

CALLED UP

Australia's Army Mokes

Words by Craig Watson.

Photos by various.





Disappointing Start

Read most histories on the Mini, and they tell you that the Mini Moke was rejected by virtually every army, because of its lack of ground clearance. End of story.

Well, there is certainly a lot more to it than that, especially in Australia, and there were some surprising uses of the Moke in various military applications.

Before we look at Mokes in the Australian military, we need to briefly go over a bit of background, some of which was included in our full feature on the Moke in Issue 6.

The Moke was originally designed as part of the ADO15 (Mini) project, to meet military requirements for a light weight, and air-transportable, utility vehicle. It was only ever considered a variant of the Mini, so was listed on drawings as ADO15B; for Buckboard.

The first prototypes were completed as early as 1959, even before the Mini went on sale. These had a wheelbase of 100" (2.54m), and had no boxed-in side panniers. They were a full four-seater, with bench seats, and the fuel tank mounted in the back.

In 1960 they were supplied to the Fighting Vehicles Research and Development Establishment (FVRDE) at Chertsey in Surrey for extensive trials. At least three were tested by the British Army, one was tested by the Royal Marines for helicopter lifts, and one went to the RAF.

These prototypes - it is not clear when the name Moke was first applied, but it seems to have been very early, possibly even for the prototypes - were rejected mainly because of their low ground-clearance. The length of the wheelbase also caused problems with bottoming out over humps.

The result was a completely revised version, with a very short wheelbase of only 72½"



First, long-wheelbase prototype - 1959



Short-wheelbase prototype undergoing a test in South Africa.

(1.84m) and increased ground clearance, which arrived in 1962. Although cross-country work was greatly improved, traction with the 10" wheels and 2WD was still limited, and the short wheelbase made the ride too choppy. The second prototypes were also rejected.

The following year another revised version appeared. This time the wheelbase was 80" (2.03m) – the same as the final production version – which happened to be the same as the standard Mini!

Meanwhile, Issigonis and his team had been experimenting with 4WD from the earliest days of the Moke. As we revealed in Issue 6, Issigonis registered a patent for the 4WD configuration of the Mini on 22 September 1959, with the first prototype 4WD Mokes appearing the same year.

While work continued on refining the 2WD Moke, the 4WD version evolved too, becoming the ADO19 Austin Ant. The Ant almost made it into production, but its path deviated substantially from the Moke, and we will have more on that in a later issue.

There was also a distraction in development going on, with the Twini Moke – a Moke with two engines, giving all-wheel-drive. Despite showing enormous potential in the snow during England's coldest winter in decades, in 1963, the lack of cargo or passenger space meant it was never a serious option.


After three versions of 2WD and two 4WD, the Moke was still rejected by the Army,

and another revised version was ultimately released to the public in 1964. Still, they had generated enough interest to be looked at by the US Army. A standard 850cc Moke and a Twini Moke, with two 1100cc engines, were tested at the Tank-Automotive Command in Michigan in 1964. We would love to know what happened to those Mokes.

Other armies looked seriously at the Mokes, with tests being done as-far-a-field as South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, to Asia. Apparently the South African Army accepted the Moke for light general duties, but it is not known how many they took.

In Southern Rhodesia, short wheelbase versions were tested for transport by helicopter, but again there are no details available on the results or any involvement with the Army. However, many years ago I saw a photograph of an armour-plated Moke, apparently in use with the Army of Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia).

Some Asian countries used Mokes in a variety of roles, but again there are no details.

The earliest I can find of any Australian Army unit having a Moke is from the *BMC Rosette*, September-October 1966, which shows a padre at Singleton Army camp, NSW, using a Moke for his daily rounds. However, the padre is Captain Young of the Salvation Army, and the Moke is privately registered, so it is probable that the Moke either belonged to the Salvation Army, or to Captain Young himself. 



Short-wheelbase version - 1962



Padre, Captain Young, at Singleton - 1966



The eight Mokes bought by the Australian Army for Tropical Trials, at BMC Zetland - August 1969.



Tropical Trials

A modification to help buffalo hunters gave the Moke another chance with the military.

Production of the Moke began in Australia in early 1966, but it appears the Australian Army was given a demonstration of a Moke as early as 1963 or 1964. *Wheels & Tracks* magazine, Issue 19 in 1987, reported; "Back in the early 1960s, BMC had demonstrated the Moke to the armed forces of several Commonwealth nations, including Australia, where in 1963 a 1,000-cc version had been tried by Army Headquarters."

