

The Rover's Conversion

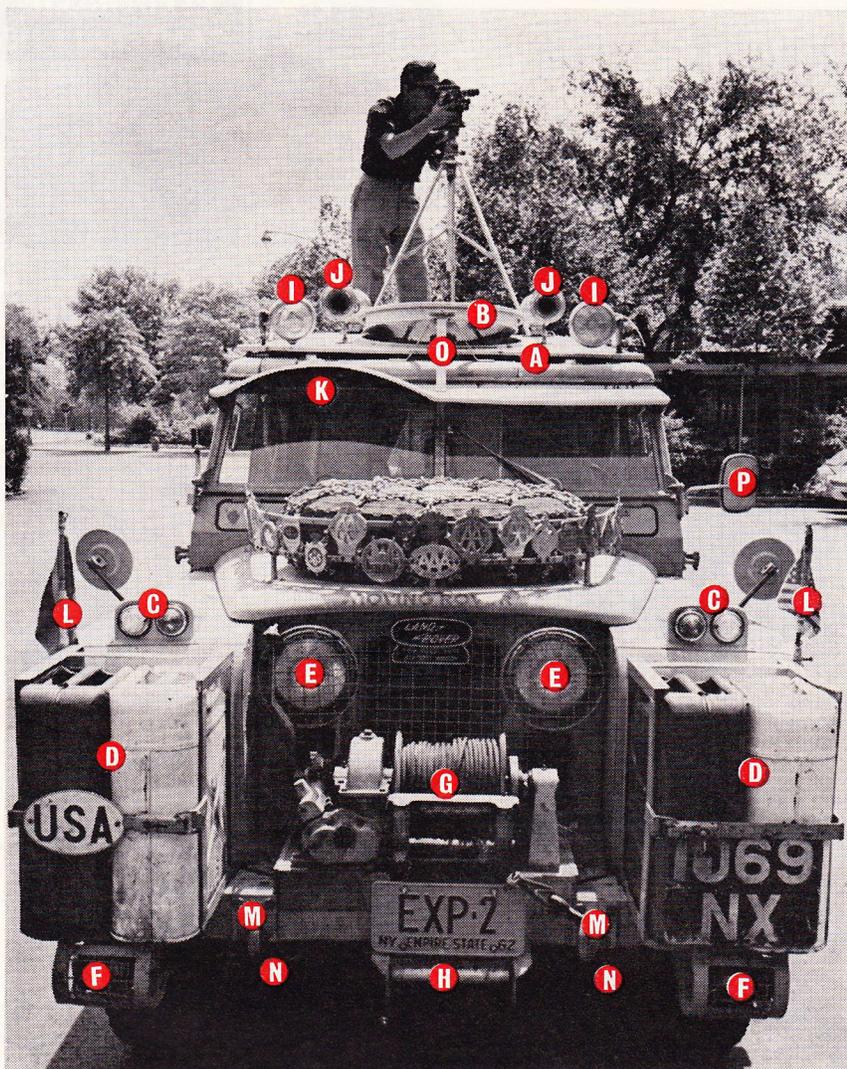
By HERBERT ZIPKIN

This awesome vehicle is not an invader from space but a wagon equipped with everything an explorer-cameraman needs



