

Hexycle

GADGET:

HEXYCLE

- BY CLIVE OLDFIELD

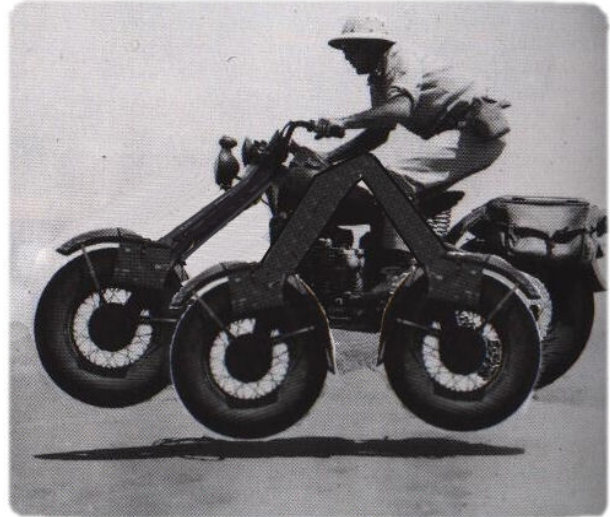
Size	Def	Strc	Spd
1	6	8	60
Han	Crew	Pass	Cost
+2	1	1	\$1200

In the late twenties a competition was organised to find the manufacturer for the new motorcycle to be used by the British Army. Vickers-Armstrongs Ltd came up with this revolutionary new design, a bike of six wheels. The Vickers Spider Motorised Hexicycle won the competition with ease and the rest is history.

The six wheels are mounted on long arms, all with independent suspension, and all wheels are linked to the engine by chains which travel inside the arms. It looks a bit like a spider, and this gave the design its common name. It soon earned a reputation as the greatest one-man all-terrain vehicle in the world.

The motorised hexicycle (usually shortened to hexycle) is not perfect. It is often beset by reliability problems unless it is meticulously maintained. The chains regularly break, and lack of access to the insides of the arms means that a single break can take an hour or so to repair. Vickers are working on a Mk II version, which will use drive shafts instead.

The great advantage of the vehicle over regular motorcycles, stability, means that the rider can wield two handed and tripod mounted weapons. And so a new era of cavalry-style warfare has been ushered in (that's the theory, it hasn't been involved in any protracted conflicts, yet). The hexycle is also equipped with a long lance which fits in a holder behind the rider, and theoretically they can be employed for old-school cavalry charges.



So far all the British Army's lancer regiments have been converted to hexycles and there are plans to introduce a couple of heavy cavalry regiments using a Vickers machine gun mounted on the Spider chassis and some armour plating.

The relatively high riding position makes it a perfect vehicle for exploration and scouting, and it can be adapted with large side panniers and rear and front mounted extra fuel and water tanks for super-long range missions.

An expedition of 12 Spiders of the XII Royal Lancers led by Captain Jasper C. Bolingbroke left Cairo in 1934 on an expedition to reach the Protectorate of Nigeria, the hard way, as a fitting test of the Vickers Spider's reliability and endurance. They were never seen again.

The US and the German armies are known to be developing their own Hexycles, (or possibly Octocycles if reports from Stuttgart are correct) as I type this.