

Navshield 2009 - Euroka - has been run and won

This year's event was set just about as close to Sydney as we could get, the Glenbrook section of the Blue Mountains National Park, (Euroka Clearing, Blue Labyrinth). A peaceful area of uplifted sandstone plateau cut by numerous deep creek gorges, leaving relatively flat, level winding ridges. A delightful area that grandparents take grandchildren to introduce them to the Australian bush, to visit original aboriginal sites, watch the kangaroos and bird life in Euroka Clearing, peer into the depths of Glenbrook Gorge, or follow the vista of the Nepean River along and over the plains to Sydney.

2009 has been very successful from the course-setting point of view. Everyone accounted for on the day and fortunately only relatively minor injuries. Two big boulders came loose and fell on a participant walking up the creek from checkpoint 80. This could have been very serious; a cracked rib is bad enough. There was one case of mild hypothermia, ably handled by first-aid and the duty paramedics and of course the usual injured knees, ankles, and bumps, cuts and bruises. This is why the safety plan calls for first aid and ambulance paramedics on site and our own bushrangers.

Postscript: - The injured walker was very sore a couple of days later and finding it hard to get around, but he loved the event and congratulated us on an excellent course. He is looking forward to next year's event (and hopes to be at the Lake Macquarie Rogain next month).

We received many good reports and congratulations from participants. A well set out course that took people to lovely seldom visited spots. The checkpoints were where we said they were. And the weather was beaut as we pre-ordered. Well done everyone. I have asked the winning teams if they will write up a report on their planning, rout choice and execution, so that other competitors and everyone can learn even more.

The highest scoring team this year was the rogainers Zinc Finger with 1580 points out of a total available 1750 points. Shoalhaven SES Team 1 were the Emergency Services Navigational Shield winners with 1410 points. The leading One day team was Kangaroo Valley Bushfire Brigade with 780 points. These are excellent scores, all teams did well, and a great "well done" to everyone who competed, this was not an easy course.



Dug looking down a slot into Glenbrook Gorge pic dug

Leading Competitors in each class

2 Day Event

Class 1 - Navigation Shield

Score	Team No	Team Name
1410	070	Shoalhaven SES; Team 1
1250	083	Sutherland Bushwalkers; Team 1
1160	026	Shoalhaven Ambulance; Team 1

Class 2

1290	004	Sydney University Bushwalking Club
1000	042	RAAF - RES & LRT
830	021	Springwood Bushwalkers

Class 4 Rogain

1590	002	Mackay - Black - Zinc Fingers
1310	003	Cziferszky - Williams
340	005	Cross - Turton

1 Day Event

Class 1

Score	Team No	Team Name
780	095	Kangaroo Valley Bushfire Brigade
660	056	National Parks Blue Mountains
610	001	Springwood Bushwalkers

Class 2

400	038	Ku-ring-gai SES
330	085	Newcastle Ramblers; Team 1
250	017	Albion Park Rural Fire Brigade

Class 4 Rogain

680	071	Bush chooks
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Full Results available on these links:-

[2 Day Event](#)

[1 Day Event](#)

We owe a special thanks to NPWS and the local managers and rangers for supporting our venture and allowing us to almost take over the park for a whole weekend. Not too sure the tour operators saw any kangaroos in Eureka during that time but.

The bare statistics give some of the story: -

- area of course, 40 square km;
- straight line distance between all checkpoints of 40 km;
- 32 checkpoints used, another 15 set but not used;
- 3 radio check points plus base;
- maximum points available 1750;
- 426 person hours, surveying, setting, vetting, hanging, another 44 negotiating with parks and support, goodness knows how many admin hours at home;
- 139 hours travelling time.



Checkpoint 40 - "The saddle" some of the lighter scrub

But these numbers can't give any idea of the effort required pushing through the scrub all day and especially not when pushing through wet scrub, as we all did. Nor the satisfaction of a job well done. The following personnel helped to make it so:- Ian, Geoff, Beth, Sue, Brian, Keith, Rose, Chris, Caro, Rob, David, Molly, Graham, Daenam and Dug. Thank you all. A special thanks to Ian for taking on the job of Course Setter support and Personnel manager, things wouldn't have run so smoothly without him. Another special thanks to Shep who came up on the long weekend to provide a pot roast dinner each night and help maintain moral. Off course Glenn is always there to offer his advice and suggestions to improve the course.

