

Master's Thesis

CHARACTERISATION OF THE
MORPHOLOGY OF INCLINED SCC
CRACKS IN AUSTRALIAN GAS
PIPELINES

BY

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i. Declaration

This work contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other Degree or Diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent for this copy of my thesis, when present in the University of Adelaide Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

L. Zadow

08/10/2013

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iii. Publications from Thesis

Zadow, L & Gamboa, E 2012, 'Tomography of Inclined SCC Cracks in Australian Gas Pipelines', *Proceedings of the 9th International Pipeline Conference*, IPC2012 - 90363

Zadow, L Gamboa, E & Lavigne, O 2013, 'Morphology of Australian Inclined SCC', *Corrosion Science*, (in progress).

Zadow, L Gamboa, E & Lavigne, O 2013, 'Comparison of Inclined SCC between Canada and Australia', *Corrosion Science*, (in progress).

iv. Abstract

Stress Corrosion Cracking (SCC) in pipeline steel occurs when an aggressive environment and tensile stresses act on a susceptible microstructure. Typically, SCC in gas pipelines tends to travel perpendicular to the hoop stresses in the through-wall direction. Studies conducted on the TransCanada pipeline, where a rupture had occurred, revealed the incidence of SCC cracks, whose crack path deviated at an angle from the normal. These unusual inclined cracks have also been found in an Australian pipeline, resulting in a need for a more comprehensive understanding of inclined SCC.

As a result, this study has been undertaken to investigate SCC in Australia, in particular the morphology of inclined SCC and together with the many inclined crack features and crack interactions and anomalies (inclusions) in the pipe steel. This study revealed that 81% of SCC cracks investigated were inclined. The majority of cracks analysed were over 4 mm in length, which corresponded to the calculated critical crack length according to industry guidelines. Inclined cracks morphologically presented with a straight section before they inclined away from the perpendicular direction. The straight section tended to be between 200-900 μm and the inclination angle varied between 30-60°. This inclination angle increased as the crack grew deeper into the pipe wall, resulting in long cracks travelling a considerable distance in the hoop direction (3.8 mm travel for a 51 mm longitudinal surface SCC crack). In two cases (out of 120 cracks), subsurface longitudinal crack travel was observed to be approximately 1.5 mm. In most other cases, no subsurface longitudinal travel was observed.

Observed crack interactions did not breach current industry guidelines used for SCC threat assessment. Hence, procedures currently employed for critical crack assessment are still deemed valid and conservative enough for Australian operations.

Keywords: Stress Corrosion Cracking, Tomography, Pipeline Steel

v. Table of Contents

i.	Declaration.....	i
ii.	Acknowledgements.....	ii
iii.	Publications from Thesis	iii
iv.	Abstract.....	iv
vii.	List of Figures	ix
viii.	List of Tables	xi
ix.	Nomenclature	xii
1.	Introduction	1
1.1.	Background.....	4
1.2.	Scope and Objectives	5
1.2.1.	Statistical Significance.....	6
1.2.2.	Limits and Exclusions	7
1.3.	Report Structure.....	7
2.	Literature Review.....	9
2.1.	Introduction.....	9
2.2.	SCC Classification.....	9
2.2.1.	High pH SCC.....	9
2.2.2.	Near-Neutral pH SCC.....	10
2.2.3.	Comparison Between Types of SCC	10
2.3.	SCC Initiation	11
2.4.	SCC Colonies	14
2.5.	Length to Depth Ratio	16
2.6.	Inclined SCC.....	20
2.7.	Inclined SCC Case Studies (Canada)	22
2.8.	Surface Crack Interaction and Coalescence.....	24

2.9.	Tomography	27
2.10.	Pipeline Details and Specifications	31
2.11.	Summary and Conclusions	33
3.	Gap	35
4.	Experimental Methods	37
4.1.	Crack Selection	37
4.2.	Metallography	38
4.2.1.	Sectioning.....	38
4.2.2.	Metallographic Mounting	38
4.2.3.	Grinding.....	39
4.2.4.	Polishing	40
4.2.5.	Mounting for Analysis	40
4.2.6.	Etching.....	41
4.2.7.	Summary	42
4.3.	Tomography	42
4.3.1.	Scanning	42
4.3.2.	Reconstruction	43
4.4.	Technical Requirements.....	43
5.	Crack Analysis Methodology	45
5.1.	Introduction.....	45
5.2.	Data Collection Method	45
5.2.1.	Straight Section	46
5.2.2.	Total Crack Geometry	46
5.2.3.	Inclined Segment	47
5.2.4.	Branching	47
5.2.5.	Application of Tomography	47

