

(1) For all serial numbered airplanes, inspect the nose wheel steering, the sliding canopy and canopy locking mechanism, the attachment of the horizontal stabilizer, the elevator installation, the vertical stabilizer, the rudder installation, and the weights and residual moments of the control surfaces in accordance with the instructions in Grob Service Bulletin No. 1078-59/3, dated October 24, 1996. Prior to further flight, repair any discrepancies in accordance with the above-referenced service bulletin.

(2) For airplanes incorporating a serial number in the range of 82001 through 82077, replace the elevator hinges with parts of improved design in accordance with Grob Installation Instructions 1078-64, dated December 11, 1996, as specified in both Grob Service Bulletin No. 1078-64/2, dated April 8, 1997; and Grob Service Bulletin No. 1078-64, dated December 11, 1996.

(3) For airplanes incorporating a serial number in the range of 82001 through 82077, after accomplishing the replacement required by paragraph (b)(2) of this AD, adjust the mass and residual moments in accordance with Grob Service Bulletin No. 1078-66, dated February 10, 1997.

(c) Accomplishing the actions required by paragraphs (b)(1), (b)(2), and (b)(3) of this AD eliminates the placard and flight restriction requirements of paragraph (a), including all subparagraphs, of this AD.

(d) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

(e) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance times that provides an equivalent level of safety may be approved by the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, 1201 Walnut, suite 900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

(1) The request shall be forwarded through an appropriate FAA Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate.

(2) Alternative methods of compliance approved in accordance with AD 96-19-07 are not considered approved as alternative methods of compliance for this AD.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Small Airplane Directorate.

(f) Questions or technical information related to service information previously referenced should be directed to Burkhart Grob Luft-und Raumfahrt, D-8939 Mattsies, Germany. This service information may be examined at the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

(g) The inspection required by this AD shall be done in accordance with Grob Service Bulletin No. 1078-59/3, dated October 24, 1996. The replacement required by this AD shall be done in accordance with Grob Installation Instructions 1078-64, dated December 11, 1996, as specified in both Grob Service Bulletin No. 1078-64/2, dated April 8, 1997; and Grob Service Bulletin No. 1078-64, dated December 11, 1996. The adjustment

required by this AD shall be done in accordance with Grob Service Bulletin No. 1078-66, dated February 10, 1997. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Burkhart Grob Luft-und Raumfahrt, D-8939 Mattsies, Germany. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri, or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW, suite 700, Washington, DC.

Note 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in German AD 96-270/2, dated December 5, 1996; German AD 96-270/3, dated December 4, 1997; and German AD 97-143, dated May 22, 1997.

(h) This amendment supersedes AD 96-19-07, Amendment 39-9765.

(i) This amendment becomes effective on June 28, 1998.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on May 1, 1998.

Michael Gallagher,

Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-12355 Filed 5-12-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-SW-32-AD; Amendment 39-10520; AD 97-18-11]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron (Bell) Model 204B, 205A, and 205A-1 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This document publishes in the **Federal Register** an amendment adopting Airworthiness Directive (AD) 97-18-11, issued on August 29, 1997, which was sent previously to all known U.S. owners and operators of Bell Model 204B, 205A, and 205A-1 helicopters by individual letters. This AD requires modification and inspections of the vertical fin spar. If any crack is discovered, replacement of the vertical fin spar with an airworthy vertical fin spar is required before further flight. This amendment is prompted by several failures of the vertical fin spar, including those with steel doublers, caused by fatigue cracks that result from a large number of high-power events. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent in-flight failure of

the vertical fin spar and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective May 28, 1998, to all persons except those persons to whom it was made immediately effective by priority letter AD 97-18-11, issued on August 29, 1997, which contained the requirements of this amendment.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before July 13, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-SW-32-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Charles Harrison, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Certification Office, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137, telephone (817) 222-5447, fax (817) 222-5783.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 29, 1997, the FAA issued priority letter AD 97-18-11, applicable to Bell Model 204B, 205A, and 205A-1 helicopters, which requires modification and inspections of the vertical fin spar. If any crack is discovered, replacement of the vertical fin spar with an airworthy vertical fin spar is required before further flight. Priority letter AD 97-18-11 superseded priority letter AD 97-18-01, issued on August 19, 1997. AD 97-18-01 contained the same basic requirements as is contained in AD 97-18-11. However, AD 97-18-11 was needed to clarify the method of compliance for the Model 204B helicopters, and to correct an error in a vertical fin spar part number (P/N). AD 97-18-01 incorrectly stated the P/N as P/N 205-030-851 instead of P/N 205-032-851. This AD is prompted by an accident involving the in-flight failure of the vertical fin spar on a Model 205A-1 helicopter. Two other accidents on restricted category (military surplus) aircraft of similar type design have occurred. One of the accidents resulted in a fatality. In 1971, the FAA issued AD 71-21-02, which addressed this problem by requiring the addition of a steel doubler to the inside edge of the vertical fin spar. There have been several additional failures since that AD was issued. A large number of high-power events can cause fatigue cracks which will cause the vertical fin spar to fail. This condition, if not corrected, could result in in-flight failure of the vertical fin spar and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

Since the unsafe condition described is likely to exist or develop on other Bell

Model 204B, 205A, and 205A-1 helicopters of the same type design, the FAA issued priority letter AD 97-18-11 to prevent in-flight failure of the vertical fin spar and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter. The AD requires, within 8 hours time-in-service (TIS) after the effective date of this AD, modification and inspection of the vertical fin spar. Then, at intervals not to exceed 8 hours TIS, further inspections of the vertical fin spar for cracks are required. If any crack is discovered, replacement of the vertical fin spar with an airworthy vertical fin spar is required before further flight.