Navshields usually cover 80 to 100 square kilometres and 60 to 100 kilometres to link all checkpoints. This course was less than half these figures, reason the persistent scrub made for slow travel and necessitated

slow careful navigation. The winning team collected all but two flags in 30 hours, having missed one, on a subtle knoll at night, so the size was just about right. Quite a bit of our time during setting was lost, setting areas that proved too slow to use for the event (we need to keep our clients happy, so they enjoy themselves and keep coming back). The final top scores are similar to the past three years, so checkpoint scores look consistent.

At one stage I was worried that we would not be able to set a good course in this bush and spoke to others about abandoning this area and finding another. In the end we managed to modify the original course design and come up with a good solution. I was happy with what we presented to the competitors and they endorsed it with their comments at the end. The aim of the game is a fun outing, as serious training for wilderness search and rescue.

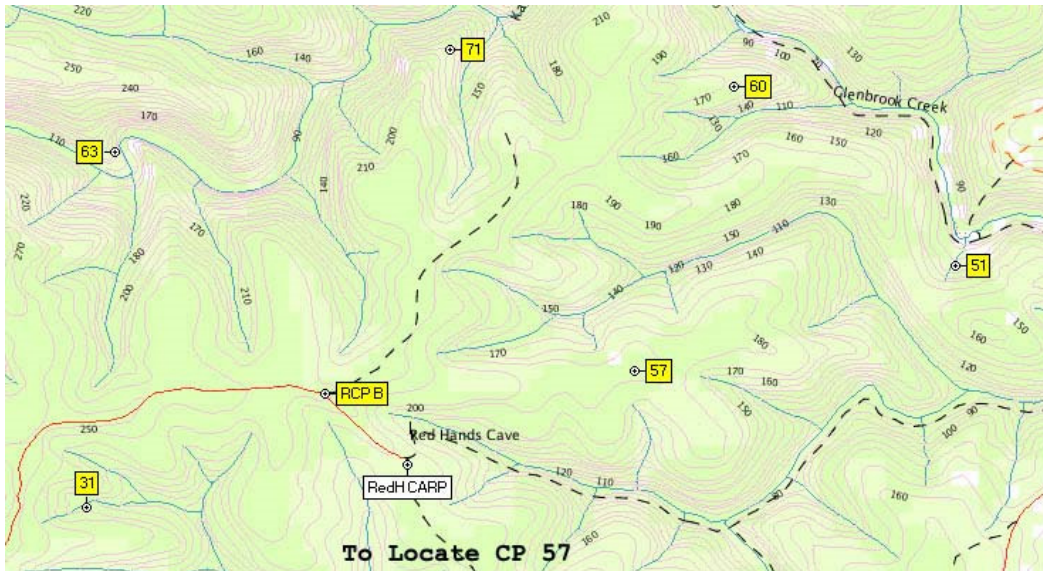
Things to do better next time

A few checkpoints flags were set too low, considering the thickness and height of the scrub, unfortunately some of these also had the setting/vetting tap removed. This was particularly an issue at night (although one team had difficulty finding a flag which was set a bit higher, because they were looking down. Make sure flags are between 1.5 and 2.5 m above the ground, without being visible over long distances (100m or more).

