



## The VW Thing (Type 181) Registry

**Registry History:** The VW Thing (Type 181) registry has been around for almost 30 years. Originally formed as the Mid-Atlantic Thing Registry located in Springfield, VA in 1990. The Registry was founded and run by Bob Miller and his family. It was a self-funded organization when it started as the Registry is today. In the mid 1990's the Millers moved to Riverside, California (very close to where the Registry is located today) and changed their name to The VW Thing, Type 181 Registry.

By this time the Registry had grown to a world-wide organization and that's why the name was changed. Bob had people from all over the world helping him with the Registry. They did not track all the Type 181/182's in the world via the VIN as we do today, but they did keep contact and vehicle information for each member. Later they did start collecting money to join the Registry and it functioned more as a club. They had a quarterly Newsletter called "Things". This was prior to the internet. Everything was mailed, and communication was harder for members back then. Now we have the internet, email and Facebook to reach the entire world in a matter of minutes!

After many years of inactivity, Eric Goodman started the Registry back in June of 2016. It is now located in Newport Beach, California. It is the only VW Thing organization in the country with thousands of members all over the world. It hosts and sponsors Thing events each year. The Things East and Things West (formally, the Kubel Treffen East and West). You can register your Type 181 or 182 and find more information about the Registry at: [www.vwthingregistry.com](http://www.vwthingregistry.com)

From the website: "The purpose of The VW Thing (Type 181) Registry is to promote the preservation and enjoyment of the Volkswagen Thing, while keeping track of all the Type 181/182 around the world. We track the VIN, owner's information, color and location. This is FREE to all Type 181/182 owners. Although we don't have formal meetings, membership does provide the opportunity to participate in various scheduled Thing activities all over the world. We network through our Facebook page and quarterly newspaper. We promote Thing and Volkswagen events and sponsor activities like cruises, parades, gatherings, etc. Our activities are made possible by our network of volunteer "Thing Ambassadors" throughout the world. Our members also receive discounts at participating VW businesses who sponsor the Thing Registry".

Please feel free to help support our official sponsors, affiliates by joining their clubs and supporting their businesses. You can also defer the basic cost of the Registry like the web page, etc. when you buy a shirt or sticker or become a sponsor. Please contact us for more information. Thank you.

The VW Thing (Type 181) Registry is a Chapter of the Vintage Volkswagen Club of America.

## **Type 181 History and Facts from The VW Thing (Type 181) Registry**

### **Models-**

#### **Type 181:**

Official Volkswagen factory designation for all the left-hand drive vehicles.

#### **Type 182:**

Official Volkswagen factory designation for all right-hand drive vehicles.

The Type 181 model was inspired by Volkswagens Type 82 vehicle. It was built for the *Bundeswehr* (German Federal Army) and designated Mehrzweckwagen (multi-purpose vehicle). In German-influenced markets, it is generally known as "Kübel" or "Kübelwagen".

Type 182 with right-hand drive produced in Germany for the United Kingdom. Small numbers of type 182's was produced by VW from about 1970 onwards, either as demonstrators or to specific order. Other type 182's was built into the middle 1970's, primarily for military use in countries where right hand drive was standard (Morocco had at least 20 units). The Type 182 was also manufactured and sold in Indonesia.

### **The Type 181/182 was known as many different vehicles:**

#### **Kubel- Germany**

It was first manufactured in 1969 for the West German Army and not sold to the public until 1971. It was manufactured in three plants in Germany over the years. Wolfsburg, Hannover and Emden from 1968-1978. Sixteen pre-production vehicles were built in 1968, regular production started in 1969. Total production was 70,526 vehicles in Germany. Germany was the main country of production for the type 181/182 for the world.

History: During the 1960's the West German government was in need of a limited number of light, inexpensive, durable transport vehicles that could fulfill their basic needs while the Europa Jeep was being developed and put into production. Although Volkswagen had been approached during the 1950's about building such a vehicle, and had subsequently passed on the proposition, the then-current management of the company saw the project as having some amount of potential as a consumer vehicle; Mexican customers were asking for something that could handle rural roads better than the Type 1, which was a large seller in Mexico at the time, and the popularity of VW-based dune buggies within the U.S. made executives think that a durable, fun, off-road-capable vehicle would become attractive to many buyers. VW could keep cost to a minimum and thus maximize profitability by using existing parts. Like the World War II era Type 82 Kübelwagen, the Type 181 used mechanical parts and a rear-engine platform, manual transmission and a flat-4 engine derived from that of the Type 1. The Europa Jeep was the result of a NATO plan to have a vehicle whereby each European NATO makers all combined to build a light-duty patrol vehicle. The Volkswagen 181 was only supposed to fill in, until the time that the Europa Jeep was ready. From 1968 until 1979, over 50,000 Type 181s were delivered to the NATO forces. By 1979 the Europa Jeep project had fallen apart completely and was abandoned, and the West German government began supplementing their consumption of Type 181's with the new front-engined Type 183 Iltis. Despite the West German government's switch to the Type 183, European and Mexican sales of the civilian Type 181 continued through 1980, and several organizations, including NATO, continued to purchase military-spec Type 181 units through 1983, finding their reliability and low purchase and maintenance costs attractive.