5.2.6.	Collation of Results and Summary	48
5.3.	Crack Measuring Procedure	48
6.	Results.....	53
6.1.	Metallography	53
6.1.1.	SCC Crack Type.....	53
6.1.2.	Colonies (Dense/Sparse).....	54
6.1.3.	Percentage Inclined	55
6.1.4.	Inclination Direction.....	56
6.1.5.	Length to Depth Ratio.....	58
6.1.6.	Straight Section	59
6.1.7.	Inclination Angle	61
6.1.8.	Hoop Travel to Length Ratio	64
6.1.9.	Branching	66
6.1.10.	Inclusion Interactions	67
6.1.11.	Longitudinal Subsurface Extension	69
6.1.12.	Crack Interactions.....	70
6.1.13.	Hardness Profile	71
6.2.	Summary of Results.....	72
6.3.	Assumptions	74
6.4.	Limitations.....	74
6.5.	X-ray Tomography Results	75
6.5.1.	Case Study (CC Colony)	75
6.5.2.	Limitations.....	76
6.5.3.	Conclusions	77
7.	Comparison	79
7.1.	Aspect Ratio Comparison	79

7.2.	Straight Section Comparison	80
7.3.	Inclination Angle Comparison	81
7.4.	Crack Branching Observations	82
7.5.	Hardness Comparison	82
7.6.	Summary	83
8.	Review of Existing Theories	87
8.1.	Crack Depth Profiling.....	87
8.2.	Impact on CEPA	89
8.3.	Active or Dormant	92
8.4.	Crack Growth Rates.....	95
8.4.1.	Stress Intensity Factor.....	95
8.5.	Residual Stress Impact	98
8.6.	3D Model Significance.....	100
8.7.	Subsurface Extension	100
9.	Implications for Australian Industry	103
10.	Future Work.....	105
11.	Conclusion.....	107
12.	References	109
	Appendices:.....	113
	Appendix A: Pipeline Layout and SCC colony locations	113
	Appendix B: Raw Data Collation Sample.....	114

vii. List of Figures

Figure 1-1: Requirements for the initiation or propagation of SCC.....	1
Figure 1-2: Presence of SCC on a pipeline surface as detected by MPI.....	2
Figure 1-3: SCC colony as seen on an MPI treated pipe surface.....	3
Figure 2-1: IG and TG SCC fracture modes.....	11
Figure 2-2: Initiation of SCC from pitting (looking at pipe free surface) (Xie et al. 2009).	13
Figure 2-3: Initiation of SCC at the IG boundaries (looking at pipe free surface) (Xie et al. 2009).	13
Figure 2-4: Depth of cracks in a) sparse colonies and b) dense colonies that are remote to failures a) 160 cracks from 17 hydrotest failures. b) cracking found in digs remote to failures (replicated from Leis & Colwell 1997).....	15
Figure 2-5: Illustration showing measured crack dimensions (Sutherby & Chen 2004).....	16
Figure 2-6: Relation between crack length and depth in the perpendicular direction (Sutherby & Chen 2004).	17
Figure 2-7: Relation between the crack length and the aspect ratio (Sutherby & Chen 2004).	18
Figure 2-8: Maximum length (x-axis) plotted against maximum depth (y-axis) (Baker, Rochfort & Parkins 1987b).....	19
Figure 2-9: a) straight crack propagation, b) inclined crack propagation.....	21
Figure 2-10: Locations of the crack colonies on the pipe panel for the TransCanada study (Xie et al. 2009).	24
Figure 2-11: Visible crack interaction on the OD surface of the ex-service Australian pipe sample.....	26
Figure 2-12: Example of X-ray tomography. In this diagram, the X-ray source and the detector rotate around the stationary sample in the centre. The axis of rotation is the centre of the sample (Ketcham & Carlson 2001).....	28
Figure 2-13: Cross sections from three different regions of the sample shown in a) using tomography. SCC had been induced in the aluminium samples and IG corrosion had taken place b), c), d) (Connolly et al. 2006).	29
Figure 2-14: A 3-D rendering of Image (c) from Figure 2-13. Only the IG SCC has been visualised along with the constituent particles. This is a compilation of 200 cross sectional slices created a 3-D image (Connolly et al. 2006).	30
Figure 4-1: Manual sample mounting press.	39
Figure 4-2: Rotating disks used for grinding.	40
Figure 4-3: Optical microscope and the crack analysis system.....	41
Figure 5-1: Illustration of sample measuring procedure for each cross section.	49
Figure 6-1: IG SCC crack path through the pipe wall.	54