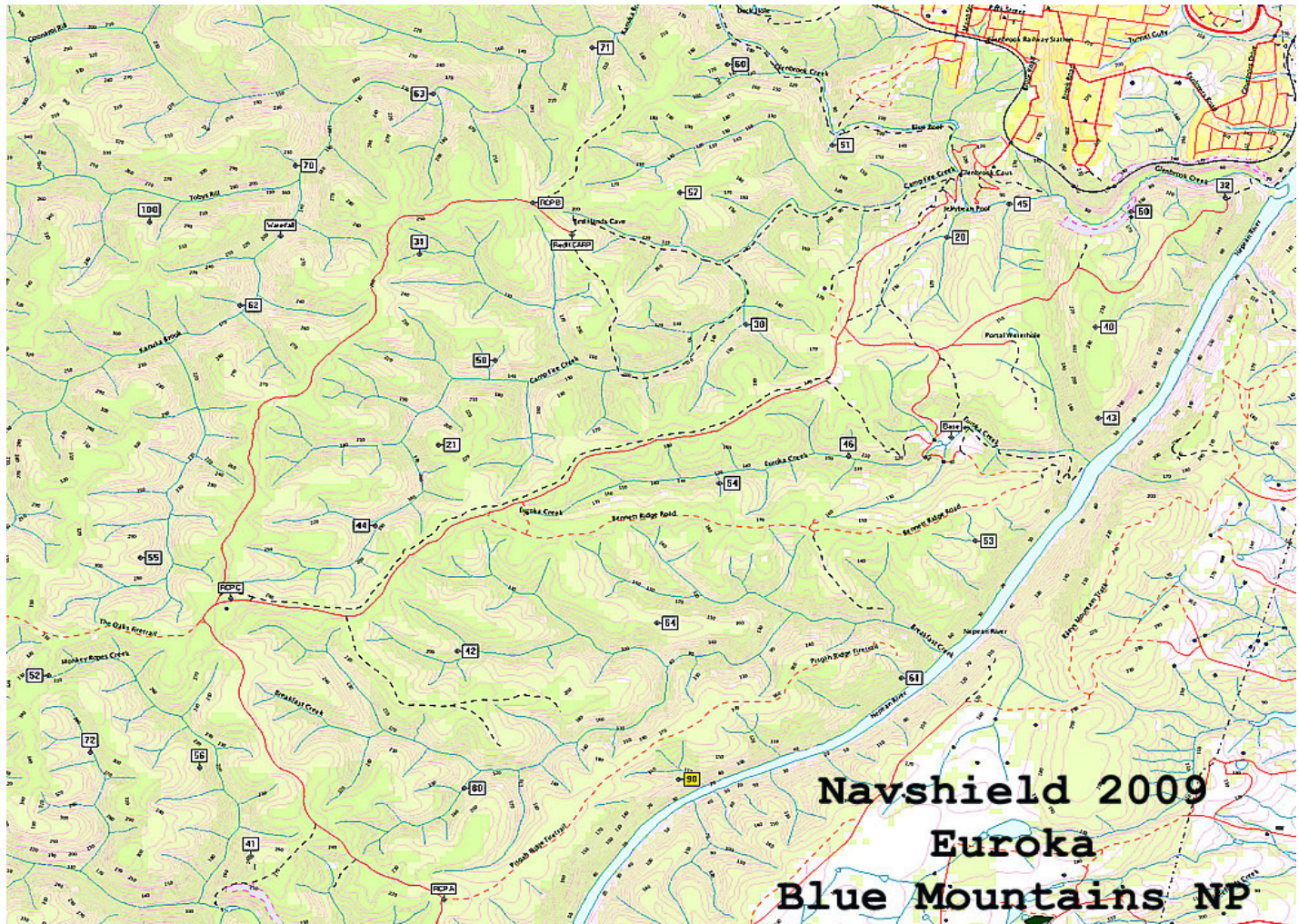
One flag was tied to a large tree close to the trunk, so the trunk blocked view of the flag from one direction. Try and set the flag further from the big tree trunks.

The foot track shown on the map along Glenbrook Creek between cp 60, cp 51 and the causeway, is very rough and slow walking. I did consider advising this during the briefing but didn't because Navshield is used as a training exercise and in a real life search and rescue we are given the map and don't always have the information about terrain.

Checkpoint 57 "The spot height" on a subtle knoll on a long ridge, was one cp, that a bushranger team couldn't easily find at night, they thought the flag was set too low (the highest scoring team also missed this). *My approach to finding it was :- The ridge to cp 57 is straight and has two ridges at right-angles to the main ridge at that point suggesting a knoll. 100m past the knoll is a contour line and just past this is a saddle, this suggests a steeper slope just here. To find the checkpoint I went straight down the ridge trying to estimate distance to the knoll with the ridges each side. If I missed I would go on to the steeper slope on the spur down to the saddle, try to find the centre of the spur at the top, then estimate distance (100m) back from the top of the slope.* See section of map below, as part of the explanation.



Map Navshield 2009 - Eureka - Blue Mountains National Park



Flag retrieval

During flag retrieval we paid particular attention to where the flags were placed and their height above the ground, generally they were within the accepted scope of 1.5 - 2.5 m. A couple in definite spots were a little lower so as not to be seen from too far away. Ian and Dug walked straight up to CP 57 and could see it from 30m, it was above waist height. We decided that this could have been another 300 - 600mm higher to make it more visible at night, it was a point that required precise navigation! I particularly liked the cluster 100, 70, 62 and they didn't take all that long. Geoff and Brian particularly liked 61

overlooking the Nepean River.

I was surprised that the scrub had not been permanently trodden down by hordes of passing competitors. There were very few tracks formed as the brush seemed to have "sprung back".

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