Since it was found that immediate corrective action was required, notice and opportunity for prior public comment thereon were impracticable and contrary to the public interest, and good cause existed to make the AD effective immediately by individual letters issued on August 29, 1997 to all known U.S. owners and operators of Bell Model 204B, 205A, and 205A-1 helicopters. These conditions still exist, and the AD is hereby published in the **Federal Register** as an amendment to section 39.13 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 39.13) to make it effective to all persons.

The FAA estimates that 265 helicopters will be affected by this proposed AD, that it will take approximately 203 work hours to accomplish the modification, inspection, and spar replacement, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$3,227,700.

Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule that involves requirements affecting flight safety and, thus, was not preceded by notice and an opportunity for public comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications should identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified under the caption **ADDRESSES**. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might suggest a need to modify the rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this rule must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket No. 97-SW-32-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

The regulations adopted herein will not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this final rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

The FAA has determined that this regulation is an emergency regulation that must be issued immediately to correct an unsafe condition in aircraft, and that it is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866. It has been determined further that this action involves an emergency regulation under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979). If it is determined that this emergency regulation otherwise would be significant under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures, a final regulatory evaluation will be prepared and placed in the Rules Docket. A copy of it, if filed, may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding a new airworthiness directive (AD) to read as follows:

AD 97-18-11 Bell Helicopter Textron: Amendment 39-10520. Docket No. 97-SW-32-AD.

Applicability: Model 204B, 205A, and 205A-1 helicopters, with tailboom vertical fin spar, part number (P/N) 205-032-899, 205-030-846, or 205-032-851, all dash numbers, installed, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each helicopter identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For helicopters that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must use the authority provided in paragraph (c) to request approval from the FAA. This approval may address either no action, if the current configuration eliminates the unsafe condition, or different actions necessary to address the unsafe condition described in this AD. Such a request should include an assessment of the effect of the changed configuration on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD. In no case does the presence of any modification, alteration, or repair remove any helicopter from the applicability of this AD.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously. To prevent in-flight failure of the tailboom vertical fin spar (vertical fin spar) and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) For Model 204B helicopters, within 8 hours time-in-service (TIS) after the effective date of this AD, modify the vertical fin spar as follows:

(1) Remove the 42° gearbox cover and open the drive shaft cover on the vertical fin spar assembly (see Figure 1).

(i) Remove the first four rivets from the vertical fin spar located at the bottom of the vertical fin spar left-hand side at the tailboom and vertical fin spar junction, and the first four rivets aft of the junction along the lower edge of the vertical fin spar skin (skin) as shown (see Figure 2). CAUTION: Extreme care must be taken when drilling and removing rivets from the side of vertical fin spar to ensure the vertical fin spar assembly is not damaged.

(ii) Trim the vertical fin spar left-hand skin using extreme care to not damage the vertical fin spar assembly (see Figure 3).

(iii) Deburr the rivet holes and trimmed skin edges. Remove all debris. In a ventilated work area, remove any surface contaminants with a cloth that has been dampened with aliphatic naphtha or an equivalent cleaning solvent.

(iv) Reattach the skin to the vertical fin spar using MS 20470AD rivets. DO NOT install the bottom two rivets into the vertical fin spar where the skin was trimmed.

(v) Reinstall the vertical fin spar skin lower edge rivets using M 7885/6-5 rivets (see Figure 6).

(vi) Refinish all reworked areas.

(vii) After modifying the vertical fin spar, immediately inspect the vertical fin spar in accordance with paragraphs (a)(2)(iii) and (a)(2)(iv) of this AD.

(2) After the initial modification and inspection of the vertical fin spar have been accomplished in accordance with paragraph (a)(1) of this AD, thereafter, at intervals not to exceed 8 hours TIS, inspect the vertical fin spar in accordance with paragraphs (a)(2)(iii) and (a)(2)(iv) of this AD for cracks as follows:

(i) Remove the lower aft tailboom inspection door, located at tailboom station 180 (see Figure 4).

(ii) Remove the 42° gearbox cover and open the drive shaft cover on the vertical fin (see Figure 1).

(iii) Through the lower aft tailboom inspection door, using a bright light and an inspection mirror, inspect the vertical fin spar assembly adjacent to the tailboom top skin on the forward side, paying special attention to the left-hand edge and the adjacent surfaces (see Figure 5).

(iv) In a ventilated work area, clean all surfaces to be inspected with a cloth dampened with aliphatic naphtha or an equivalent cleaning solvent. Using a bright light and a 10x magnifying glass, inspect the vertical fin spar assembly adjacent to the tailboom top-skin on the in-board and out-board sides, the vertical edge, and the two open rivet holes. Using a bright light and a mirror, inspect the aft side of the vertical fin spar in the same area. Special attention must be given to the left-hand edge of the vertical fin spar and any adjacent surfaces between fin stations 66.31 and 71.31 (see Figure 5).

