

STEVE McQUEEN—HELL BENT FOR GLORY : COMPLETE COVERAGE—ISLE OF MAN

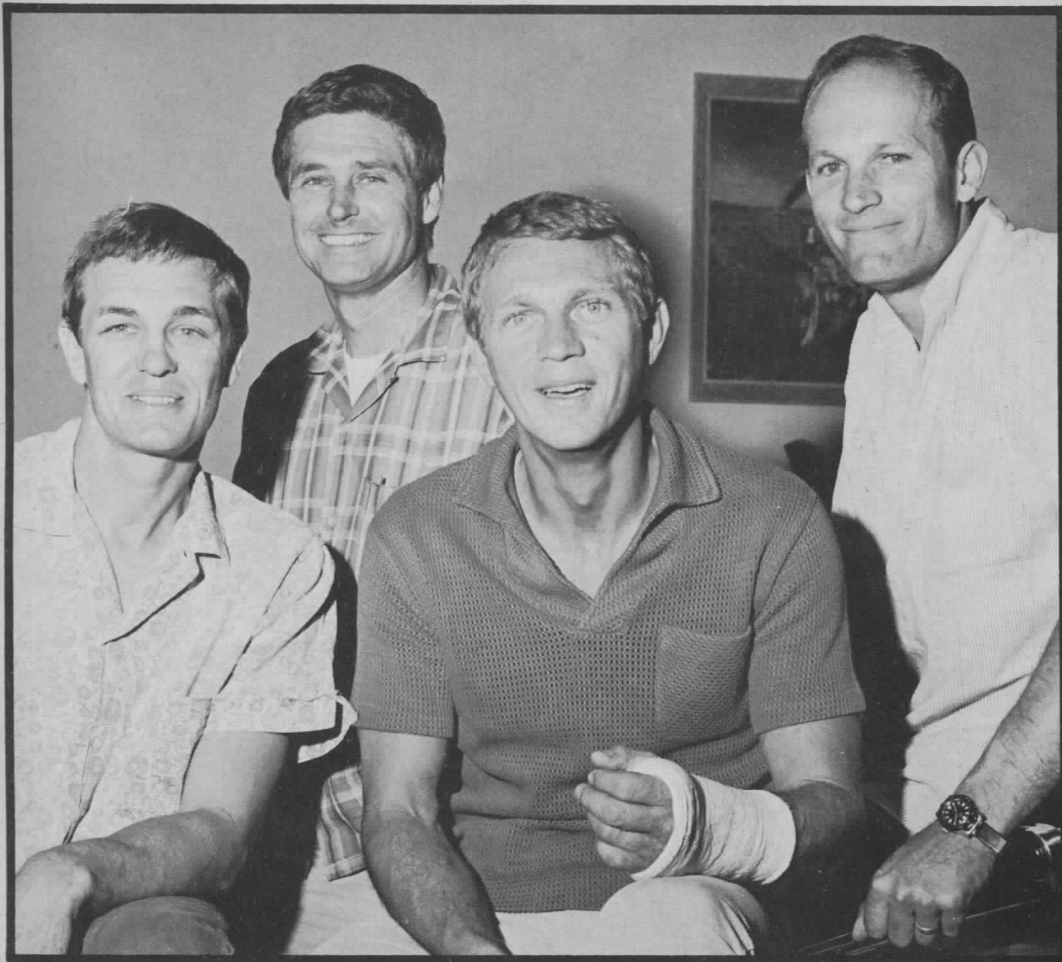
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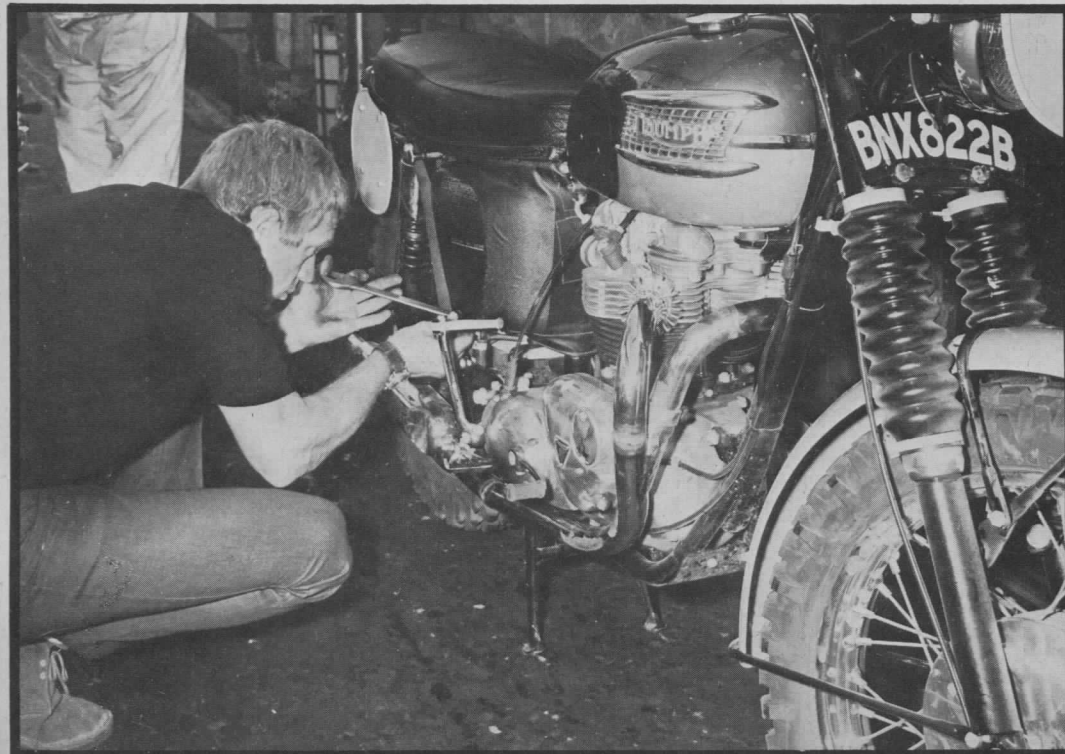
HOW TO BUY A USED MOTORCYCLE : FLYING SQUIRREL— 2 WHEEL ROLLS ROYCE
FIELD TESTS : MZ 250cc "Gelandesport" Works Model : New Yamaha YDS3C