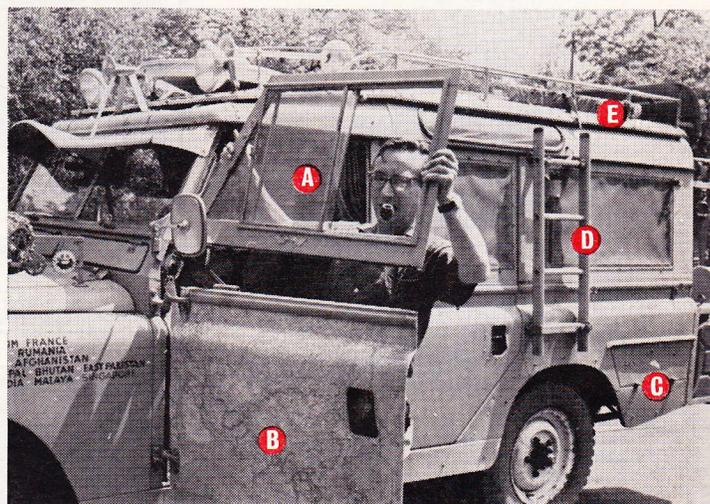
OUR Land-Rover started life as a standard "long model" station wagon—a 4-wheel-drive vehicle much favored by African white hunters. My wife and I (*see cut, left*) have used it on prolonged exploring expeditions in Europe, Africa, and Asia. But before that, we converted the Rover into as self-contained a vehicle as has ever been built. Our first 6-month journey started in England, continued through Europe and the Middle East, and then the length of Africa, from Cairo to Capetown. The second expedition began in Holland and took in East Poland, Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, the Middle East, India, Singapore, and Japan.

For motion-picture and still photography I had a platform-turret (B) installed in the double roof (A) and hinged in the back. The two spotlights (I-I) are directed from inside the cab, as are, of course, the powerful electric horns (J-J). The standard sun visor was modified (K) to give full scope to a wide-angle-lens camera used inside the wagon. Jerry cans (D-D) carry gasoline and water; when we installed them we had to move the parking and directional lights (C-C) up from their original position lower on the fenders. Other additions: fog lights (F-F); towing brackets (M-M), used only once when



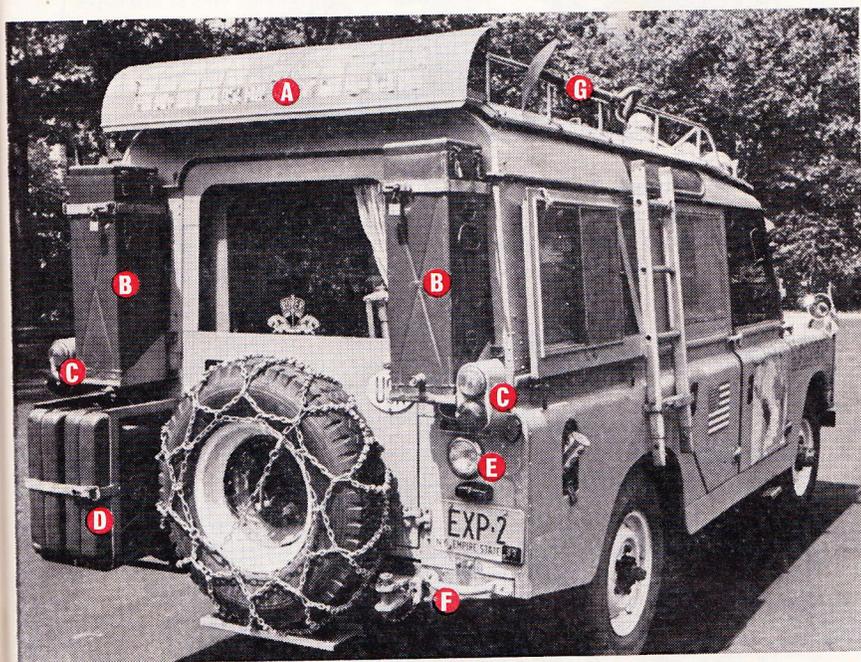
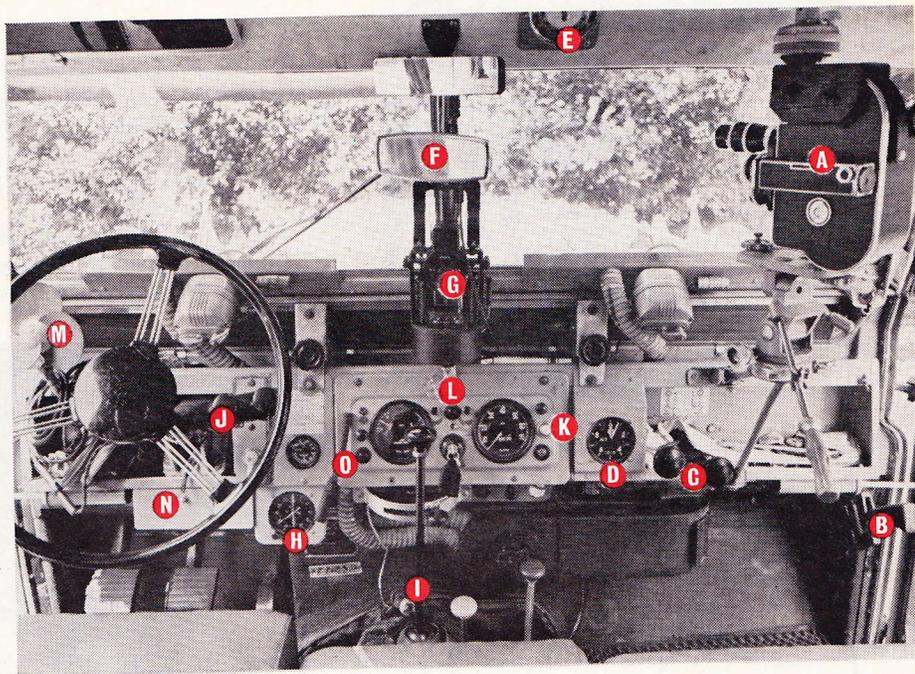
we ran out of gas; winch (G); heavy wire screening to protect the headlights (E-E); flag holders (L-L); an extra leaf in each spring (N-N); and a tripod mount (O). I also installed an additional rearview mirror (P).