(3) If any crack is discovered on the vertical fin spar as a result of the inspection specified in paragraphs (a)(2)(iii) or (a)(2)(iv) of this AD, replace the vertical fin spar assembly with an airworthy vertical fin spar assembly before further flight.

(b) For Model 205A and 205A-1 helicopters, within 8 hours TIS after the effective date of this AD, modify the vertical fin spar as follows:

(1) Remove the 42° gearbox cover and open the drive shaft cover on the vertical fin spar assembly (see Figure 1).

(i) Remove the clip, P/N 212-030-099-091, and the radius block, P/N 212-030-099-095, (see Figures 5 and 6).

(ii) Remove the first four rivets from the vertical fin spar, located at the bottom of the vertical fin spar left-hand side at the tailboom and vertical fin spar junction as shown (see Figure 5). CAUTION: Extreme care must be taken when drilling and removing rivets from the side of vertical fin spar to ensure the vertical fin spar assembly is not damaged.

(iii) Trim the vertical fin left-hand side skin and retainer, P/N 205-032-851-045, using extreme care to not damage the vertical fin spar assembly (see Figure 7).

(iv) Deburr the rivet holes and trimmed retainer and skin edges. Remove all debris. In a ventilated work area, remove any surface contaminants with a cloth that has been dampened with aliphatic naphtha or an equivalent cleaning solvent.

(v) Reattach the skin and retainer to the vertical fin spar using MS 20470AD rivets. DO NOT install the bottom two rivets into the vertical fin spar where the skin and retainer were trimmed.

(vi) Reinstall the clip and radius block with M 7885/6-5 rivets (see Figure 5).

(vii) Refinish all reworked areas.

(viii) After modifying the vertical fin spar, immediately inspect the vertical fin spar in accordance with paragraphs (b)(2)(iii) and (b)(2)(iv) of this AD.

(2) After the initial modification and inspection of the vertical fin spar have been accomplished in accordance with paragraph (b)(1) of this AD, thereafter, at intervals not to exceed 8 hours TIS, inspect the vertical fin spar in accordance with paragraphs (b)(2)(iii) and (b)(2)(iv) of this AD for cracks as follows:

(i) Remove the lower aft tailboom inspection door, located at tailboom station 180 (see Figure 4).

(ii) Remove the 42° gearbox cover and open the drive shaft cover on the vertical fin spar (see Figure 1).

(iii) Through the lower aft tailboom inspection door, using a bright light and an inspection mirror, inspect the vertical fin spar assembly adjacent to the tailboom top skin on the forward side, paying special attention to the left-hand edge and the adjacent surfaces (see Figure 5).

(iv) In a ventilated work area, clean all surfaces to be inspected with a cloth dampened with aliphatic naphtha or an equivalent cleaning solvent. Using a bright light and a 10x magnifying glass, inspect the vertical fin spar assembly adjacent to the tailboom top-skin on the in-board and out-board sides, the vertical edge and the two open rivet holes. Using a bright light and a mirror, inspect the aft side of the vertical fin spar in the same area. Special attention must be given to the left-hand edge of the vertical fin spar and any adjacent surfaces between fin stations 66.31 and 71.31 (see Figure 5).

(3) If any crack is discovered on the vertical fin spar as a result of the inspection specified in paragraphs (b)(2)(iii) or (b)(2)(iv) of this AD, replace the vertical fin spar assembly with an airworthy vertical fin spar assembly before further flight.

(c) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Rotorcraft Certification Office, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, Rotorcraft Certification Office.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Rotorcraft Certification Office.

(d) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the helicopter to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

