

The Commando 'R' type

The Commando 'R' Type was introduced in early 1969. Destined for the Canadian and USA markets, it had high bars, a small 2.25 gallon petrol tank and was available in blue or red. It had a conventional dual seat unlike the Fastback, but in other respects was similar to the first Commando.



Andover Norton have searched the factory records to establish how many 'R' types were built and where they were shipped.

The records show motorcycles were produced over two separate periods: the first from January to July 1969 and the second from February to April 1970.

The factory documents indicate that 585 'R' types were manufactured. However, due to the quality and completeness of the original files, we cannot be 100% sure.

The first 59 bikes were sent to Canada in late January 1969 aboard the Canadian Pacific vessel "Beaverash". Their destinations were Chariot Cycles at Winnipeg and Firth Motorcycles in Toronto. The lowest numbered motorcycle in these two batches was 130148.

2388	P. Mitchell (Chariot Cycles)	21-1-69	Winnipeg	11 x Com "R"
2389	S & G (Firth M/C)	22-1-69	Toronto	48 x Com "R"



The vessel "Beaverash" made two journeys to Canada with Commando 'R' types.

The lowest numbered 'R' type was 129928. However this was not shipped until late March 1969. It is apparent from the records that a lower or higher frame/engine number is not a good indicator of age. i.e. bikes were not built or shipped in number sequence.

The first USA bound bikes, 72 in number, were shipped to the Norton Villiers Corporations in Los Angeles and Seattle in late February 1969, aboard the vessel "Brasilia"

Detailed shipping entries exist for the first production period. The number of bikes shipped by month were:

Month	Canada	USA
Jan-69	84	0
Feb-69	74	72
Mar-69	43	100
Apr-69	78	0
May-69	31	0
Jun-69	10	0
Jul-69	2	0
Total	322	172

A second batch, built over the period February to April 1970, totals 88 machines. Detailed shipping entries don't exist, only their distributor destinations: 68 went to the Berliner Corporation, New Jersey and 20 to NVC, Los Angeles.

Month	USA
Feb-70	20
Mar-70	67
Apr-70	1
Total	88

The last 'R' type - 135885 ?

Eng No	Docket	Model	L.A	Agent	Date
135882		Roadster	NV14	NVC	USA 5.3.70
		Roadster	B11	Berliner	USA 12.3.70
		Roadster	B11	Berliner	USA 12.3.70
		Com R	B13 B10	Berliner	USA 2.4.70 3.3.70

Originally entered as 3rd March, the record was changed to 2nd April 1970

Just 3 bikes appear to have remained in England: 132479 to Wilf Green, Sheffield, May 1969, 130898 to 'Continental Cars' in September 1969 and 130387 to Ian Kennedy, London in October 1969.

The 'R' type is undoubtedly a rare motorcycle, accounting for less than 1% of total Commando output. If you have one and wish to share its story and photos please let us know!



llir

Ohri's superbly restored 'R' type is numbered 129928. It was shipped in April 1969 to S & G Firth, Toronto.



Gerry Lavender bought 130811 unseen and was expecting an 'S' type. He convert it back to an 'R' type with a deviation to the later timing cover.



130373 (above) was shipped to Edmonton in January 1969 and 130201 (below) went to Winnipeg in February 1969. Both returned to England in 2016.