This date could be passed off as a mistake, but for another reference in the final report of the Army Tropical Trials of Mokes in 1969/70, which stated; "The original 'Mini Moke' which utilized 'Mini' 998cc machinery was demonstrated to AHQ six years ago."

Their evaluation was consistent with that of the British, continuing; "although it was considered interesting, it was deemed unsuitable for military use due to low ground clearance and high rolling resistance on soft ground due to the small diameter wheels, and insufficient power/weight ratio."



Mokes were popular with Darwin's buffalo hunters. This one is in 1966.

That might have been the end of it, if not for the work of Port Darwin Motors in the Northern Territory. Since the release of the Aussie Moke in 1966 (again, see Issue 6 for details on how the Australian version differed from the English Moke), Port Darwin Motors had been Australia's biggest supplier of Mokes, selling them to many station owners for work in rounding up cattle and buffalo hunting.

Like the Army, the station-hands found the lack of ground clearance and the small wheels to be a problem over rough ground. It's often said that necessity is the mother of invention, and the problem was solved with the fitting of fourteen-inch wheels from the Morris Minor, to the front of the Mokes.

Des Nudl (pronounced Null), the former principal of Port Darwin Motors, recalled ten years ago; "We were approached by them to modify the rear, fitting the fourteen-inch wheels all round. We showed one of these to BMC, who were impressed and set about production, but with thirteen-inch wheels."

The big-wheel Moke was released in April 1968, and got the 1100cc engine in April 1969. With the problems of ground clearance and power-to-weight ratio now addressed, BMC approached the Army again.

This time the Army decided the Moke was worthy of further evaluation, and ordered eight for Tropical Trials testing.

These were supplied in August 1969, with the thirteen-month trial to be carried out from 1 September 1969 until 30 September 1970.

Although only one black-and-white photo exists of the Mokes at Zetland before delivery, it appears that they were standard Mokes, probably painted dark green, and had one or two extra items fitted – most notably the stack-type air cleaner.

The Army also received four prototype BMC ¼-ton trailers, designed specifically for use with the Moke.

Two of the Mokes and one trailer were delivered to Tropical Trials Establishment, Cowley Beach (near Innisfail), Queensland, with the remainder deployed to Pupua/New Guinea Command, for general duties.

The Mokes allocated to TTE were Army Registration Number (ARN) 176891 and 176892, while the Mokes that went to PNG were ARN 176894 through to 176899. Registration 176893 was allocated to the trailer at TTE.



One of the Mokes and the trailer undergoing tests in tropical North Queensland.



...while two could lift the back.

Ease of recovery is demonstrated with four soldiers lifting the front of the Moke...

The Mokes were also allocated Army nomenclature: internationally recognised descriptions, based on the type of vehicle and its configuration. Therefore, in Army-speak, the Moke became 6030E – Truck ¼Ton CL Lightweight (BMC Moke), and the trailer was designated ¼Ton Trailer CL (BMC).

The Moke was also given a NATO Stock Number (NSN): 2320-66-093-7891, where 23 means vehicles, 20 is the type, 66 is country of origin (Australia), and 093-7891 is the individual description of the item.

A progress report was tabled every month, with every incident, malfunction or failure recorded, as well as regular maintenance carried out, and the amount of down-time.

Service and repairs were carried out by the local BMC agent, South Johnstone Motors, at Innisfail, with the PNG Mokes service by PNG Motors, Port Moresby.

The Mokes at TTE each covered a little over 22,000 miles, of which around 3,400 was on second-class roads. One Moke covered 3,762 miles on jungle tracks, with the other doing 2,439 miles in similar conditions. The PNG Mokes averaged around 9,000 miles, with a high percentage being over dirt roads and jungle tracks.

The trailer at TTE covered 8,881 miles, while no mileage was recorded for the PNG trailers, as explained; “It would appear that the majority of tasks had no requirement for a trailer or alternatively when a need was found, the vehicles had been air transported to remote locations without the trailers.”

Interestingly, the TTE Mokes averaged 25mpg and 27mpg respectively, while the PNG Mokes, which did a much higher percentage of their work in rough terrain, averaged 28mpg.



Trial conditions included: Rocky creeks...