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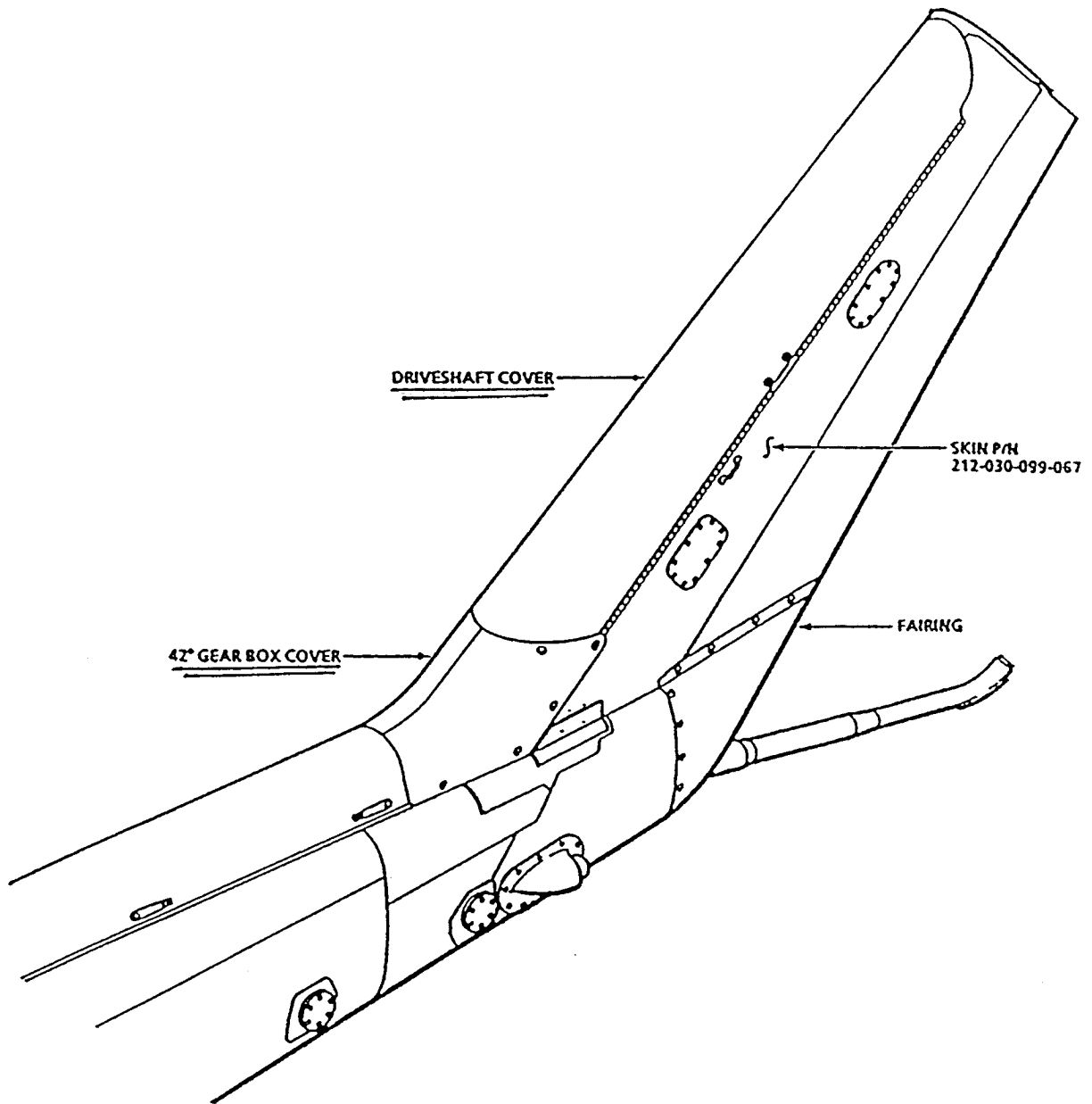