Below you see me lifting off the top of a Dutch door (A) made by cutting original door in two; it is screened, as are all windows. A large map (B) has been plastic-laminated to the door's lower half; it's handy when we



explain our routes to visitors. Since the Rover's interior was also modified, we had to cut an access door (C) to the tool compartment. Short magnesium ladders (D) carried on the sides can be joined as one ladder, or used to obtain additional traction in mud, snow, or sand. Large spare parts, such as a spring, were fastened to roof rack (E).

Front-of-cab modifications (picture right) include a set of mountings that hold a movie camera (A). Lower tripod mount folds against dash when not in use, and inverted tripod head attached to roof adds steadiness. Barometer (E); day-night rear-view mirror (F); compass (G); switches for spotlights and fog lights (L); cigarette lighter (K); altimeter (D); remote winch controls (C); holder for machete (B); switch for backup lights (I); adjustable map light (O); 24-hour clock (H); button for roof horns (J); re-



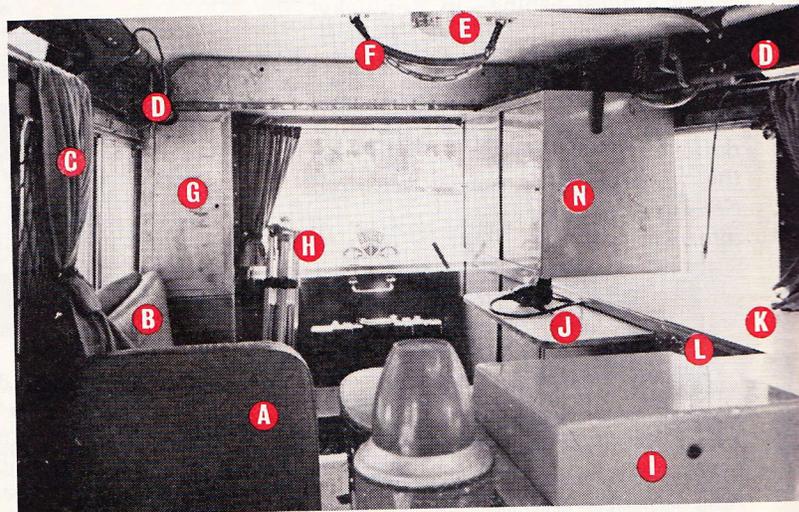
operated when transmission is in reverse, gives ample illumination.

