ERDA/JPL 954374-77/4
Distribution Category - UC-63

(NASA-CR-157080) SLICING OF SILICON INTO N78-24629
SHEET MATERIAL. SILICON SHEET GROWTH
DEVELOPMENT FOR THE LARGE AREA SILICON SHEET
TASK OF THE LOW COST SILICON SOLAR ARRAY Unclas
PROJECT (Varian Associates, Lexington, G3/44 20681

SLICING OF SILICON INTO SHEET MATERIAL

Silicon Sheet Growth Development for the Large Area Silicon Sheet Task of the Low Cost Silicon Solar Array Project

SEVENTH QUARTERLY REPORT

Βy

S. C. HOLDEN

J. R. FLEMING

January 12, 1978



Reporting Period September 19, 1977 to December 17, 1977

JPL Contract No. 954374

Varian Associates
Lexington Vacuum Division
121 Hartwell Avenue
Lexington, Massachusetts 02173

This work was performed for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, under NASA Contract NAS7-100 for the U.S. Energy Research and Development Administration, Division of Solar Energy.

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#### 1.0 SUMMARY

During the past quarter fabrication was begun on a prototype large capacity multiple blade slurry saw. Final concept and design is nearly complete on the bladehead which will tension up to 1000 blades, and cut a 45 cm long silicon ingot as large as 12 cm in diameter. The large blade tensioning force of 270,000 kg (600,000 lbg) will be applied through two bolts acting on a pair of scissor toggles, significantly reducing operator set-up time.

Poor wafering yields have caused concern in recent tests with MS slicing. The cause for poor yield, namely perimeter fracture of slices, also impacts the solar cell production yield of 10 cm diameter thin  $(250-350\mu)$  silicon slices. Recent tests with an "upside-down" cutting technique has resulted in 100% wafering yields and the highest wafer accuracy yet experienced with MS slicing.

Variations in oil and abrasive have resulted only in degraded slicing results. A technique of continuous abrasive slurry separation to remove silicon debris is described.

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Phase II of an effort by Vāriān to reduce the cost of multiblade slurry wafering of silicon for 1982 silicon sheet production cost goals involves construction of a large scale prototype MS wafering saw and numerous test programs to reduce the costs and improve the capabilities of the MS technique.

The standard form of the MS wafering technique has been shown to have cost effective potential for low cost solar array production. However, improvements in the technique cannot yet be formulated from basic understanding of the fundamental cutting technology. Recent experience has demonstrated that a more complete technical perception must be gained in order to effectively develop improvements.

An example of this dilemma is the lack of success of the multiple blade alignment device. It was felt that improved blade alignment with this method would result in significant process improvements. However, to date, no major improvements have been seen. A major objective of the next quarter will be to review the current technology understanding in light of recent results and formulate a modified approach.

#### 3.0 CUTTING TESTS AND WAFER CHARACTERIZATION

Table I shows a summary of all MS slicing tests during this quarter. A severe reduction in slice yield has occurred during the second phase of this program. The slices which do survive the slicing operation have occasional cracks in the perimeter. The source of these cracks has not been explained or resolved despite efforts to modify slurry application, improvements in machine alignment and other changes. The one exception has been the upside down cutting tests where 100% yield was experienced.

It must be noted that most tests involve very thin slicing of 10 cm silicon wafers where a borderline survival condition may exist. Also wide variations in composition of the abrasive slurry has been explored and failures are not surprising.

#### 3.1 Slurry/Oil Tests

The object of this series of cutting tests is to explore the use of lower cost abrasive mixtures in MS slicing. Broader particle size distributions may have effective cost leverage since fine gradiations are more difficult to achieve. Oil tests are preliminary to tests involving oil viscosity and settling rate. This would indicate proper parameters for use with lower cost of recycled oils.

#### 3.1.1 <u>Mixed Abrasive</u>: Test #2-3-05

For this test, the abrasive consisted of equal parts of #600 and #800 SiC. Other conditions were standard. This test was to investigate both reduction of kerf with mixed abrasive and the effect of the amount of spread in particle sizes.

Efficiency, abrasion rate, productivity and kerf loss were normal. The yield was very low, only 29%. Slice taper and bow could not be measured since the wafers activated the out-of-range warning on the measuring device.

TABLE I
SLICING TEST SUMMARY

PARAMETER	TEST	2-3-06	2-3-07	2-3-08	2-3-09
Material	1501	100 Si	100 Si	100 Si	100 Si
Size	(mm)		100 31	100 31	100 31
Area/Slice	(cm <sup>2</sup> )	78.54	78.54	78.54	78.54
			<u> </u>		
Blade Thickness		4	$0.15 \times 6.35$		0.15 x 6.35
Spacer Thickness		0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36
Blade Height	(mm)	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4
Number of Blades		270	131	150	136
Load	(gram/blade)	85	85	85	85
Sliding Speed	(cm/sec)	63.76		61.15	64.44
Abrasive (type	e/grıt size)	#600 SiC	#600/800/	#600/800/	#600 SiC
Oil Volume	(liters)	4	1000 Sic 7.6 PC	1000 SiC 7.6 PC	7.6 Lub.
Mix	(kg/liter)	1	0.18 Total	0.36 Total	0.12
Slice Thickness	(mm)	0.292		0.320	0.304
Kerf Width	(mm)	0.216		0.188	0.204
Abrasive Kerf Lo	ss (mm)	0.064		0.038	0.052
Cutting Time	(hours)	34.25	23.20	44.10	36.20
Efficiency	(full test)	0.93		0.656	0.81
	(typical)	1.15		0.812	1.06
	(maximum)	1.27		0.939	1.28
Abrasion Rate	(full test)	.050		.034	.044
(cm <sup>3</sup> /hr/b1)	(typical)	.062		.042	.058
	(maximum)	.069		.049	.070
Productivity	(full test)	2.29	3.39	1.78	2.17
(cm <sup>2</sup> /hr/bl)	(typical)	2.87		2.23	2.84
	(maxımum)	3.19		2.60	3.43
Yield		52/269 19%	4/130 3%	17/149 11%	16/135 12%
Şlice Taper	(mm)	.065		.101	.078
Slice Bow	(mm)	.054		.107	.168
Abrasive Utilizat		251.3		81.1	239.2
Oil Utilization	(cm <sup>3</sup> /liter)	60.3		29.2	28.7
Blade Wear Ratio	(cm <sup>3</sup> /cm <sup>3</sup> )	.054		.067	.064
• f					

# TABLE I (continued)

## SLICING TEST SUMMARY

PARAMETER TEST	2-3-10	2-4-04	2-4-05	2-5-03
Material ——————	100 Si - ~	100-si	100 Si	100-Si
Size (mm)	100	100	100	100
Area/Slice (cm <sup>2</sup> )	78.54	78.54	78 <b>.</b> 54	78.54
Blade Thickness (mm)	0.15 x 6.35	0.15 x 6.35	0.20 x 6.35	0.15 x 6.35
Spacer Thickness (mm)	0.41	0.47	0.41	0.47
Blade Height (mm)	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4
Number of Blades	131	271	78	125
Load (gram/blade)	85	85	113.4	113.4
Sliding Speed (cm/sec)		65.3	61.14	65.73
Abrasive (type/grit size)	#600 SiC	#600 SiC	#600 SiC	#600 SiC
Oil Volume (liters)	7.6 Lub.	7.6	7.6 PC	7.6 PC
Mix (kg/liter)	0.06	0.36	0.48	0.48
Slice Thickness (mm)		0.322	0.333	0.341
Kerf Width (mm)		0.237	0.277	- 0.269
Abrasive Kerf Loss (mm)		0.087	0.074	0.069
Cutting Time (hours)	44.55	26.55	36.50	25.05
Efficiency (full test)		1.25	0.87	1.13
(typical)		1.53	1.42	1.30
(maximum)		1.733	1.85	1.66
Abrasion Rate (full test)		.069	.060	0.084
(cm <sup>3</sup> /hr/bl) (typical)		.085	.098	0.097
(maximum)		.096	.128	0.123
Productivity (full test)	1.76	2.91	2.15	3.14
(cm <sup>2</sup> /hr/bl) (typical)		3.59	3.54	3.61
(maximum)		4.06	4.62	4.58
Yield	5/130 4%	78/270 29%	42/77 55%	124/124 100%
Slice Taper (mm)		0.044	.066	0.044
Slice Bow (mm)		0.046	.057	0.030
Abrasive Utilization (cm <sup>3</sup> /kg)		184.2	46.5	72.3
Oil Utilization (cm <sup>3</sup> /liter)		66.3	22.3	34.7
Blade Wear Ratio (cm <sup>3</sup> /cm <sup>3</sup> )		.052		0.048

TABLE I (continued)

# SLICING TEST SUMMARY

PARAMETER TEST	2-5-04	2-5-06	2-6-01	2-6-02
Material ———————	100 Si	-100-Si	- 100 Si	100 Si
Size (mm)	T00	100	100	100
Area/Slice (cm <sup>2</sup> )	78.54	78.54	78.54	78.54
Blade Thickness (mm)	0.15 x 6.35		0.15 x 6.35	0.15 x 6.35
Spacer Thickness (mm)	0.47		0.36	0.36
Blade Height (mm)	6.4		6.4	6.4
Number of Blades	136		150	138
Load (gram/blade)	85		127.6/85	85
Sliding Speed (cm/sec)	65.21		63.42	
Abrasive (type/grit size)	#600 SiC		#600 SiC	#600 SiC
Oil Volume (liters)	7.6 PC		7.6 PC	7.6 PC
Mix (kg/liter)	0.36		0.36	0.24
Slice Thickness (mm)	0.330	•	0.287	0.300
Kerf Width (mm)	0.229		0.221	0.208
Abrasive Kerf Loss (mm)	0.076		0.068	0.056
Cutting Time (hours)	65.55		22.55	12.35
Efficiency (full test)	0.49		1.15	
(typical)	1.33		1.59	
(maximum)	2.06		2.00	
Abrasion Rate (full test)	.027		.077	
(cm <sup>3</sup> /hr/bl) (typical)	.073		.107	
(maximum)	.114		.134	
Productivity (full test)	1.20		3.48	
(cm <sup>2</sup> /hr/bl) (typical)	3.19		4.84	
(maxımum)	4.98		6.06	
Yield .;	96/135 71%		120/149 81%	0/137 0%
Slice Taper (mm)	.090		.075	
Slice Bow (mm)	.137		.020	
Abrasive Utilization (cm <sup>3</sup> /kg)	89.4		95.3	
Oil Utilization (cm <sup>3</sup> /liter)	32.2		34.3	
Blade Wear Ratio (cm <sup>3</sup> /cm <sup>3</sup> )	.048		.054	

# TABLE I (continued)

# SLICING TEST SUMMARY

PARAMETER TEST	2-6-03	2-6-04		
Material	100 Si	100 Si		
Size (mm)	100	00.0		
Area/Slice (cm <sup>2</sup> )	78.54	78,54	•	
Blade Thickness (mm)	0.15 x 6.35	0.15 x 6.35	<b>2</b>	
Spacer Thickness (mm)	0.36	0.36		
Blade Height (mm)	6.4 ·	6.4		
Number of Blades	150	150		
Load (gram/blade)	85	85		
Sliding Speed (cm/sec)	63.24	62.23		
Abrasive (type/grit size)	#600 SiC	#600 SiC		
Oil Volume (liters)	7.6 PC	7.6 PC		
Mix (kg/liter)	0.36	0.36		
Slice Thickness (mm)	0.274	0.267		
Kerf Width (mm)	0.234	0.241		-
Abrasive Kerf Loss (mm)	0.082	0.091		•
Cutting Time (hours)	28.20	30.50		
Efficiency (full test)	1.21	1.16		
(typical)	1.64	1.75		
(maximum)	1.91	2.09		
Abrasion Rate (full test)	.065	.061		
(cm <sup>3</sup> /hr/b1) (typical)	.088	.092		
(maximum)	.102	.110		
Productivity (full test)	2.79	2.53		
(cm <sup>2</sup> /hr/bl) (typical)	3.76	3.82	ORIGI	VAL PAGE IS
(maximum)	4.36	4.56	OF PO	OK GOILLI
Yield	80/149 54%	99/149 66%		
Slice Taper (mm)	.060	.079		
Slice Bow (mm)	.059	.086		
Abrasive Utilization (cm <sup>3</sup> /kg)	100.8	103.9		
Oil Utilization (cm <sup>3</sup> /liter)	36.3	37.4		
Blade Wear Ratio (cm <sup>3</sup> /cm <sup>3</sup> )	.046	.047	,	

WAFER THICKNESS CHARACTERIZATION SUMMARY

TABLE 2

PARAMETER	TEST		2-3-06	2-3-07	2-3-08	2-3-09
SLICE	Diameter (m Area (cm	m) <sup>2</sup> )	100 78.5	100 78.5	100 78.5	100 78.5
THICKNESS		р Д	292.1 39.7		319.5 34.0	303.7 38.0
TOTAL VARIATION		μ ~- μ	60.4 21.2		58.9 18.3	57.6 37.0
STD. DEVIATION		μ μ	23.8 8.7		20.8 7.2	20.4 15.8
VERTICAL TTV	Maximum 1	n T	65.4 111.9 32.9		100.8 140.6 79.1	78.2 226.7 . 45.6
HORIZONTAL TTV		LL LL	18.6 38.3 6.2		26.4 35.7 18.1	17.5 46.8 7.0
VERTICAL BOW	Average p Maximum p Minimum p	ľ	52.6 117.6 . 18.4		118.0 161.0 70.9	159.0 173.5 144.7
HORIZONTAL BOW	Average parameter Average parameter	ĭ	63.9 86.2 24.0		41.7 64.2 26.7	30.7 50.9 12.6
VERTICAL CL. BOW	Average p Maximum p Minimum p	ſ	108.7 209.7 38.6		214.1 365.2 81.2	335.3 392.3 171.9
HORIZONTAL CL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		139.4 195.2 40.2		70.1 107.6 20.5	43.3 65.4 27.8

TABLE 2 (continued)

#### WAFER THICKNESS CHARACTERIZATION SUMMARY

PARAMETER	TEST	2-3-10	2-4-04	2-4-05	2-5-03
SLICE	Diameter (mm) Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	100 78.5	100 78.5	100 78.5	100 78.5
THICKNESS	Average μ Std. Dev. μ		322 21.7	332.6 21.7	341.1 21.0
TOTAL VARIATION	Average $\mu$ Std. Dev. $\mu$		35.6 23.3	63.8 19.7	35.1 14.9
STD. DEVIATION	Average μ Std. Dev. μ		13.7 10.2	24.6 7.8	13.3 6.3
VERTICAL TTV	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		44.0 137.2 17.4	65.9 102.1 34.3	44.3 72.5 21.8
HORIZONTAL TTV	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		9.0 17.7 1.9	15.3 34.3 6.6	11.5 18.5 4.3
VERTICAL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		36.6 109.0 11.5	56.8 95.8 30.09	36.1 70.6 16.1
HORIZONTAL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		15.7 30.8 6.5	53.4 101.0 8.7	24.1 35.7 5.5
VERTICAL CL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		91.7 306.9 15.9	113.3 164.4 81.3	60.3 102.3 31.6
HORIZONTAL CL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		29.2 55.3 8.6	109.7 203.8 19.4	48.7 74.3 14.9

TABLE 2 (continued)

## WAFER THICKNESS CHARACTERIZATION SUMMARY

PARAMETER	TEST	2-5-04	2-5-06	2-6-01	2-6-02
SLICE	Diameter (mm) Area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	100 78.5	100 78.5	100 78.5	100 78.5
THICKNESS	Average μ Std. Dev. μ	330.1 18.4		287.4 35.8	299.7 22.7
TOTAL VARIATION	Average μ Std. Dev. μ	61.1 13.9		56.9 23.7	25.4 17.8
STD. DEVIATION	Average μ Std. Dev. μ	23.0 5.2		21.9 9.5	12.7 7.6
VERTICAL TTV	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ	90.3 122.7 50.6		75.4 162.5 30.2	
HORIZONTAL TTV	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ	12.7 22.9 6.4		14.6 36.3 4.9	
VERTICAL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ	119.5 142.3 46.8		31.9 68.0 12.8	
HORIZONTAL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ	16.5 24.1 8.2		29.3 42.4 13.0	
VERTICAL CL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ	274.0 344.1 95.9		80.4 129.0 28.9	
HORIZONTAL CL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ	38.8 68.1 13.8	,	66.4 84.3 15.1	

TABLE 2 (continued)

### WAFER THICKNESS CHARACTERIZATION SUMMARY

PARAMETER	TEST	-	2-6-03	2-6- <u>0</u> 4	est t	-
SLICE	Diameter (mm Area (cm <sup>2</sup>		100 78.5	100 78.5	ş.	
THICKNESS	Average μ Std. Dev. μ		273.6 18.4	267 28.8		
TOTAL VARIATION	Average μ Std. Dev. μ	1	45.9 22.5	61.8 21.1		
STD. DEVIATION	Average μ Std. Dev. μ	1	16.8 9.1	24.2 9.5		
VERTICAL TTV	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		60.1 127.4 32.0	78.6 121.9 34.9		
HORIZONTAL TTV	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		7.8 20.4 2.2	13.6 27.7 4.0	-	
VERTICAL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ	` -	51.5 73.3	85.1 157.4 19.4		
HORIZONTAL BOW	Minimum μ Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		26.6 18.4 38.9 7.2	21.0 47.3 2.5		
VERTICAL CL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		117.0 157.3 45.7	172.2 397.3 64.9		
HORIZONTAL CL BOW	Average μ Maximum μ Minimum μ		40.7 70.8 19.6	40.9 93.1 7.0		

The results of this test were encouraging in terms of using potentially cheaper abrasive, but controlled cutting conditions were not achieved. Cause of the low yield must be established.

#### 3.1.2 Light Mix Lubrizol: Test #2-3-06

Since Lubrizol 5985 oil had not performed well under the same conditions as the standard slurry oil, we decided to vary the abrasive mix. Feeling that Lubrizol may provide a higher effective mix at the cutting interface due to the higher suspension power and lower viscosity, we decided to reduce the amount of abrasive.

For this test, the mix was 0.24 kg/l (2 lb/gal) and conditions were standard (0.15 mm blades, 85 grams/blade loading). Efficiency, abrasion rate, and productivity were slightly low. Cutting time was longer than usual, and kerf loss was high. Yield was only 19%. Slice taper and bow were slightly high.

We felt that since a slight improvement over previous tests was noted in the early stages of this test, we were going in the right direction.

#### 3.1.3 Mixed Abrasives: Test #2-3-07

Continuing the effort to lower the price of abrasive by using a broader spectrum of particle sizes, a slicing test was made using equal parts of #600, #800 and #1000 grits. Cutting force, cutting speed, ingot size, and suspension oil were standard. 0.15 mm x 6.35 mm blades with 0.40 mm spacers were used. An error was made in slurry mixing: only half the desired amount of abrasive was mixed, so the overall abrasive mix was 0.18 kg/l.

Cutting time was good, 23.2 hours. However, severe slice breakage occurred and the yield was only 3%. The blades, again, showed anomalous side wear, up to 1/3 the total thickness. The appearance of side wear may indicate that a wafer breakage is caused by a machine problem, although no measurements have supported this.

#### 3.1.4 Mixed Abrasives: Test #2-3-08

In an attempt to reduce kerf loss and abrasive cost, a standard condition run was made using equal parts of #800, #1000 and #1200 grit abrasive.

Again, yield was very low (11%). Cutting time was long (about 44 hours) as before with #800 grit slurry. Kerf loss was slightly reduced: bow and taper were somewhat large. The mixture of #800 and smaller abrasives does not seem to offer any improvement over #800 alone.

#### 3.1.5 Light Mix Lubrizol: Test #2-3-09

Continuing the trend of Test #2-3-06, a run was made at a mix of 0.12 kg/l (1 lb/gal). All other conditions were standard.

Kerf loss was reduced. Slice taper was increased slightly and slice bow increased significantly. All other measurements were comparable to Test #2-3-06. Yield was only 12%.

The low yield and high taper and bow were partly a result of blade breakage and wear. The blades were worn on the side by approximately 1/3 the thickness. The ratio of the number of blades worn on one side to the number worn on the other side was 10:1, indicated some asymmetry in the cutting process. This amount of wear

is unprecedented in cutting any material in any condition. We cannot yet give a good reason for this wear. However, the early stages of cutting appeared quite good. It is possible that the abrasive was limiting the slurry life at the end of the cut. However, it appears that light mix was the correct approach for standard Lubrizol.

#### 3.1.6 Light Mix Lubrizol: Test #2-3-10

In order to find the point at which a Lubrizol slurry has too little abrasive, and to investigate the side wear problem, a test was run with a 0.06 kg/l (½ lb/gal) mix. Yield was so low (4%) that only cutting time could be measured. The cutting time increased significantly. This has always been a good indication that the total amount of abrasive was too little; thus, it seems that a heavier mix is necessary with Lubrizol.

The high side wear occurred again. Measurements were made during the cut with the following results. At \$\frac{1}{2}\$ of the cut depth, side wear could not be measured; at \$\frac{1}{2}\$ the cut depth, side wear was 0.05 times the blade thickness; at the end of the cut the side wear was 1/3 of the blade thickness.

These results indicate that the side wear is due to some effect which changes during a cut, perhaps the geometric changes due to the round cross-section of the ingot or abrasive breakdown due to the small amount of abrasive used. Although Lubrizol with a light mix is economically attractive, we cannot use it until we resolve the side wear question. It still remained that the early cutting was better controlled and breakage occurred after 1/3 of the ingot has been cut.

#### 3.2 Cell Fabrication: Test #2-4-04

Three hundred 0.15 x 6.4 mm blades with .41 mm spacers were used to cut a 10 cm silicon ingot for surface preparation and cell fabrication studies. Cutting time was 28 hours, but yield was only 29%. Slice thickness was .322 mm and kerf loss was 0.237 mm. Slice breakage during the cutting process and poor yield with thin slices continues to plague this phase of the program.

#### 3.3 Miscellaneous Slicing Techniques

#### 3.3.1 Upside Down Cutting: Test #2-5-03

To determine the characteristics of slurry ingress to the blades during MS slicing, a special work holding fixture was installed on a standard Varian 686 MS saw to allow "upside-down" cutting of a 10 cm silicon ingot. 150 0.20 x 6.4 mm blades and 0.41 mm spacers were used with 113 grams of blade load. 0.48 kg/liter of #600 SiC was used as a slurry with "pulse-type" application to either side of the ingot.

Cutting time was 26.1 hours, yield was 100% and the bow and taper of the 10 cm slices was 36 and 44 microns respectively. Indeed the cutting process proceeded well in this mode and the slice accuracy was the best seen to date.

The work-holder tended to loosen and rock slightly at the end of each bladehead stroke due to the direction of loading in this cutting mode. For this reason a new test was scheduled to eliminate the rocking motion which may have cushioned the cutting shock to wafers and been responsible for the improvements noted.