## **Thing- USA**

First sold in the USA in 1972 as a 1973 model exported from Mexico to the USA for sale by Volkswagen of America. They were only sold in the USA in 1973 and 1974 with a total production of 28,930 Things sold in the USA. The 1975 model was prohibited by the U.S. government as they could not meet crash testing standards for "passenger cars". The 1973 and 1974 were classified as "Multi-Purpose Vehicles" and were exempt from those tests. The Thing included full emissions equipment on the engine, the letter "X" (for export) following the chassis number and a U.S. DOT sticker on the left center door post. The VIN also contains and "E" for export.

The first "Name" attached to these cars was to the Type-181 that was being built, or at least assembled, in Mexico, starting in late 1970. For purposes of registration, VW wanted all of these cars were to be called "The Safari", as this name had the same general meaning in all of the languages of the Americas. Unfortunately, General Motors had been using the "Safari" name on Pontiac Station wagons as early as 1955 and thereby "owned" the name Safari in the U.S. market. Volkswagen of America therefore elected to call all of its type 181 cars "The Thing". The official name "The Thing" is supported not only in all the VW literature, but in at least 42 states DMV registrations. Only 4 states are known to register these cars as "Type-181". Those Things that were sold in Canada and a few other countries, that were Volkswagen of America Things.

## **Acapulco- USA/Mexico**

In 1974 the Thing "Acapulco" model was available, a stock Thing with a few minor trim changes. They had blue and white gloss paint and interior, running boards, usually a surrey top and either a hardtop or a soft top. There were some Acapulco's built in Mexico in 1973 for the resort trade, including a few with a pink and white color scheme. Most all the Acapulco Things were exported to the US market in 1974 and only 400 were made. This is the rarest of all the Type 181's built.

## **Safari- Mexico**

All Type 181's made outside of Germany were built in Mexico in the Puebla plant from 1970-1983. About 6,000 more Type 181's was built in Germany than Mexico. But most of the vehicles made in Germany were not for Civilian sales. The VW plant at Puebla, Mexico, assembled Type 181's in 1970 and 1971 from CKD's (completely knock down) kits from Germany as there were no stamping facilities in Mexico at that time. The Safari was produced for Mexican domestic sales and was also exported to countries to the south of Mexico. The Mexican domestic engines all had low compression pistons installed for about a 6.8:1 compression ratio that would run on lower grade Premex gasolines. Mexico was the largest market for civilian Type 181 sales. Total production was 64,254 vehicles in Mexico.

## **Trekker- U.K.**

The type 182 was officially sold in Britain by VW dealers in 1974-75, under the name Trekker. Volkswagen U.K. first attempted to introduce the type 182 into England as "The Thing", but the dealers objected to the name and a "contest" was held to "name the car". Despite Press reports that 300 were being imported, current records only show surviving numbers of less than 200. Trekkers had European rear-lights and front flashers. They did not sell well in the UK based on the price and only lasted a few years.

## **Camat- Indonesia**

Type 182's was also sold and assembled in Jakarta, Indonesia from 1972-1980. History: PT Garuda Mataram Motor Company supplied VW Safari to Indonesian Army from 1972 in limited quantity, then in large number in 1973-74 until the contract ended in 1975. VW Safari used in Indonesian Army is actually the civilian version colored in green army. Unlike the military version used by the Bundeswehr, which is equipped with a variety of standard NATO military equipment, the VW Safari used by the Army is not equipped with standard military equipment because its function is only as an official vehicle officer in the middle of the army. PT German