The interior view (below) looking toward the rear shows fold-down back of front seat (A); settee for two (B), behind which is concealed a rifle compartment; side curtains (C) for privacy; bunks strapped in traveling position (D-D); one of two dome lights (E); bunk-supporting chains (F) in travel position; aluminum storage cabinets, fitted to wagon's contours (G); tripod camera mount on rear door (H); housing for tape recorder (I), operated remotely; table (J) that pulls out from under Formica counter top; stainless-steel sink (K) with Formica cover; controls for water pump and "telltale" pump light (L); refrigerator of "foam" polystyrene (M); and aluminum cabinets extending from bunks to floor (N).

(Please turn page)

volver compartment (N); and air-conditioning unit (M) are other features. The photograph of the "Roving Rover's" rear end shows a very effective dust chaser (A)—a deflector that scoops up air and sends it down the rear of the wagon, preventing dust swirls from rising and seeping in through doorways crevices. On each side of door (B-B) is an aluminum water tank piped into an electric pump within the car. At the rear, the directionals had to be relocated (C-C) also. Two 5-gallon jerry cans (D) are locked in racks that prevent pilferage.

When we had the extra chained wheel and tire installed at rear, it was necessary to move the tow bar (F) to the right. A powerful backup light (E),



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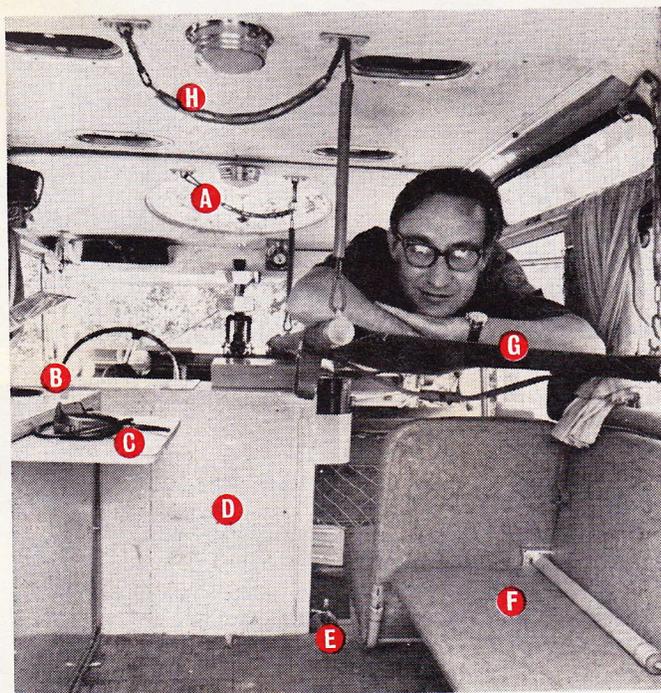
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I even had a secret compartment for tools and other valuables under the front seat (A, photograph below). When closed and locked, its door is invisible to the casual eye. And since I always like a flashlight handy, I have a special holder for one (B) beside the driver's seat.

The interior photograph shows one of the bunks (G) dropped into sleeping position—and me doing what comes naturally. Up front is the special roof turret-platform (A)



described earlier. Another view of the extended table (C) and sink (B) with cover removed. My photographic equipment goes into the aluminum cabinet (D). A fire extinguisher is always at hand (E) beside the seat. When the seat



back is dropped it forms, in conjunction with settee (F), an extra bed.

I am not a gadgeteer—the additions and modifications were made to fulfill specific needs and to take advantage of all the Land-Rover's available space. The finished job makes the Long Wagon a most comfortable vehicle in which to travel, live, explore, hunt, and take photographs.