The final report was tabled on 30 October 1970, by Commanding Officer, Lt Col R. A. Sunderland, and makes for interesting reading, if you are into that sort of thing. Annexes to the report list road conditions encountered, fuel consumption, and daily weather charts, and include photographs of the trials and problems that arose - including the photos on these two pages.



...mud...



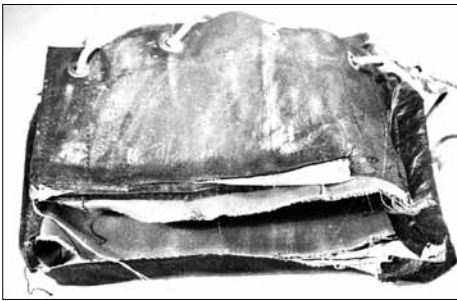
Typical of many of the rough tracks encountered at TTE Cowley Beach.



...water...



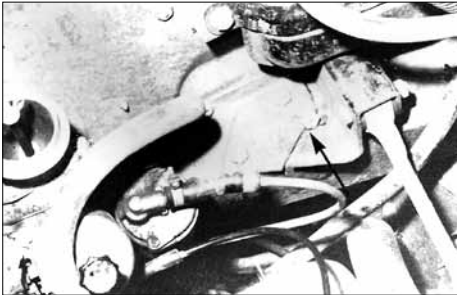
...and serious dust!



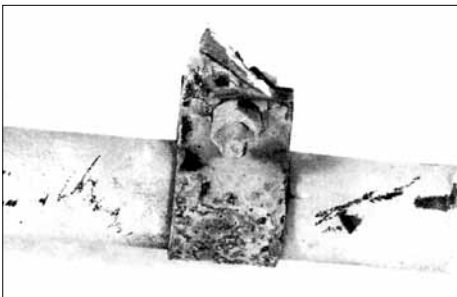
Seats fell apart from rotting thread.



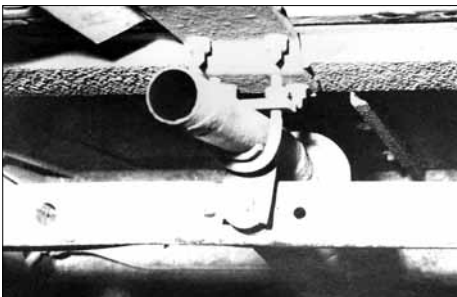
Two more photos indicating some of the conditions encountered.



Arrow shows crack in engine steady bracket.



Broken exhaust mount bracket.



Army modification to exhaust mounting.



Initial Army placement for mirror.



Army mirror placement, adopted by BMC.

A number of weaknesses showed up in the design of the Mokes, most of which were easily rectified.

Of most concern to the army was the lack of a laminated windscreen – with drivers being injured by broken glass on three occasions – and the lack of visibility.

When the Mokes were delivered, they still had black canvas screens fitted to the sides of the windscreen. Before the trial had ended, BMC had introduced clear side-screens. This allowed TTE staff to design and fit an improved mirror design to the windscreen support panel – which was later adopted by BMC.

Other weaknesses that showed up were shock absorber ferules (rubbers) that wore out very quickly, engine steady brackets cracking, exhausts cracking where they joined the manifold, and exhaust brackets at the rear of the car breaking. “A total of seven exhaust system failures occurred (on the two TTE Mokes – Ed) and it is considered that the failures can be attributed to the rigidity of the mountings”, the report said. It was recommended that a flexible pipe be fitted to the exhaust, where it joined the manifold.

The trailer at TTE was found to be unsuitable, due to “a lack of robustness” in the materials used and in the construction. A total of 50 hours of unscheduled maintenance was recorded for the trailer, which was as much as for each of the Mokes, but for less than half the mileage, and without mechanical complication – ie: there’s no engine, etc.

Due to the humidity experienced in the tropics, particularly in PNG where the average humidity didn’t drop below 70% for the period of the trial, the standard materials used for the roof and seats were found to be unsatisfactory – particularly the thread used in sewing the roof and seats.

On the positive side, the Mokes were found to perform all their allocated tasks well, with limited success in rugged terrain. Driver and front passenger comfort was considered

adequate, but the range was inadequate, due to its small 27lt fuel tank.

The stack-type air cleaner was found to be superfluous in all but the very dustiest of conditions, due to the efficient nature of the standard air-filter.