A few days before leaving for the '64 ISDT. Left to right: Dave Ekins, Bud Ekins, McQueen, Cliff Coleman. Fortunately, Steve's wrist cast was removed in time for the wrist to strengthen before the arduous trials.

THE HOTTEST PROPERTY IN FILMDOM IS A GUY WHO WOULD TURN DOWN A MILLION-DOLLAR PICTURE TO TAKE ANOTHER CRACK AT AN INTERNATIONAL GOLD MEDAL BY GRUBBING THROUGH THE MUD, OVER ROCKS AND SAND WITH A FAST BIKE BETWEEN HIS KNEES. HE'S A RARE BIRD, BUT STEVE McQUEEN IS FOR REAL

Giving a final twist of the spanner to snug up the oil line fittings, McQueen pronounced his bike ready. Various changes include conversion to single muffler system, notched to clear kick starter; stretched forks; waterproofing with taped control cables and new air filter under leatherette splash shield bonded to oil tank.



MOVIES, MOTORCYCLE McQUEEN

Article by LYNN WINELAND

It was a long line, not straight, and on both sides there was little to see other than momentary stationary front wheels fitted with knobby tires — about 300 of them in view. A quick glance showed riders on either side, clad in dusty leathers and once-colorful club jumpers, tense and ready.

Goggles were down over helmet heads and personal identity displayed. A foot poised on the starter crank, you were known by your number plate, helmet design or other symbol of individuality. The banner still up. Quiet.

The rider was 30 years old, an average age among desert motorcycle racers but he hadn't the years of experience shared by most. He was a Novice on his competition card declared. He'd had a good teacher in the past time since drifting to cross-country bike racing, and experience in racing cars indicated a competitive heart.

His teacher, Bud Ekins, was now, beside him in line. The pro

of his instructor was legend on Mojave Desert and in Euro scrambles and trials. "Follow Bud had said.