Fig. 1

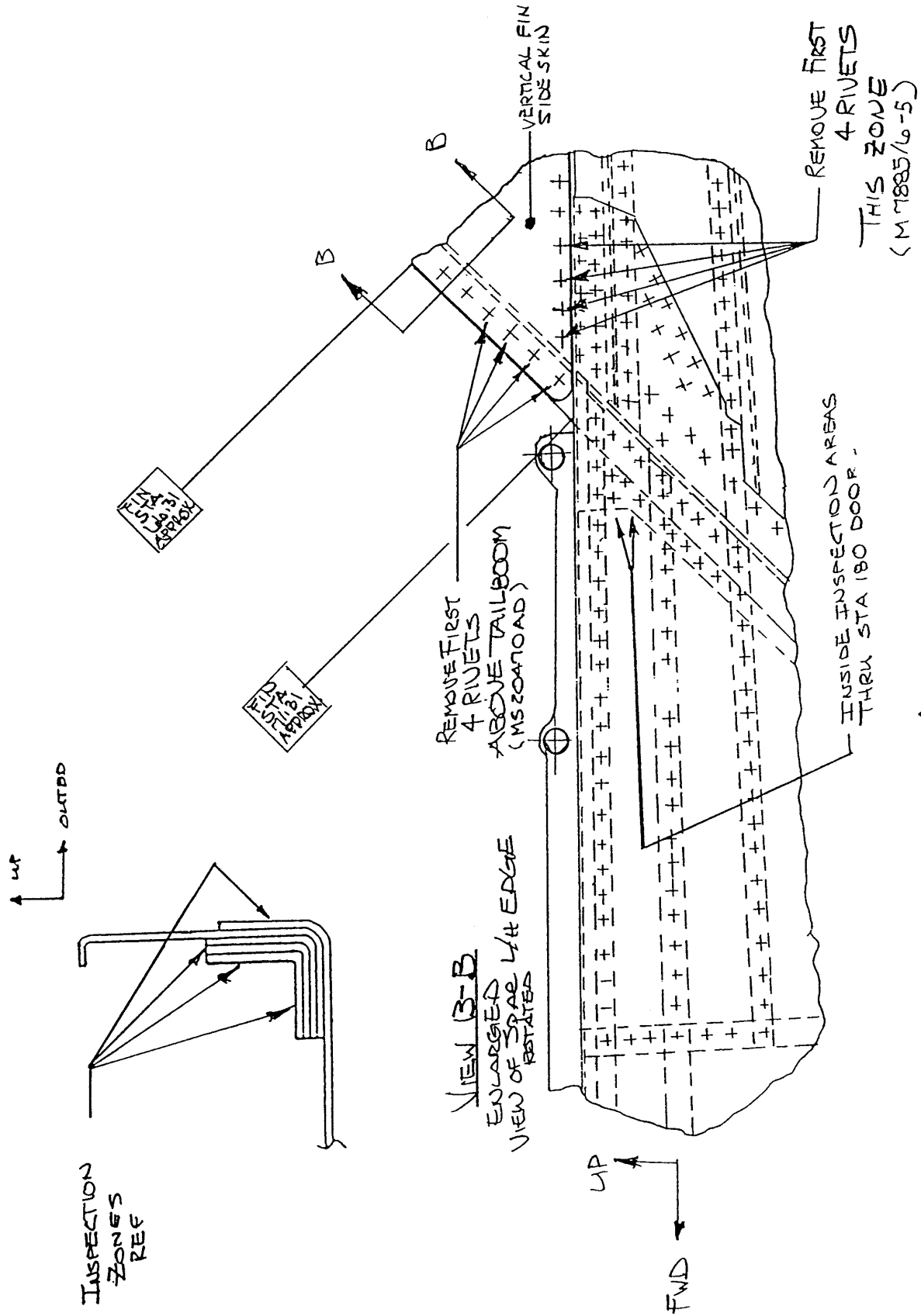


FIG. 2 DETAIL - A -
204B CONFIGURATION

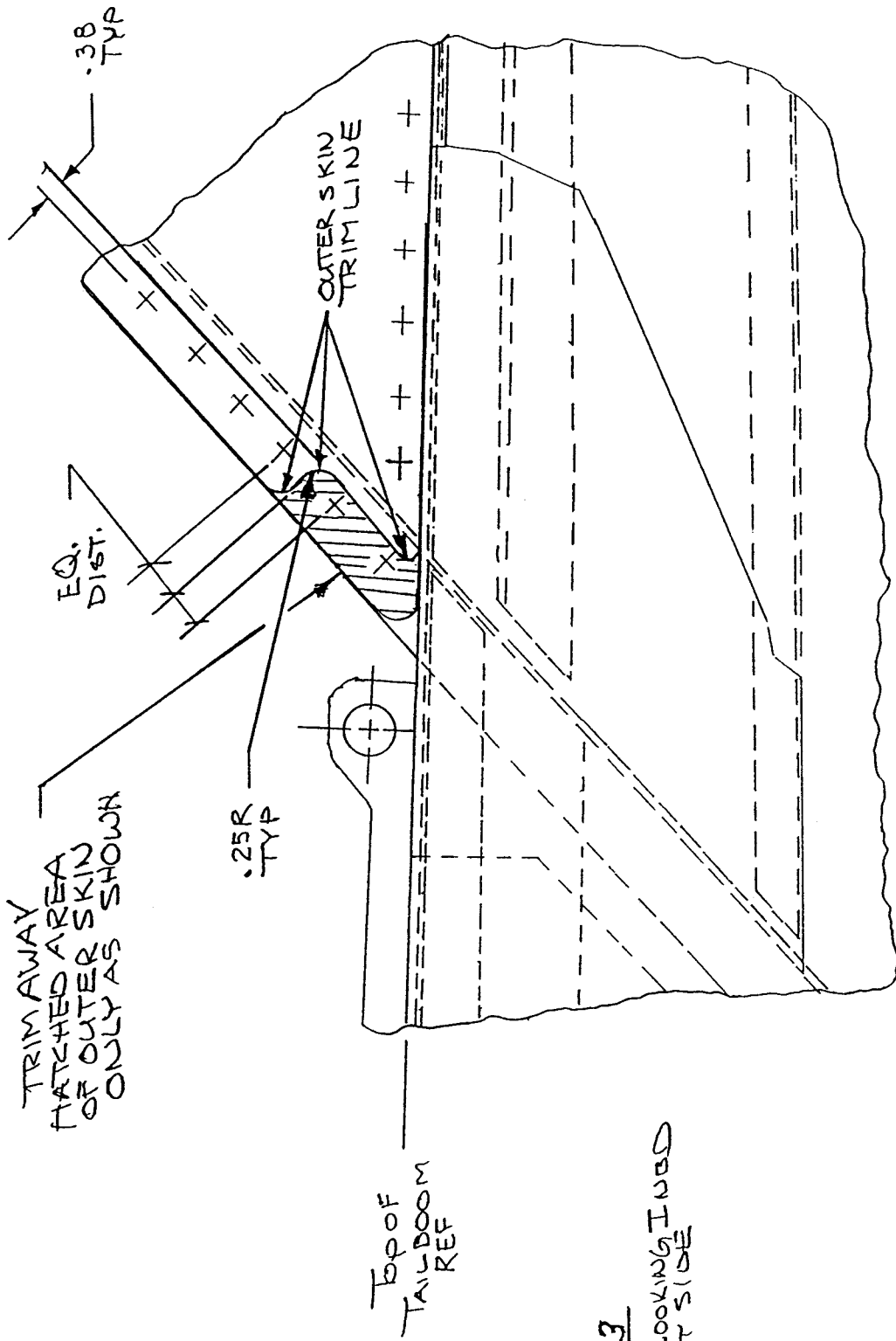


FIG. 3