#### 3.3.2 Constant Pressure Cutting: Test #2-5-04

It was assumed that the cutting pressure at the blade/silicon interface was important to controlled abrasion and that variations in pressure due to ingot cross-section (at constant load) might cause some of the bow/taper variations seen in MS slices. Cutting force was varied to maintain constant pressure with the maximum load being 113 grams per blade. 136 0.15 mm blades and 0.41 mm spacers were used. In order to suppress wafer fracture, a thin coating of epoxy was used on the perimeter of the ingot. The epoxy slowed the cut so severely during the early and late portion of the test that the overall slicing time was 63 hours. Yield was 71% and the edge chipping seen in the past did not occur. The coating disturbs the cutting process so severely, however, that an alternate will be sought. Wafer accuracy in the vertical direction was degraded, but in the horizontal direction, it was greatly improved.

#### 3.3.3 Upside Down Cutting: Test #2-5-06

A second upside down cut was run to isolate the effect of the upside down mode from that of the rocking work-holder experienced in test #2-5-03. A rigid work-piece mount was used and cutting went very well until half way through the ingot when the workpiece broke loose from the submount. This experience was sufficient to show that the reversal of gravity on the action of slurry was the useful improvement with this technique.

#### 3.4 Alignment Device Tests

This series tests a device designed to improve the alignment of a set of multiple blades. The concept considers the possibility of blade misalignment being the limiting condition for thin wafer slicing and the use of thin blades in MS slicing.

#### 3.4.1 Alignment Device: Test #2-6-01

The alignment device was installed onto a package with 150 0.15 mm blades and 0.35 mm spacers. The installation was facilitated by positioning the rack gears into engagement with the blades prior to tensioning. Both end blades were parallel within 2-3µ, a distinct improvement over normal blade packages. By adjusting rack gear positions, a vertical runout of +3 microns was obtained in the four measurable points at the corners of the blade package. Slurry was a standard mix of 0.36 kg/liter. Total cutting time was 23 hours faster than normal, however, the first half of the ingot was cut with a blade force of 127 grams, rather than 85 grams. Total wafer yield was 81% (120 of 149). Slice thickness averaged 287 microns with a kerf loss of 221 microns. Wafer accuracy was improved over the best cutting accuracy obtained with 0.15 mm blades. However, the difference was not significant to herald success of the alignment device at this point.

#### 3.4.2 Alignment Device: Test #2-6-02

A second test of the alignment device was performed using a different installation technique. The blade package was first measured to assure that its width, after compression, could match the exact spacing of the rack gears. Opposing pairs of spacers were replaced with oversized spacers to

achieve this condition. The package was fully tensioned, and then the width was adjusted by modulating the side compression. The rack gears were easily engaged at this point. All preliminary alignment went as before except that vertical alignment of one side of the package was off vertical by 75-125µ. This was averaged over that end of the package, but the variation was not correctable since one gear seemed to be longer than the other. The rest was run with 150 0.15 mm blades, 0.35 mm spacers and 85 grams of blade load with a slurry mix of 0.24 kg/liter.

Cutting appeared to go well, but the ingot broke loose from the submount after half of the ingot had been cut. Measurements of the broken wafer pieces indicated 200 microns of kerf loss and 300 micron thick slices. Bow and taper measurements were not meaningful, but the surface profiles were very impressive. Further testing, following this installation technique, will be pursued. Four new sets of gears are expected soon.

#### 3.4.3 Alignment Device: Tests #2-6-03 and #2-6-04

Two cutting tests were performed using the multiple blade alignment device with identical conditions (0.15 x 6.4 mm blades, 0.36 mm spacers, 85 grams/blade loading, 0.36 kg/liter mix of #600 SiC abrasive).

In the first, a set of gears used many times was installed. Blade parallelism was within 3 microns, but vertical alignment was, as in test #2-6-02, out by 60 microns at one end of the pack. Cutting time was 28.3 hours and yield was 53% (10 cm slices). Taper and bow were 50-60 microns average in the vertical direction. Slice thickness was .273 mm with .235 mm kerf loss.

A new set of rack gears was installed for test #2-6-04. Vertical alignment was only within 20-30 microns, but improved over previous tests. Cutting time was 32.3 hours and 66% yield resulted with 10 cm slices. Slice thickness was .267 mm and kerf loss was .241 mm. Bow and taper were not improved (80 microns average).

Since only minor improvements in slice accuracy have resulted from tests with the alignment device, the next step in its test process will be to test it using 300 blades (150 have been used previously) and then with 0.10 mm blades which have suffered from fatigue induced breakage in the past.

#### 4.0 DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Cell Fabrication

A set of 20 silicon wafers cut on the MS saw was sent to Solar Power Corp. for fabrication into solar cells in their standard commercial processing line. The slices were 10 cm diameter with a nominal thickness of 300 $\mu$ . Of the twenty wafers, only 1 survived the complete processing sequence. One was broken in shipment, 7 broke during the boron diffusion step and 11 others broke during other process steps. The remaining cell produced  $V_{\rm OC}$  of 0.55V,  $I_{\rm SC}$  of 1.68A, maximum power (P max) of 0.67W and a fill factor of 0.725 at 100 mw/cm² illumination and 28°C. This represents an efficiency based on full wafer area of 8.53%, (8.97% based on 9.75 cm diameter applied cell area). Since the potting compound acts as part of the AR coating system for Solar Power's cells, the performance cited above is expected to improve by 10% in a completed panel. Therefore, the efficiency of this cell may be characterized as 9.4% based on the 10 cm wafer or 9.9% based on the size of the active cell applied.

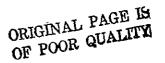
#### 4.2 Lab Saw

Because of the complete change of design necessary in the laboratory saw, the fabrication of that unit will be delayed the next quarter. The small number of blades requires a new concept of feed mechanism to apply the small loads required. The blades will be adjustable from 10 inches to 22.5 inches in length, requiring a new, longer bladehead, a longer waybed and an adjustable position drive system. The bladehead has been completed during this reporting period. The waybed was ordered in September and delivery was slow. These two have been subcontracted for machine work, and grinding and expected delivery of mid-December was not met. Drawings for the lab saw are shown in Appendix I in the S-2000 series.

#### 4.3 Prototype Large Capacity MS Saw

Basic mechanical design for the 1000 blade capacity multiblade slurry wafering saw is complete and fabrication began during this quarter. The machine is designed to slice a 45 cm long silicon ingot with up to 1000 blades of 0.15 x 12.7 mm cross-section. The blade tensioning capacity is 270,000 kg (600,000 lb). The basic design concept is a modification of the underslung reciprocating workholder carriage described in the previous report. Gravity is utilized to protect sliding members from the abrasive slurry. Drawings for the prototype are shown in Appendix I in the S-1000 series.

The bladehead tensioning is accomplished with two clamping elements spread apart by a pair of closing scissors. Design for the system indicates that a torque of 35 kg-m (250 ft. lbs) must be applied to each of two scissor closing bolts in order to apply 270,000 kg of tensioning force. Final bladehead design will be completed soon after the first of the year.



#### 4.4 Investigation of Suspension Media

We are investigating the possibilities of using various oil or water bases suspension media for slurry sawing. To date, most of the research has concentrated on oil based suspensions, since few water based suspensions are manufactured and we do not know the optimum characteristics of such media. (Manufacturers of water based media are being contacted.) We are currently working with our standard suspension oil (PC oil) and a new oil manufactured by the Lubrizol Corporation (Lubrizol 5985).

Attempts to use 5985 have been disappointing. The best results so far have been obtained using 1/3 the amount of abrasive normally used in PC oil (0.36 kg/l). A portion of the wafer breakage problems may be traced to machine problems (poor yield in standard cutting tests), but this condition is yet to be certainly corrected. It is possible that some wafer breakage was due to abrasive failure, abrasive settling, or some other mode of failure, all due to the small amount of abrasive in the system. When we are sure the machine faults have been corrected, we will retest 5985 with a low abrasive mix: this combination is attractive because the cost approaches the \$3.00/m<sup>2</sup> slurry cost goal.

In the meantime, we are carrying out a more structured investigation of the two suspension oils. The first steps have been consideration of important differences and characterization of the two oils.

#### 4.4.1 Comparison of 5985 and PC

The major differences between 5985 and PC are:

- Different suspension power (5985 holds abrasive in suspension longer).
- 2. Viscosity (5985 is less viscous).
- 3. Suspension method (5985 uses a dissolved polymer, PC uses colloidal clay platelets).

We feel that the suspension method does not affect the cutting process significantly (although it may affect reclamation).

It seems likely that the suspension power and/or viscosity affect the cutting process through abrasive transport. The cutting process is controlled not by the actual abrasive mix but rather by the "effective mix" (i.e., a measure of the number of active particles at the cutting interface). Greater suspension power and/or lower viscosity might well increase the effective mix by transporting particles to the cutting interface more efficiently.

The first step in our systematic investigation must be to identify the important variables. In order to demonstrate that viscosity and/or suspension power are the important variables, we intend to mix mineral oil with 5985 or the 5985 polymer additive to match PC as closely as possible. If this mixture behaves like PC, that will show that only viscosity and/or suspension power are important. Once we have identified the important variables, we can vary them systematically and independently to ascertain their effects and relative importance.

#### 4.4.2 Characterization of Oils

The viscosities of both oils were measured using a Brookfield LVF viscometer with the #2 cylindrical spindle. The samples were 550 ml of the test fluid in a 600 ml Griffin low form beaker (kImax #14000). The spindle-beaker combination were calibrated with silicone oil viscosity standards (92 cps  $\pm$ 1% and 505 cps  $\pm$ 1%). The temperature was 25°  $\pm$ 1°C in all tests. The results are presented in Figure 1 and discussed below.



Suspension power was measured by static settling tests. 50 g of PC, 5985, or 5985 cut with 130 cps mineral oil were mixed with 20.85 g of #600 SiC (corresponding to a standard PC mix: note that the specific gravity of all the oils ranges from 0.89 to 0.91). These mixtures were shaken and allowed to stand until significant settling took place.

PC oil is a thixotropic fluid: the viscosity depends on both strain rate and history. The viscosity decreases asymptotically with time at a given strain rate. This is not surprising, since the clay platelets probably line up as shearing proceeds. The viscosities in Figure 1 are asymptotic viscosities.

PC settles by loss of suspension power. Both the platelets and abrasive settle, so that a clear oil area forms at the top, with a homogeneous mixture of abrasive and platelets below.

Lubrizol 5985 is a psuedo-plastic fluid (on the time scale investigated): the viscosity depends only on strain rate. Only the abrasive settles out: larger abrasive particles settle faster, so a three-layer structure forms: a thin layer of oil and suspension agent above a region of oil, suspension agent, and fine abrasive particles above a cake of fully settled particles.

It is essentially impossible to match 5985 and PC by diluting 5085. Consideration of Figure 1 shows that the viscosities can be matched at all strain rates by diluting 5985 with carefully tailored psuedo-plastic fluid (a difficult job !)\*. We do not know if the thixotropic nature of PC is important. However, it seems that a reasonable viscosity

The strain rate in MS slicing varies during each stroke from 0 to approximately 105 sec-1, with an average value of 5 x 104 sec-1.

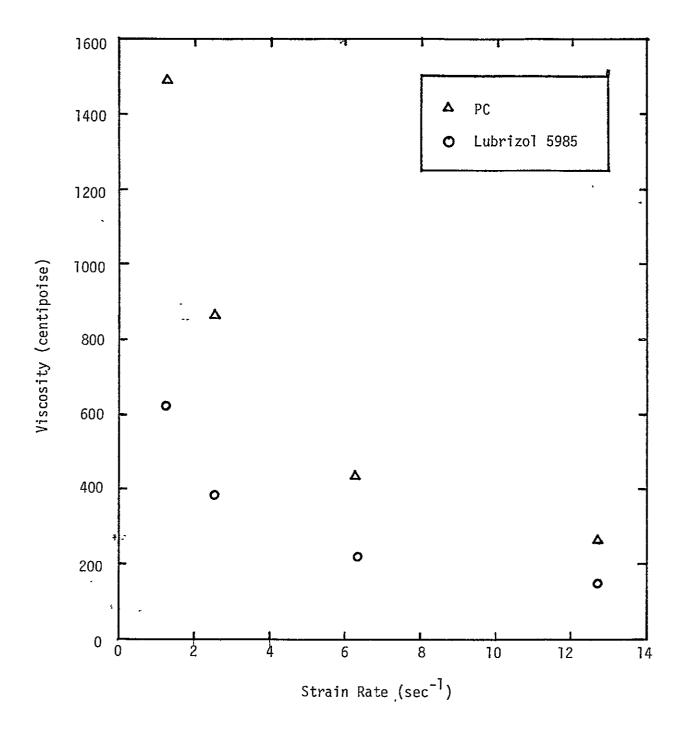


FIGURE 1 VISCOSITY OF SUSPENSION OILS

match may be obtained by mixing 5985 with a mineral oil chosen to give a viscosity of around 250 cps at  $12.5 \text{ sec}^{-1}$ .

Matching suspension power is also difficult because 5985 forms a cake at the bottom and PC does not. On the basis of clear top area, it appears that a mixture of 40-45% 5985 matches PC best.

#### 4.5 Slurry Reclamation

Earlier reports stated that the failure mechanism of slurry appears to be debris accumulation. We have been investigating the possibilities of several methods of separating the components of used slurry for reuse. In the last quarter, sufficiently encouraging replies have been received from manufacturers so that we feel able to discuss possible mechanisms of reclamation.

There are many problems which make the separation of slurry components difficult. The abrasive nature of the slurry could lead to excessive separating machine wear. The large solid volume could lead to clogging. The oil is designed to keep the solids in suspension.

We currently envision a two-stage separation process. In the first stage, the majority of the oil would be removed, leaving a Si/SiC sludge. If the oil were PC, the separated oil would probably have little or no suspension power since the clay platelets would be left in the sludge. If the oil were LZ 5985 or an equivalent, the separated oil would probably still contain dissolved polymer and the suspension characteristics would be at worst slightly degraded. With the suspension oil removed, separation of silicon and silicon carbide would be easily done in the second stage.



The most promising oil separation device is the Mott Inertial Filter, manufactured by Mott Metallurgical Corporation, Farmington, CT. The filtration element consists of a sintered stainless steel tube, sintered under little or no pressure so the tube is porous. The tube is open at both ends, and the liquid to be filtered is pumped around a closed loop which includes the tube. As the liquid passes through the tube, the cross-sectional pressure gradient and inertial effects concentrate the solids in the center of the tube, while the liquid passes through the walls. Filtrate flow ranges from 0.4 to 8 l/min depending on many factors. Particles down to 0.1µm are filtered out. The element does not clog, and wear is negligible or not present. The machine is relatively low cost (approx. \$3000 for the machine and \$500 for the filter element). We will test this system with both PC and 5985 based slurries.

Once the oil is removed, the Si/SiC separation step would be relatively easy. The SiC particles are about 10 times larger and 50% denser than the Si particles. Separation should thus be possible either by static settling (in a liquid in which Si floats and SiC sinks) or elutriation (in which an upward flowing stream of liquid lifts lighter and smaller particles from a liquid). Both systems will be tested with the sludge obtained from filter tests.

#### 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Slice breakage from fracture resulting from the wafering process reduces yield in the case of fully propagated cracks and limits the production of solar cells from thin 10 cm silicon slices. This problem has not been resolved.
- 2. Mixtures of abrasive sizes and different slurry oils do not give suitable cutting performance with the current approach to MS slicing.
- A scissor type blade tensioning system has the design potential to reduce operator setup time with a larger capacity MS wafering saw.

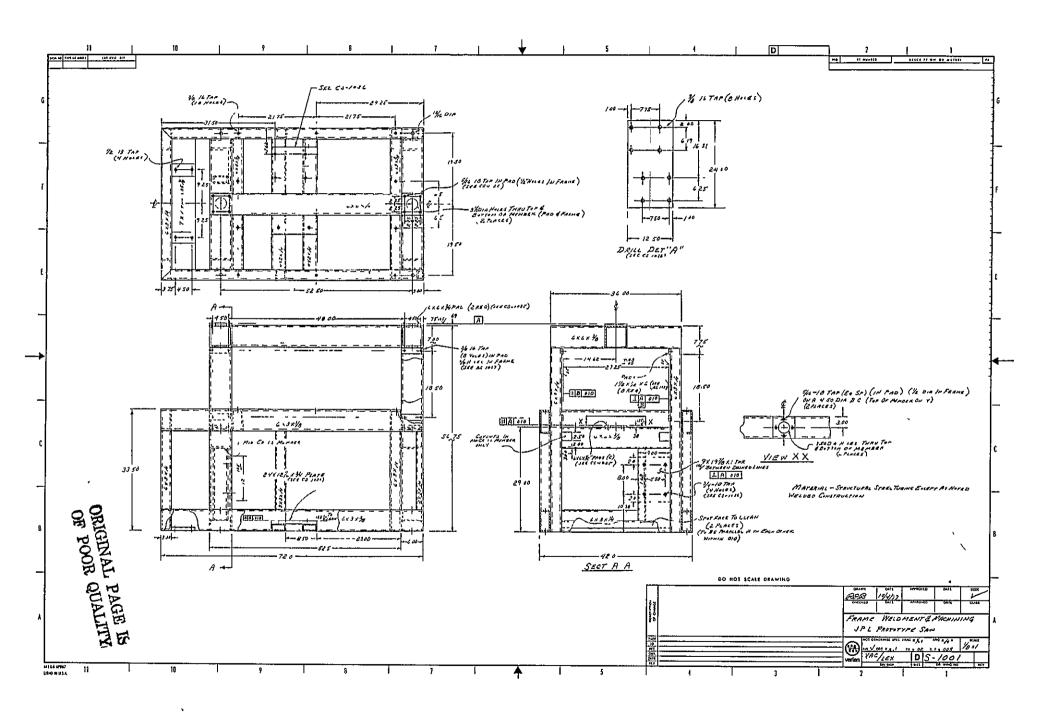
#### 6.0 PLANS

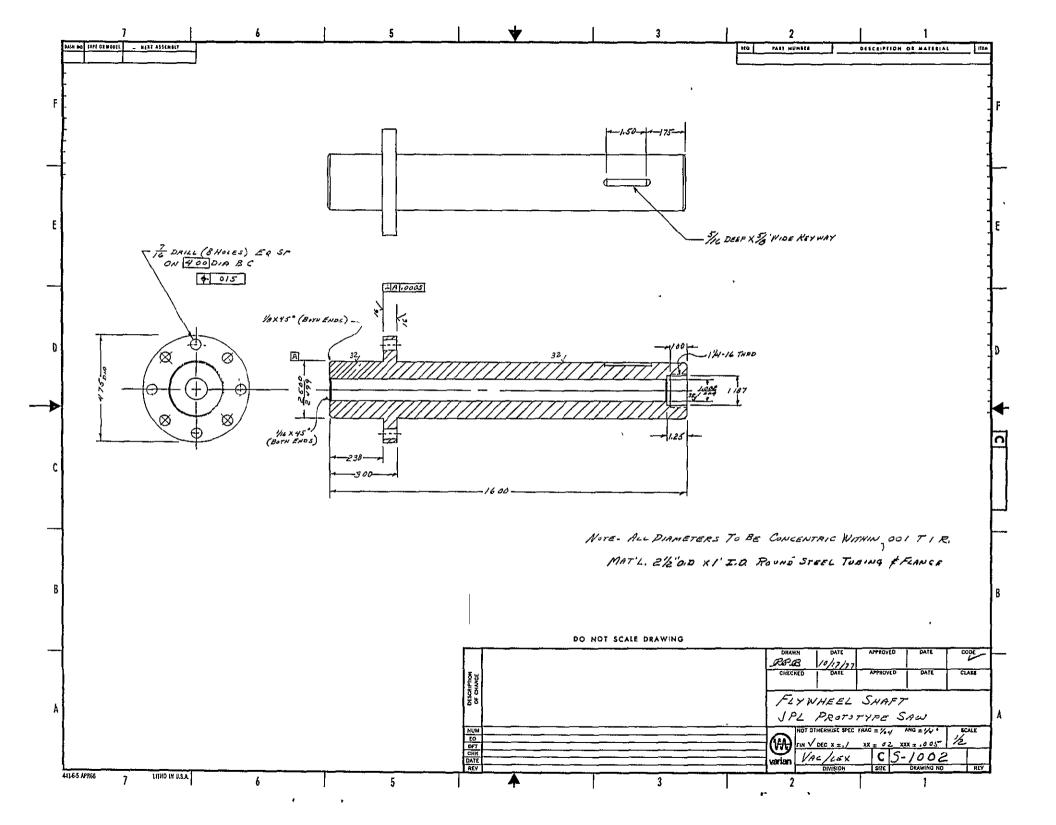
Plans for the next quarter include:

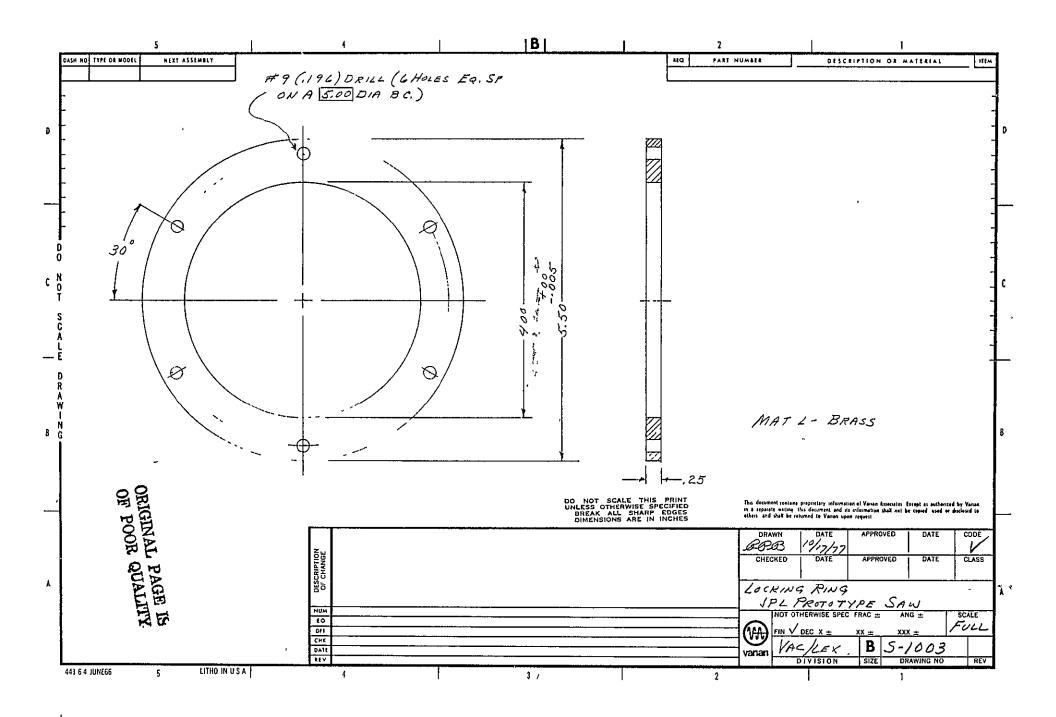
- Complete lab saw
- Complete final design of large scale prototype.
- Fabricate low cost oil of characteristics similar to present oil. Test in MS slicing.
- Prepare SAMICS anaylsis of MS slicing.
- Test alignment device with 300 0.15 mm blades, and with 0.10 mm blades.
- Complete thorough etching studies with 10 cm and 2x2 cm MS silicon wafers. Begin cell fabrication.
- Test blade hardness variations.