Figure 6-2: Illustration showing measured crack dimensions, (Adapted from Sutherby & Chen 2004).	58
Figure 6-3: Length to depth ratio for all SCC cracks analysed.	59
Figure 6-4: Transverse view illustrating SCC cracks with typical straight sections and defining the inclination angle.....	60
Figure 6-5: Straight section depth distribution for all cracks.....	61
Figure 6-6: Unetched sections (a) and (b) 1 mm apart in the main axis direction. (MPI) of the surface appearance of this crack was straight in the longitudinal pipe direction.	62
Figure 6-7: Relationship between crack length and inclination angle for all inclined cracks. ...	63
Figure 6-8: Angle changes as the crack grows in the through-wall direction (scale bar is 500 μm).The two cracks on the right have coalesced.	64
Figure 6-9: Maximum hoop travel plotted as a function of the crack surface length.	65
Figure 6-10: Relationship between maximum crack depth and hoop travel.	66
Figure 6-11: Inclined crack with significant branching at a perpendicular angle to the inclined crack path.....	67
Figure 6-13: 2% Nital etched image of SCC crack interacting with an inclusion.....	69
Figure 6-14: Longitudinal subsurface extension.	70
Figure 6-15: Cross sectional observations of a) non-collinear interaction and b) collinear interaction.....	71
Figure 6-16: Hardness in the through-wall direction of investigated pipelines in Canada (red line) and Australia (blue line), adapted (Xie et al. 2009).	72
Figure 6-17: Cross section of SCC affected sample using X-ray scanning (left) and metallography (right).	76
Figure 6-18: 4 mm SCC sample using tomography (source Michael Giuliani).	78
Figure 7-1: Crack depth plotted as a function of the crack surface length (Sutherby & Chen 2004).	79
Figure 7-2: Distribution of straight section depths (Sutherby & Chen 2004).	80
Figure 7-3: Distribution of the inclination angle (Sutherby & Chen 2004).	81
Figure 7-4: Variation of the hardness across the pipe wall (Sutherby & Chen 2004).....	83
Figure 8-1: Crack depth and straight section depth profile for sample CMI-2.	88
Figure 8-2: Sample CMI-2 as photographed before analysis.	88
Figure 8-3: Two cracks in a sample not expected to interact (measured hoop travel).	90
Figure 8-4: Two cracks that may be interacting when approaching the CEPA calculation from a 3D perspective.	91
Figure 8-5: Induced SCC crack in pipe sample (active), (courtesy of Olivier Lavigne, UoA).	93
Figure 8-6: SCC crack tip taken from ex-service pipe sample showing a very fine structure near the tip.....	94

viii. List of Tables

Table 2-1: Comparison of NN pH SCC with high pH SCC (Xie et al. 2009 adapted from Beavers et al. 2001 & Parkins, Blanchard & Delanty 1994).....	10
Table 2-2: Definition of SCC density classification (CEPA 2007).....	16
Table 2-3: Statistical analysis of all SCC cracks investigated (Xie et al. 2009)	23
Table 2-4: Material properties for pipe analysed	31
Table 2-6: Colony locations and longitudinal distances (Zadow & Gamboa 2011).....	32
Table 5-1: Straight section raw data input for CMI-1	50
Table 5-2: Total crack geometry raw data input for CMI-1 (cut 7 mm)	50
Table 5-3: Inclined segment raw data input for CMI-1 (Cut 7 mm).....	50
Table 6-1: SCC colony classification (CEPA 2007)	55
Table 6-2: Classification of each colony.....	55
Table 6-3: Percentage of total crack inclined	56
Table 6-4: Direction of inclined cracks.....	56

ix. Nomenclature

Term	Description
CC	Confirmation colony
CP	Cathodic protection
CT	Computed tomography
DC	Direct current
FC	Fatigue colony
FOV	Field of view
ID	Inner diameter
IG	Intergranular
LC	Leaking colony
M-S	Moomba to Sydney
MPI	Magnetic particle inspection
NN	Near neutral (pH)
OD	Outer diameter
SCC	Stress corrosion cracking
SIF	Stress intensity factor
SS	Straight section
SMYS	Specified minimum yield strength
TC	Teething colony
TG	Transgranular
UoA	University of Adelaide