The banner dropped, but before it hit the ground the line erupted in action. Noise and dust obliterated any view of the smoke bomb two seconds away — the racers' first target. As the giant line split and disappeared toward the horizon, Ekins moved forward rapidly. His student and she pursued, but no amount of enthusiasm or physical endurance makes up for experience and the undergrained desert racing lore must fall back on a hundred miles of sand, sage and pocked and broken with rabbit holes, gullies and sharp banks, is a separator.

It was March, 1962; the National Championship Hare and Hour in the Southern California desert. Ekins was second over-all, displaced by a flying Eddie Mulder for the title. The student rider managed a hard-earned forty-fifth — third in the Open Novice class (The writer took three spots back — 48th and a Novice at the time).



Entering time control checkpoint in Thuringian forest on third day, McQueen-under-mud takes a quick smoke break with Englishman Johnny Giles, who rode on same starting minute with Steve and Cliff Coleman—all on 650cc Triumphs. Gold Medal was in Steve's sights until disaster hit.

Sliding into the finish and bumping into the rider just ahead as he braked from the last-stretch plunge for another position, the new desert enthusiast held out his hand and said, "Sorry . . ." Yanking off the dusty green helmet, the sweat-matted blonde hair, pale blue eyes set above the line separating the dirt-covered grin from goggled cheeks brought back an identity to number 955. There was a little buzzing. "Isn't that the guy on *Wanted - Dead or Alive?*" "It's Steve McQueen!" And even a, "So what." The latter was perhaps more to the star's liking. CONTINUED

Pushing out from impound area for misty first morning's start, Steve was eager despite unfamiliarity with riding in wet.



McQUEEN

As the weeks passed, Steve continued his riding, practicing weekdays and racing weekends, readying himself for a picture called *The Great Escape* in which he would be riding a bike in cross-country chases. Bud would be going along for stunt work. As with anyone else, McQueen took his share of falls, got lost on course, and even had his 650cc Triumph catch fire. On that occasion, long overdue at the finish, Steve had the troops a little worried and Bud, Keenan Wynn and other members of the unofficial H₂PO₃ plus (NH₄)-2C₂O₄ (a chemical analysis of chicken excrement) Racing Team combed the desert in search of him. They found him alongside a road where he had overshot a turn on the course, his scorched TR-6 covered with sand hastily scooped over it as an extinguisher.

While in Europe on *The Great Escape*, Steve continued to ride every chance he got, picking up more tricks from Bud, who sneaked off for a week to win his second Gold Medal in the

International Six Days Trials. On returning to the States, both were psyched on the possibility of a U.S. Team in the Trials, nearly forty years in running with no more than sporadic participation by Americans as individual entries.

Between flicks, Steve rode hard wearing out the TR-6 which V. Dutch had carefully prepared, painted in dark green (as are all the McQueen rolling stock) and detailed with hand engraving on the cases, alloy fenders and even a tiny painting of the famous sawed-off Winchester used in the TV series. A new bike was built; Bonneville fitted with cams and other horsepower goodies. McQueen was getting better in the desert.

His stock in the movies was advancing faster. Following *The Magnificent Seven* and *The War Lover*, Life magazine put a top photog on assignment to follow Steve's activities on the Greenhorn 500-Mile Enduro. He got a Life cover. Starring with Natalie Wood in *Love with a Proper Stranger* moved him along quickly. *Soldier of the Rain* and *Baby, the Rain Must Fall* were wet titles that moved McQueen a little further up on dry land. CONTINUED PAGE 38



ABOVE: Registering shock just moments after putting his bike in a ditch in the 1964 ISDT, McQueen shows battering of impact. Smashed goggles, facial cuts and bruises are visual evidence, with more beating hidden under the Barbour suit. BELOW: The end of a tough first day, with five to go in the '64 ISDT. McQueen sprawls on the ground for a moment's rest and chat. Clockwise from McQueen's right arm: Bud Ekins, Cliff Coleman, John Steen, Johnny Giles and Roy Peplow. Other members of the press.



End of the third day. McQueen, just back from overdue arrival at last control, explains to Bud about his crash to avoid hitting another rider.



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McQUEEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

and wisely he invested the top dollars as he was commanding from films in various ventures. One was a motorcycle shop in partnership with Ekins. Then Steve backed off the films to concentrate on a new project: the Six Days Trials Team. And he rode hard. He won a couple of Novice events, including a tough European Scrambles (a type of event held in the U.S.) and was advanced to Amateur. He finished his second Greenhorn, riding the first minute slot with Bud, a former winner. The endurance practice was needed. Six days is a rough grind.