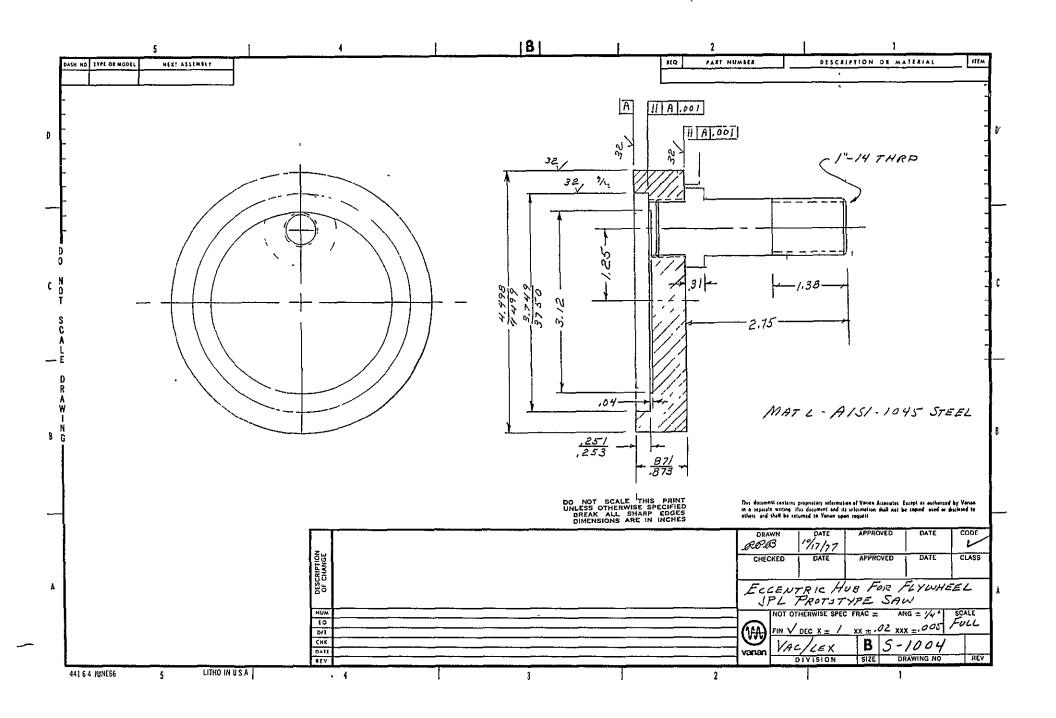
## APPENDIX I

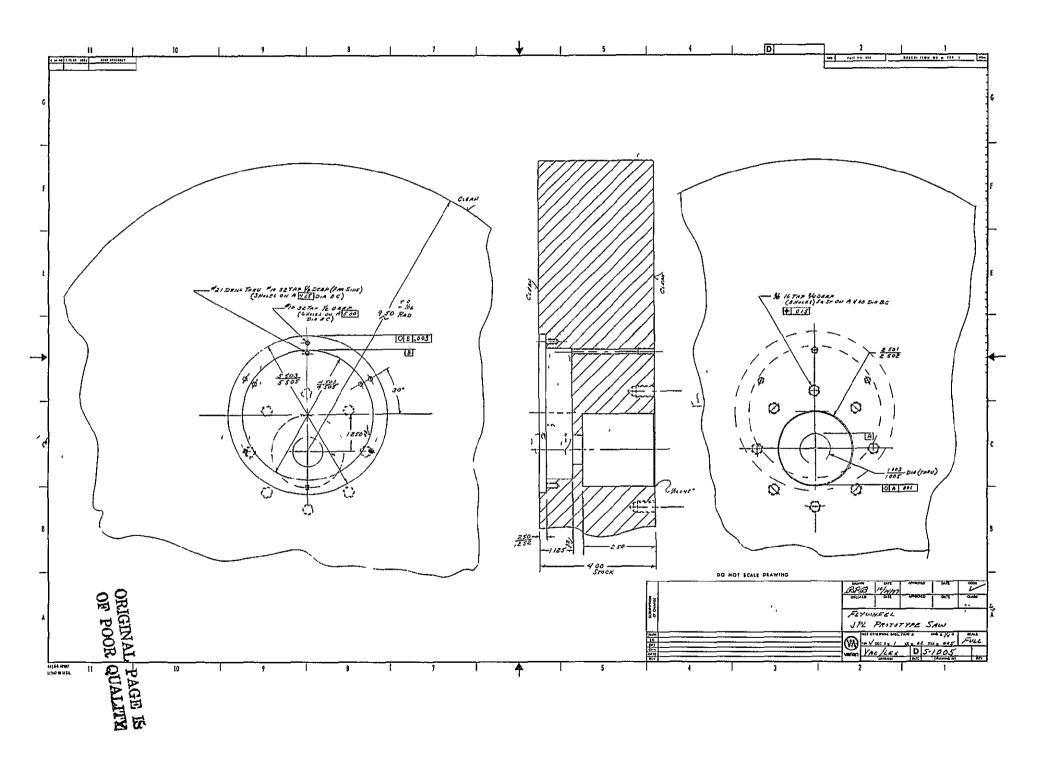
Engineering Drawings and Sketches

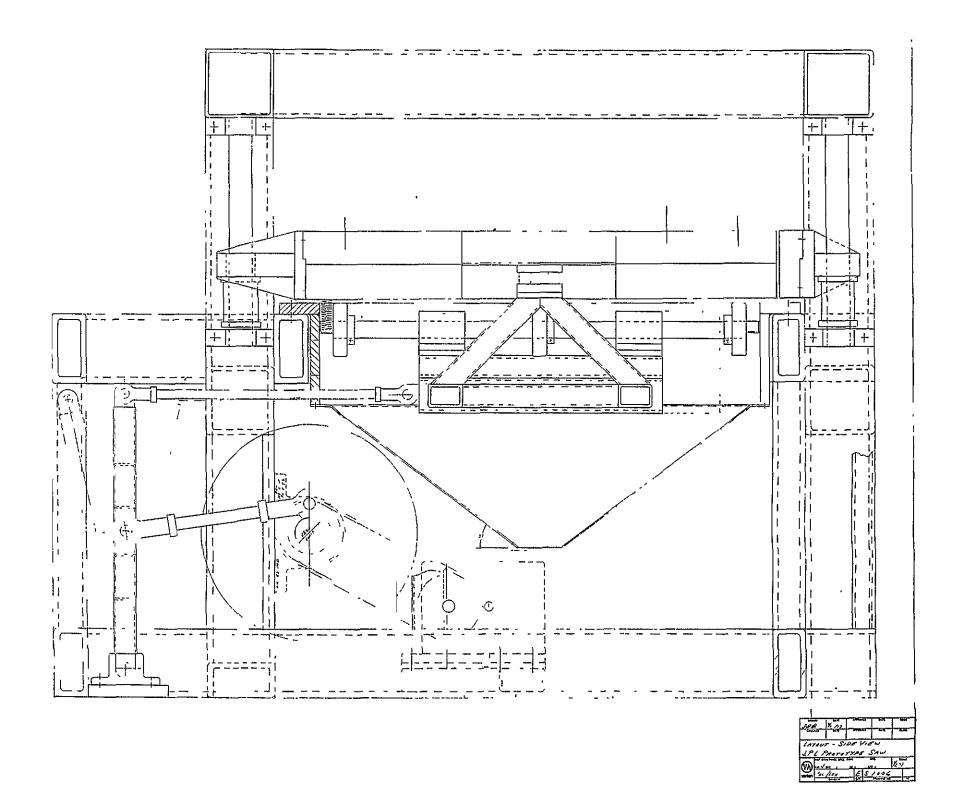


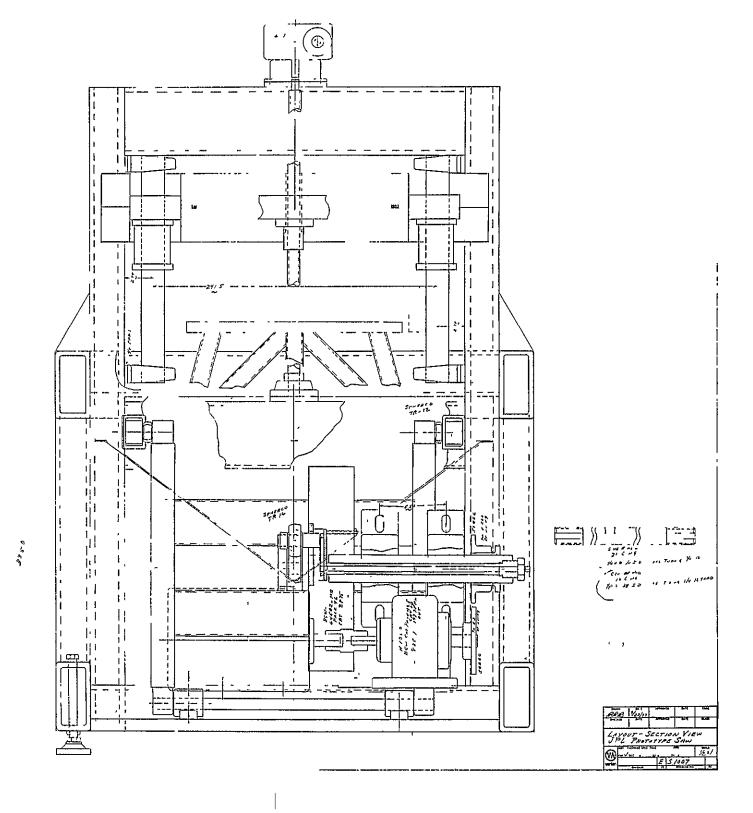


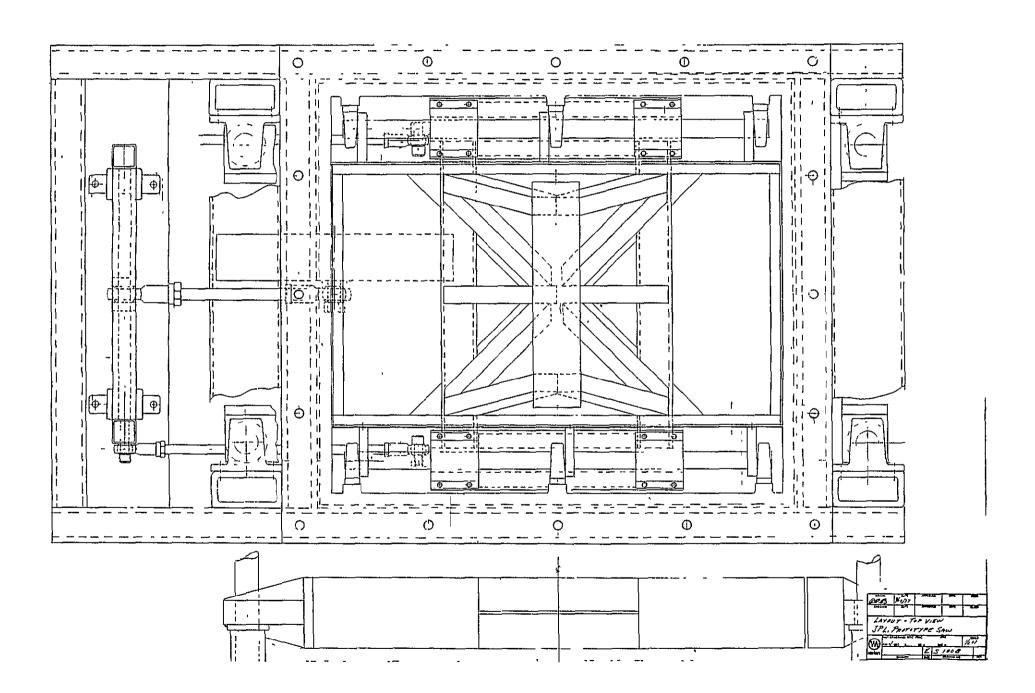


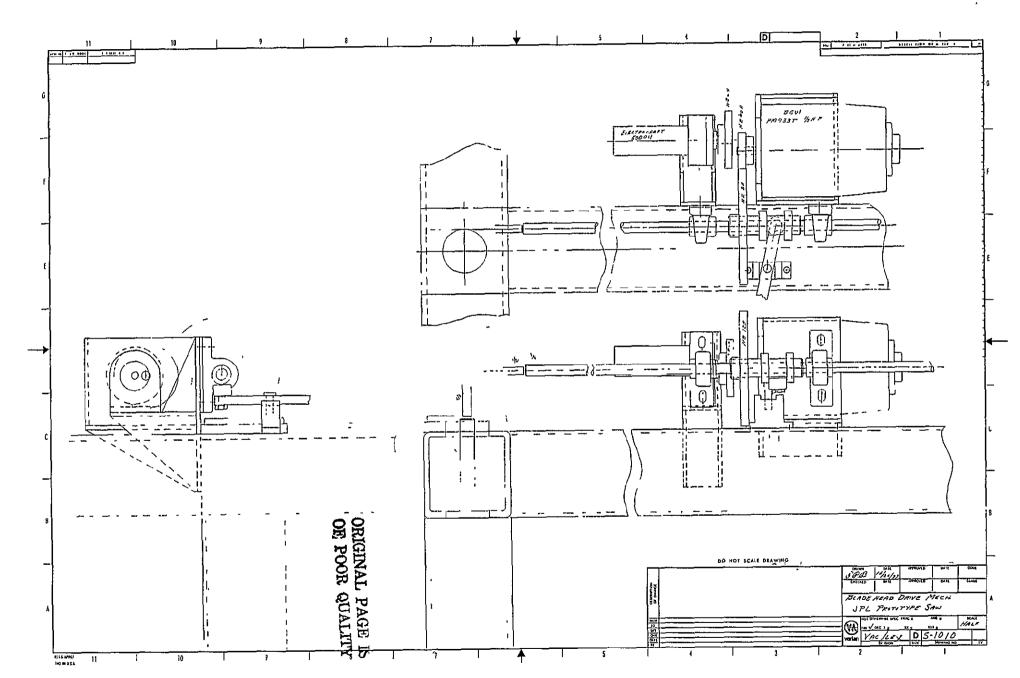




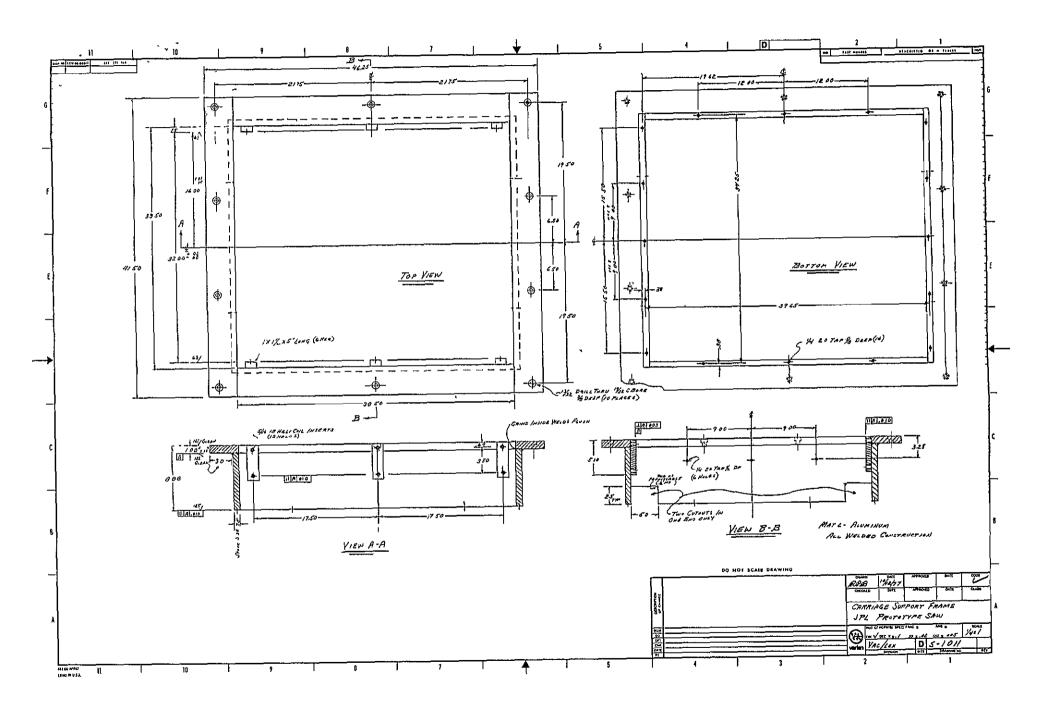


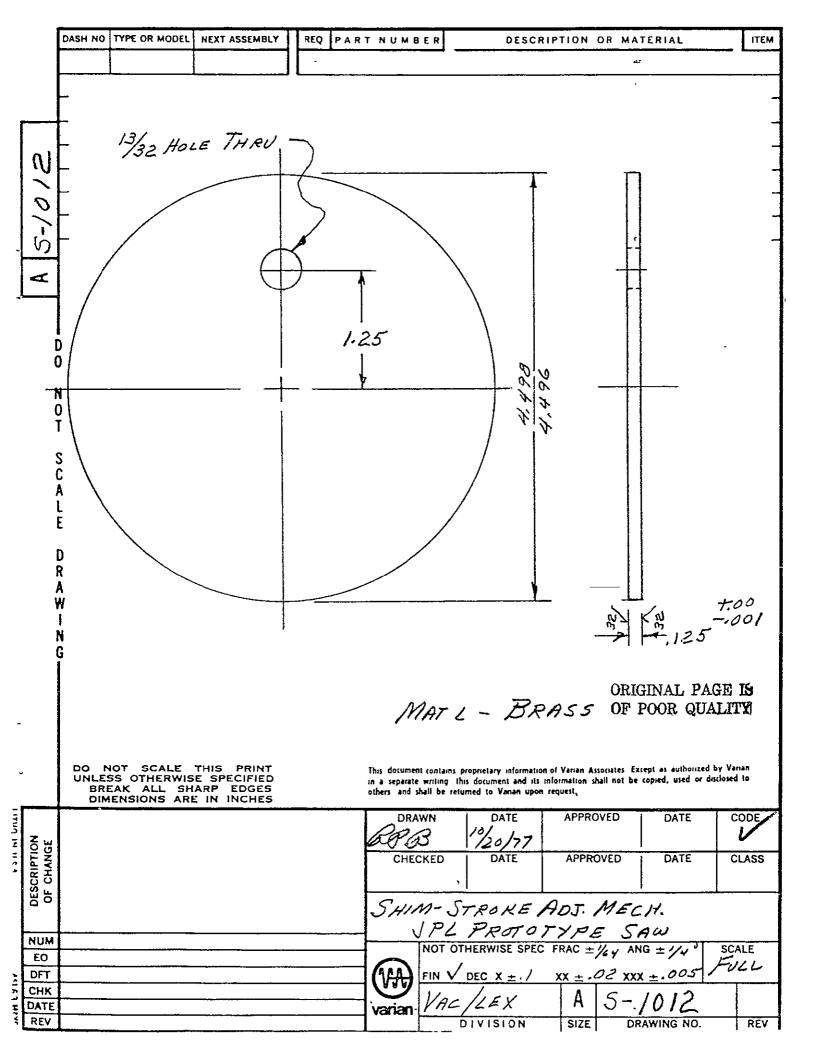


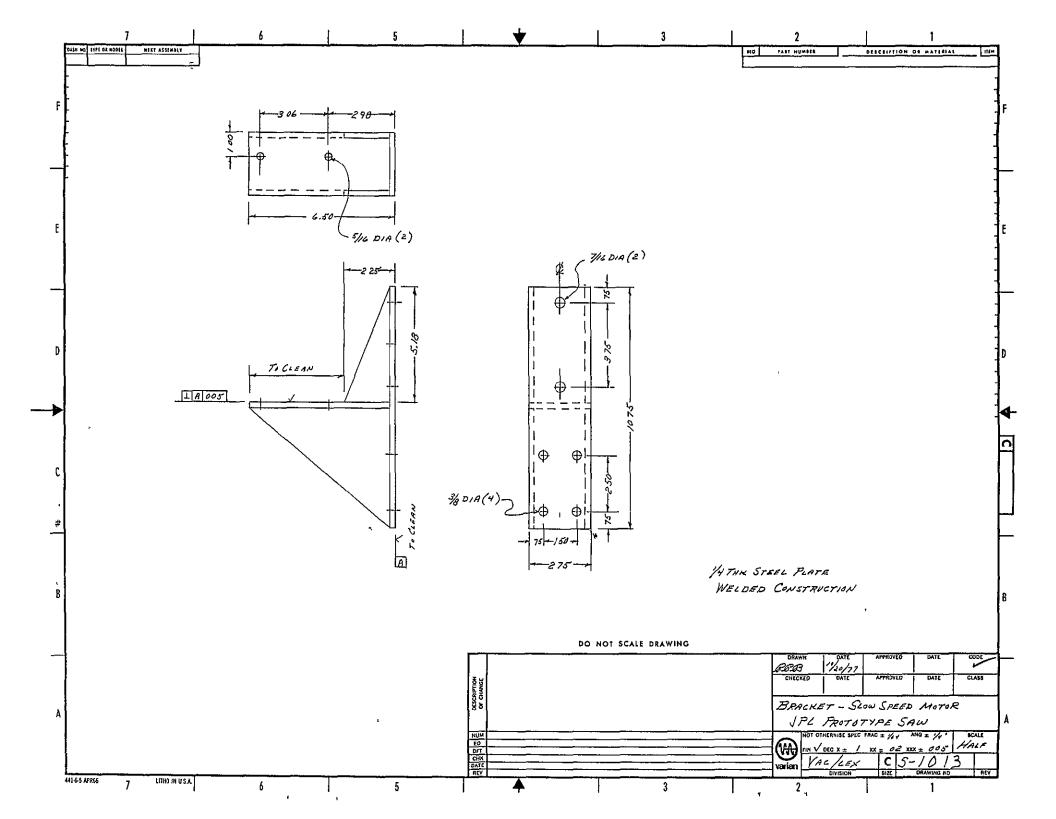


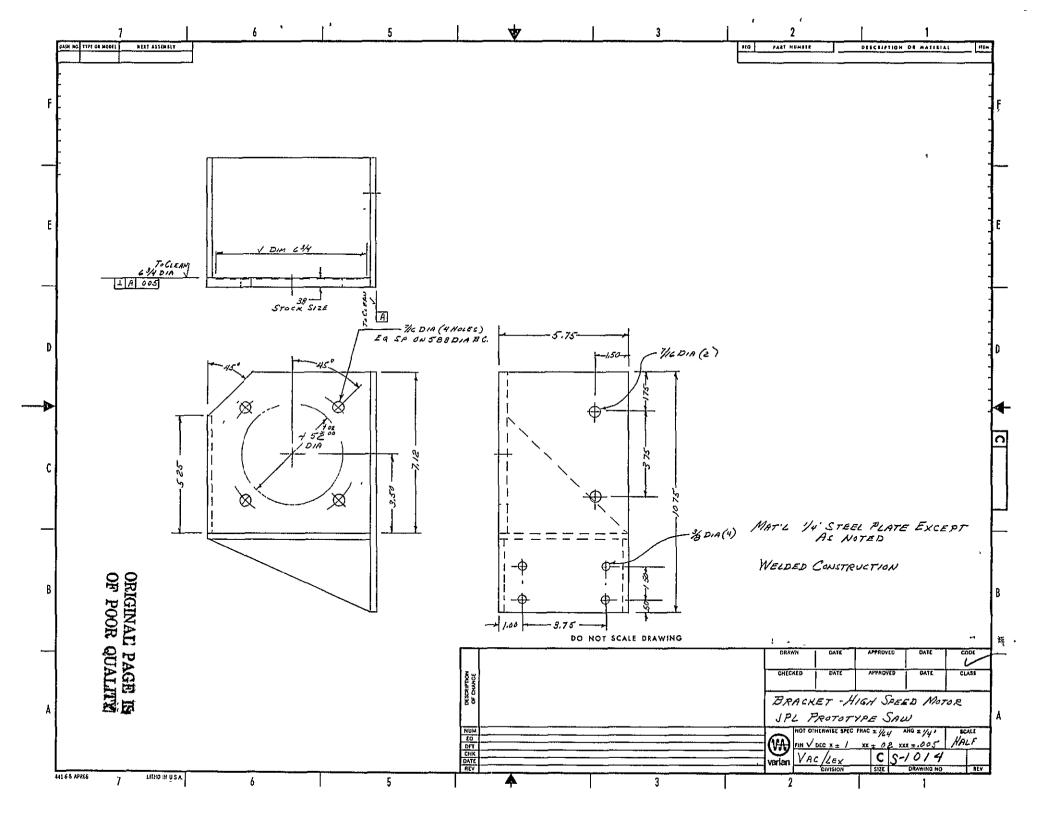


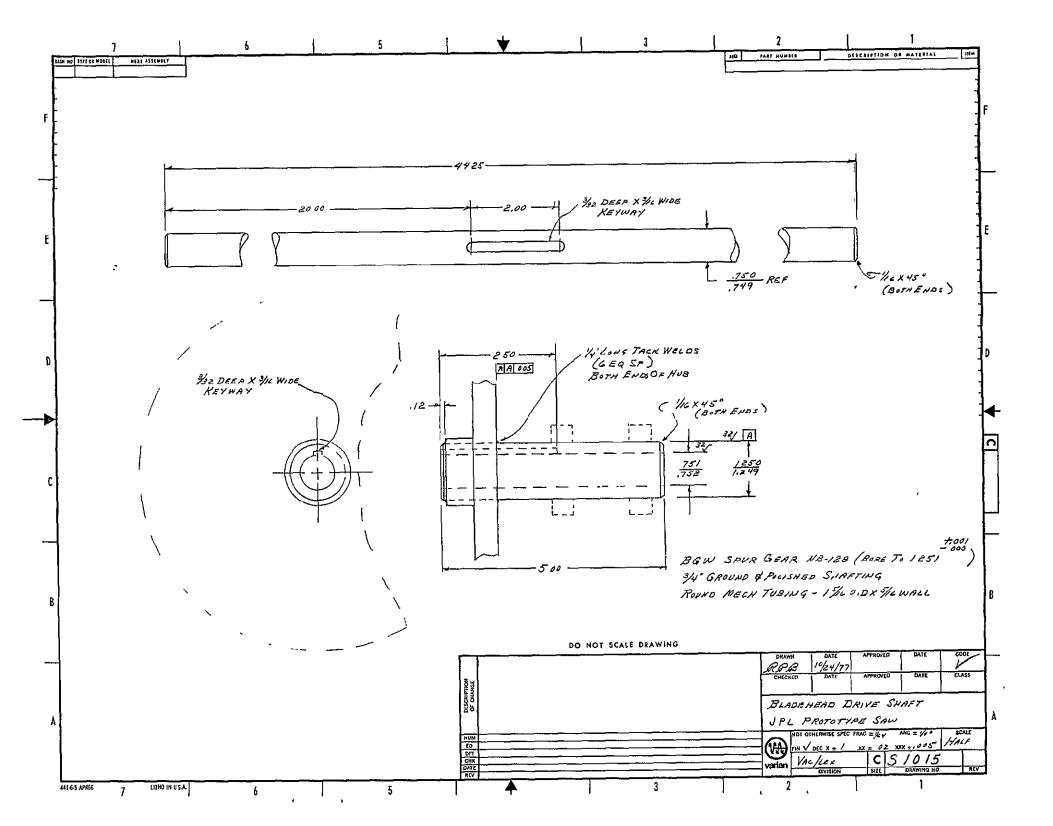
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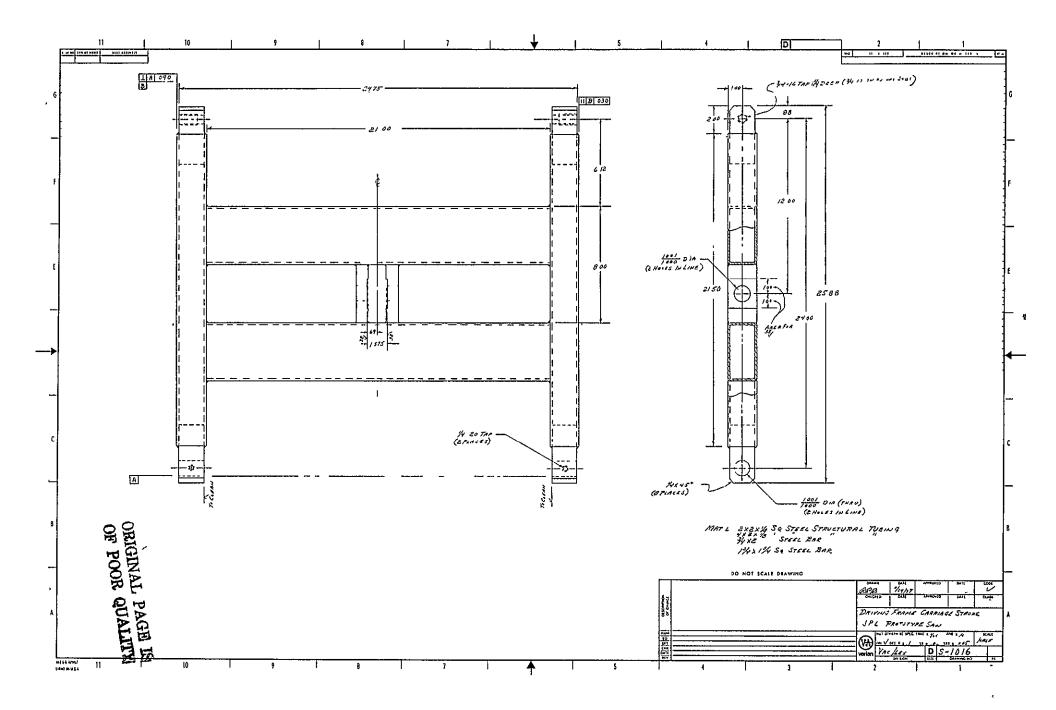


