

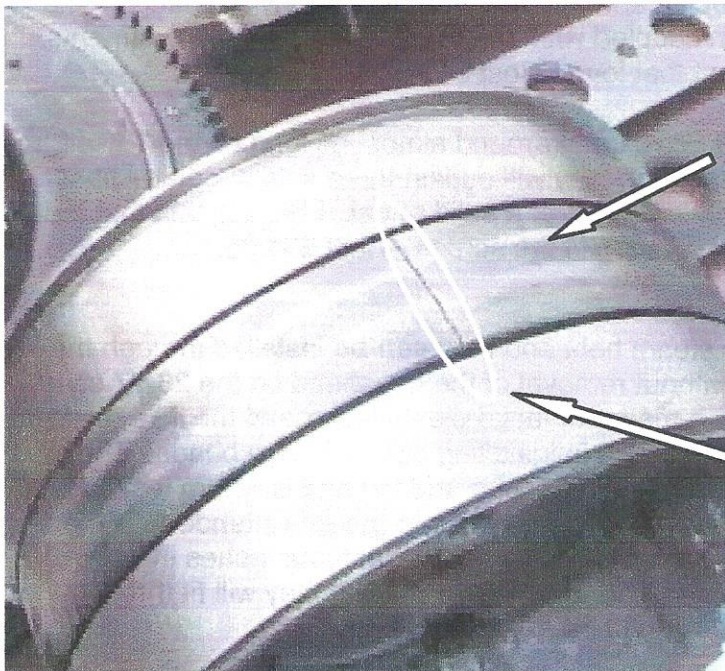
~~Wood~~ Would You Try ~~Would~~ Wood Bands?

By Gary Tillstrom

My 17 has Kevlar, the 22 has Kevlar, the 26 I sold last year has Kevlar and the 27 I bought this spring had Kevlar. Don't get me wrong, I like Kevlar bands! While doing a routine oil change I noticed something that seems harmless yet sets up the potential for a severe transmission problem. There has been lots written about bands, our own Lynn Cook about a year ago stressed the importance of making the bands round and he was dead on the money. The transmission will take up more smoothly and engage with less pedal pressure if all is square with the world (round in this case).

Problems arise when all is not well, or round, or square with the world or whatever. The situation may be aggravated when lined with Kevlar as this type of band liner has the potential to generate a destructive amount of heat. Take a band adjustment that it too tight and you may quickly destroy a drum. The out of round band (which will drag) can do the same thing. Finally, if the ends of your bands are unraveling, they may "tuck under" and create heat like nobody's business. The end result would be the same, cracked drum.

There have been a few documented failures coupled with Kevlar bands. In every case where I have seen a picture of the drum, it shows signs of severe overheating to the point of turning blue.



Notice this drum overheated to the point of turning blue. The owner had the band too tight and this is only 30 miles after band installation!

Nobody wants to experience this. Notice the crack across the face.

Thankfully this isn't my drum. I replaced bands before I experienced this!

After finding the ends of my bands unraveled I considered my options.

- I could ignore it but decided it would probably bust the drum a week before the International tour next year. (Not a good choice)
- I could pull a Tom Sawyer and try to talk Ken or Ralph into changing them for me but they are both too smart to fall for the old "see how much fun this is" thing.
- Talk Annette into changing them (I'm too smart to ever even suggest that).
- Replace with Kevlar
- Replace with Cotton
- Replace with Wood

Kevlar - I firmly believe to reduce risk, the hogshead needs to be pulled and the Kevlar bands need to be made round when installing. Upon completion of the installation, the bands should be left as loose as possible. There is no benefit to having a high pedal as opposed to one within ½ inch of the floor. Cost of bands and gasket set, \$95.00.

New Kevlar bands have the ends sealed with super glue to prevent the unraveling. If your bands appear "sealed" and you run them on the loose side they will run for many years. Enjoy them and don't worry about them. Mine were about five years old and showed no wear. I wished they hadn't started coming undone.

Cotton – Good reason to run a lint screen. Unlike Kevlar, these will continue to generate lots of lint and afford us the opportunity of changing the things again soon coupled with lots of practice making adjustments. They just don't last that long. Cost \$46.00.

Wood – Wood band liners have been around almost as long as the T itself. They don't generate lint, they will outlast three sets of natural fiber bands, and they give the driver a solid pedal. I like the fact that they generate no lint but I still run the screen. Cost \$34.95.

Installation Report

Wood bands are steam bent and they **can be** installed through the inspection door without removal of the hogshead on the 26-27 style transmission. As a matter of fact, I didn't even need the little "metal strap thingy" that is an aid in installing quick-change bands. The steam bent bands keep their shape and the end is where it needs to be which makes installing the ear a snap (no pun intended). When putting the brake band in I had to tap the last four inches in with a rubber mallet. It would be interesting to see if they will fit through the access door of a 25 and earlier transmission.

I installed mine using aluminum pop rivets that have an aluminum mandrel, which should protect the drum. My rivet heads are counter bored and set about 1/8th of an inch below the surface.



Brass Rivets shouldn't stick to magnets! These are steel, brass plated. No matter which type band lining you choose, check the rivets first! Steel rivets are not nice to iron drums.

Driving Report – I just put them in yesterday and finally drove the car for about ten miles. They take up smoothly and positively requiring little foot pressure. The drum locks and does not slip and the pedal feels solid. If I were not running RM brakes I would probably opt to buy one Kevlar lining for the brake pedal and run wood on the other two but my RM's are taking up about 80% of the braking effort. So far I like them but 10 miles is too soon to tell.

I took lots of pictures and will write a "how I did it" (as opposed to a 'how to') article for relining your bands with wood liners. If you find its time to replace bands anyway, consider wood. I tried them, ~~would~~ would you? Gary