

## All Tail-Draggers with Tubular Steel Frames.

### Cracking & Corrosion at Aft Tail Post Welded Joint & Lower Longerons.

The US FAA have recently published a Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB CE-13-14) that advises that the tail area on all Piper tail-dragger aircraft should be subject to a special inspection regime. This recommendation applies to all Piper airframes that have accumulated over 1000 hours in service and suggests that the inspection be carried out within 100 hours. They suggest that this area be visually inspected (using dye penetrant NDT) or investigated using X-Ray NDT. Naturally, the fabric would need to be removed for the former inspection method.

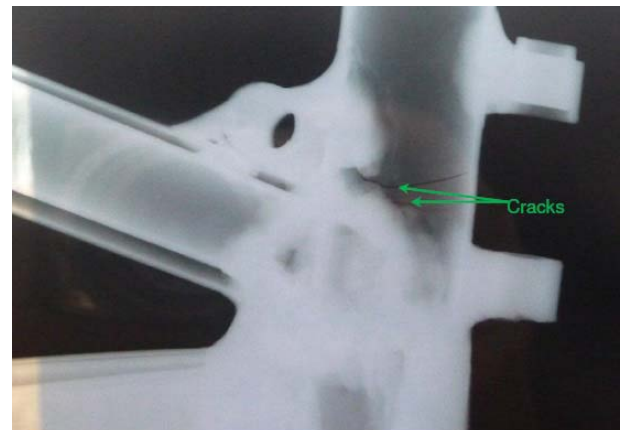


Fig. 1. X-Ray of cracked Fin Post

Because fuselage construction using tubular steel frames is common amongst LAA types the advice to incorporate detailed checks in this area should be accepted as good practice on many LAA machines.

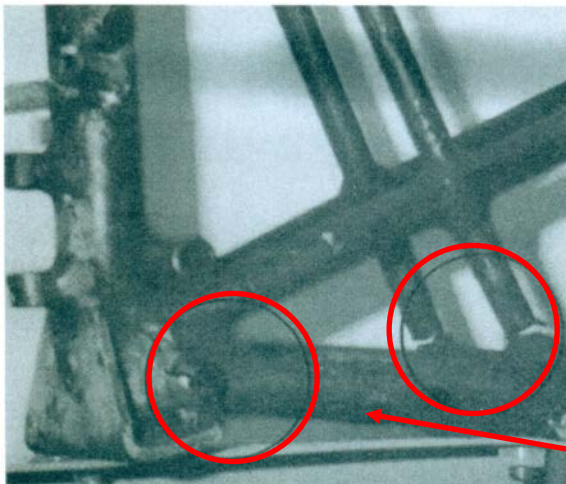


Fig. 3. Serious corrosion and cracking found in the rear fuselage structure of a Vagabond (PA-15)

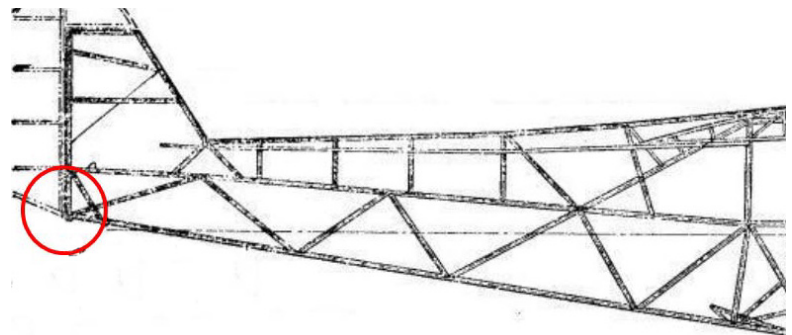


Fig. 2. General Arrangement showing area of concern.

NOTE: The lower Longeron is especially prone to corrosion

LAA Engineering has recently sent out a copy of the FAA SAIB to all Piper tail-dragger aircraft with a recommendation that they incorporate this inspection into the Tailored Maintenance Schedule for their aircraft. If you own a tail-dragger aircraft of any type which uses a tubular steel frame we would suggest that you consider doing the same.

You can download a copy of the FAA Safety Alert [HERE](#)