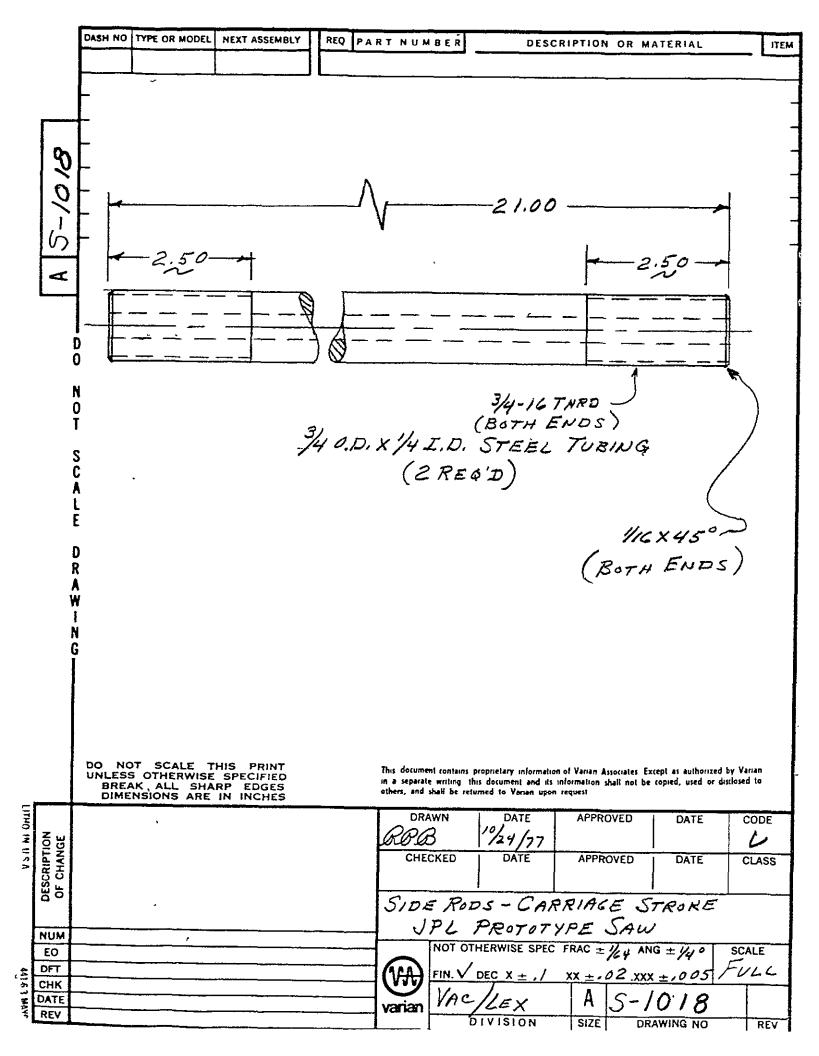


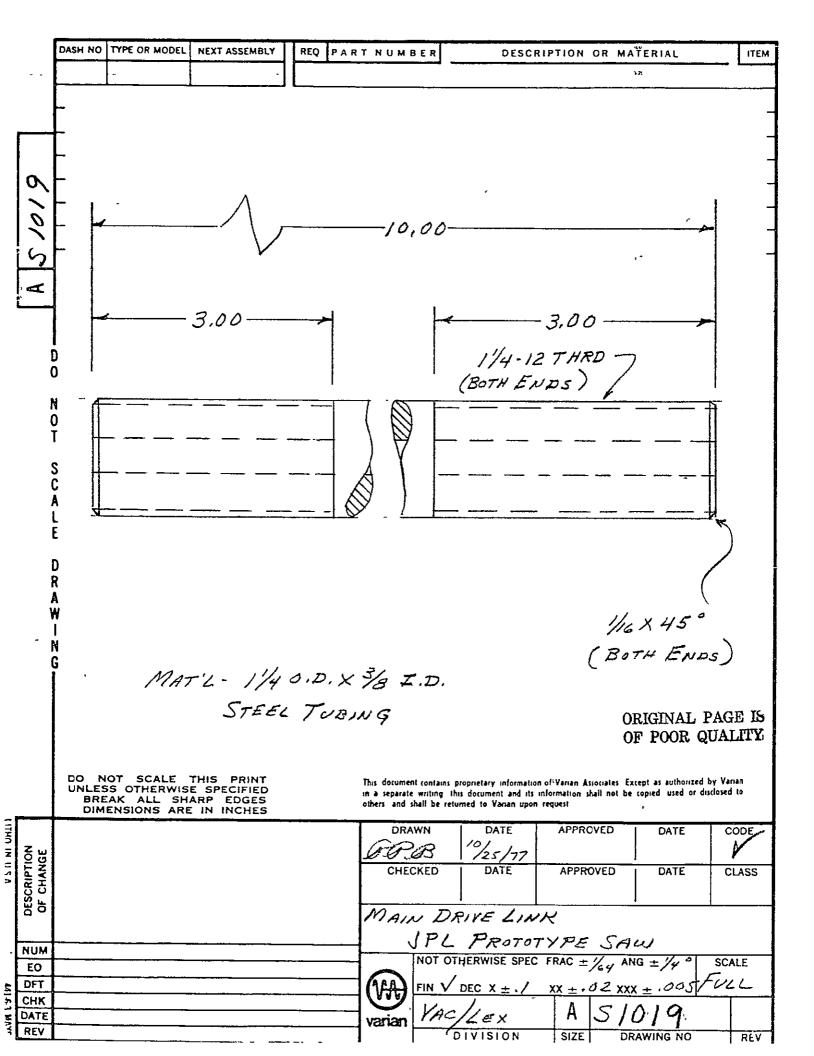


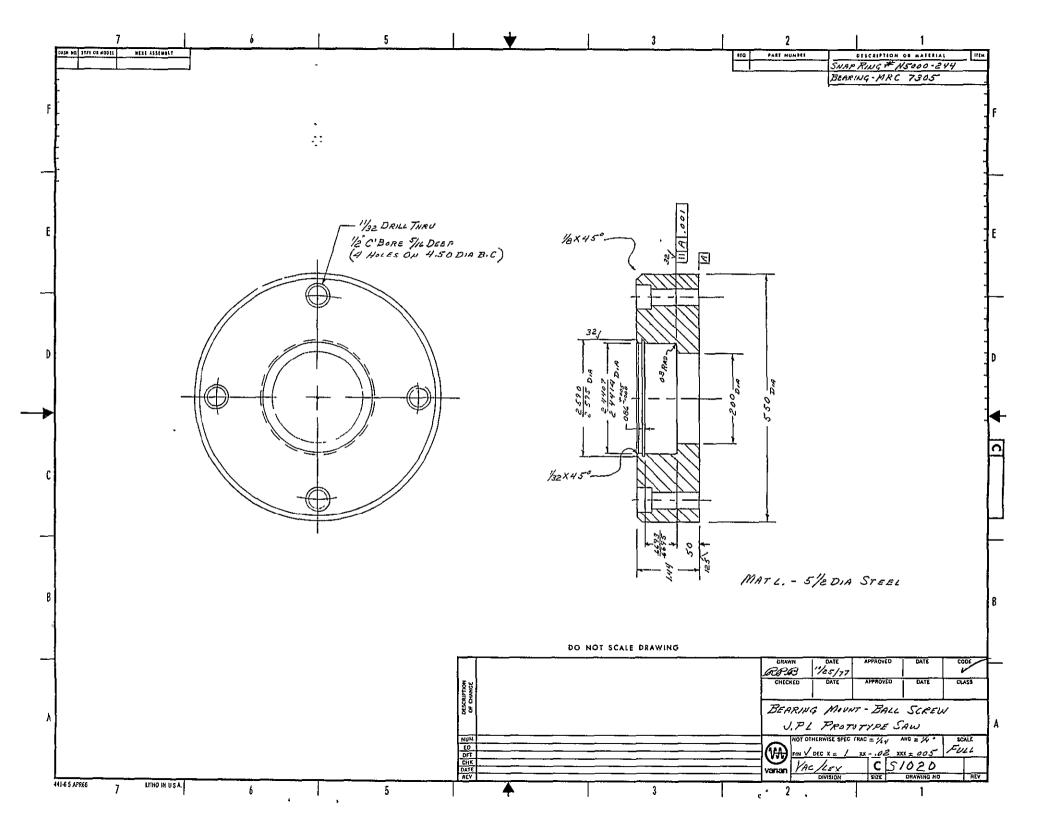


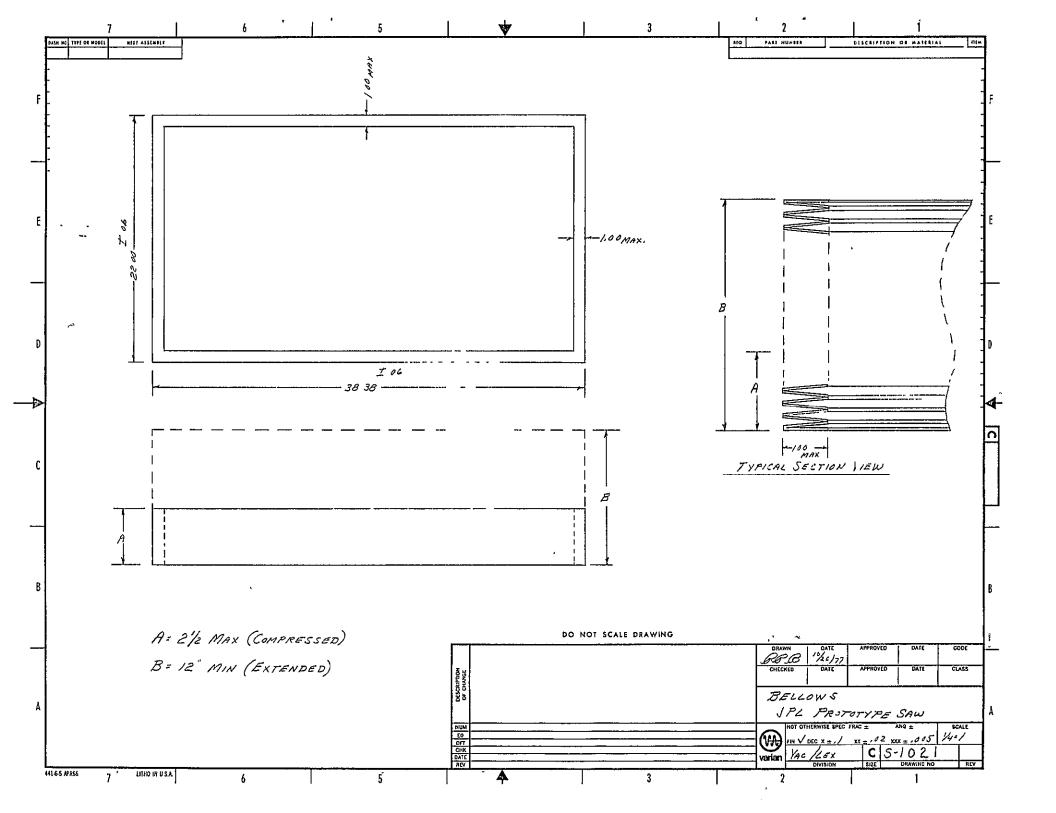


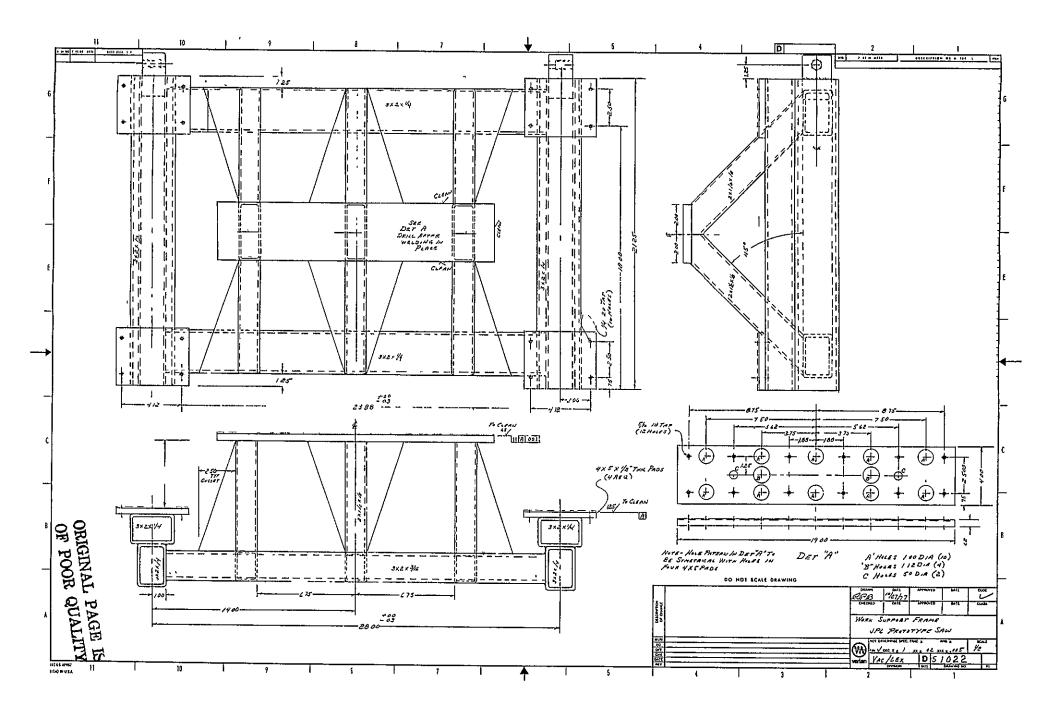


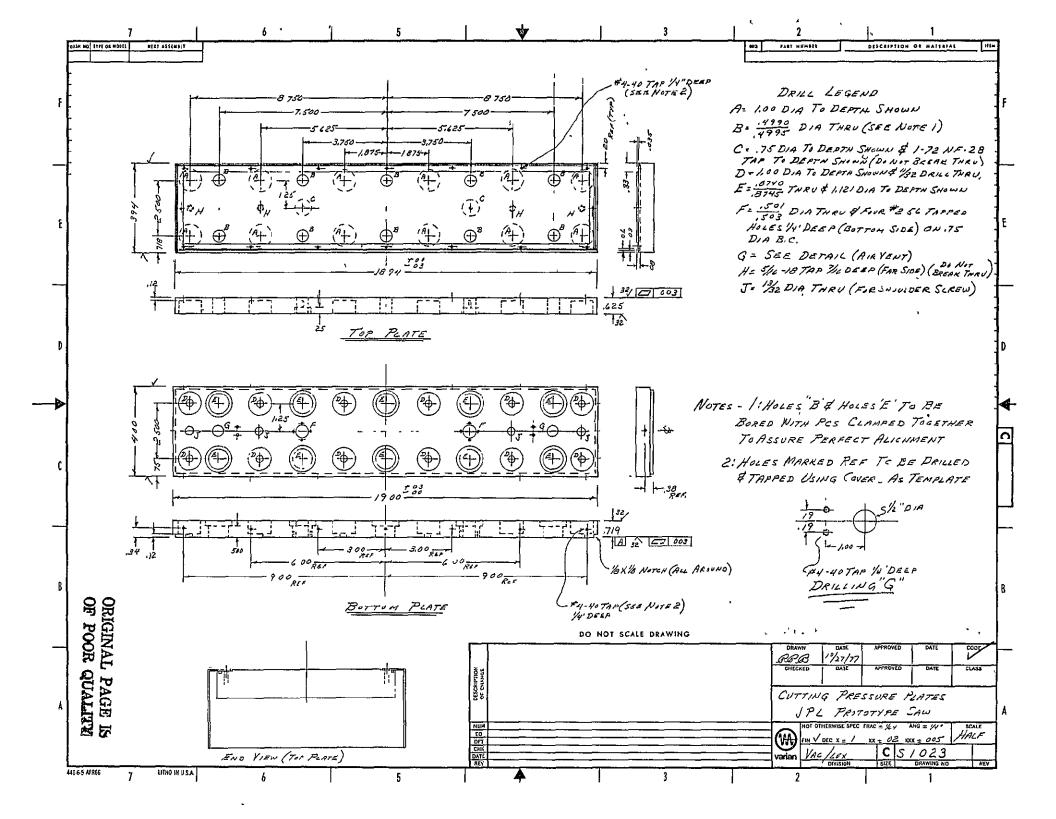


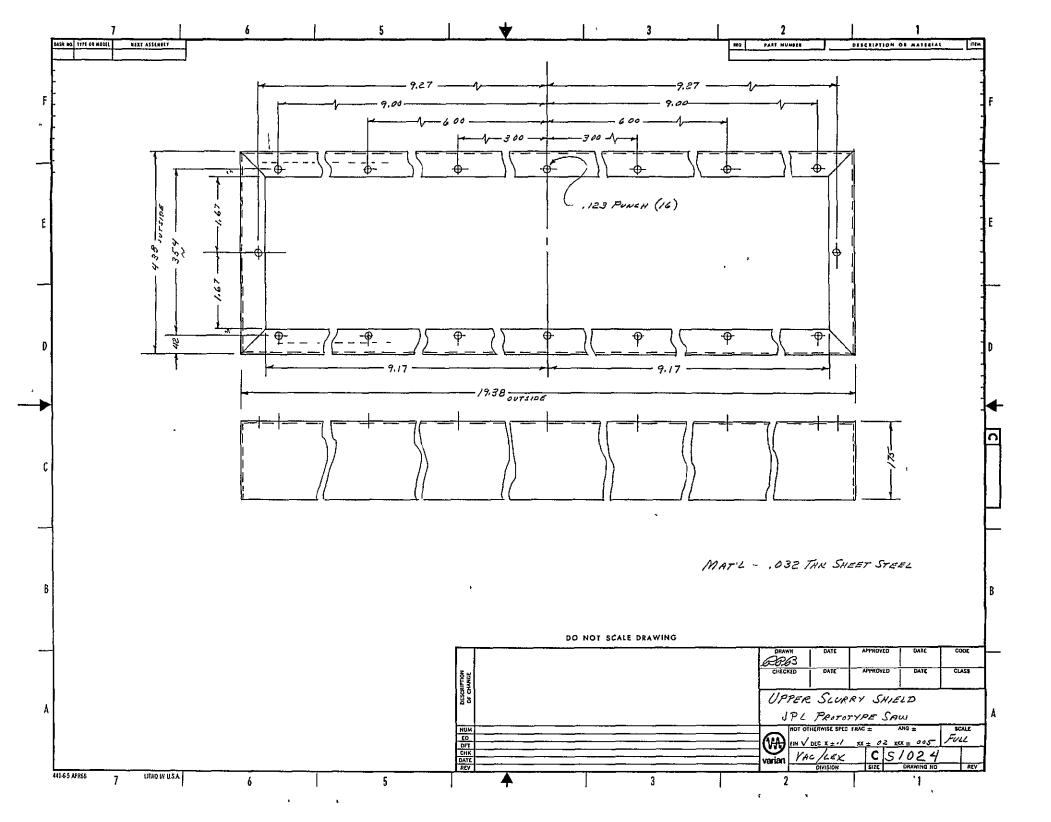


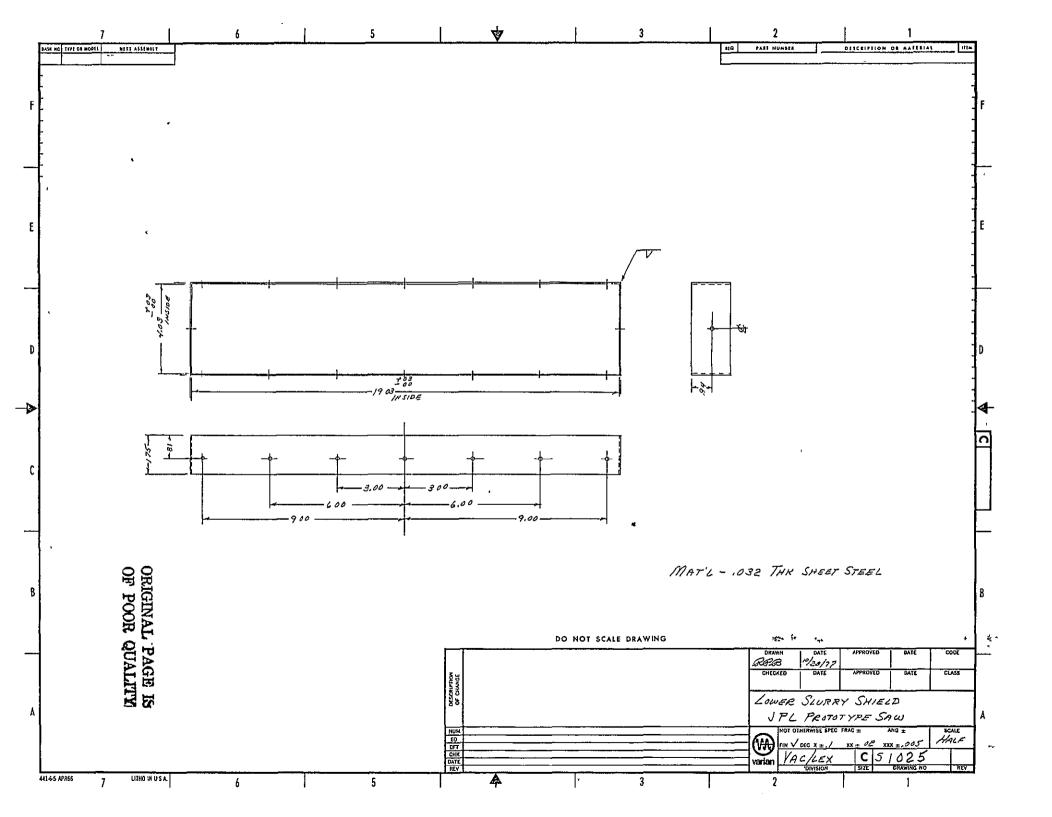


