

# TANK DAY

MEN OF STEEL 2009



*I just wanna be left alone and drive me tank without any b\*\$#@\*d telling me I need a flamin resource consent or asking if I know how big me flamin carbon footprint is!*

Des O'Sullivan, Te Kauwhata turret-head and Mk10 Chieftain main battle tank owner

WORDS KIRK MAD PICS SUPPLIED BY KIRK/MAG

t turned out the hard-hitting heavy-metal-fan-come-farmer wasn't the only one in the mood for tracked action, with thousands of fans making their way to the Men of Steel 2009 Tank Day at Horotiu just outside Hamilton in October.

Being thrown about an open turret hatch sounded like fun to me too, so I grabbed the mini-Macs and headed off in our Jeep. Pretty soon we were in the hatch of a Sabre CVR(T), hot on the tail of Des' Chieftain and an M41 Walker Bulldog.

The brainchild of three military vehicle enthusiasts; Malcolm Lumsden, Jeff Peters and Reg Gibson, MoS 09 attracted 20 tracked armoured vehicles and more than 50 soft-skin vehicles, plus artillery pieces, re-enactment groups and aircraft.

Malcolm Lumsden, MoS 09 secretary, said despite an uphill battle, everything came through in the end.

"We've had to battle everything from council bureaucracy and demands for thousands of dollars through to heavy rain for weeks before the event," he said.

"But the team's perseverance paid off with fantastic weather allowing for large crowds."

"And the rain made for a picturesque backdrop with the pond turning into a lake."

This MoS event differed from three previous gatherings in that it was open to the public.

"There's other shows around in various parts of the country, but where this one differs is we're able to offer a real hands-on experience with rides available on most vehicles," Malcolm said.

"Previously it's been held on private land, but this year, the Perry Group gave us access to their large sand quarry so we had plenty of room and the heavy rain left a bit of a lake that was put to good use with vehicles testing their amphibious capabilities."

As well as the distinctive former Berlin Brigade Chieftain painted in its urban-camouflage finish, other tanks included ex NZ Army M41 Walker Bulldogs, Valentines, M3 Stuart/Honey, a Scorpion CVR(T), M113 APCs, Ferret and Daimler armoured cars, Bren and Lloyd carriers, plus an L5 and 5.5 inch artillery pieces.

Overseas-sourced armour included a Russian BMP1, a British Abbott self-propelled gun, 432 APCs, a wheeled Saracen APC, a Sabre CVR(T) an ex-Bundeswehr Hotchkiss APC and an ex-Free French M5 Halftrack.

