



TClinic

REPAIRING LEAKING GAS TANKS (or how to make the most out of the energy crisis)

Have you ever been faced with a leaking gas tank in which repairs to the tank itself have been necessary? If you've never had the experience of trying to find someone who is willing to braze or weld an old gas tank, you're in for a shock. The first reaction you're likely to get is outright refusal. The second most common tactic is to quote a price that is so high you give up the idea. People just don't like to do that kind of work. So the usual result is that you either (1) use it the way it is, or (2) hock your soul to buy a new one. Having traveled down this road myself, I was unusually interested in an article contained in a TSO newsletter about a compound used in the aircraft industry, apparently to solve the same problem. It's called "slushing compound." It's a sealant that leaves a protective, rubber-like coating on the inside of tanks in which it is applied — it also acts as a rust preventative and will seal any pinhole leaks or cracks. The recommended technique is to swirl some lacquer thinner around inside the tank to remove loose rust and foreign material. Then add about a pint of slushing compound and slush it around by tipping the tank. A common brand name is Randolph Slushing Compound which is supposedly available from aircraft supply firms. The Fuller Paint people also make the stuff and information on its availability can be had by writing to:

Fuller-O'Brien Corporation
450 E. Grand Avenue
South San Francisco, CA 94030

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Fuller-O'Brien discontinued production of their slushing compound in the mid 1990's.

Currently Moss Motors sells a compound as well as a cleaner and an etcher for prep work. Their compound is specially formulated to resist alcohol, which is now a very common fuel component.

While you can do the slushing yourself (make sure you coat the entire inside) you may want to farm the job out. Check with your local radiator shop or sheet metal specialty shops to see if they are equipped to do this. They can test the tank when done as well.