Motor Manufacturing began to assemble new model of VW Safari to be marketed in 1975. Some CKD parts were imported from German then later from Puebla, Mexico. This was due to Type 181 was no more produced in German and all were made in Mexico. In October 1974, Solichin GP (the West Java Governor) received 60 units of VW Safari from Col. Arifin Adil, a Director of PT Garuda Mataram. These cars then were distributed among 19 Regencies in West Java. To support the 1977 General Election, in February 1976 the government of Indonesia ordered 3,500 units of VW Safari. It was found then that they needed more so in August 1976 they ordered 2,500 units more. Total production was 5,988 units for Indonesia. In 1976, VW Safari CKD kit were ordered in large amount from Puebla plant, Mexico, to support the 1977 General Election. These cars were distributed to all 'Camat' throughout Indonesia. 'Camat' is a name for government officials (a sub-district, one level below regency). because VW Safari is used by the sub-district. In the 1970s, road conditions in the territory of Indonesia are still not as good as now. Indonesian government officials who are intensively carrying out development in various sectors, often have difficulty to reach areas that are still minimal facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, the government feels the need to equip officials in the regions with vehicles that are suitable for that purpose. There were many options at that time, but the Government decided to use the VW Type 181 as an official vehicle in the area. With the characteristic that is very easy to recognize the orange colored paint and passengers who look dashing with the uniform leader of the region (Camat), many years of this vehicle passing in Indonesia.

#### **Pescaccia- Italy**

The Type 181 was sold in Italy as the Pescaccia in the early 1970's and exported from Germany. We have vey little info on the total number of Pescaccia's in Italy.

## **VIN numbers (Serial Numbers)-**

Each model year had a specific number for the VIN (180-18C).

1968: 180 2645 373 (prototype)  
1969: 180 xxxx xxx (180 2198 169, first)  
1970: 180 xxxx xxx  
1971: 181 xxxx xxx  
1972: 182 xxxx xxx  
1973: 183 xxxx xxx  
1974: 184 xxxx xxx  
1975: 185 xxxx xxx  
1976: 186 xxxx xxx  
1977: 187 xxxx xxx  
1978: 188 xxxx xxx  
1979: 189 xxxx xxx  
1980: 18A xxxx xxx (18A 0100 746. Last production)  
1981: 18B xxxx xxx  
1982: 18C xxxx xxx

## **Number of Type 181/182 listed in the VW Thing Registry (World Wide):**

1969: 225  
1970: 220  
1971: 270  
1972: 135  
1973: 1,000+  
1974: 1,000+  
1975: 135  
1976: 90  
1977: 115  
1978: 230  
1979: 45  
1980: 7

As of 12/1/2017

## Production figures-

Information about production figures is conflictive on the internet and in other publications. Numbers range from 90,883 to 140,768. The official number is: 140,768.

Bob Miller, founder of The VW Thing (Type 181) Registry did a lot of research into the production. Bob obtained data from VW sources, taken from actual copies of official VW production records and confirmed by Volkswagen Auto Group in 1995.

| Year   | Wolfsburg | Hannover | Emden | Puebla                       | Indonesia | Yearly totals |
|--------|-----------|----------|-------|------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1968   | 16        |          |       |                              |           | 16            |
| 1969   | 2,373     |          |       |                              |           | 2,373         |
| 1970   | 5,386     |          |       | 323                          |           | 5,709         |
| 1971   | 11,026    |          |       | 4,057                        |           | 15,083        |
| 1972   | 6,682     |          |       | 3,105                        |           | 9,787         |
| 1973   | 21,598    |          |       | 18,729 (incl. 14,197 Things) |           | 40,327        |
| 1974   | 10,493    | 8,747    |       | 18,844 (incl. 14,733 Things) |           | 38,084        |
| 1975   |           | 1,882    | 307   | 6,562                        |           | 8,751         |
| 1976   |           |          | 1,506 | 4,965                        |           | 6,471         |
| 1977   |           |          | 477   | 1,480                        |           | 1,957         |
| 1978   |           |          | 33    | 3,408                        |           | 3,441         |
| 1979   |           |          |       | 2,086                        |           | 2,086         |
| 1980   |           |          |       | 695                          |           | 695           |
| Totals | 57,574    | 10,629   | 2,323 | 64,254                       | 5,988     | 140,768       |

## **Type 181/182 Paint Color/Codes-**

The paint code tag for Type 181's built in Mexico was a paper tag stuck on the body in front of the well near where the jack is stored.

Factory Paint Color and Code:

Aluminum Grey L97U

Avocado Green L60F (USA only)

Blizzard White L90H (USA only)

Bream White L90C

Canary Yellow L11E

Caribbean Blue L41G

Cream White L90H (USA only)

Chrome L91

Coral Orange L22G

Delft Blue L55Z (USA only)

Flamingo Red L35G

Green L510 (Military)

Ivy Green L60F

L41G

Lemon Yellow

Malinche Blue L57G

Olive Green L319 (Military)

Pacific Blue L55G

Patzuaro Blue L55G

Pumpkin Orange L30H (USA only)

Salmon Red L30F

Steppe Beige L10F

Sunshine Yellow L11E (USA only)

Toga White L90C

Tepetl Green L67G

All Factory Things were painted with Semi-gloss paint except for the Acapulco Thing (Cream white/Delft Blue combo) were painted in a Gloss finish.