Steve spent a lot of time in Bud's Sherman Oaks shop. The Team was being formed with these two, brother Dave Ekins, Cliff Coleman and, as alternate, John Steen. All were well qualified.

Practice, practice, practice. Feeling himself to be the weak link on the chain, McQueen drove himself hard. Friends would come to the shop to have tires repaired and switched on their dirt bikes and Steve would ask if he might do it. Tire changing speed can make or break a rider in the Six Days. A lot of jovial heckling hurried his efforts, and while he never became a 'three-minute man' it didn't take the actor long to get his Tommy-bars around a Dunlop.

Unloading his bike following a desert run, Steve slipped in an oil spot behind Ekins' shop and the machine fell hard with its owner on the bottom of the heap. Coleman became the brunt of the remarks that followed, having spilled the oil, but Steve felt that only a minor sprain was involved. Next day, he appeared at the shop, arm hidden behind him. Beginning to kid him, about his 'motorcycle accident,' the gang at the shop were greeted with a typical twinkle of the eyes as, deadpan, the arm was exposed, encased in white plaster. Then, a mirthless, "Ha Ha."

In spite of the nearness to the ISDT, the broken wrist would mend in the intervening weeks. Next evening, the Academy Awards Presentation was viewed by millions across the land. Looking a little uncomfortable in formal dress Steve and his wife, Neale, were first on the screen, entering the auditorium, the arm hidden.

Introducing the one who would read the winner of the first Oscar, Emcee Jack Lemmon referred to "the sought-after leading man who would rather be the fastest person on two wheels . . . Steve McQueen." Walk-

ing onstage with the gimp wing hanging somewhat behind, the actor moved to behind the podium and accepted the envelope with the winner's name. He moved to open it, awkwardly, and finally succeeded. with the realization that the cast was in camera view. A little embarrassed, he glanced first at the fingers protruding from the plaster, then right at the million. A mere handful of insiders cracked up at the familiar, flat, "Ha ha" that followed.

Late in August of '64, the team, accompanied by the writer, left L.A.'s International Airport following an all-night Watusi party at Steve's, air-bound for New York. Dark blue blazers with U.S. flags on the pocket gave a distinctive and meaningful air to the group. At NYC we were met by Michele Descamps of Paris Match and Life magazines, who with his battery of Nikons and Leicas would be recording nearly every move by Steve and the Team until the end of the Trials when the group went to Paris for the premiere of *Love with a Proper Stranger*.

From London, where the group quartered in an elegant home belonging to a friend of McQueen's from sportscar days, the crew tripped north to Coventry to take delivery on the cycles which had been set up for the Trials in Triumph's competition department. Steve and Cliff would be riding 40-inch TR-6's, while Bud, Dave and John rode 500cc bikes. The state of preparation was a little discouraging to the quintet, used to a lot more modification as found on desert scooters. The Triumphs were transferred to London, where Comerford's threw open their shop doors to old friend Bud Ekins and his Team. The basic modifications of extending forks, improving air cleaners and adding air bottles for tire repairs were made to all the machines, and then each man made the personal changes he wanted. Steve's TR-6 took on a real look of determination, just as its rider had evidenced for months.

Then, across the channel and by van and car to Erfurt, East Germany. The Team was strengthened by addition of their manager, Ted Wassell, a prominent manufacturer and distributor of bike accessories in England, and a member of the international jury for the Trials.

Once across the Iron Curtain border into East Zone, the Yanks checked in at ISDT Headquarters and began final preparations for the effort. To win the Silver vase, a secondary award to the Trophy which is for alternate national teams or those riding machines not produced in their own coun-

CONTINUED PAGE 55

McQUEEN

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try, a team of four must complete the entire six days distance with as few penalty points and as many bonus points as possible. The machines are stamped with identifying numbers on every major part, and replacement of such parts during the Trials brings penalty points, as does late arrival at time control stations. Bonus points, counting toward Gold or Silver Medals are scored based on position in class at special tests, two of which are held each day. On the U.S. Team, tension grew. McQueen seldom relaxed, finding little relief from the pack of cameramen hounding his every action in the Parc Ferme assembly area. It was a relief to get out on the course.