The PNG Mokes were reported to have covered “a wide variety of user tasks...which included air transportation of vehicles and personnel engaged on patrols. In this role, the vehicles proved very useful providing the terrain in the patrol area was not too rugged.”

It was also pointed out that the Mokes had been used for driver training in the Pacific Island Regiment, and reduced the training period by five weeks. However, it was explained that there were “several vehicle components which are highly vulnerable when used for this task” – particularly the handbrake, indicators and bumper bar. One can only imagine how that information was obtained, with learner-drivers.

In summary, the report found the Moke would be a suitable vehicle for light duties that did not require all-terrain capabilities.

“The vehicle is suitable for operation in a military environment and the trailer, with suitable design changes, would present a useful combination to fulfil the following roles:

- a. Accompany a platoon to a range practice with small arms ammunition and miscellaneous stores.
- b. Collect or deliver mail.
- c. Collect canteen stores.
- d. Collect ½ ton of small ordnance stores.
- e. Transport a driver, umpire and personal equipment on a field exercise.
- f. Inspection of barracks, ranges and training activities.”

In conclusion, the report states; “The results of the trial show that the vehicle, with some modifications, is suitable for use in the Australian Army as a self-drive run-about with a limited cross-country performance. The trailer should be rejected.”



Accepted for service

BMC Australia listened to the criticisms from the Army's test, and accepted most of the recommendations.

As a direct result of the Army trials, a number of changes were made to all production Mokes. These included the re-positioning of the driver's side exterior mirror (BMC had already introduced the clear side-screens), strengthening of the upper engine steady support bracket, fitting a rod to the bottom of the front side curtain to hold it down while driving (another Army modification), improvements to the shock absorber rubbers, fitting a fuse for the sidelight/taillight circuit, fitting a protective strip to the bottom of the rear of the roof (to stop the spare wheel damaging the roof) and strengthening of the spare-wheel mount.

Improvements were also made to the fuel filter, to prevent it from dropping into the fuel tank. Of the eight Mokes on trial, all but one of them had the filter drop into the tank.

A number of other improvements were available as Special Production Orders. These included locking petrol filler cap (SPO 1), oil cooler (SPO 4), the stack-type air cleaner (SPO 18), and the laminated windscreen (SPO 31).

On the basis of these changes, the Australian Army placed an initial order of 111 Mokes, to be made to specific Army



Army Mokes look standard (apart from colour) but there were a lot of changes.

requirements. They were delivered in April 1973 and given ARN 25688 to 25798. The nomenclature was revised slightly, to: Truck Utility ¼ Ton CL Lightweight.

These differed from the civilian version by also having a heavy-duty canvass roof and side curtains with tropical-specification thread, being painted Olive Drab in colour (including the wheels), two TAC-plate (Tactical Formation Plate) holders each front and rear, NATO 12-pin trailer socket, 50mm tow-ball, strengthened towbar, fire extinguisher, two-speed windscreen wipers, electric windscreen washers, 'throw-in' full-width cushion for rear passengers (removable to carry stores), improved seating cushions with tropical-spec cotton (green in colour to distinguish them from the standard type), reversing light, passenger-side mirror, log-book pocket spot-welded to the body, and a trailer indicator telltale on the dashboard fascia. They also had laminated windscreens fitted as standard.

With the usual approval procedures, checks and decision processes, it is not surprising that it was 31 months before the first batch of Army Mokes was delivered.

Chris Rogers from BMC was given the task of presenting one of the Mokes to the Army Inspection Service for final evaluation, as he explained in a recent letter which gives an insight to the testing procedure. Chris points out that he was working from memory, of over 30 years, and that his recollections may not be 100% accurate.

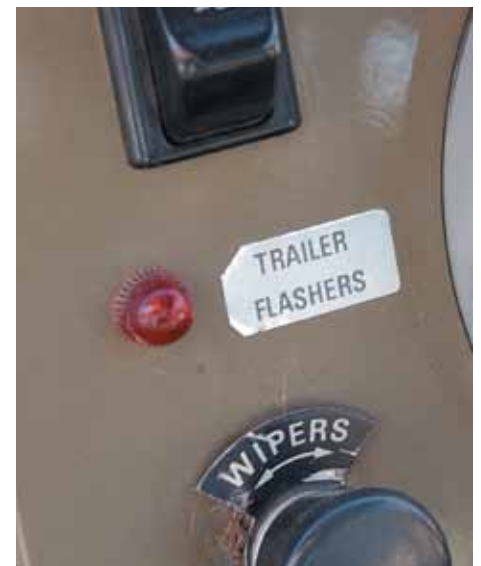
"The AIS was then located at Ashfield NSW, and I visited their premises on one or two occasions. Their operational rules were an eye-opener: no Inspector had more than one piece of paper on his desk. This was designed to avoid confusion. Everything else was (presumably) hidden in the drawers of the desks. There were some twenty inspectors – I dealt with one only assigned to the Moke job."