## **VW of America Accessory Parts list/numbers-**

|                             |             |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Fog Lamps                   | ZVW 123 202 |
| Fog Lamps                   | ZVW 123 203 |
| Sport Horn Set              | ZVW 123408  |
| Bosch Air Horns Set         | ZVW 123 410 |
| Tunnel Console (1973)       | ZVW 145 181 |
| Stripe Kit Black            | ZVW 146 181 |
| Sports Shifter              | ZVW 148 105 |
| Chrome Wheels               | ZVW 148 184 |
| Roll Cage                   | ZVW 148 283 |
| Front Push Bar              | ZVW 148 701 |
| Spare Tire Carrier (1973)   | ZVW 149 702 |
| Stripe Kit Strobe           | ZVW 149 181 |
| Bumper Overrides            | ZVW 151 809 |
| Chrome Wheel Cover          | ZVW 154 181 |
| Wheel Bolt Caps (set of 20) | ZVW 155 201 |
| Electric Winch              | ZVW 162 181 |
| Trailer Hitch (1973)        | ZVW 164 181 |
| Front Hitch                 | ZVW 164 182 |
| Trailer Hitch (1974)        | ZVW 164 184 |
| Cigarette Lighter           | ZVW 171 109 |
| Fiberglass Hardtop          | ZVW 175 101 |
| Hardware Kit for Hardtop    | ZVW 175 115 |
| Luggage Rack for Hardtop    | ZVW 175 181 |
| Utility Light               | ZVW 181 101 |
| CoCo Mats Black             | ZVW 197 181 |
| Air-Conditioning Unit       | ZVW 203 181 |
| AM/FM Radio                 | ZVW 535 075 |

All sold through dealers in the USA by Volkswagen of America.



## **Type 181/182 Parts interchangeability-**

Many of the mechanical parts on a VW 181 are interchangeable with some other model VW. Most come from the type 1, but some type 2, 3 and 4 parts are also used. Some parts are unique to Things and other versions of the Type 181.

The list below points out which parts are VW 181-specific and which ones are interchangeable with those from other VW types.

### **Brake parts**

#### **Backing plate**

- Front: VW part no. 181 609 139.
- Rear:

#### **Brake cylinder**

- Front:
- Rear: VW part no. 211 611 047 C

#### **Drums**

- Front: the front brake drum is the same as on the '66-'67 Bug. VW part no. 131 405 615A.
- Rear: the rear brake drums for the two transaxle set-ups were different:
  - o Type 181 with swing axle transaxle (plus reduction gears) is the same as on the August 1960 - July 1963 type 2 (Bus) with that transaxle layout. Note: although the Bus brake drum will interchange with the splines and brake shoes of the VW 181, the lug nuts are the larger 14 mm size.
  - o Mexico: the rear brake drum for the double-jointed ('IRS') transaxle is easy to identify as it has the 181- part number cast into the outside face of the drum. There just is not any other VW drum that will fit correctly. The difference all starts with the stub axle. The type 181 stub axle was designed to meet a specification for military use set down in the original NATO contract in 1966. As a result, we have an odd combination of CV joints, stub axles and drums. Only the 181 drum will properly and safely fit the 181 stub axle. VW part no. 181 501 615A.

**Hose:** as the Type 181 floor pans are nearly the same basic shape, Karmann Ghia brake lines fit perfectly. Front: VW part no. 181 611 701 (easily swapped for 113 611 701).

**Protection plate** - Front: VW part no. 181 611 369.

#### **Shoes**

- Front:
- Rear: same as August 1960 - July 1963 type 2 (Bus).

#### **CV joint**

VW part no. 113 501 331D

Bug and Bus CV joints don't have the same ability to operate at as severe a drive angle as the type 4 joint used in the type 181. Thus, will operate up to an angle of approximately 21 degrees, versus 17 degrees for the Bus joint. However, as a temporary fix, the Bus joint (VW part no. 211 501 331B) can be made to work.

The type 4 and 181 CV joint can be fitted to a Beetle transmission. Just use the transmission flange from the original on the new transmission. It's only this flange that is different on the trans.

## **Flasher unit**

There's only one flasher for both emergency and turn signals. Although it's a very VW only looking part, they are available as a Beetle replacement item from most VW accessory stores.