VIEW LOOKING INBOARD
LEFT SIDE

204B CONFIGURATION

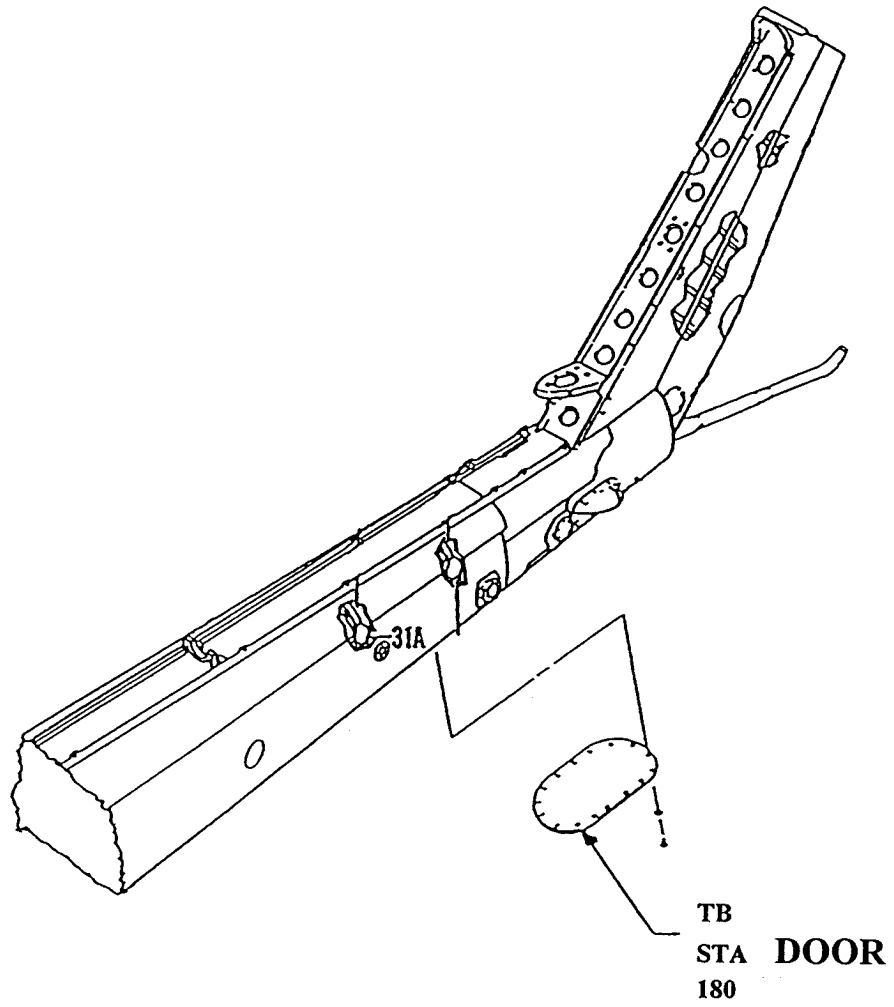
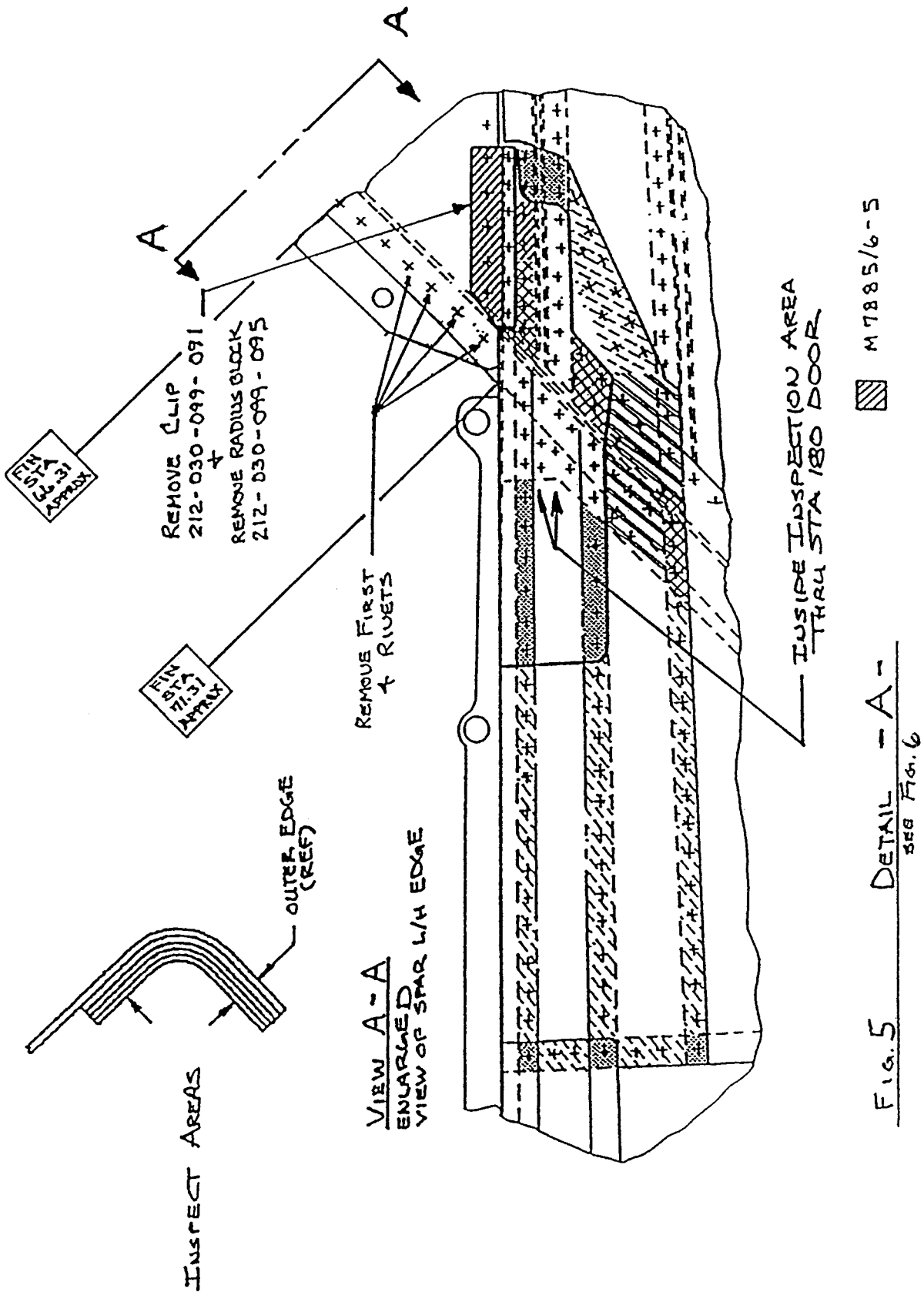