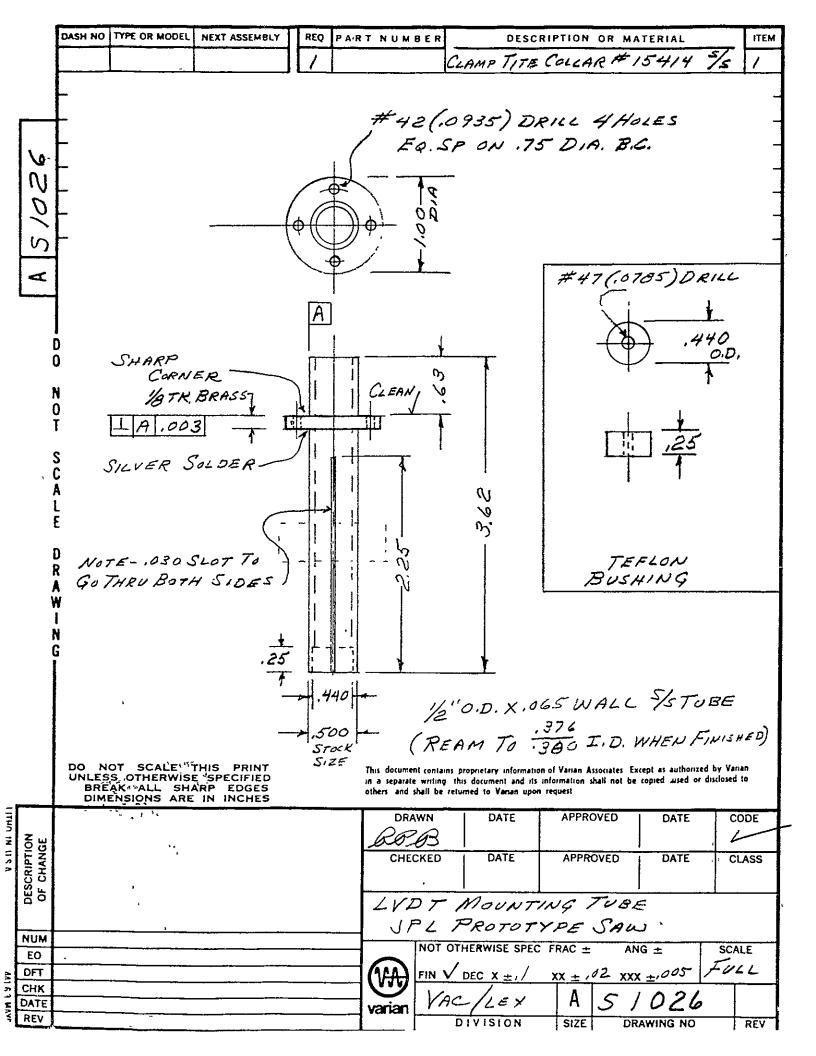


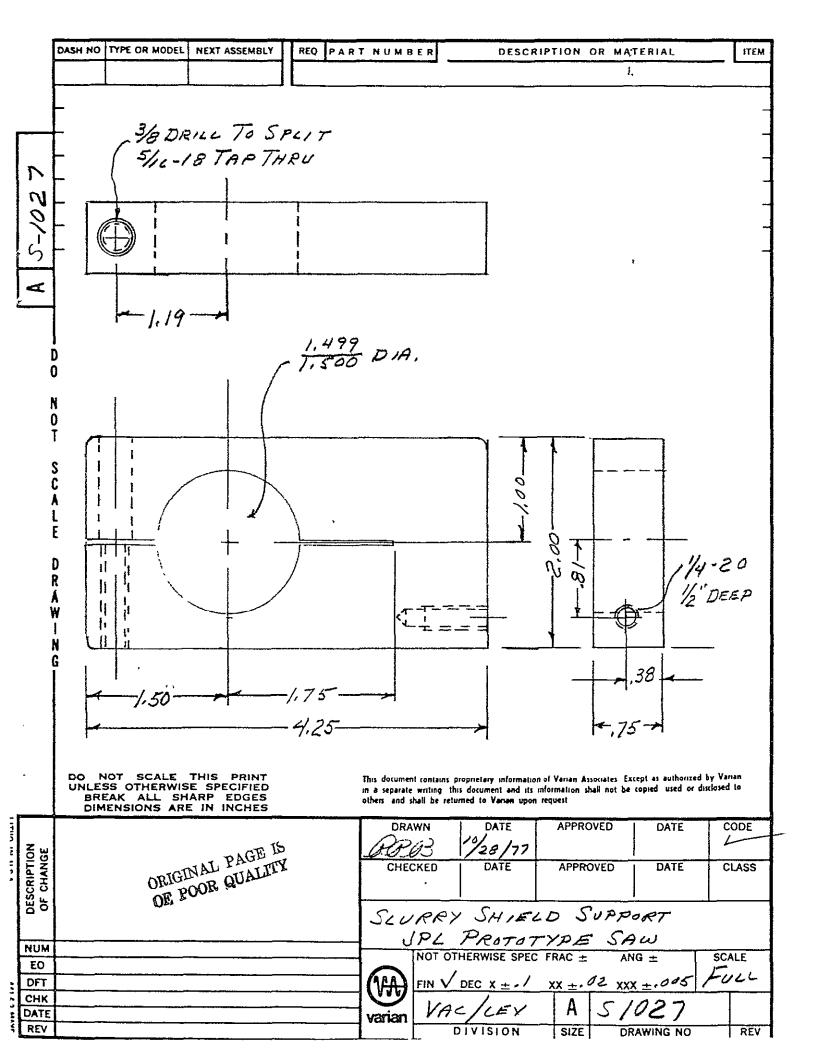


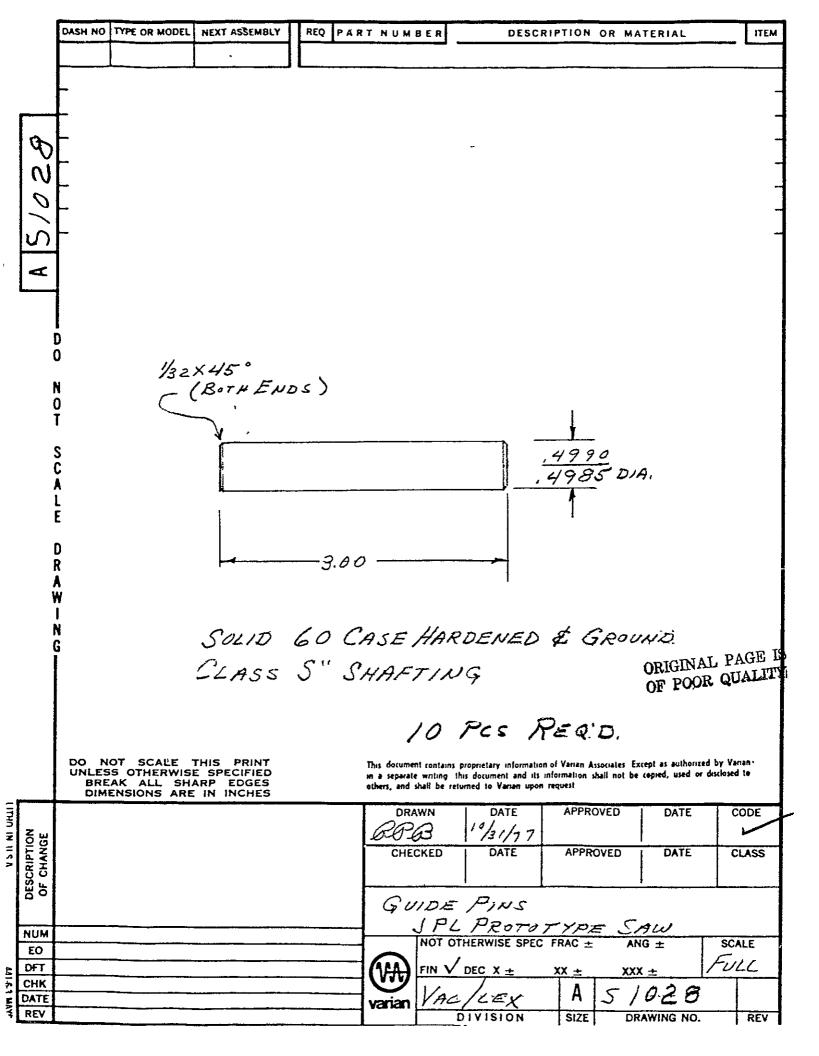


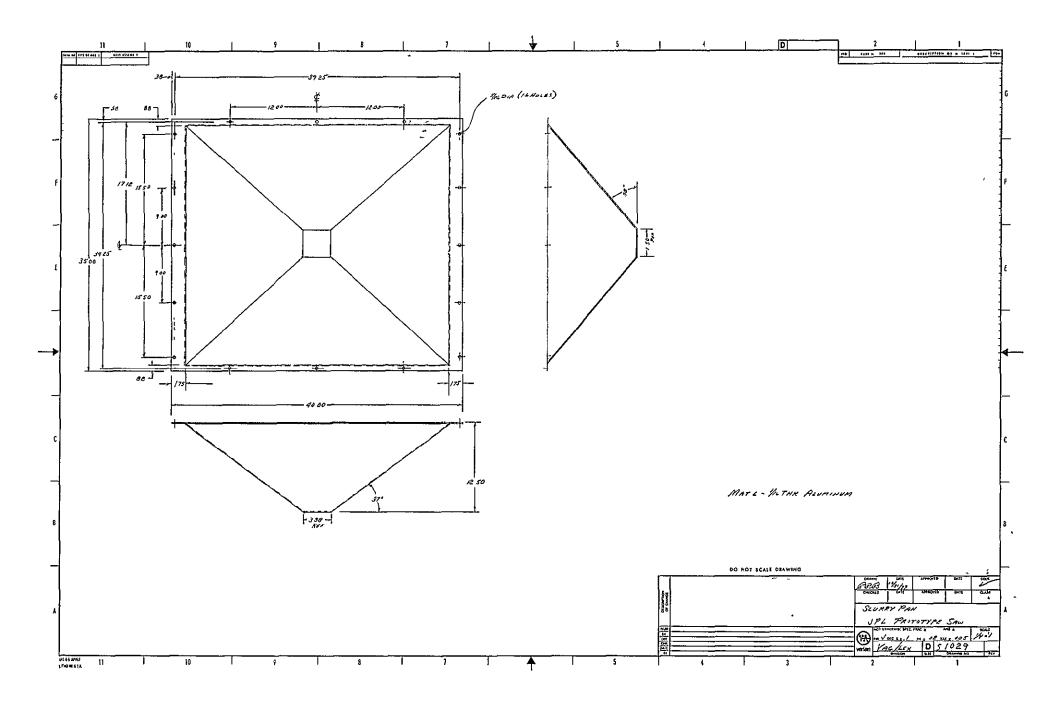


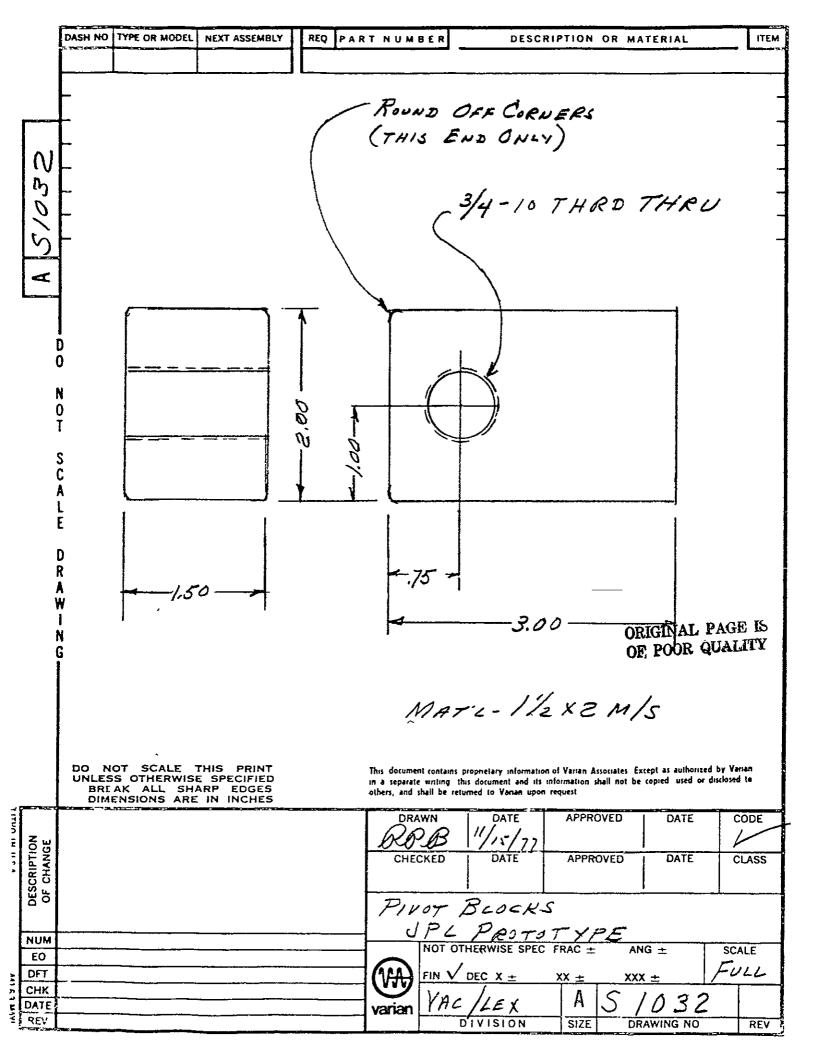


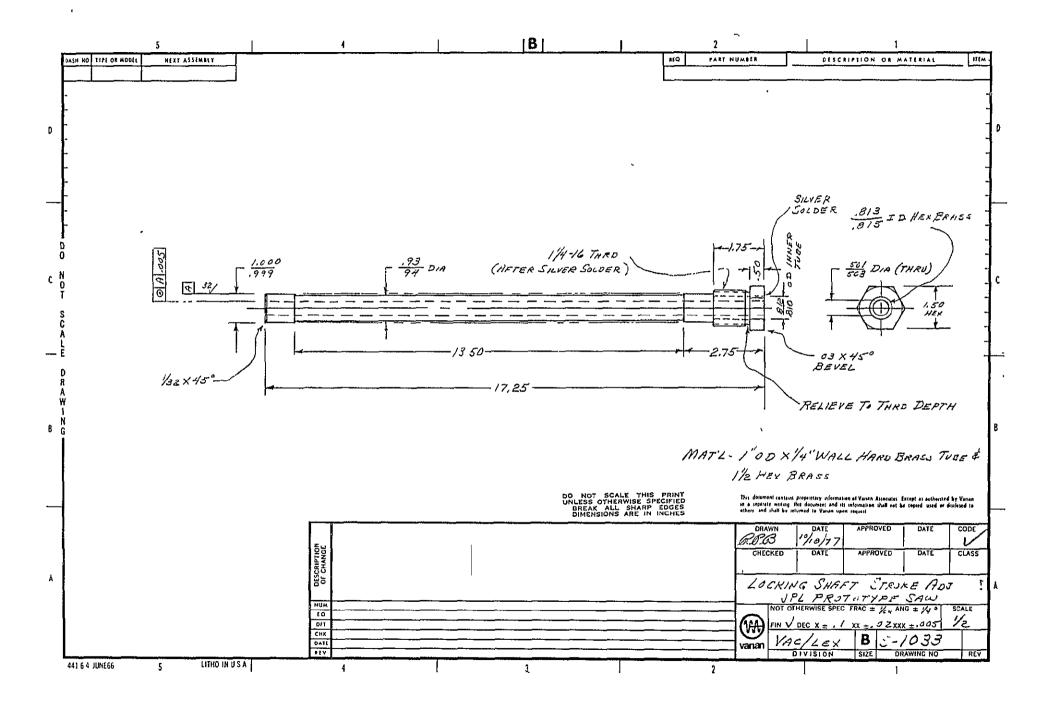


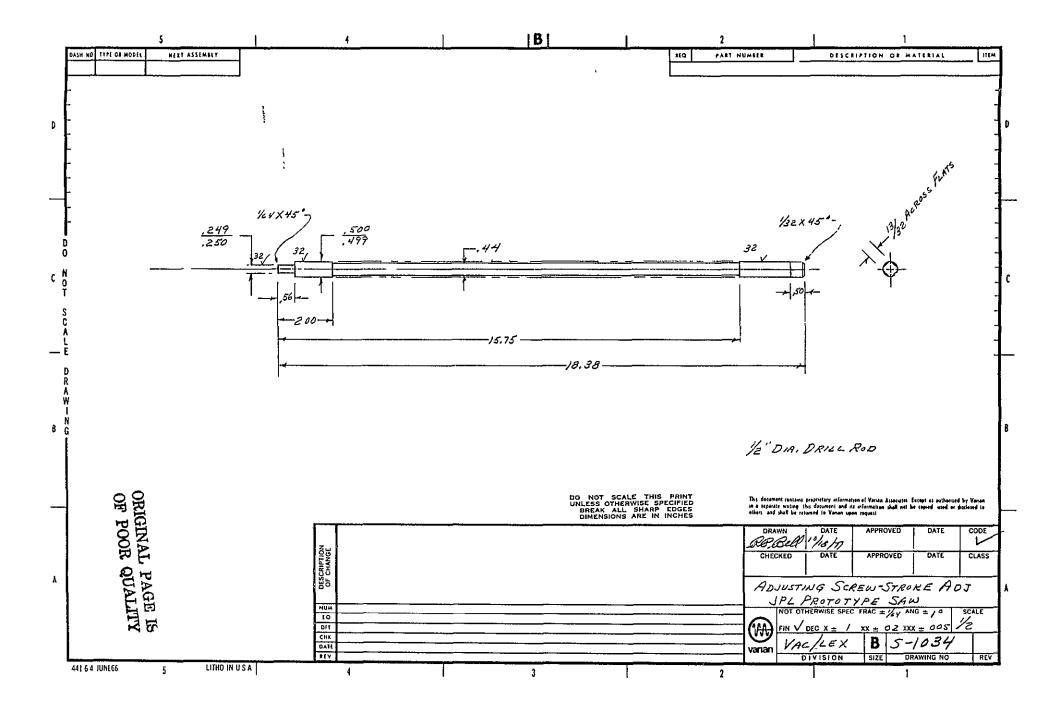


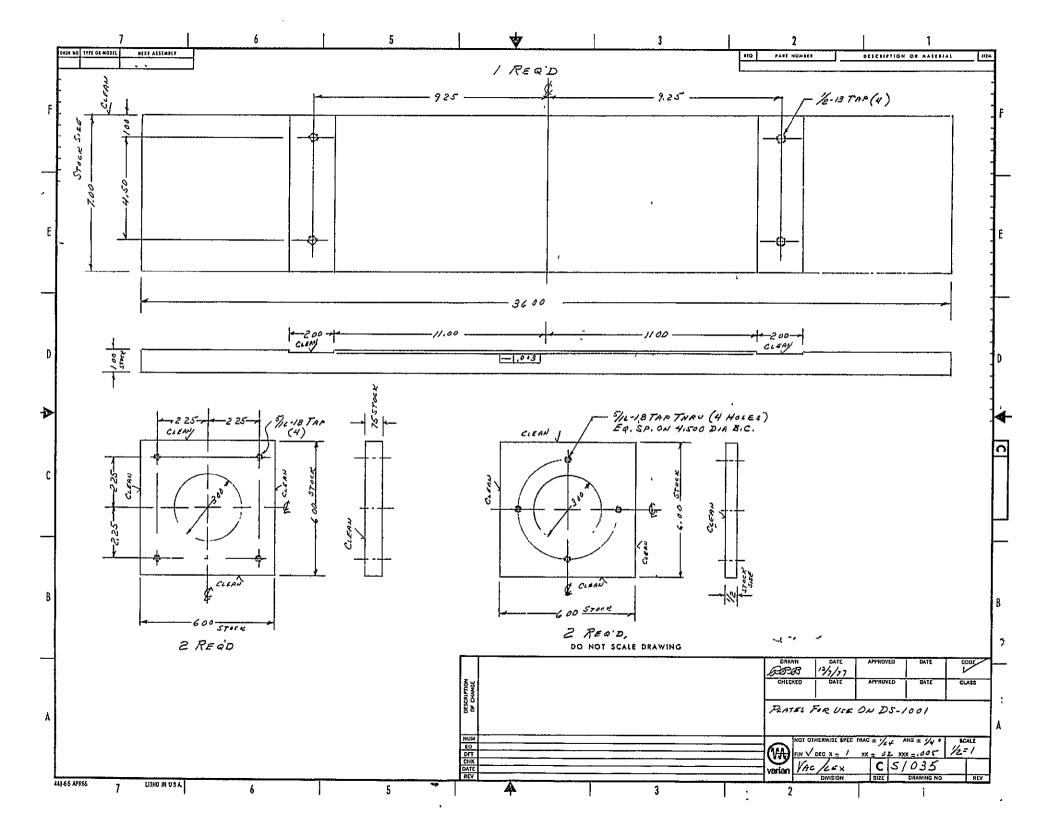