Based on his 40-inch displacement, the largest category in the Trials, McQueen was given number 278 — next to last in the lineup and sandwiched between English Trophy Team members Johnny Giles and Ken Heanes. Coleman was 276, the others well ahead at 250 (Bud), 261 (Dave) and 266 (John). The first away were the 50cc machines, starting at 6 a.m.; cold and misty that Monday morning of September 7, 1964. An hour and a half later it came turn for Coleman, Giles and McQueen, with Heanes a minute after, alone.

The first day brought rain, and with it, mud — unnatural for the Californians. There were many falls, including a serious one for Steen, who had stitches taken under his chin. The slick cobblestones took a toll, as did grassy meadows and root-crossed forest trails. The U.S. Vase Team finished the day with no penalty points, well enough along on bonuses. The 264 miles was tough and tiring.

Next morning, the few minutes before starting following release of the bikes from impound found Steve securing his gas tank with bungee cord.

The support bracket was broken from fatigue, but it could be secured with a little ingenuity. Weather remained grim and light rain fell constantly. Barbour suits and bikes were heavy with mud in pockets where the rain didn't wash it away. The course was shorter than the first day, which meant one thing: tougher. Still the Team held, and gobbled up their bonus points; all were headed for Gold Medals.

Wednesday was a break. Weather let up and the sun broke through to cheer the Californians. The mud dried and it was smooth sailing. On the special tests, the Yanks improved their scores. CONTINUED PAGE 61

MZ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15



buret mount, rear brake stabilizer and leatherette shield panels which protect the vitals from mud and water splash. Rubber bands assist on the latter project at the lower extremes, with the upper wingnuts also doubling to retain the saddle.

The frame could scarcely be lighter with a single tube of large diameter for a backbone. The neck holds the steering crown and the pelvic bones of bent and welded steel plate support the long swing arm (a secret of MZ's fabulous ride?), engine/transmission unit, footpegs and brake lever. A light, multi-vented skid plate cradles beneath the engine which supports a small tube leading up to the steering crown. Off the backbone tube is the support for the rear fender and upper suspension units with incorporation of the muffler hanger.

The telescopic front forks are oil damped and have 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ -in. travel. These are of a type supplied by MZ on machines going to desert countries such as Iran. Springs are outside the tubes, protected by high quality accordion boots. The small headlamp, protected by a sturdy tube guard, holds the ignition and lighting switch, tell-tale light and originally housed a small speedo head, now blanked-off. The high front fender is fiberglass and maintains position with the front wheel reciprocating beneath it, ideal for scavenging any foreign materials which might try to lodge between. The alloy front hub is unique in that the brake has no outside lever which might catch, and topple the rider. The cable disappears directly into the backing plate. Attached to this is a 21-inch front wheel with a 3.0 tire. We won't knock this arrangement per se. It's more than proven itself in action and we like it for most applications. In mud and on hard-packed trails or in rocky country where the going is picky, the skinny tire proves tops. In sand of the type encountered during the two enduros and hare scrambles run across the Mojave

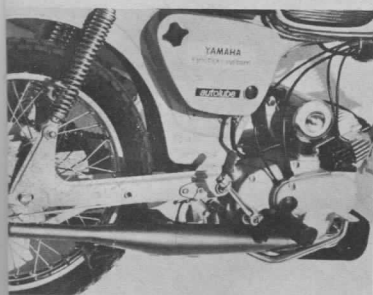
Desert it lacks — strongly. MZ has graciously offered to supply us a 3.50x18 front tire and wheel for further use and if the reaction is that of other makes who have made such a change to suit these conditions, the problem is solved. Some modification to increase fork angle could also be considered for desert racing, but admittedly at the sacrifice of slow speed maneuvering.

The rear wheel is of the quick-change type, splined to the alloy-cased rear sprocket which need not be disturbed. The axle is levered for easy removal and replacement and the brake slips out instantly. The MZ's brakes are the best we have experienced; soft to the touch yet positive in action on the most violent stops. Their show in the ISDT tests for acceleration and braking proved their superiority.