Fig. 4



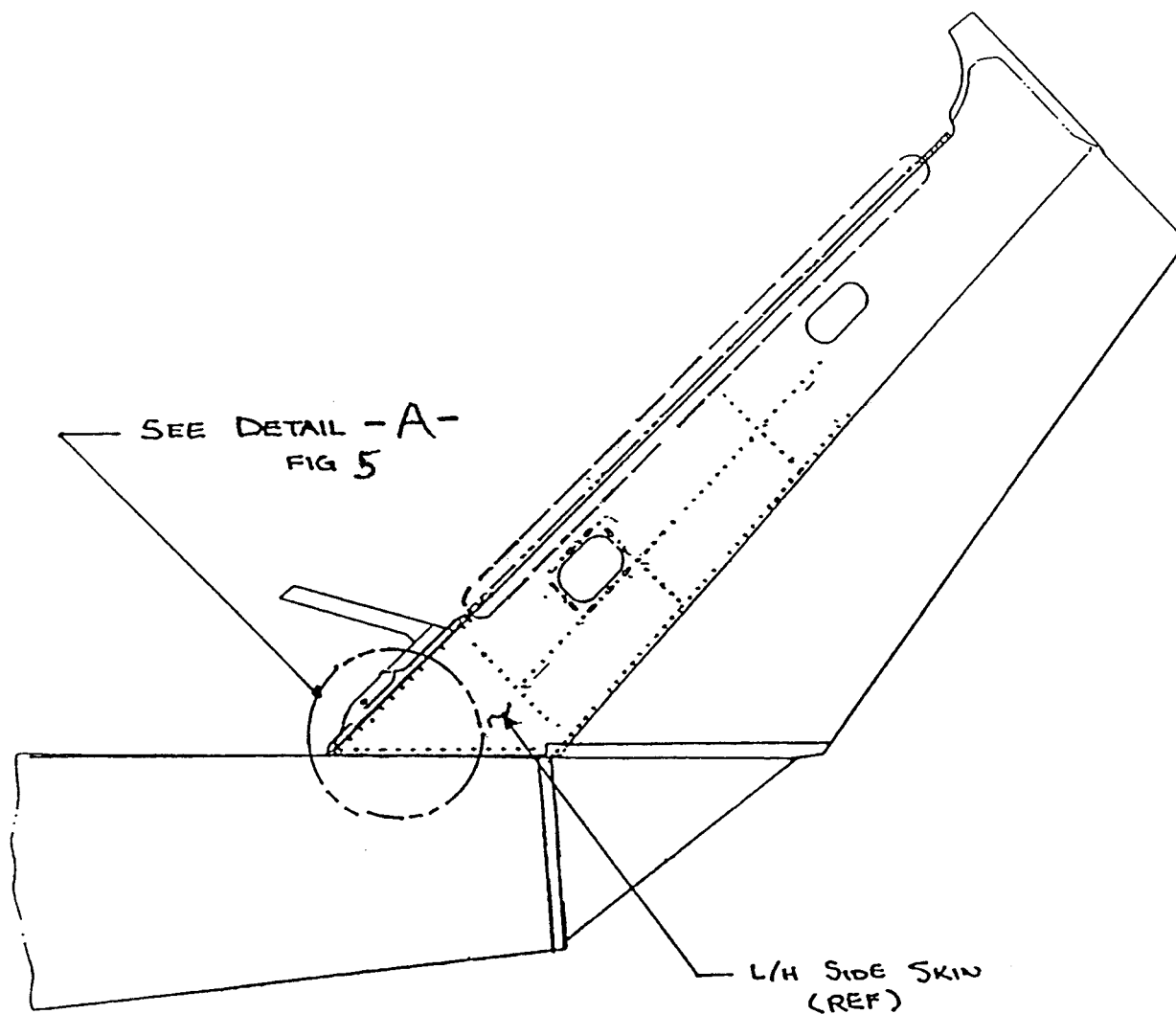


FIG 6 VIEW LOOKING INGD
L/H SIDE

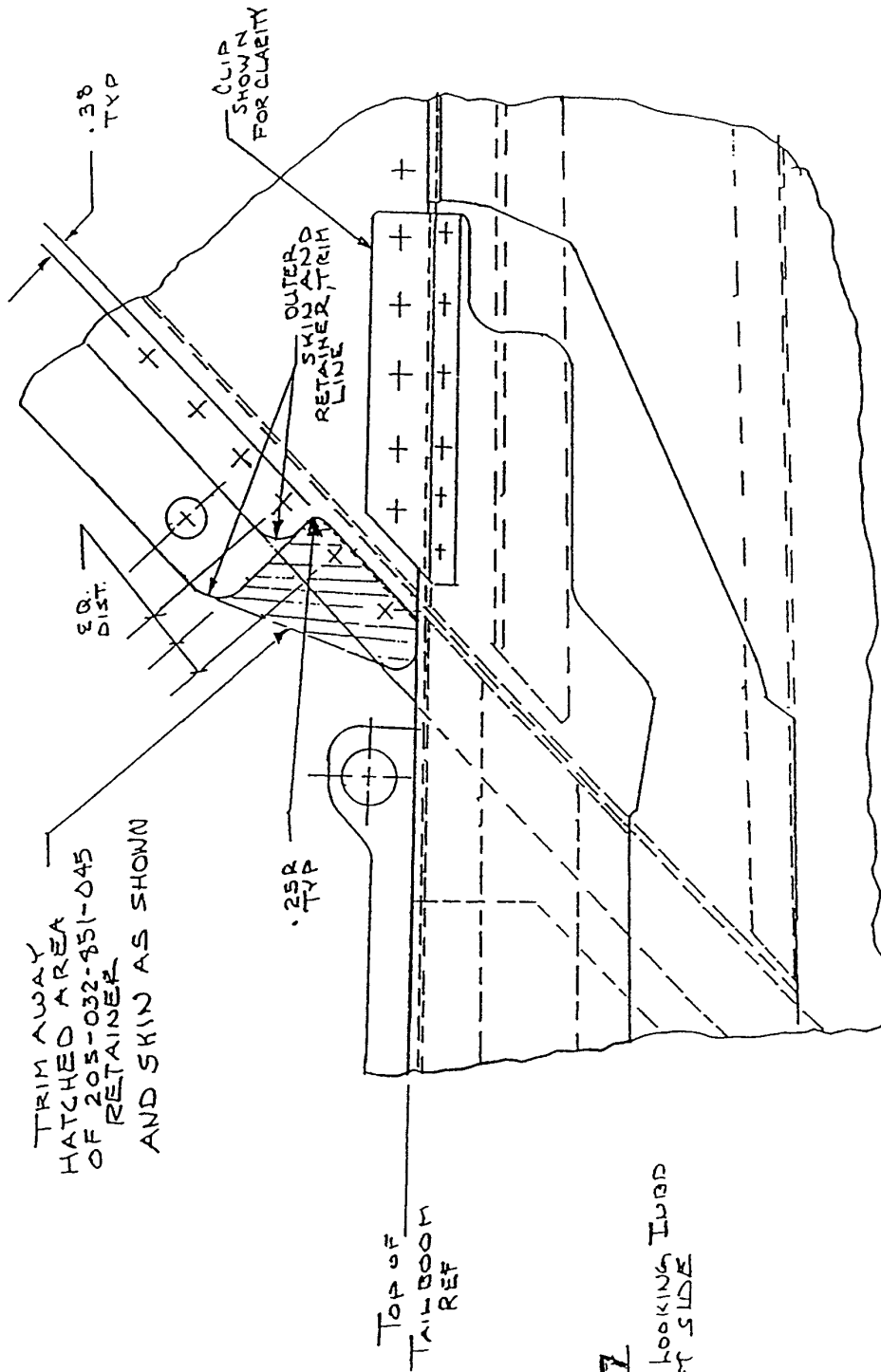


FIG. 7
VIEW LOOKING UP
LEFT SIDE

(e) This amendment becomes effective on May 28, 1998, to all persons except those persons to whom it was made immediately effective by Priority Letter AD 97-18-11, issued August 29, 1997, which contained the requirements of this amendment.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on May 4, 1998.

Eric Bries.

*Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-12508 Filed 5-12-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-C

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-SW-35-AD; Amendment 39-10521; AD 97-20-09]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron (Bell)-manufactured Model HH-1K, TH-1F, TH-1L, UH-1A, UH-1B, UH-1E, UH-1F, UH-1H, UH-1L, and UH-1P Helicopters; and Southwest Florida Aviation SW204, SW204HP, SW205, and SW205A-1 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment supersedes an existing priority letter airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to Bell-manufactured Model HH-1K, TH-1F, TH-1L, UH-1A, UH-1B, UH-1E, UH-1F, UH-1H, UH-1L, and UH-1P helicopters; and Southwest Florida Aviation SW204, SW204HP, and SW205 helicopters, that currently requires modification and inspections of the

vertical fin spar. This amendment requires the same modification and inspections required by the existing priority letter AD, but adds the Southwest Florida Aviation Model SW205A-1 and Utah State University UH-1H helicopters to the applicability of this AD. This amendment is prompted by accidents involving in-flight failure of the tailboom vertical fin spar. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent in-flight failure of the vertical fin spar and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective May 28, 1998.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before July 13, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-SW-35-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Charles Harrison, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Certification Office, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137, telephone (817) 222-5447, fax (817) 222-5960.