



For immediate release

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### **Three Mazda MX-5s finish Britain's most gruelling endurance race**

- All three Mazda MX-5s finished this weekend's 24-hour race
- Lead car finished 16<sup>th</sup> overall, completing 500 laps of Silverstone, notching up 1,830 miles
- Army and RAF Squadrons supported Forces MX-5 Car in aid of five British Forces Charities

This weekend saw three Jota prepared Mazda MX-5s start what is considered the most gruelling test of car endurance: the Britcar 24hr race at Silverstone race circuit and 24 hours and 1,830 miles later cross the finish line in formation. The Mazda Financial Services, Sparco and Motul backed Mazda MX-5 GT car was driven by racing drivers Mike Wilds, Mark Ticehurst and Owen Mildenhall, with journalists driving production Car 75 and members of the British Armed Forces in Car 86 raising money for five Forces charities.

The Mazda MX-5 GT car set the early pace, lapping the 3.6 mile Northamptonshire circuit in 2 minutes 22 seconds and proving a match for the Aston Martins, Porsches and Lotuses that have previously dominated the class.

Early in the race an impact caused a fuel leak that necessitated a repair to the GT car's fuel cell, effectively putting the car out of contention for the race. Notwithstanding this setback the Mazda MX-5's honour was upheld by the remaining two cars. These were two standard production MX-5s with the addition of safety equipment required for racing but with the same power and basic set-up found on the road car. The MX-5 production race cars 75 and 86 were competing against purpose-built race cars with considerably more power and grip enhancing aero modifications.

Mazda's highest finishing MX-5 was Car 75 driven by motoring journalists Andrew Frankel, Matt Prior, Ben Anderson and Jethro Bovingdon. A faultless drive by the four journalists saw them cross the line in an incredible 16<sup>th</sup> place overall and sixth in class, making this result the best overall finish that Mazda has had at the Britcar 24 hour race. All four drivers avoided the multitude of accidents and incidents on the track to complete 500 laps, 1,830 miles, in the 24 hour race and crossed the line in formation with the other two team cars.

The other production car, 86, was driven by members of the British Armed Forces - fundraising for charities that help injured and fallen servicemen and women and their families - and was supported by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Tank Regiment (2RTR) and the Army Air Corp (AAC) who brought to Silverstone a

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65 tonne Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank, Apache and Lynx helicopters. In addition, engineers from the RAF Typhoon Display Team attended with two RAF-branded Mazda CX-7s. The MX-5 Forces Car was driven by Major James Cameron of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Tank Regiment; motorsport TV presenter Tony Jardine, an ardent supporter of Forces Charities and himself the son of a Royal Navy pilot; Brigadier Mike Hickson, the Director of the Royal Logistic Corps and former Royal Signals Sergeant Will Browning now a Metropolitan Police Officer in the London Borough of Hackney.

Unfortunately Car 86 was involved in a race incident that required considerable effort by the team to rebuild the front end and get the car back into the race. A clean run to the finish ensured that the MX-5 Forces Car finished 24<sup>th</sup> overall and 10<sup>th</sup> in class having completed 471 laps.

“The race was incident packed but our two production cars managed to avoid any serious damage,” commented Graeme Fudge, PR director, Mazda UK. “What damage we did sustain the team at Jota and the Forces Car team worked magnificently to ensure the cars were back out on track without losing too much track time.

“To get all three cars to the finish of a 24 hour race is a real testament to the reliability and durability of the Mazda MX-5, but also a testament to the hard work and dedication of the whole team who were focused on achieving that goal.

“With a grid of 60 cars there was real pressure on the drivers to stay out of trouble and they did an incredible job to keep the cars in one piece and really push for the best possible finish. What this race demonstrates is you do not need lots of power and money to get a good result in endurance racing, you just need a reliable car and drivers who know how to extract the maximum from the car.

“Although the MX-5 GT was put out of contention early on it demonstrated race winning pace and was matching, and beating, the pace of the established class leaders. We are all proud of the job done by the team and the drivers and are now preparing for the next race at Brands Hatch in November.”

Charities supported by the MX-5 Forces Car are *Scotty's Little Soldiers*, *ABF The Soldier's Charity and Help for Heroes*, as well as *Forces Children's Trust* and *The Not Forgotten Association* – two of the 2011 chosen charities for the RAF Typhoon Display Team, of which Mazda is a 2011 sponsor.

To donate go to <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/forcesMX-5> or text 'Race24 £5' to 70070.

For further information on the Mazda MX-5 GT race programme go to [www.mazdamx5racing.co.uk](http://www.mazdamx5racing.co.uk) or download the free [app](#) from the iTunes store.

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