## **Gearbox (transaxle)**

The Type 181 and Beetle transaxles are basically the same for corresponding years:

- Mexico: the swing axle transaxle is basically a Beetle unit, but has a higher differential ratio (resulting in lower speed). Also, the differential is fitted on the opposite side because reduction gears (from the split screen Bus) have been fitted to the axle ends.
- The double-jointed ('IRS') transaxle came in two varieties: the pre-'73 models have two side covers, the '73-onward models have only one. The transaxle is the same as on the Beetle with this rear axle layout, but it has a higher differential ratio (resulting in lower speed) and uses different CV flanges. The Beetle transaxle can be used, but note the following points:
  - Retain the VW 181 CV joints and the CV joint flanges. The flanges can be easily changed over to the Beetle transaxle.
  - Make sure the Beetle transaxle has the pre-'73 2-bolt nosecone so that the mount lines up. If needed, the nosecone can be changed over.
  - Make sure the clutch throw out bearing is of the '71- onward type. It can be identified by the guide sleeve fitted over the driveshaft over which the bearing slides. Pre-'71 clutch throw out bearings can be used, but only with a corresponding pressure plate. This has a release pressure ring on the three release levers

## **Sheet metal**

### **Apron**

About the only part that is probably not available "new" any more is the front sheet metal panel known as the apron. All other parts are thought to be available from one or more of the known U.S. sources. Parts are even harder to find in Mexico than in the U.S.

### **Floor pans**

As the VW 181 floor pan is nearly the same basic shape, the Karmann Ghia floor pans will fit with some slight modifications. Note: they do not have the stock VW 181 pressed rib pattern and the gauge of sheet metal is slightly thicker.

### **Starter motor**

All Type 181s were originally fitted with the starter motor as found on semi-automatic ("Auto Stick") Beetles. These have just a gear on the end of the starter and not any shaft or pin protruding past the gear about 2 inches. Some of the transmissions are not even bushed for stock Beetle starter motor type (on which the aft end of the shaft is supported by a bushing in the bell housing).

### **Steering wheel**

Type 181s, unfortunately, used two different steering columns and steering wheels. The "early type" seen mostly on 73's can be identified by the metal trim around the key switch area, the "late" version, found mostly 74's, has a plastic trim assembly in the same area. Not only is the trim different, but the steering wheel spline is different so most 73 steering wheels won't fit 74 steering columns and vice versa.

The good news is that the "late" style (74's) is identical in spline and other fitments to most later VWs. Of Rabbit sports wheels all the splines, compression tubes and even the horn and turn signals align between the VW 181 and the newer wheel. Also, other VWs and Audi's steering wheels should fit right in place of the stock wheel.

### **Suspension, front**

The Type 181 and ball joint Beetle front axles are basically the same. The main differences are that the axle beam is 'ruggedized' and that the trailing arms, ball joints plus spindles are changed to raise the front some 2.5". If your front axle needs replacement, you have the following options:

- replace with a complete ('spindle-to-spindle') ball joint Beetle front suspension. Note: your VW 181 will sit lower at the front;
- replace the axle beam with one from a Beetle and refit the VW 181 spindles plus trailing arms - if you want to go stock, remove the brackets from the VW 181 axle beam and re-weld them to your Beetle axle beam.

Below follows a listing of parts that are different from the stock ball joint Beetle front suspension plus their VW part no.'s:

**Axle beam:** basically, the same as the Beetle's, but with strengthened damper support brackets and brackets for the outer axle-to-pan supports. VW part no. 181 401 021.

**Ball joints:** the VW 181 ball joints are unique to the car. Look at the front end versus a Beetle and you will see why. The VW 181 spindles are entirely below the trailing arms. This raises the front of the car 2.5" over the Beetle suspension. Shop for prices as they can be very expensive. But don't let anyone tell you they are the same as any other VW part, they are a 181- part number and are unique to the VW 181.

VW part no 181 405 361A (upper ball joint) and 181 405 371C (lower ball joint). Manufacturers include Heyd of Germany (part no.'s V.03.93 and V.03.98).

**Spindle:** VW part no. 181 405 311A (left); 181 405 312A (right).

**Stabilizer bar** (sway bar): VW part no. 181 411 309.

**Clamps and rubber mountings** for stabilizer bar: VW part no. 181 498 101. Clamps from the Beetle will work.

**Tie rod:** the right tie rod is VW 181 specific, the left one is interchangeable with the VW 1302/1303. VW part no. 181 415 802 (right tie rod); (left tie rod interchangeable with 131 415 801F).