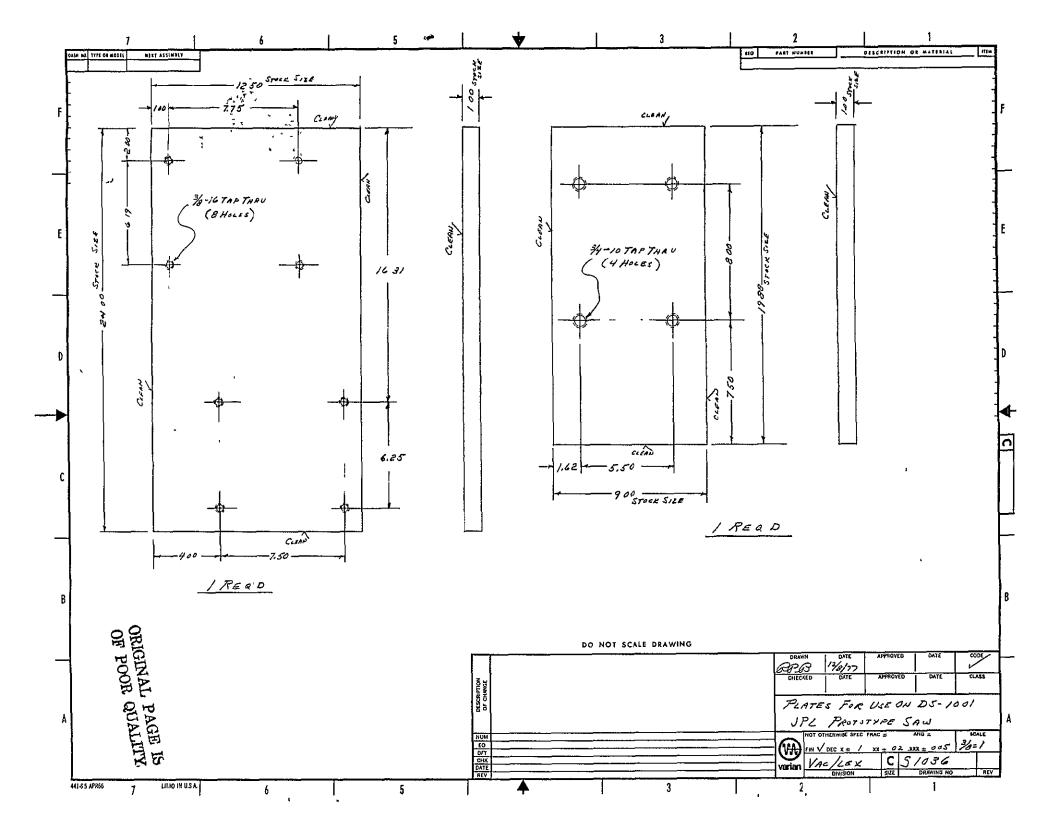


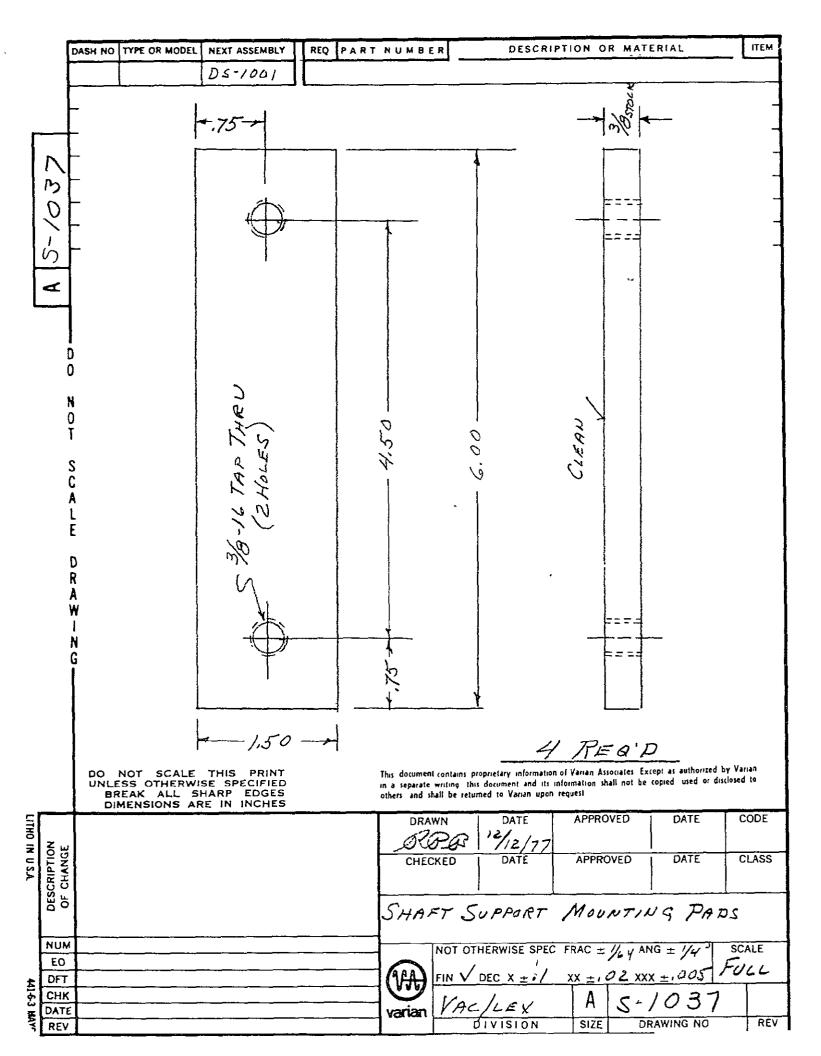


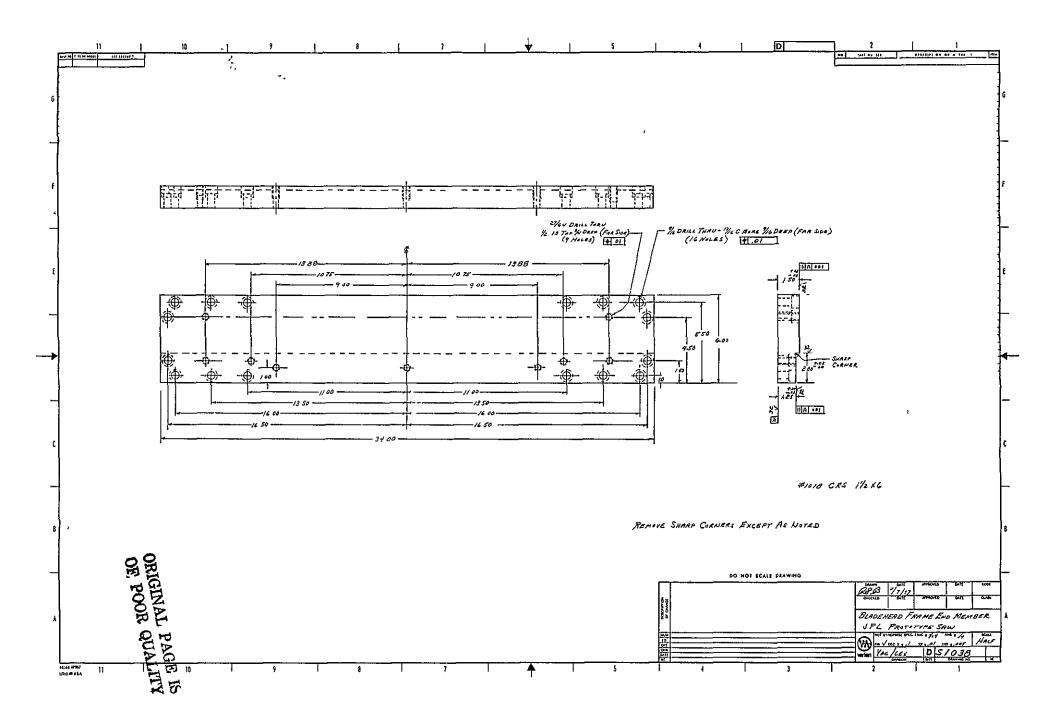


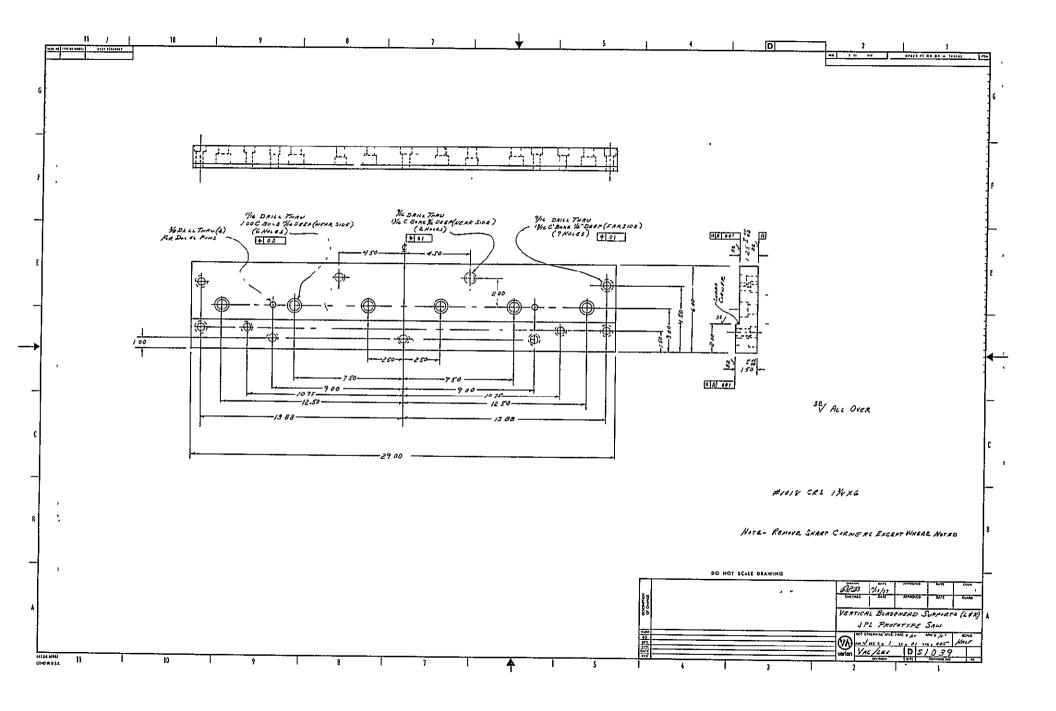


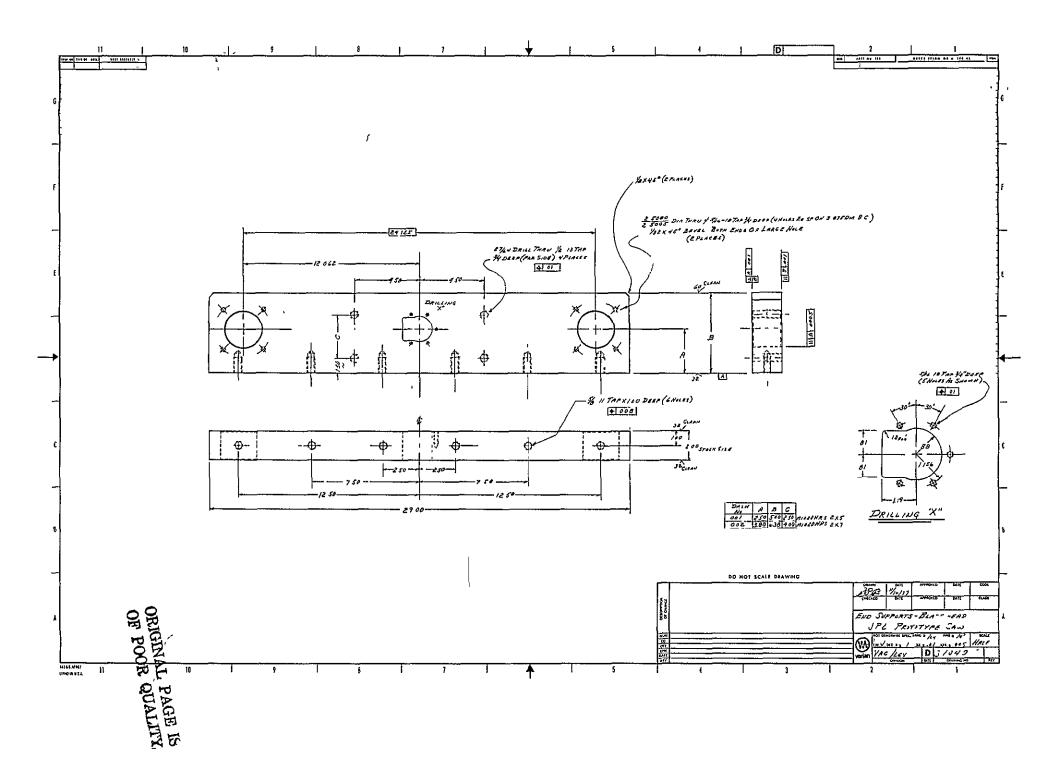


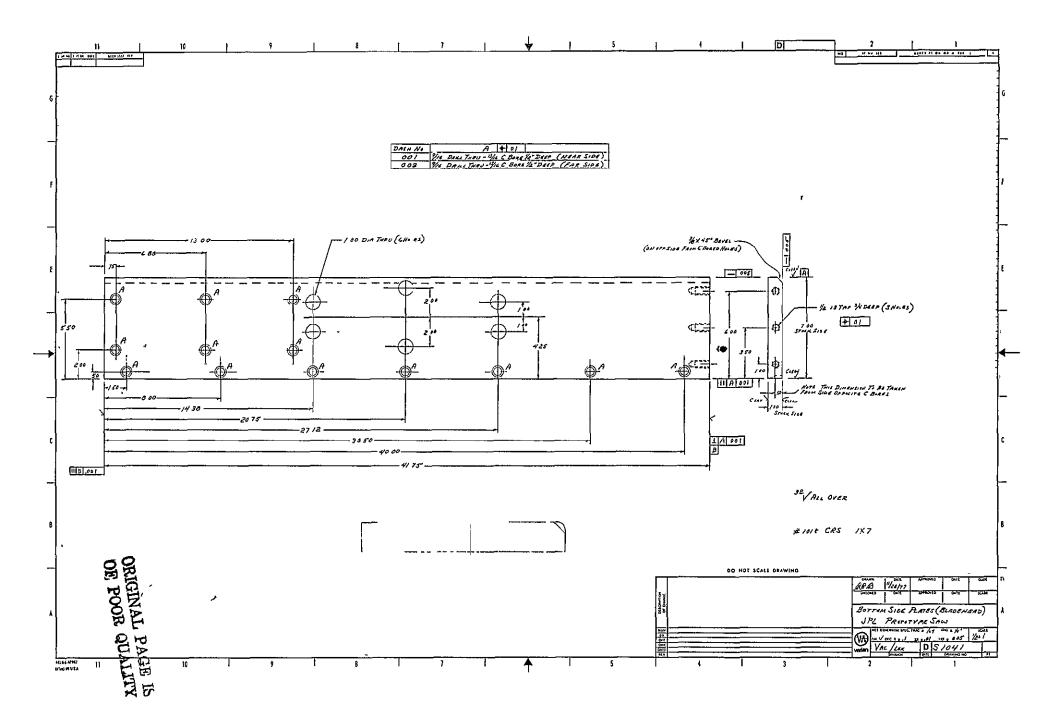


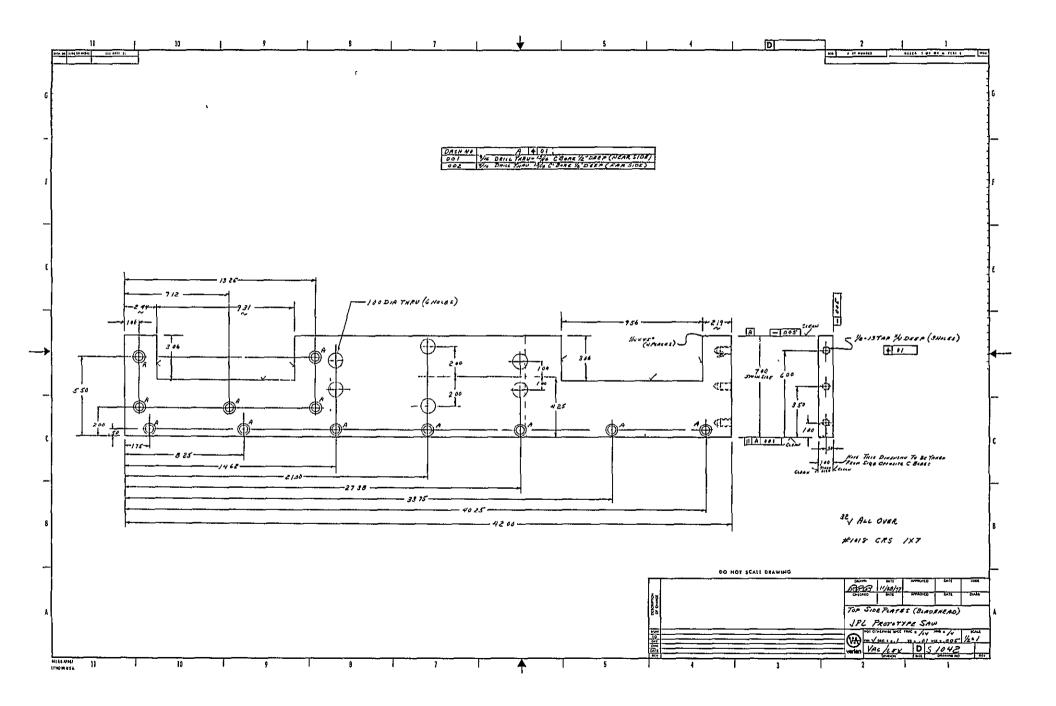


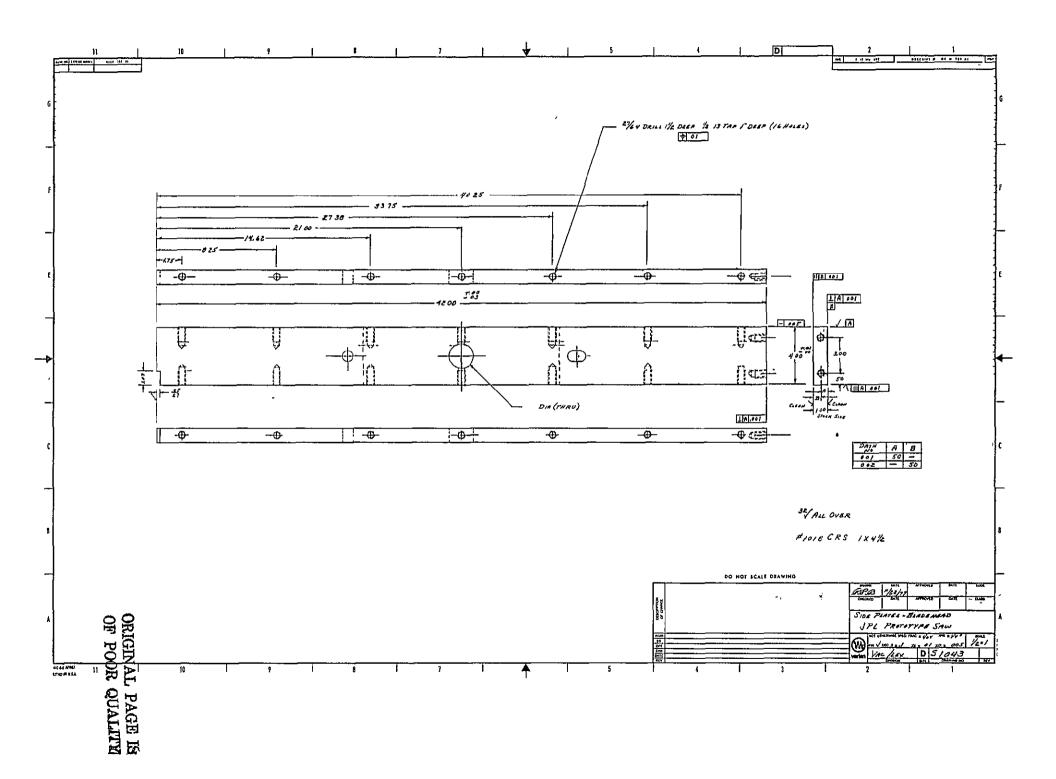


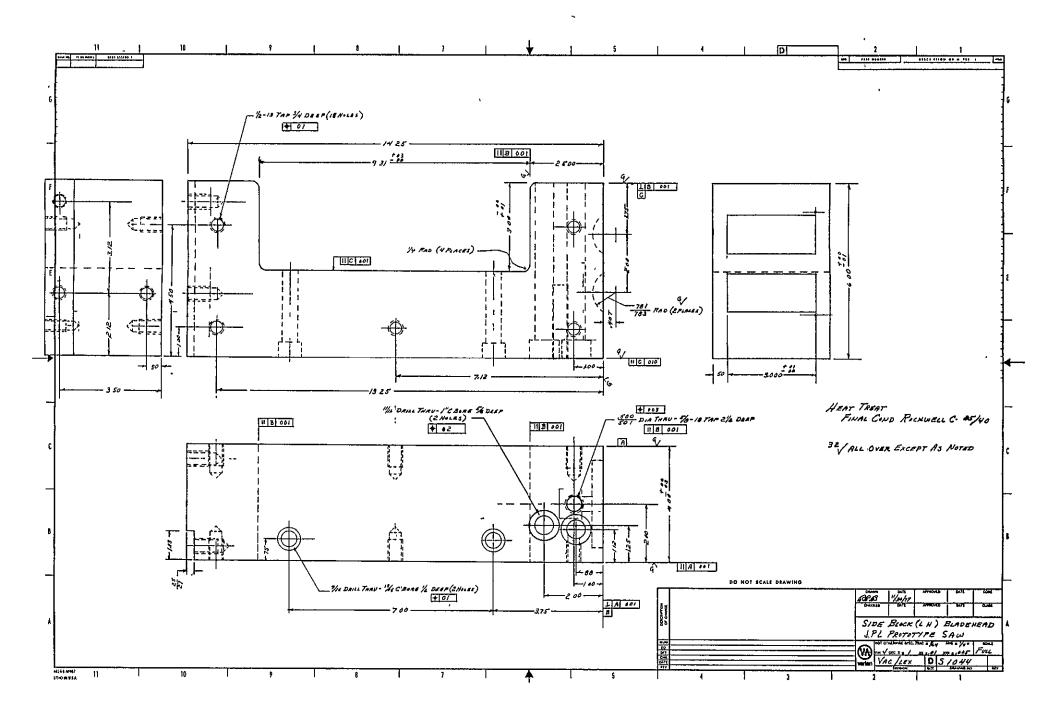


