crossing the deep gullies prevalent in China we achieved this using the sand ladders.

During this time, the police had arrived, but after a discussion with our interpreter it was evident that they felt we were able to sort the situation out, being adequately equipped and demonstrating the right skills. They did block the area of for us to support the cross carriageway winch and then guided vehicles past.

The police supplied us with a location of a repair place and the next step was to tow the Defender there. Site was cleared, equipment re-stowed and off we went. Severe blow aside in losing a vehicle, the training, the vehicle equipment provisioned from base and team effort ensured a successful end to the tragedy.

In parallel with the extraction, other team members co-ordinated the plan with the UK team for a Land Rover Dealership in Shanghai to assist downstream.

At the repair yard, a more detailed vehicle examination could take place plus we sent photos back to the UK for recommendations. Our view was that it was not possible to carry out an in-field repair so we commenced the tiring task of moving everything from the Defender into the remaining four vehicles. After this was completed and agreement reached with the UK about the vehicle requiring to be transported via trailer, we found a small hotel for some rest.

Despite how strong and supportive of each other the team are, we tried to lift the mood, by venturing into the peoples square. Every town has one as meeting place for people post work, very busy and we were soon surrounded as it transpired that no westerners had ever visited the town before. Everyone was really friendly.

In the morning we were invited to the local police station – problems we thought; but no they just wanted to ensure we had the right paperwork for customs later, apologise for the condition of their local roads (there had been four other collisions that day and the road is notorious) plus ply us with fruit. This area is a big fruit growing region.

After all of the pleasantries plus photos, we were given a police escort to the main highway.