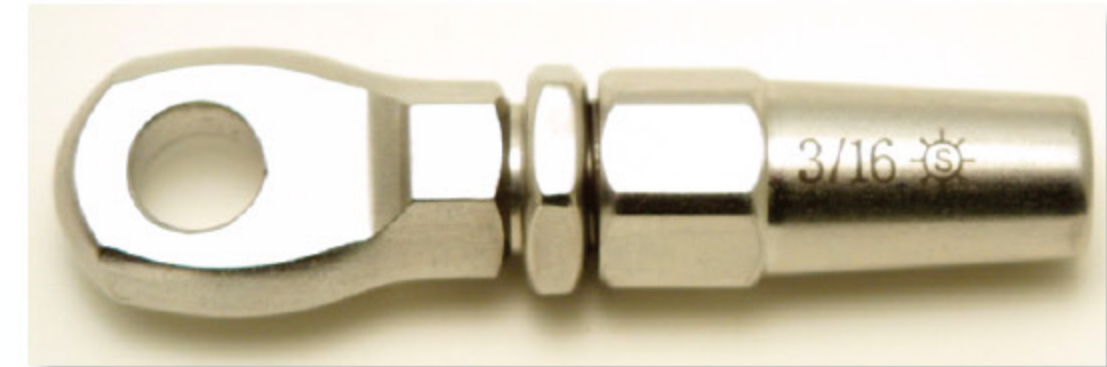


An Up Close Look at Suncor QuickAttach Rigging Terminals

When reader Roger Martin noticed a crack in the swageless-type terminals (photo immediate right) used in the shrouds for his Westerly Chieftan, he worried about others. According to Martin, when he bought the fittings 18 months earlier, he was told they were Blue Water brand and made in Denmark. He later learned his terminals were actually made in Asia and sold by Suncor, a U.S. company that specializes in stainless steel hardware. In fact, the fittings bear an electro-etched Suncor logo. (The Suncor and Blue Water fittings are based on the same patent, and the companies had a joint marketing agreement until about six years ago.)

Suncor replaced Martin's fitting at no charge, and upon examining the cracked fitting, the company concluded that the use of Loctite to seal the assembly may have contributed to the cracking. Suncor technicians identified the cracked cone as a Suncor Mark I QuickAttach fitting made by a supplier in the Far East that Suncor has not used in four years. Suncor reported that the company has sold more than 10,000 QuickAttach fittings, of which approximately 2,500 were the Mark I. Roughly 2/3 of the QuickAttach fittings are used outside the marine industry in architectural and industrial applications.

According to Suncor CEO Roman Seibel, the company has invested more than \$500,000 in fully automated machinery so



Reader Roger Martin's cone fitting (above left, sliced in half for inspection), showed cracking and uneven wall thickness. The Mark I Suncor fittings (top right) have an electro-etched logo. The Mark II units (bottom right) are laser-engraved with the Suncor name.

that the next series of the terminals—the Mark III, due for release next month—will be 100-percent made in the USA. Suncor also has invested heavily in sophisticated test equipment to quickly check that all fittings meet advertised specifications for material and strength.

Suncor has concluded that any possible issue regarding these fittings would be confined to the Mark I series. The company extensively tested control samples from that series and found that all were up to spec.

According to Seibel, Suncor has never seen any other fitting behave like Martin's. Nevertheless, the company has offered to exchange any Mark I product now in use

in the field for a Mark II at no charge. All Suncor products carry a lifetime guarantee.

Practical Sailor applauds Suncor's response in this matter. We have long advised readers to conduct a close annual inspection of all stainless-steel rigging terminals—swageless or not, particularly those at deck level—for signs of micro-cracking or unusual corrosion. Marine grade fittings have a large safety factor built into them, but they cannot be expected to last forever in the harsh marine environment. If sealant is to be used on these fittings, it should be a flexible type. Seibel suggests a silicone-type sealant.