

# TRUE-LOCK™

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The Honorable Senator Dirk Kempthorne  
Dirksen Building  
Room 367  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kempthorne:

We started consulting with the tank personnel at the field level in 1994. We were informed by the operation and maintenance crews of the tanks that there was a problem with track end connector/wedge bolts loosening. If not spotted in time, this would result in the bolts backing out, causing the tracks to break and could cause extensive damage to the tank and personnel.

The military solution to this problem was to have the crews regularly inspect the wedge bolts and re-tighten as needed. Failure to spot loose wedge bolts at the time of each inspection and re-tighten them, could/would result in loss and breakdown before the next scheduled inspection.

All our experience, testing and observations, along with our communications and work at the field level with the tanks and tank crews, support and are consistent with the fact that bolts loosen and will back out. We have also proven to our satisfaction as well as that of the field personnel, that the True-Lock™ system stops the problem "in its tracks."

In conversations with TACOM, we have either been told that there is no problem with the wedge bolts becoming loose, that there is a problem, but the problem wouldn't exist if the field personnel would install the track correctly, or that there had been a problem with the bolts that came with the earlier T-156 track, but this was corrected with the T-158 track, when the bolt threading was changed from coarse to fine, from metric to U.S. and by staking (localized material deforming) the wedges on the T-158 which solved the problem of the wedge bolts becoming loose. Regarding this last statement, we have only applied our system to the T-158 track to keep its bolts from flying off their tanks.

If you ask TACOM and everyone else if there is a problem with wedge bolts coming loose, you will get at least two different answers. This suggests to us that there is a lack of communication between the parties. What either group knows or believes, is not being conveyed to the other group and as a result, there is no consensus on this issue.

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If TACOM is correct that any problem relating to loose bolts are caused by improper application, then the military needs to improve its training program. However, if the field personnel are correct in that the bolts do come loose, then the True Lock™ system is a good solution. In either instance the taxpayers of this country would benefit by the savings which could be achieved by addressing this issue properly.

I would like to suggest what I believe is the simplest and most direct way in which to arrive at the truth. Conduct a meeting, within the next 60 days, between the Senator and his aides, knowledgeable military personnel in track and maintenance from TACOM, knowledgeable field personnel at all levels (tank maintenance and crew). We would recommend there be representation from the users, as these people are knowledgeable on the True-Lock™ system from ATC at Gowen Field the Marines at 29 Palms and myself and ask questions such as listed below (this is a partial list of what needs to be covered).

Do you have any actual experience operating or maintaining armored tanks?

If so, when and where was this experience gained (detail the vehicles involved)?

Do you have first hand or second knowledge as to whether T-158 wedge bolts loosen in use?

If so what is this knowledge and what is its source?

Have you shared this knowledge with anyone and if so with whom?

At any time, have you received information that contradicts this knowledge?

If so, what was it, when was it received by you and from whom did you get it?

Did this contradictory information cause you to rethink or question your previous position?

If so, what did you do about it and who did you tell?

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What do you know about the True Lock™ system?

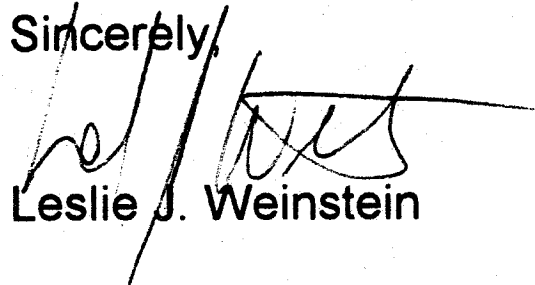
Why isn't the True Lock™ system being tested or used?

In your experience, has the True Lock™ system increased readiness on the M1 tank?

Will the True Lock™ system save the military man hours?

At the completion of this meeting, we would know who knows what and when they knew it. We might also be in concurrence as to whether or not the problem exists and if it does exist, what course of action is desired to solve this problem. In my view it would help the military resolve this problem for the benefit of all parties.

Sincerely,

  
Leslie J. Weinstein

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