**Tie rod end:** all the tie rod ends are either VW 1302/1303 or type 3.

**Torsion springs:** VW part no. 181 411 027.

**Trailing arms** (torsion arms): VW part no. 181 405 103 (upper left); 181 405 104 (upper right); 181 405 151A (lower left); 181 405 152 (lower right).

## Wheels and Tires

From 1970-1973 the VW 181 was fitted with 4.5J x 15" wheels and 165 R15 tires. These are the same four slotted wheels as on the split screen type 2.

From 1 March 1973 onwards VW 181s had unique 5JK x 14" wheels fitted with 185 R14 tires. These VW 181-only (they have a 181- part number) are different from other 5JK x 14" VW wheels in two major respects:

- The off-set dimension is greater than the other 14" wheels such as those used on the type 2. Use bus wheels on your VW 181 and everything will scrape a bunch.
- The original VW 181 wheels are un-slotted. All other 14" VW wheels are slotted.

Largest tires that can be fitted to VW 181s are 205/75 R15 tires. This requires several things to make it work. First you will need the 15 inch wheels to have the stock offset. Next, the suspension must be in good shape with no sag to prevent rubbing. If you are staying with the 14 inch wheels, 205/75 R14s will work nice. Possibly one can use a 215/75 R14 with little problem as well.

## Option Codes-

VW used modification or M-codes which to denote extra equipment fitted. Like most vehicles, the Type 181 has a variety of optional extras, and the following list identifies the more common of them. These codes appear in the microfiche, and on the Vehicle Data Sheet, but are rarely translated. Military Type 181's had the M-codes painted in white on the fan housing, others had them on metal tags common to other VWs.

| Code    | Description   |
|---------|---|
| M20     | Speedometer in miles.   |
| M26     | Activated carbon container for absorbing fuel vapor (Mexico).   |
| M27     | Compliance with US (West Coast) exhaust emission standards (USA).<br>California state safety regulations: these included all-rubber bumper overrides for the VW Thing (VW part no. 181 807 151 A).                        |
| M30     | Headlamp flasher with license plate illumination (Austria).   |
| M32     | Lockable Fuel Cap.  |
| M34/I   | White parking light and warning lamps (Italy).  |
| M34/II  | White parking light and warning lamps, without emergency lights (Italy).  |
| M34/III | White parking light and warning lamps, without emergency lights, with left and right convex mirrors (Italy).  |
| M34/IV  | Without emergency lights, with left and right convex mirrors (Italy).   |
| M37     | Without emergency light system (Italy, France).   |
| M46     | Side-mounted flashing indicators (Denmark, Norway, Italy).  |
| M47     | Back-up (reversing) light on bumper.  |
| M50     | Dual circuit and hand-brake warning light.  |
| M51     | Prepared for second generator.  |
| M60     | Petrol heater.  |
| M63/I   | Special (military) equipment, consisting of: blackout lights, rear fog lamp, speedometer with 1/10th km reading, fully suppressed and watertight equipment, starting handle, laminated windshield, petrol heater.         |
| M63/II  | Special (military) equipment, consisting of: blackout lights, rear fog lamp, speedometer with 1/10th km reading, fully suppressed and watertight equipment, starting handle, laminated windshield, without petrol heater. |
| M69     | Rifle brackets.   |
| M74     | Rear Mud Flaps.   |
| M89     | Laminated windshield glass.   |
| M105    | Stiffer rubber mountings for transmission.  |
| M123    | Specially suppressed parts (France).  |
| M124    | Yellow headlamps and safety rear view mirror (France).  |
| M129    | Additional third mounting-point for front seat-belt (France).   |
| M142    | Special equipment <i>Bundesgrenzschutz</i> (border guard): M63.   |
| M153    | Filter system with two oil bath air cleaners.   |

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| M157    | Exhaust emission control system and activated carbon container for absorbing fuel vapor. 48-hp engine, code AM (USA).   |
| M160    | Revolving warning light and high-volume horn.   |
| M165    | Painted instead of chrome parts.  |
| M183    | Rear seat belts.  |
| M185    | Lap belt front and rear (USA).  |
| M187    | Headlamps for left-hand traffic.  |
| M208    | Electric installation for trailer operation.  |
| M220    | Limited-slip differential.  |
| M231    | Reclining seat for passenger.   |
| M240    | Engine (code AF) with recessed pistons for low-octane fuel.   |
| M267    | Modified transmission ratio, 8:35 instead of 8:33.  |
| M335    | Compliance with exhaust emission standards (Austria). Engine code AL.   |
| M549    | Lap belt front.   |
| M552/I  | Without heater (petrol).  |
| M552/II | Without heater (exhaust system without heater boxes).   |
| M553/I  | Sealed-beam headlights, flashing indicators with side marking lights, red taillights, back-up lamps in taillight, but without headlamp flasher and steering lock (USA).       |
| M553/II | Sealed-beam headlights, flashing indicators with side marking lights, red taillights, back-up lamps in taillight, city horn, but without headlamp flasher and steering lock ( |
| M571    | Rear fog lamp.  |
| M610    | 24V alternator, engine code AL (with M51 and M63).  |
| M660    | The Acapulco Thing (Mexico, USA).   |