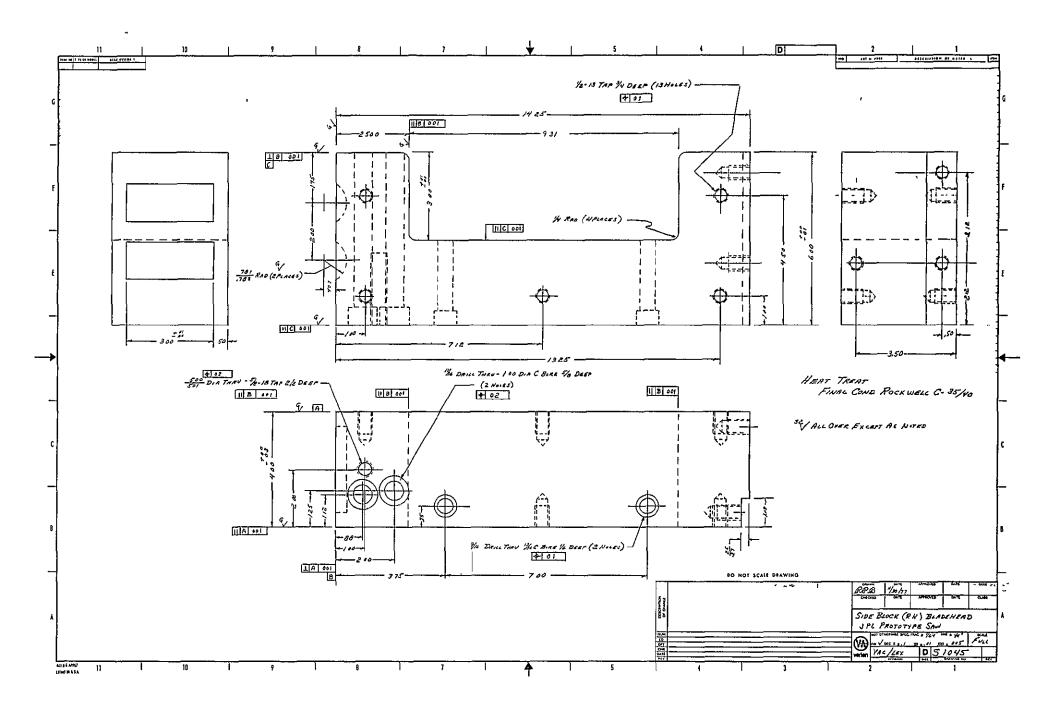


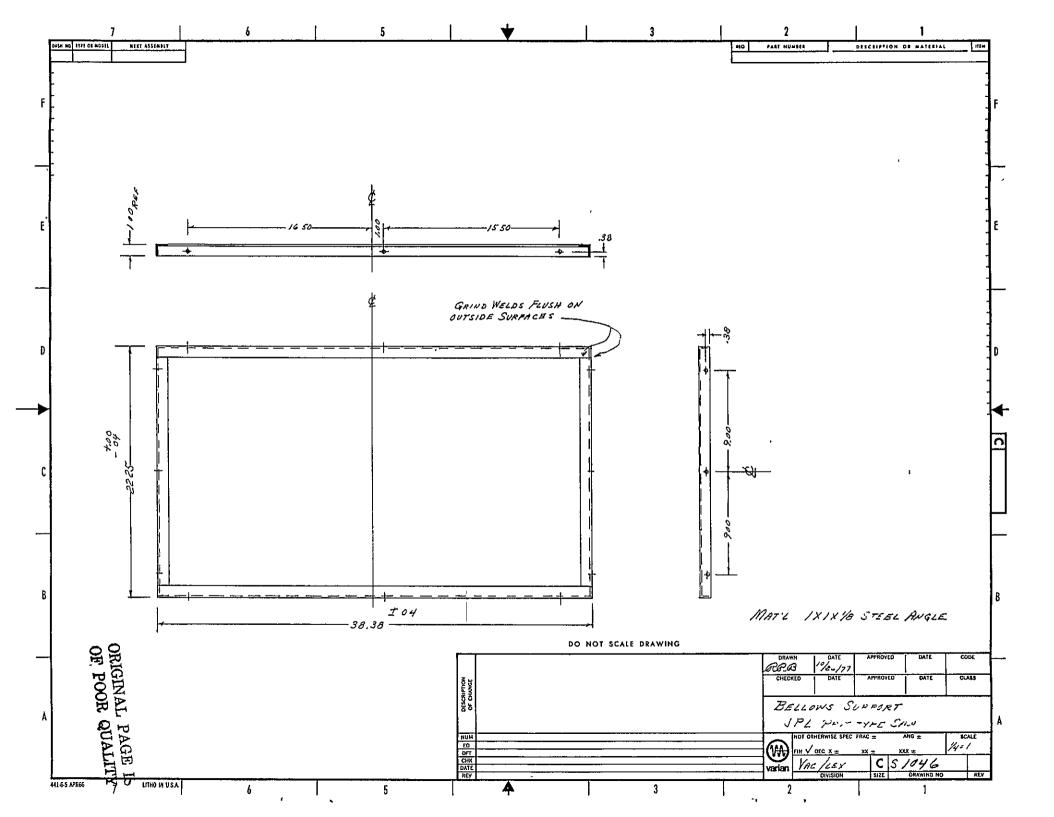


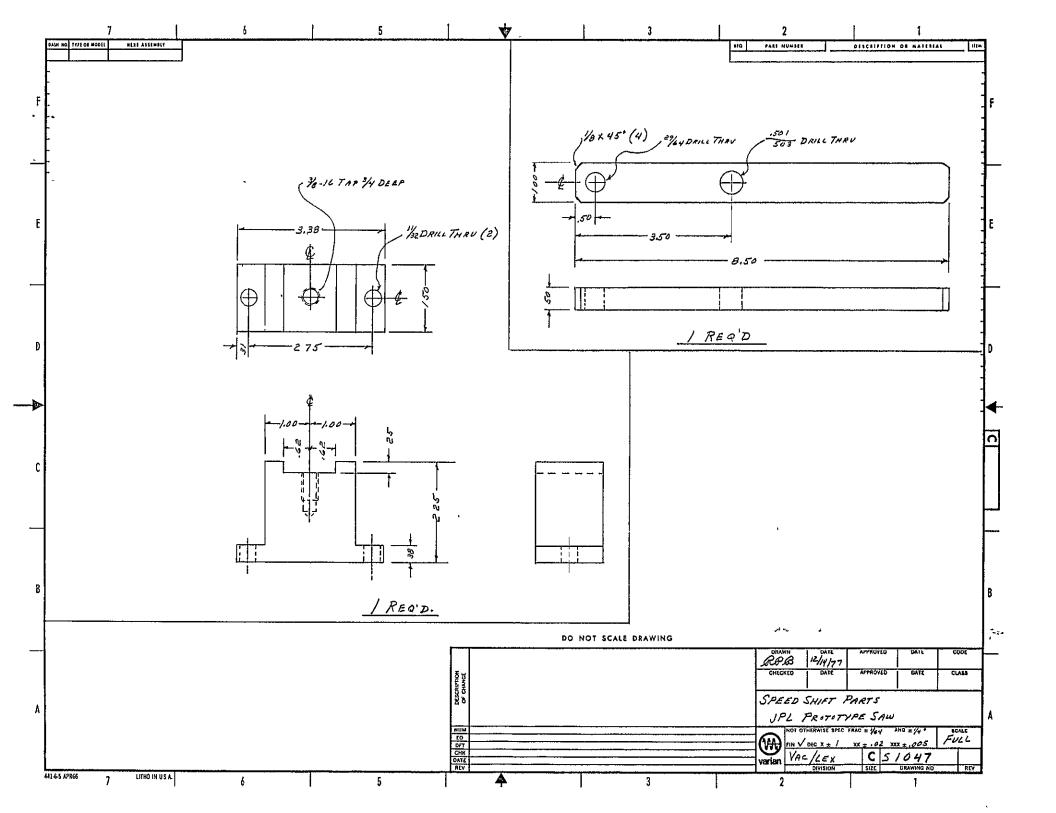


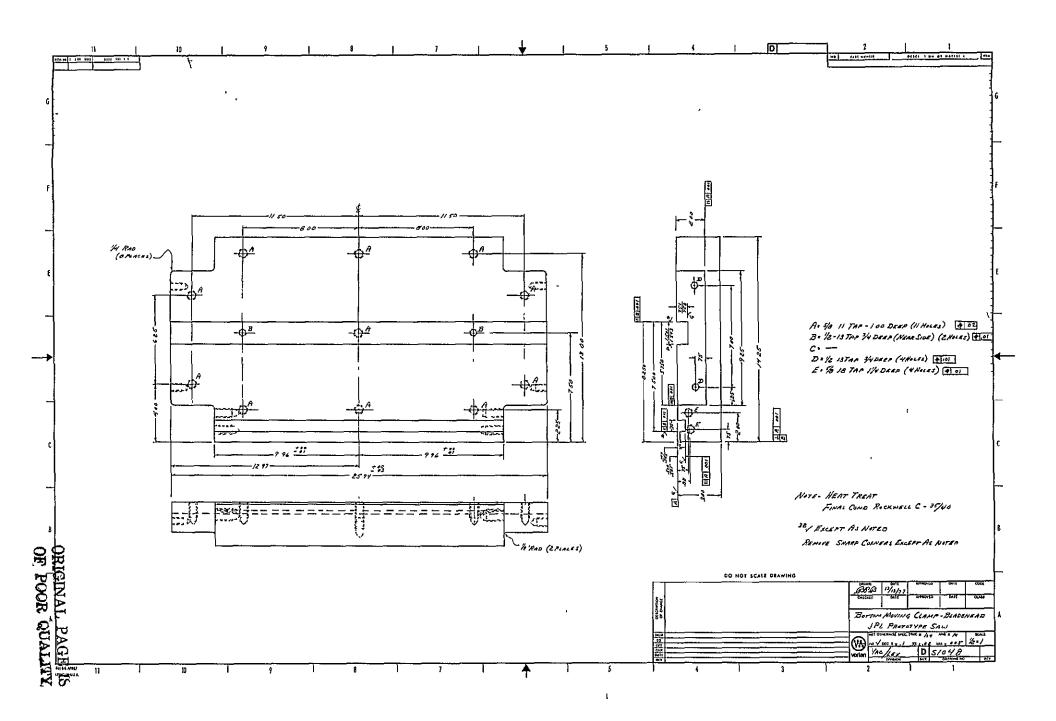


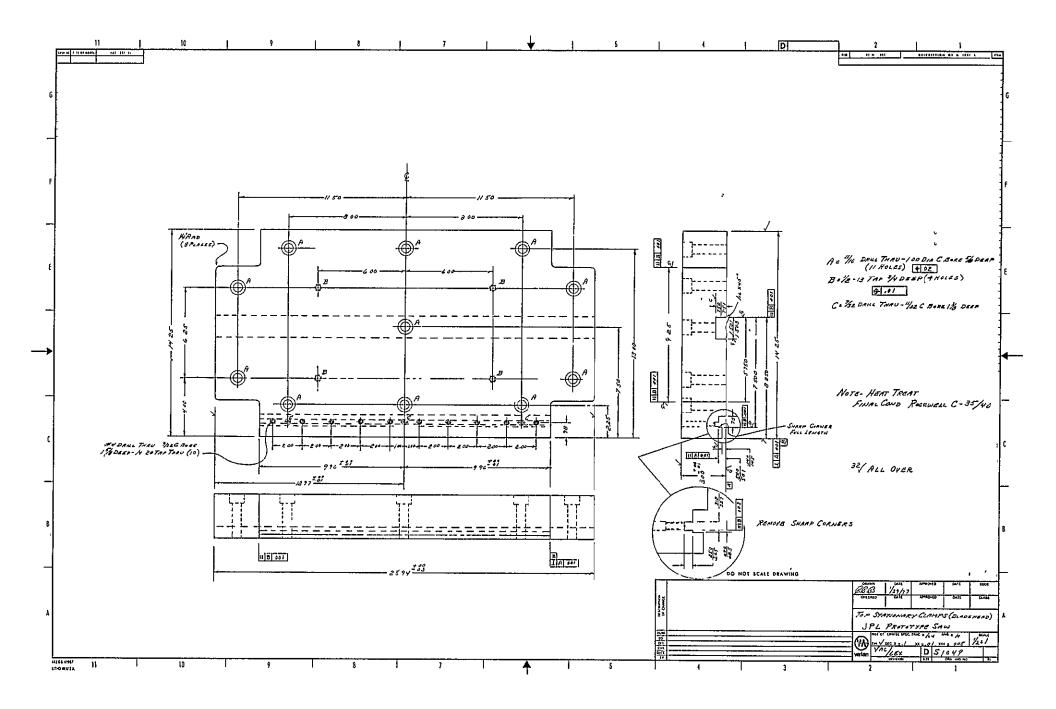


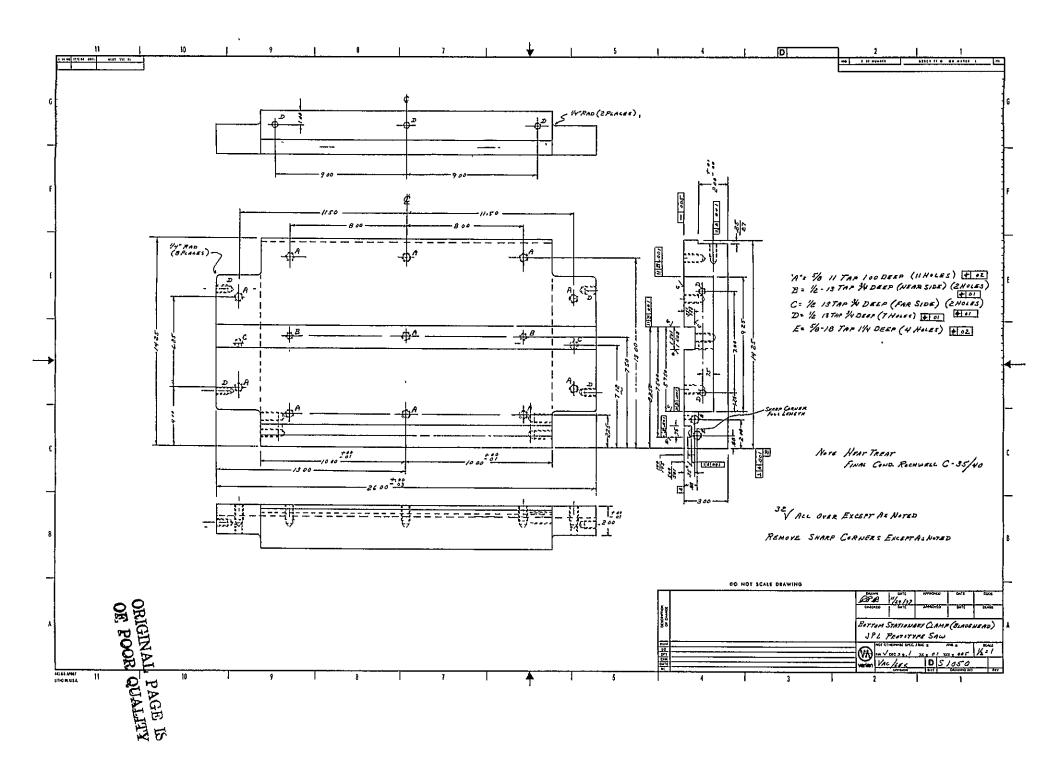


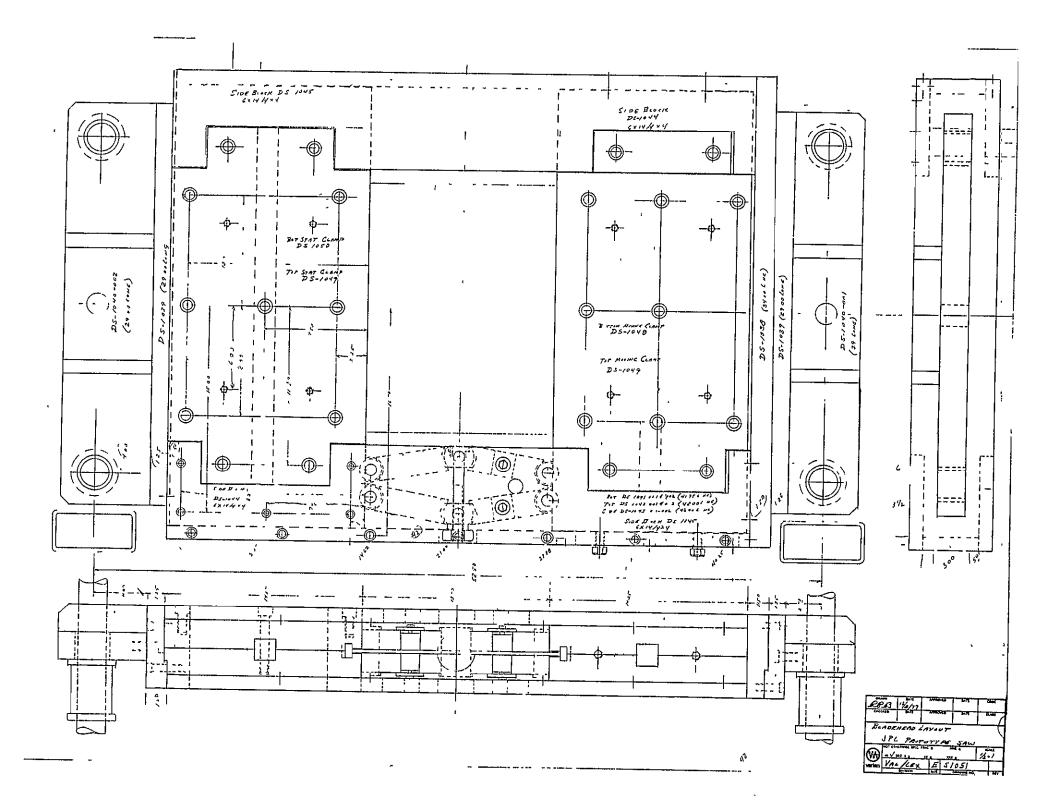


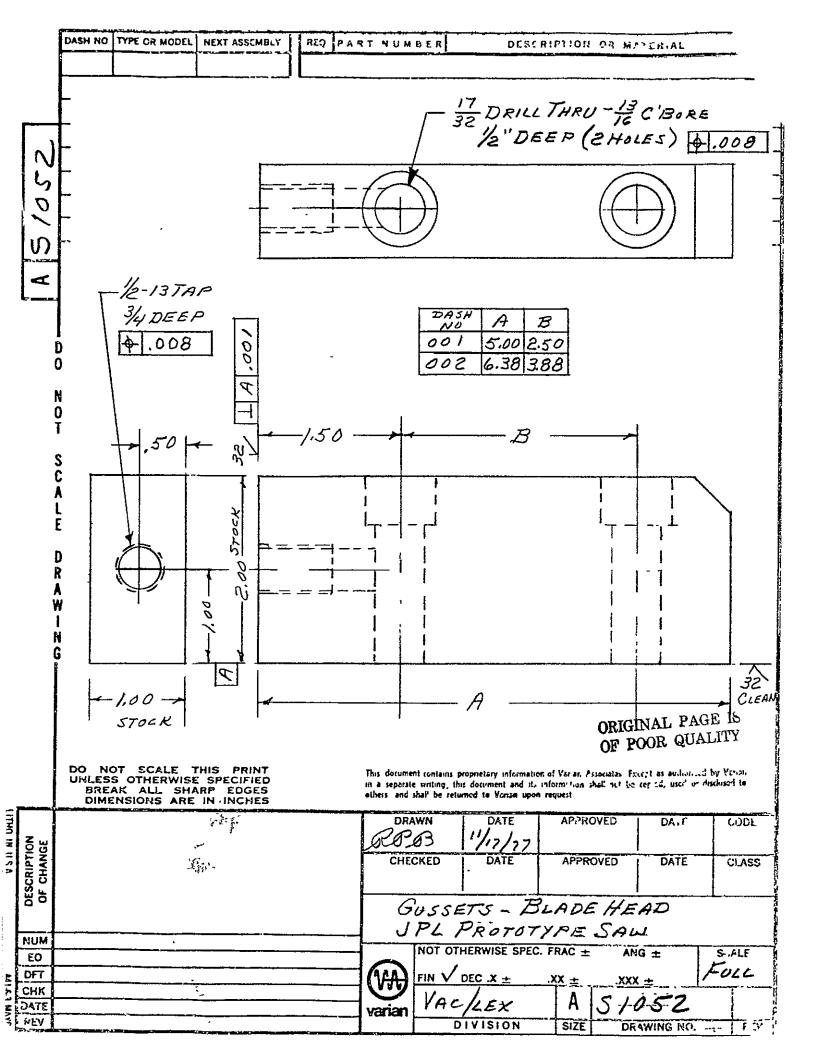