It's always the little things that mean a lot, and we appreciated the thought put into MZ's side stand. Located on the left side of the swing arm, it folds back out of the way without decreasing ground clearance, a thing the Gelandesport has an abundance of. It's easy to find and put down with hand or foot and the steep angle and broad base kept the bike securely upright even in powdery sand — a rare thing.

A detailed inspection of the MZ uncovers more little features than any stick you ever shook at. Another example: attention to filtered fuel. Once you've strained your supposedly (and most important) clean mixture through the mesh basket under the generous filler cap (with added handle by Hans), it passes another filter screen in the tank before entering the shut-off petcock. A plastic bowl under this shows if fuel is available and being removable, permits access to the final stop-gap filter which unscrews for cleaning. MC's testers learned to check this regularly after an unaccountably sluggish performance was traced to this partially clogged screen. CONTINUED

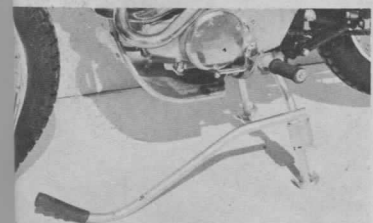
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McQUEEN

Then tragedy struck. Bud Ekins, racing down hill into a tiny Thuringian town, missed a shift and slid into a bridge parapet. There was a sharp pain in his right leg. He continued on, not quite oblivious to the break.

Later, on a narrow trail, Coleman and McQueen collided. There was no great hurt, but Steve's siamesed exhaust pipe was flattened and the big twin's engine would no more than whisper. Frenzied, he pushed the bike along the trail, growing later and later at the time control. Spying a woodsman, Steve threw down the bike and ran to the man with a look not to be denied as he reached for the sharp axe. Deft strokes louvered the pipe above the pinch and he was off again.

As he approached the town, late but still in contest, he swept into a curve of the road normally held clear by the *Volkspolizei*. Something was wrong, the road was not clear, and a youth was headed his way on a small motorbike. Each took evasive action, Steve making a last instant dive off the road into a ditch and over the bars. Bleeding from cuts on the face, goggles smashed and sore from battered legs and arms, he surveyed the candy-red Triumph with its bright yellow number plates. The forks were twisted and pushed back with the wheel behind the frame downtube.

The forks were pried back out with local assistance, not allowed if still in competition, and a thoroughly thrashed man rode slowly back to Erfurt. The others had been worried. No, the Team's chances had been lost with Bud's broken leg; both were out.

Dave and Cliff went on to get their Gold Medals, John a Silver because of first day penalties. No remorse, but rather a realization that first time efforts are seldom winners, and the stage was being set for future action.

The 1965 Six Days is hosted by Great Britain on the Isle of Man. The U.S. will be represented by at least two teams, the maximum for the Vase, plus other teams and individual entries.

Back in the States Steve made *The Cincinnati Kid*, just released, and is now working on *Nevada Smith* for Paramount, directed by Henry Hathaway. Then he goes to Hong Kong for *Sand Pebbles*, a 20th Century production under Robert Wise. The fast pace continues with Warner Bros. *Day of the Champion*, teamed up with John Sturges, director of *The Great Escape* and *The Magnificent Seven*, in which he portrays a racing car driver.

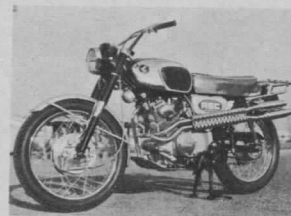


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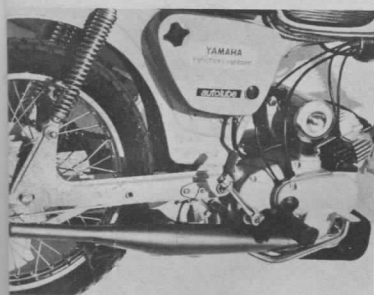
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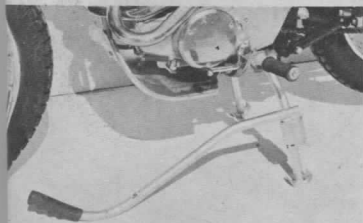
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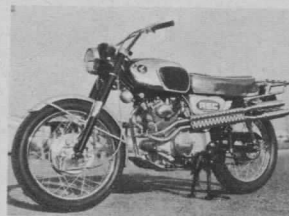


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