## Type 181/182 Engine's-

| Displacement (cc) | Engine no.            | Compression (1:x) | Performance (hp @ rpm) | Torque (mkg)    | Years                  |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1,493             | H<br>1130501(?)<br>up | 7.5               | 44 @ 4,000             | 10.2 @<br>2,000 | 1-Aug-69 to 31-Jul-70  |
| 1,584             | AG                    | 7.5               | 44 @ 3,800<br>(32kW)   | 10 @<br>2,000   | 01-Aug-70 to 28-Feb-73 |
| 1,584             | AL, AM                | 7.5               | 48 @ 4,000<br>(36 kW)  | 10.5 @<br>2,000 | 01-Mar-73 to 1980      |
| 1,584             | AF                    | 6.8               | 46                     |                 | Safari                 |
| 1,584             | AL                    |                   |                        |                 |                        |
| 1,584             | AM                    |                   | 48                     |                 | 73, 74 Thing           |

Engine serial codes include H, AF, AG, AL and AM.

The 1973 and 1974 Things had full emissions equipment on the engine. The original Thing case is a type 2 or Universal case to provide the attachment points for the skid plates that are bolted onto the bottom of Thing engines. 1973 Thing and all Military engine tin is without the holes for the heat exchanger tubes as they have gas heaters. Military engine tin also has a hole and cover flap for a starting crank. The Mexican domestic engines all had low compression pistons installed for about a 6.8:1 compression ratio that would run on lower grade Premex gasolines.

## Type 181/182 Gearbox ratios-

Ratios listed below are for gearboxes fitted to Type 181's. Depending on destination, gearbox ratios could differ. For example, VW 181s destined for Europe and the USA were geared higher than those for Germany and Mexico.

| <b>Model year</b>       | <b>1970</b> | <b>1971 - February 1973</b> | <b>March 1973 up</b> | <b>'73, '74 Thing</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Gear box code letter    | ..          | ..                          | ..                   | AV                    |
| Part number             | ..          | ..                          | ..                   | 181.300.044F          |
| <b>Reduction ratios</b> |             |                             |                      |                       |
| 1st gear                | 3.80        | 3.80                        | 3.78                 | 3.78                  |
| 2nd gear                | 2.06        | 2.06                        | 2.25                 | 2.06                  |
| 3rd gear                | 1.22        | 1.22                        | 1.26                 | 1.26                  |
| 4th gear                | 0.82        | 0.82                        | 0.88                 | 0.93                  |
| reverse gear            | 3.61        | 3.80                        | 3.78                 |                       |
| differential            | 3.875       | 3.875                       | 4.375 <sup>(*)</sup> | 4.125                 |
| reduction gears         | 1.39        | 1.26                        | (none)               | (none)                |

(\*) Specified for Germany and Mexico only. VW 181s for Europe and the USA had a 1:4.125 ratio differential. Option code M267 (from 183 2346 525 to 184 2818 496) denoted a modified transmission ratio, 1:4.375 instead of 1:4.125.

## Gearbox code letters-

| <b>Gearbox code</b> | <b>Other gearbox codes (Type 1 VWs for USA)</b> | <b>Ring and pinion ratio</b> | <b>Notes</b>             |
|---------------------|---|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| AT and BG           |   | 3.875                        | ..                       |
| AH and DC           |   | 4.125                        | ..                       |
| BA and GA           |   | 4.375                        | ..                       |
| AV                  |   | 4.125                        | part number 181.300.044F |



## **Type 181 Road test-**

Road and Track Road Test for the Volkswagen 181

October 1973.

