

Russian Motor Cycles of WWII

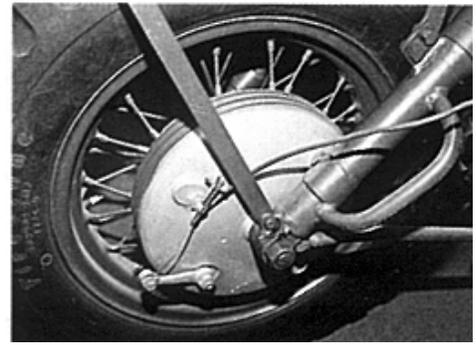
The M72 outfits were used in WWII against the German invasion in 1941. They were pretty well suited once the final drive ratio had been dropped from 3.889:1 to 4.625:1 but they were basic compared with the German sidecar machines such as the R75. The M72 lacked the sidecar drive of the BMW R75 and the Zundapp 800 that were both designed at great cost specifically for the war. Although the Soviets took the design of the R75 epicyclic differential for the military KMZ MB 750 after WWII they did some work on sidecar drive during the war. These photographs come from MOTO, the text still needs translating, but a picture is worth a thousand words.



Proof if any was needed that the Red Army used the M72 in WWII. (They must be inexperienced riders, look – only a solo rider would put his left foot on the ground whilst driving an outfit!)



Both pictures - TMZ-53. Some parts such as fuel tank, forks, headlamp common to M72. Engine bares some resemblance but greater finning may be in aluminium or related to FN or Sarolea 1000cc 1939. Sidecar drive and silencer copy of BMW R75 system – NB BMW forced to supply 6 R75 outfits to Russia between January and June 1946 as part of WWII War Reparations (BMW Frame Nos from 770,000 onwards). Wide section tyres a major difference, should have helped off-road. How many of these beasts were built is unknown at present.



Above - Note the brake actuation lever on left fork leg, and the grab handle for pulling the outfit out of ruts.

Left - rigid rear end and drive arrangement from TMZ-53 (sidecar shaft disconnected in this photo), showing very massive construction.

Views below show the M73



The M73 shows development from the M72, the code number increment sort of helps! There are many similarities such as forks, wheel, tank, rubber seat, mudguards but some significant differences.

Note the 2 into 1 silencer in front of the engine feeding an exhaust on the left side of the bike. Engine looks very similar to a M72 motor, but there is a device on the front of the engine and across where the generator would sit, maybe a crankshaft mounted generator and a magneto on top. (Magnetos useful since engine will start and run with no battery!) Looks to be plunger suspension but also with lockable sidecar drive, remember the sidecar driven BMW R75 had rigid rear end and the later 1970s MB750 was swinging arm.

There are also references to a M-75, but no details yet.

It is suggested that development of these prototypes stopped as the Red Army acquired American help to build Jeep 4x4 copies.