Seats were green vinyl, with tropical thread.



Fire extinguisher was compulsory.



Dash telltale for trailer indicators.



One of the first batch of Mokes from 1973 - this one was disposed of on 5 July 1977

"I must have been at the time responsible for Concessional Vehicles – ie; those ordered to a specification which deviated from normal production. The Army Moke was one such vehicle which required AIS approval before any batch was accepted. Their method of acceptance was a paper trail to establish build conformance to their requirements, and this was checked, and a physical assessment of the finished vehicle, which included a road test/evaluation of the capabilities of the presented sample."

"The Army had surveyed a particular hill in Eastwood to establish a one-in-seven grade. One requirement for acceptance was that the vehicle fully loaded would start on this grade. The load was designated (as recommended by the trial – Ed) as 500 lbs (227kg) in the trailer, 250 lbs (113kg) in the rear seat area, observer and driver. On each test run, the vehicle and trailer were weighed on a weighbridge to establish 'correct weight'. The artificial load was in the form of canvas bags filled with gravel. I think the weighbridge was in Yagoona."

"Proceed to Eastwood. The only way I could get the Moke to start on this gradient was to have the engine running at about 3,000 rpm and drop the clutch in such a manner as to make the front wheels spin, and then using

the kinetic energy of the wheels spinning and slipping on the bitumen, thereby forming a secondary clutch, encourage the Moke to take off. Despite this obvious ruse, the AIS inspector considered that this manoeuvre was legitimate, and ticked the box."

"The route then went to St Albans to try the vehicle, and the driver, on rocky surfaces and dirt roads, finally returning to Ashfield late afternoon."

"I can recall my hips aching from the con-fining seat frame tubes. I can also recall an enormous problem in not being able to trace the provenance of the thread used in the hood stitching of one of the batches of vehicles. This was apparently much more important than anything else."

"I cannot recall how many Mokes we sold (see later – Ed), but I do recall that all the ar-duous testing was probably unnecessary as they were allocated to Stores General Duty, no doubt running around on completely flat concrete for the rest of their Service life."

It is interesting that trailers were used in the test, as the TTE trial report recommended the trailer be rejected. However, the Mokes still had to be trailer-capable, and Army Ordnance redesigned and made them for the Moke themselves – see separate story.



Another 1973 Moke - Military Police

Although the Mokes were not considered suitable for rugged terrain, and therefore were not deployed in combat situations or that level of training, they did find a niche as a very capable, and flexible, General Duties run-about.


It would appear that they were in service at most bases across the country, as well as in PNG, as previously mentioned.

In all, the Australian Army bought 316 Mokes, in five batches, with the last lot of 78 being acquired in 1980.

They were used by Military Police, engineers, vehicle mechanics, for the collection of mail, mess duty, and a variety of other self-drive applications (that is, one occupant).

The 1100cc engine was replaced with the 998cc in May 1975.

However, earlier concerns about the power/weight ratio don't appear to have arisen with the General Duties Mokes. 125 Mokes with 998cc engines were bought by the Army - 47 in November 1976 and 78 in April 1980.

On average, the Mokes were kept for around five years (some as little as two years, the longest eleven years), with the last two being disposed of on 30 April 1987. 



1100cc engine was standard up to 1975.



Heavy-duty canvas roof with Tropical thread.



Tac-plates ID a vehicle's unit & command.



Reversing light was Army requirement.



De-mob'd

What has happened to the Army Mokes, since they were de-mobilized and sold off?

I have only been able to find one genuine Army Moke in completely original condition, and that is on display at the Army Museum Bandiana, Albury.

This Moke was purchased by the Army in September 1975, given ARN 26722, and transferred to the museum on 8 November 1979. It was originally on display in the Army Transport Museum at Puckapunyal, but was moved to Bandiana when the Pucka museum closed a few years ago.

