

HIGHT TECH PROGRESS : BORON STEEL WIRE is to be avoided like the plague. Sure, it stiffens up your model and lets you build nice and light but where you risking? At Sikorski, they call the Boron Room the "Death Room". Protective clothing, masks and all the good stuff. When some one gets a bit of it in them, they cut it out immediately. Neat stuff. I try using it, figured that I certainly was smart enough not to have any problems. Well, despite all my precautions which include protective glasses, taping all unused bits to a white paper so as not to lose any, some got away. When it gets away, it just disappears. It has the thickness of a human hair. It is nonmagnetic so you can't pick up that way. It gets lost in the carpet. It goes into the flesh easily and accidentally. I found I'd get a bit into a finger despite my best efforts. Finally I began feeling a pain in my right foot. Some how I had picked up a piece while barefoot (the bed is only 3 feet from my work space). I call Kaiser Permanente about it and they did not know a damn thing, except that an X-ray would be useless with something that size. Los Angeles County and UCLA Medical Center were also ignorant of what could be done. Finally an end about .005" long worked itself out and my dear wife, Phyllis, perform surgery and got out the offending bit , a piece of about 1/16 long. Even then, it broke of several times during the extraction process with tweezers, plus it keeps going deeper in when you try to get it out.

Since then we have repeated the operation several times for other bits, and it is not fun. Also my foot still is hurting, with the boron steel somewhere inside. The articles sound the alarm that when it gets in the blood-stream, look out. Great. The worry alone and the ignorance of the medical profession regarding it makes for something less than mental tranquillity. I'll keep you posted. In the meantime, I suggest you do not get yourself into a similar predicament.

And from Erv Rodemski, 1980 World Champion, comes his comment "I think this boron thing is the most important issue we have ever faced! My family and I have had at least 6 piece of the stuff in our feet, one in mine went in and never came out, it's somewhere in my body. Boron should be outlawed in all form of modelling RIGHT NOW! The above article is from the December 84 issue of " The Hangar Pilot" and should be read by all. Do we wait until some kid puts out an eye, or worse, before we do ban that stuff?".

We have received several letters and phone calls expressing concern about Boron. Stan Chilton got a piece into his hand and when his thumb and forefinger became numb several days later he became very concerned. Materials experts we've spoken with feel it is inert and won't cause problems except they admit they know very little about Boron. We also consult Dr. Jim Thornberry , a free flyer from Madison, WI, whose major concern is that because Boron has a rough

surface and is nor sterile, it would carry germs etc. into the body and become an infection site.

Boron , once it pierces the flesh and enter your body, it appears to continue to travel in the same direction through the body. Eight month after some Boron entered my own foot it came out in many pieces each about 1/32 inch long. The Boron has entered at the front of the arch and travelled forward exiting by my little toe some inch and a half away. During this same time span I suffered an respiratory infection which my doctor could not identify and it did not respond to treatment. Whether this illness was connected to the Boron or not is only speculation.

First off Boron filament is not wire, its structure and the way it behaves is more like glass fiber and should be treated like glass fiber. Use extreme caution, WEAR SAFETY GLASS and to contain the small pieces that fracture at the ends when you break off a piece, Ray Harlan suggests you work inside a container. I suggest you store Boron in an impenetrable container such as a coffee can.

Here in the Great Lakes region, drastic changes in humidity are common, often occurring within hours. As a result, unless Boron strands are placed in a symmetrical pattern, when the humidity changes and the balsa swells or shrinks the part can warp. Also Boron applied to a motorstick of mine in January 1984 is now coming loose and falling off from repeated expansion and contraction of the wood. Another problem occurred when I had a motor come apart in the roof in Akron, causing damages to the wing, when I got the model down the wing was repairable and all the balsa pieces were accounted for, but some of the Boron which had been on the wingposts was missing. What would happen should a model explode close to the floor, near modellers and spectators? Are we endangering these peoples by exposing them to flying pieces of Boron?

I have found an alternative to Boron in using a .0010 x .0020 strip of balsa every place I had thought to use Boron. The wood gives extra strength while being lighter in weight than the Boron, without warpage from humidity changes. Sure, it isn't as stiff, but in most case it is stiff enough.

Several modellers – Rodemsky and Chilton – are considering a ban on the use of Boron filament and I personally am not adverse to a ban. However a ban only in the United States would not be effective and would possibly put U.S. teams at a disadvantage in international competitions. Note : The AMA Indoor Contest Board ruled in 1984 that all high-tech materials, witch include Boron, are banned from Easy B. Only wood, condenser paper, suitable adhesives, wire for prop hook and rear motor hook are allowed in Easy B.

We are very interested in the opinions of modellers from country other than the U.S. especially the British and Swiss flyers who have used Boron in their models