## **PRICE**

List Price, all POE.....\$2750

Price as tested.....\$2858

Price as tested includes AM radio (\$65), dealer prep (\$43)

## **IMPORTER**

VW of America

600 Sylvan Ave.

Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632

## **GENERAL**

Curb weight, lb. ....1920

Test weight .....2290

Weight distribution (with driver), front/rear, %....44/56

Wheelbase, in. ....94.5

Track front/rear .....53.3/56.9

Length .....148.8

Width .....64.6

Height .....63.8

Ground Clearance .....11.0

Overhang front/rear ...21.2/33.1

Usable trunk space, cu ft. ..10.7

Fuel capacity, U.S. gallons 10.6

## **ENGINE**

Type .....ohv flat 4

Bore x stroke, mm ...85.5 x 69.0

Equivalent, in ...3.37 x 2.72

Displacement, cc/cu in .....1584/96.7

Compression ratio .....7.3:1

Bhp @ rpm, net .....46 @ 4000

Equivalent mph .....76

Torque @ rpm, lo-fi ...72 @ 2800

Equivalent mph .....53

Carburetion ...1 Solex 34 PICT 3

Fuel Req. ....regular, 91-oct

Emissions, gram/mile:

Hydrocarbons .....1.8

Carbon Monoxide .....26.9

Nitrogen Oxides .....2.6

## **DRIVE TRAIN**

Transmission .....4-sp manual  
Gear ratios: 4th (0.93) ..3.83:1  
3rd (1.26) .....5.19:1  
2nd (2.06) .....8.49:1  
1st (3.78) .....15.57:1  
Final drive ratio .....4.12:1

## **CHASSIS & BODY**

Layout ...rear engine/rear drive  
Body/frame .....platform frame/separate steel body  
Brake system.....9.6 x 1.7-in. drums front, 9.1 x 1.7 in. drums rear  
Swept area, sq. in. ....111  
Wheels .....steel disc, 14 x 5 JK  
Tires .....185 SR-14  
Steering type .....worm & roller  
Overall ratio .....19.4  
Turns, lock-to-lock .....2.75  
Turning circle, ft. ....36.1  
Front suspension: trailing arms, torsion bars, tube shocks  
Rear suspension: trailing & diagonal arms, torsion bars, tube shocks

## **INSTRUMENTATION**

Instruments: 100-mph speedometer, 99,999.9 odometers, fuel level  
Warning lights: oil pressure generator, hazard, high beam, directional

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Seating capacity, persons .....4  
Seat width f/r .....2 x 20.0/52.0  
Head room f/r .....37.0 x 37.0  
Seat back adjustment, deg .....10

## **MAINTENANCE**

Service intervals, mi:  
Oil change .....3000  
Filter change .....6000  
Chassis lube .....none  
Tune-up .....12,000

Warranty, mo./mi .....24/24,000

### **CALCULATED DATA**

Lb./bhp (test weight) .....49.8  
Mph/1000 rpm (4th gear) .....18.8  
Engine revs/mi (60 mph) .....3200  
Piston travel, ft./mi .....1451  
R&T steering index .....0.99  
Brake swept area, sq. in./ton ..97

### **ROAD TEST RESULTS**

#### **ACCELERATION**

Time to distance, sec:  
0-100 ft. ....4.4  
0-500 ft. ....12.1  
0-1320 ft. (1/4 mile) .....22.5  
Speed at end of 1/4 mi, mph .59.0  
Time to speed, sec:  
0-30 mph .....6.3  
0-40 mph .....9.7  
0-50 mph .....15.3  
0-60 mph .....23.2  
0-70 mph .....42.2

#### **BRAKES**

Minimum stopping distances, ft.:  
From 60 mph .....165  
Control in panic stop .....good  
Pedal effort for 0.5g stop, lb..65  
Fade: percent increase in pedal effort to maintain 0.5g deceleration  
in 6 stops from 60 mph .....15  
Parking: hold 30% grade? .....yes  
Overall brake rating .....good

#### **SPEEDS IN GEARS**

4th gear (3850) .....73  
3rd (4700) .....67  
2nd (4700) .....40  
1st (4700) .....22

#### **INTERIOR NOISE**

All noise readings in dbA:

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Idle in neutral .....   | 65 |
| Maximum, 1st gear ..... | 92 |
| Constant 30 mph .....   | 75 |
| 50 mph .....            | 81 |
| 70 mph .....            | 90 |

## **SPEEDOMETER ERROR**

|                              |      |
|------------------------------|------|
| 30 mph indicated is actually | 28.0 |
| 50 mph .....                 | 46.0 |
| 60 mph .....                 | 56.0 |
| 70 mph .....                 | 65.0 |
| 75 mph .....                 | 69.0 |

## **Type 181 History and Facts from The VW Thing (Type 181) Registry**

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*Source:* German Federal Army Manual, The VW Thing Parts Manual, The VW Thing (Type 181) Registry, Bob Miller (USA), Jeff Gilleland (USA), Eric Goodman (USA), Wisynu Wibhisana (Indonesia), Pedro Sarda (Mexico), and Andy Talbot (UK). 2017