I have seen a few Army Mokes in non-original condition, from partly modified to completely unrecognisable as having any Army connection – they were, after-all, not the nicest-looking vehicles in Olive Drab.

The Army and Fun Museum at Cowra, about 100km south of Bathurst on the Mid Western Hwy, has a 1980 ex-Army Moke on display, but it has been repainted in camouflage.

While in Perth a few months ago I met Jason Beams, who has one in very original spec (about the only things missing are the TAC-plate holders). What was most interesting with Jason's Moke was that it still has the 'throw-in' cushion for the back. Designed to provide basic seating for rear passengers – remember when it was okay to ride in the back of a ute? – the cushion is held in place with a tab at each corner, that press-studs to the side of the Moke.



Bandiana Moke, showing logbook holder.



Logbook holder in Jason Beam's Moke.



Les Jordan's Moke was one of the last bought by the Army, April 1980.

Purchased by the Army in November 1976, Jason's Moke was ARN 27861, and disposed of on 5 February 1980, through 11 Supply Battalion, Brisbane. This Moke has the log-book holder attached to the inside of the sidebox, behind the driver's seat, whereas the earlier Moke at Bandiana has it on the firewall above the left-hand parcel shelf.




Cowra Army Museum Moke

Les Jordan from Mt Beauty, Victoria, has one of the last batch, from April 1980 and was ARN 31149. It was disposed of on 23 July 1985, through 32 Supply Battalion, Broadmeadows, Melbourne. Les has fitted a shortened ute body, Sunrasia wheels (painted Olive Drab) and painted slight camouflage pattern on the body.



Bill Sjoblom's on display in Sydney city.

Another former Army Moke has been owned by Bill Sjoblom from Bonnet Bay, NSW, for around 20 years. It has a non-original roof and seats, but otherwise appears complete. It was with the first batch in April 1973, ARN 25722, apparently stationed at Enoggera, Qld., and was disposed of on 15 April 1977 from 21 Supply Battalion, Morebank, Sydney. Bill is a member of the Australian Military Vehicle Collectors Society, Sydney, and regularly has the Moke in public displays and at commemorative functions. 



Jason's is about 95% original.



Rear cushion in Jason's Moke is held in with four press-studs to the body.





VID plate on 1973 Moke



SD plate on 1975 Moke



Post-1976 Mokes had both plates on wheel arches, and were metric.



Identifying

Identifying an ex-Army Moke is a fairly simple affair.

Identifying an Army Moke is easy enough if it still has its identity plates. Even if these plates are removed, there are plenty of ways to check if your Moke is ex-Army.

Apart from the normal ADR Compliance plate under the bonnet, there should be one Service Data (SD) plate and one Vehicle Identification (VID) plate, each pop-riveted to the Moke with four pop-rivets.

It would seem the position of these plates changed in 1976, as Bill Sjoblom's and Bandiana museum's Mokes have them in the same positions, while Les Jordan's and Jason Beams' are in a different location.

On the earlier Mokes the SD plate is affixed to the wiper-arm cover plate, while the VID plate is attached to the inside of the firewall in the left-hand-side parcel tray (on the log-book holder in the museum Moke). On the later Mokes, both plates are attached to the wheel arch, inside the Perspex side-screen, with the SD plate on the right side of the Moke, and the VID plate on the left.


If these plates have been removed, look for the pop-rivet holes in these locations.

There are also a number of brackets that should be attached to the outside of the Moke. These include two Tac-plate holders on the front and two on the back. While the front ones were attached to small brackets

welded to the bumper bar, the rear ones were far more substantial, being L-shaped brackets spot-welded to the body.

There should also be a similar bracket mounted on the right-hand-side for the reversing light, and a smaller bracket on the left-hand-side for the 12-pin trailer plug. Post-1979 Mokes will not have the reversing light bracket, as reversing lights were incorporated in the taillight cluster.

There should also be a fire-extinguisher bracket mounted inside the front passenger's footwell. Again, look for mounting holes.

It is, of course, possible to identify an Australian Army Moke from its chassis number. I have what I believe is a complete list of every Moke owned by the Army, and I am happy to look up any Moke on the list for owners. Just contact me at this magazine. 



Vehicle ID plate (1975 Moke).



Service Data plate (1975 Moke)



Look for mounting holes - rear grab handle.



Strengthened tow bar.



12-pin trailer plug.



Non-Leyland paint code hand-written.



TAC-plate holder and trailer plug brackets.



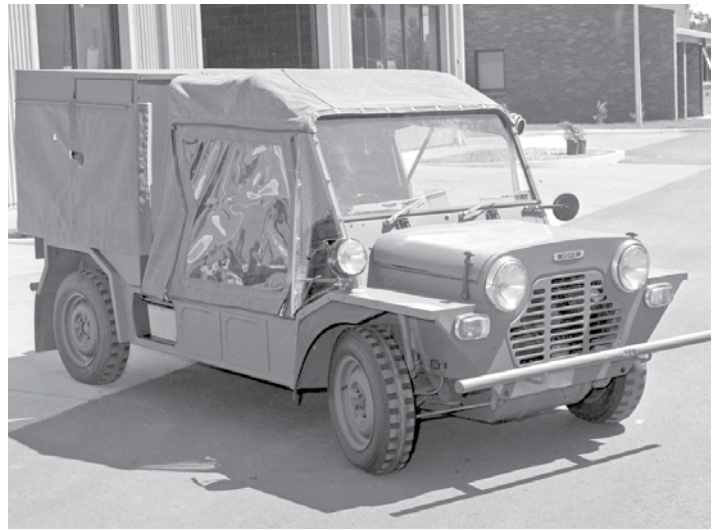
TAC-plate holder and reverse light brackets.



Front TAC-plate holder mounted to bumper.



1980 RAAF Police Dog Moke



RAAF Police Dog Moke - circa 1975.



Big dogs and aircraft.

RAAF had Mokes, but they weren't all used for aircraft.

Although the Royal Navy and Royal NZ Navy used Mokes in a limited capacity, I have not been able to find any concrete evidence, apart from a few anecdotal stories from former seamen, that the Royal Australian Navy used Mokes. In fact, according to the Navy; "There is no evidence to support that the RAN used Mini Moke vehicles."

If any of our readers have photographs or information to the contrary, we would very much like to see them.

I had more joy obtaining information about Mokes with the RAAF, but it is still a long way from complete.

Mokes were purchased by RAAF between 1975 and 1982, for use as General Utility vehicles. No figures seem to exist as to the number used, but according to Defence; "Most bases and squadrons would have had at least one or two of these vehicles, so the number purchased would have probably exceeded 30."

Mokes were often used to move personnel around the RAAF bases, and for moving light stores between buildings.

A common use for the Mokes was to take maintenance technicians, tools and spare parts to aircraft parked on the tarmac, to conduct maintenance, when it was not possible or practical to put the aircraft in a hanger.

They would often tow a small trailer to carry oxygen bottles and replenishing equipment,

navigation bags, safety equipment and in-flight rations to parked aircraft. It is not likely that they would have been used for carting ammunition, due to its heavy weight.

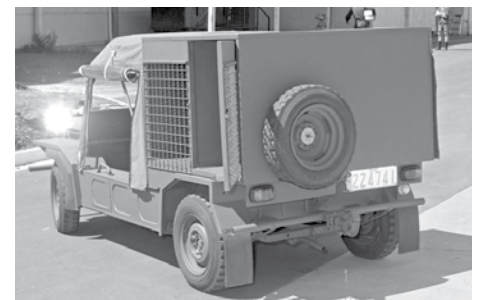
Former RAAF technician Stephen Gee reported, "I remember being involved with towing a Caribou at RIC (Richmond RAAF base) using a Moke. It did the job, just, even though the clutch smelt a bit hot. The Moke was also used to tow the big electric cherry picker that we used when changing the anti-collision light bulbs on top of the tail."

Mokes were also sometimes taken away by squadrons, to use as a deployment vehicle when operating away from their base. Noel Peterson recalled; "My memories are from 77Sqn and ours deployed throughout Australia. I think it was transported by Hercules. I know that we had it with us for a transit (to Perth) overnigher in Alice Springs."

As the Mokes were used around the flight line and on the tarmac, it is likely they were painted visibility yellow – so as not to get run over.

The other common use for Mokes with the RAAF was for the Security Police dog patrols. These Mokes were not Moke Pickups, but were standard Mokes, probably painted Olive Drab, and apparently modified by RAAF technicians.

The three photos here show two versions. The later one has the dog box attached to the Moke by way of a strap, while the earlier version appears much more substantial. Other modifications of interest on the later Moke are the hand-held spotlight, radio aerial on the roof, wide-angle mirror and radio microphone. The earlier Moke has the spotlight mounted on a bracket, no driver's side mirror and unusual bar-tread tyres.




RAAF Police Dog Moke - circa 1975.

Trevor Thompson recalled; "I remember when the dog sections first got the Mokes with the cages on. The story was that the cage set up was designed by an RAAF carpenter, who planned to use timber to build them. Long-story-short, his plans were transferred to metal construction, and the vehicles ended up grossly overloaded by the weight of the cages."

Sgt Peter Lawson, from Air Force Security Police elaborated; "Between those bloody cages and the weight of two bloody great Police Dogs in the back, we had no steering in the Mokes. In those days it wasn't out of the ordinary for two dogs to weigh as much as 85-90kgs. We usually only had forward motion when we had smaller dogs and bigger blokes in the Moke."

"Transport section usually had spare diffs and gearboxes ready for us. Those things went everywhere, whether they were designed to or not. Hence the extra diffs and gearboxes on stand-by. We broke the things on a regular basis. I've seen the things (Mokes) go places I wasn't game to go in a 4WD Hi-Lux!!! Like up the earth berms on the side of the engine run-up areas, and through gullies that you wouldn't think they'd get through."

Again, we would like to hear from anyone who can provide details of numbers used, colours and any photographs of RAAF Mokes. 



Moke trailers.

Although the BMC trailers used in the TTE trials were rejected for Army use, there was an obvious need for the Mokes to be trailer compatible. The TTE report stated; "...the trailer, with suitable design changes, would present a useful combination.."

The main concerns with the BMC trailer was the thin gauge steel used in its construction, and a lack of strength in the spring mounts and shackles.

Army Ordnance in Maribyrnong, Melbourne, addressed these issues and redesigned the trailer to meet Army requirements. Listed as 6003A Trailer Cargo ¼ Tonne Lightweight, a total of 90 were built between 1973 and 1975. The first two of these were accepted in 1974, allocated ARN 25799 and 25800, were used for User Trials, and sold in 1975.

The remaining 88 trailers were delivered in 1974, and were allocated ARN 25801 to 25888. Most of the trailers were disposed




A versatile combination.



The Moke trailer. Inset: Chassis number.

of in 1983-4, while around a dozen were kept until 1989.

They were fitted with NATO 12-pin trailer plugs, tonneau tie-down hooks, screw-lock coupling, two TAC-plate holders, indicators and one tail/brake light. The chassis number was stamped into the front of the trailer body, on the drawbar reinforcing plate. Bandiana has chassis 48 (ARN 25856).

An interesting feature is that the trailers were made without a tailgate, and there is a screw-in plug in the bottom near the front. With this plug screwed tightly in place, the trailer will float. As the Mokes were not deployed in rugged terrain, this seems a needless feature. With the plug in place and the trailer full of ice, though, it does make a great Eski. 



Heavy-duty 12-pin NATO plug.



Standard Army spec, just Mini-size.



Even trailers need proper Army ID



Perfect for floating - or carrying ice.



Screw-lock prevents it leaving the Moke.

Acknowledgements:

This feature was originally intended to be about the Mokes in all of Australia's Defence Forces – Army, Navy and Air Force.

Unfortunately, finding information has, for the most part, been very difficult to impossible. All defence information is apparently considered sensitive for 30 years, after which time it is either sent to the National Archive, if it is considered important enough, or it is destroyed. It seems that such information as vehicle records fall into the latter category and,

as most of the Moke information I sought was more than 30-years-old, it has been destroyed.

I must acknowledge the people who have assisted in the research for the feature, in particular Les Jordan, a former Warrant Officer with RAAF and Moke enthusiast; Mick O'Brien, Defence Civilian and ACT Mini Car Club member; Bill Sjoblom, AMVCS member; Stephanie Kimonides from Defence Public Relations; and the many people who wrote in with snippets of information.

Despite the greatest efforts of many people, most of the information for Air

Force, and all information for Navy has proved elusive. Similar problems were initially encountered with Army records, but a few surprises turned up valuable information, some of which has been previously published, some hasn't.

I would like to find more information on the Navy and Air Force Mokes, and would be happy to hear from anyone with written or photographic material of Mokes in these forces.

The same still applies to Army as well, even though I feel we have got most of the story – it wouldn't hurt to have even more information.