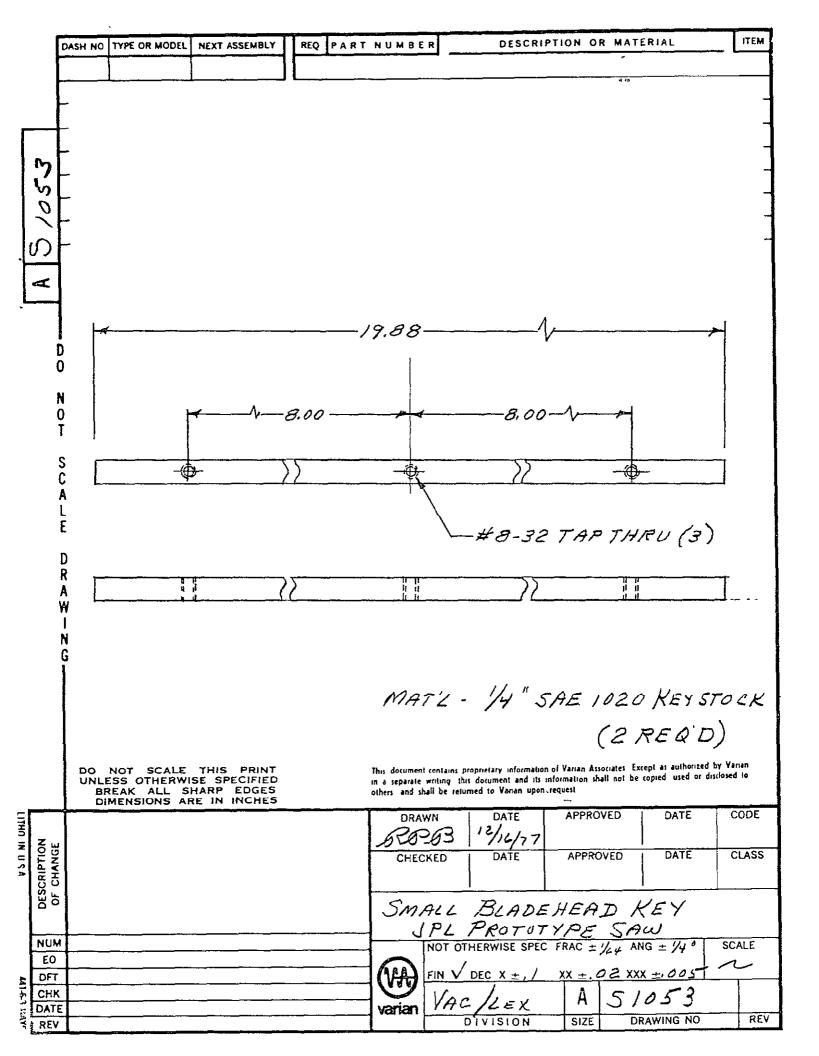


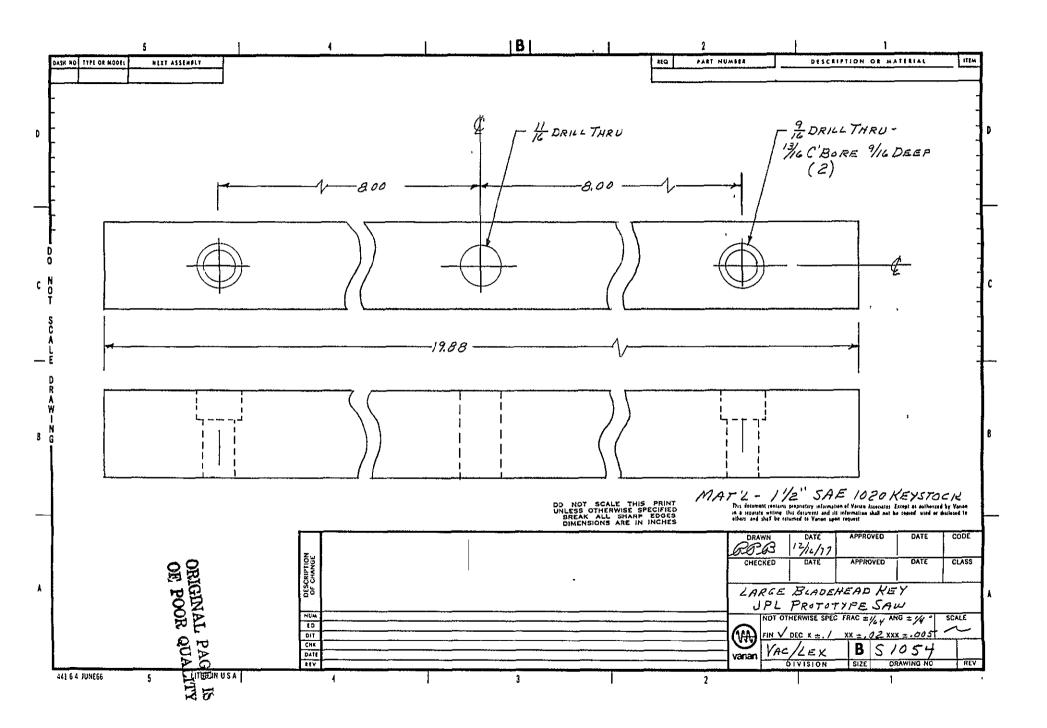


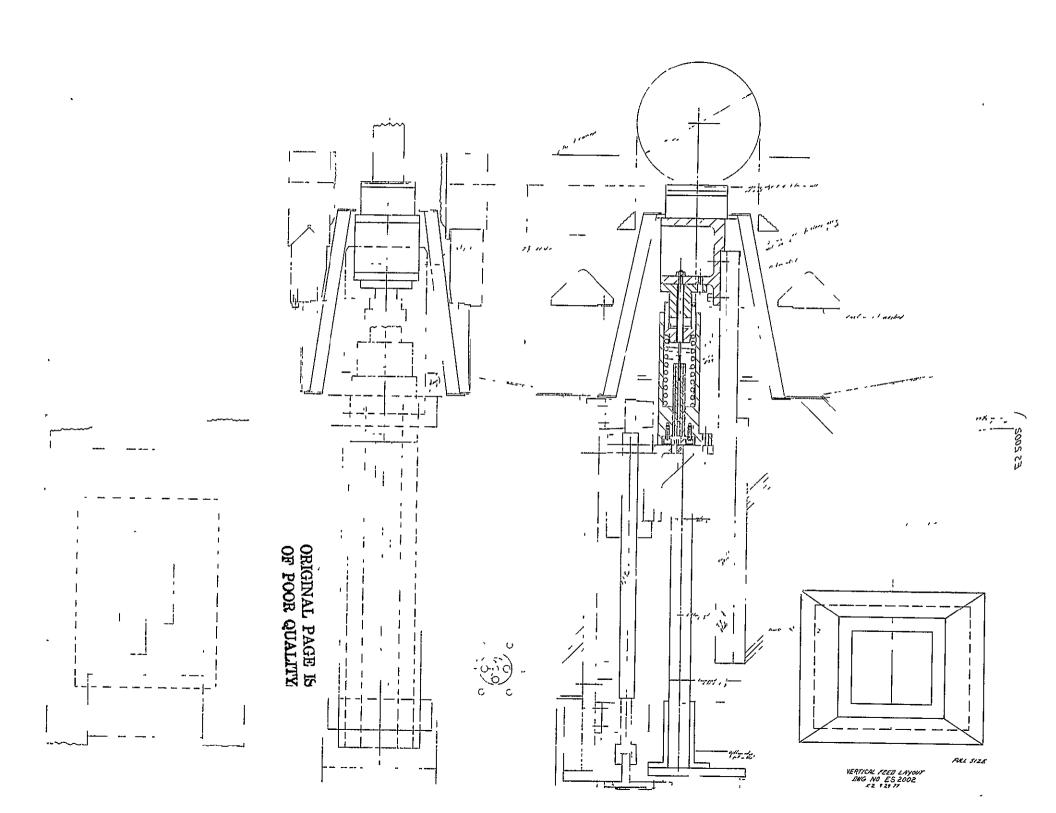


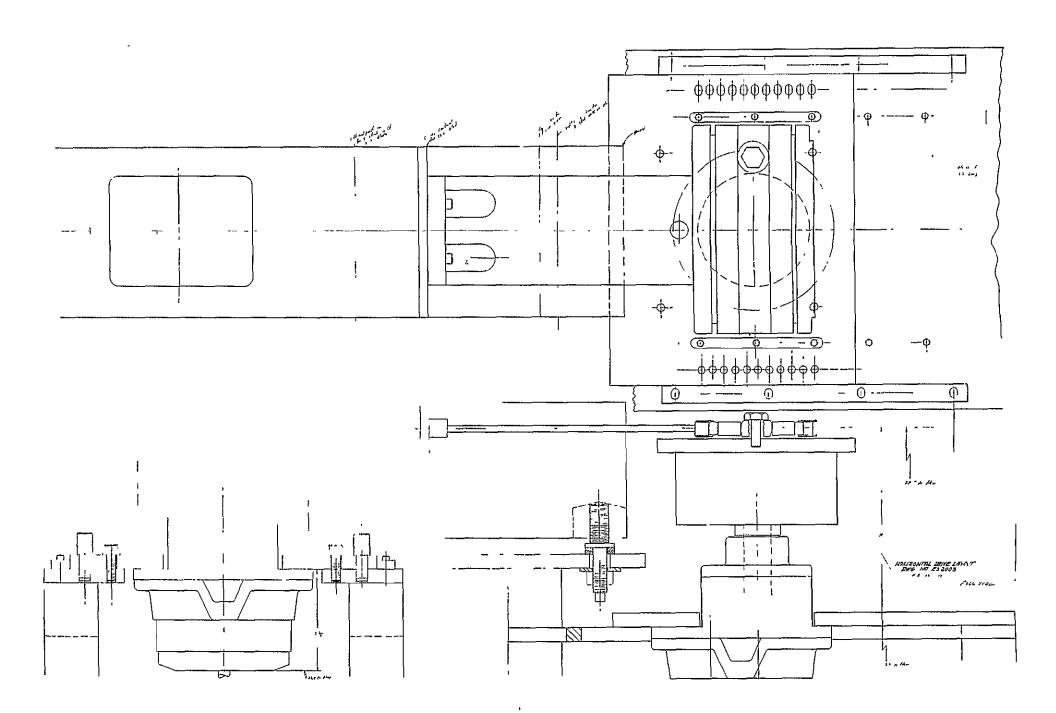


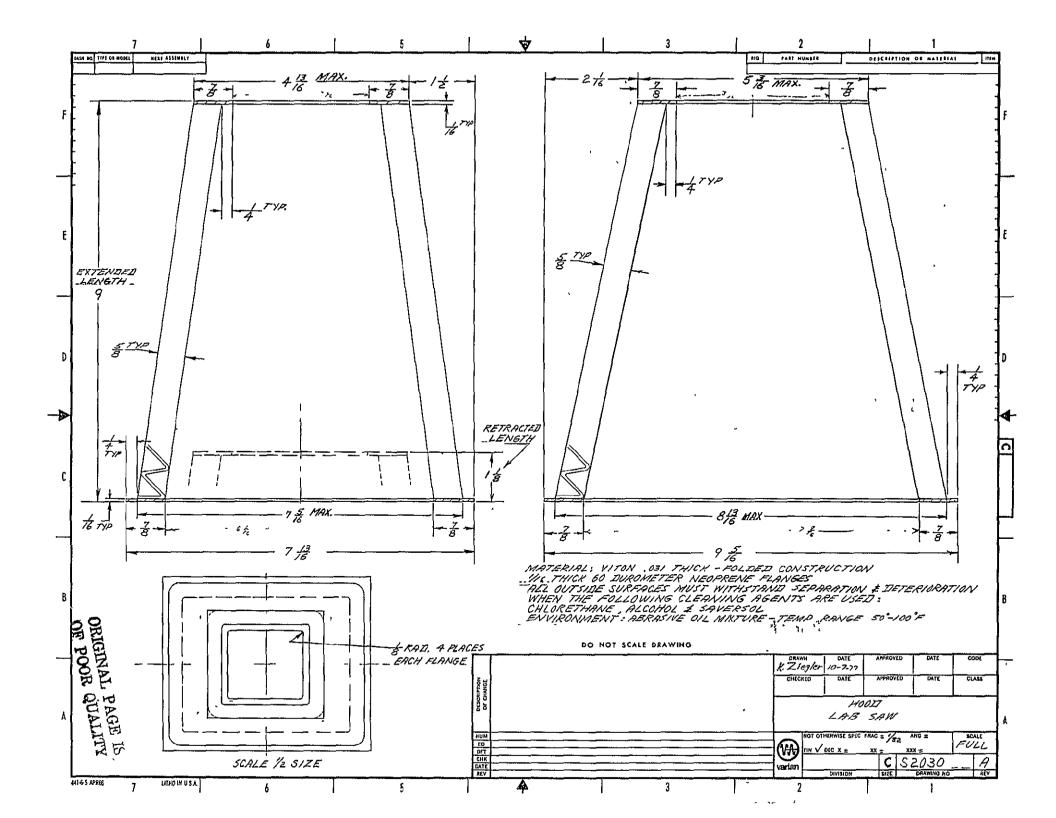


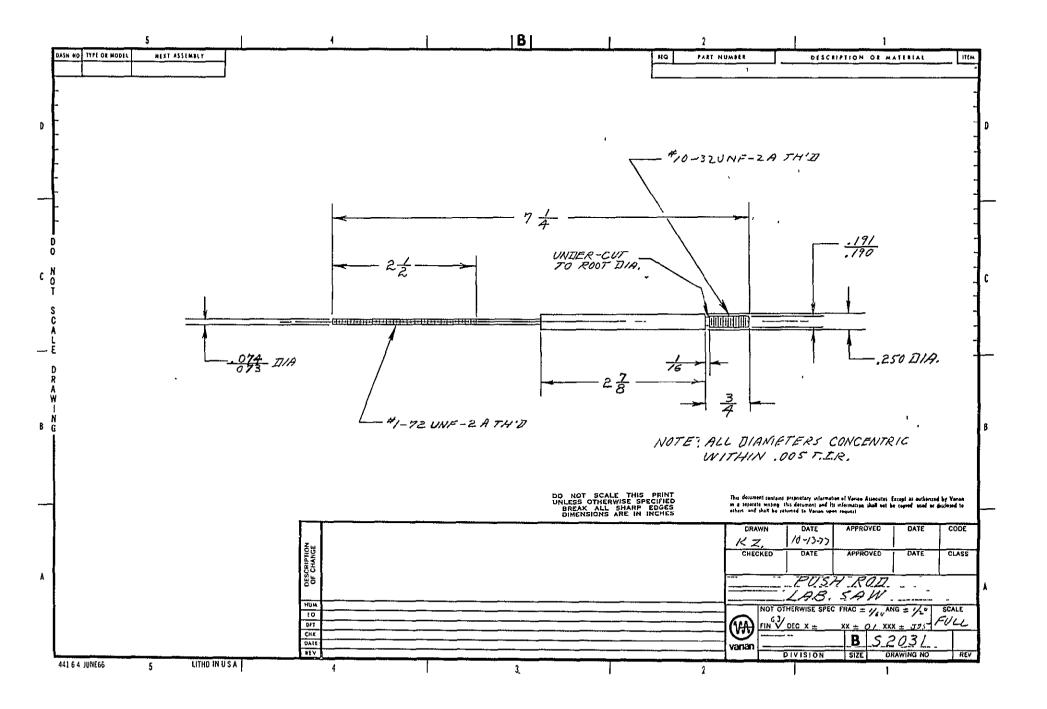


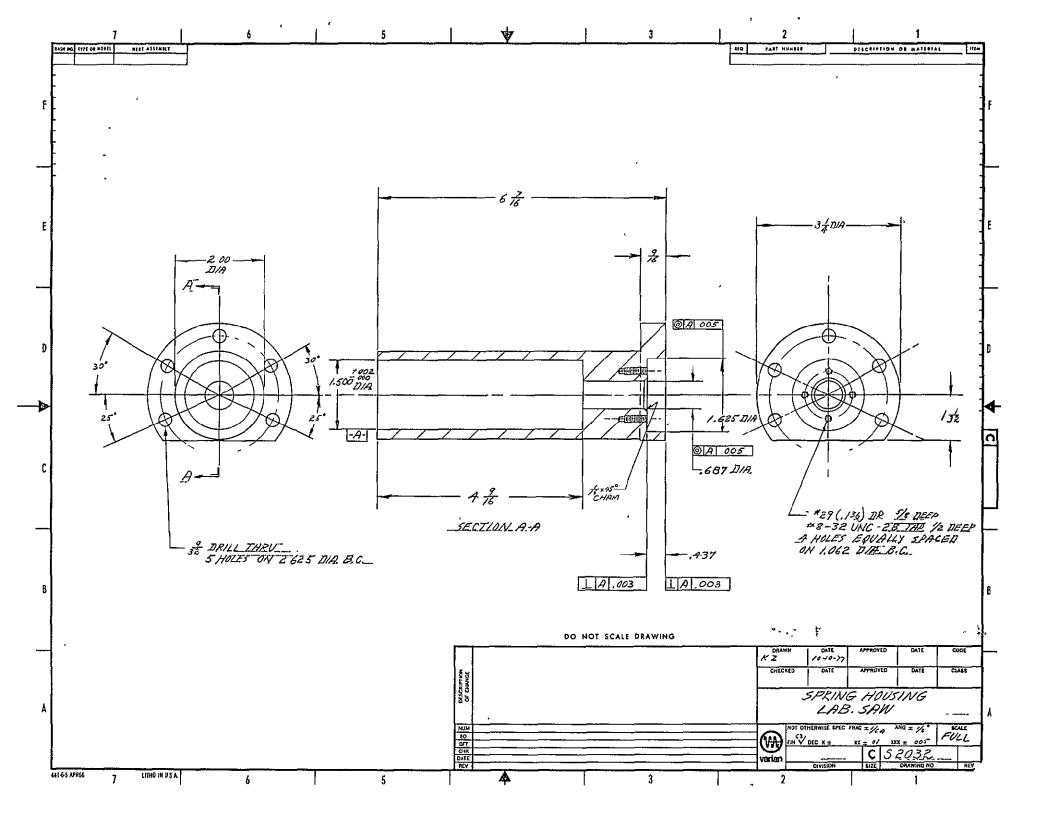


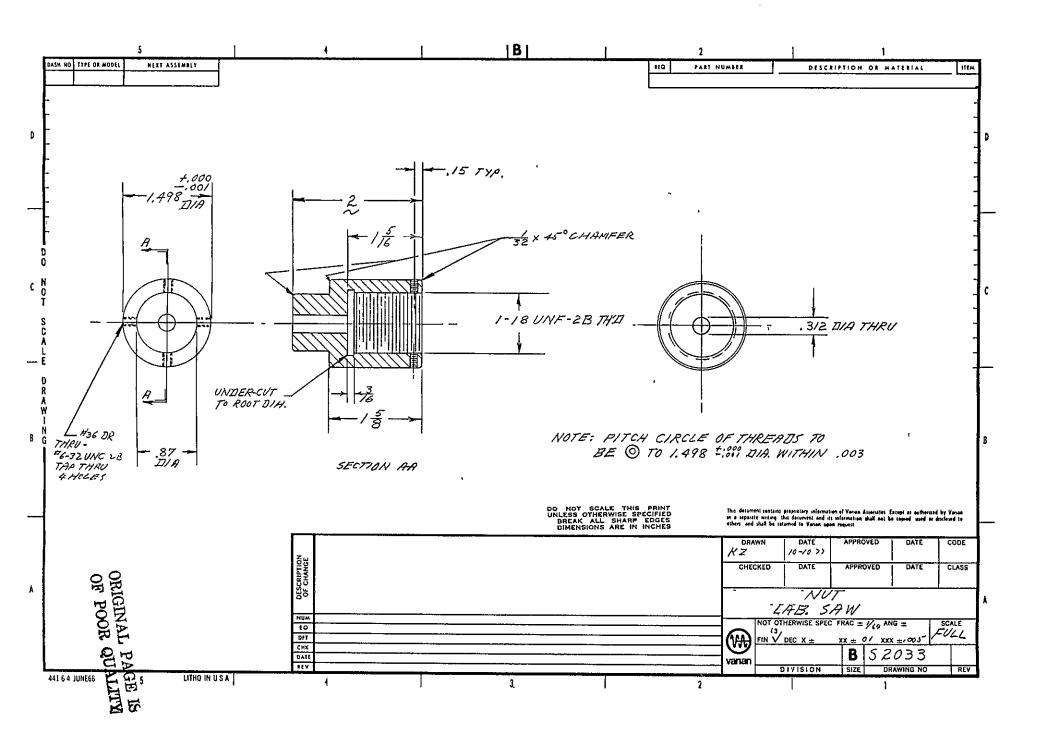


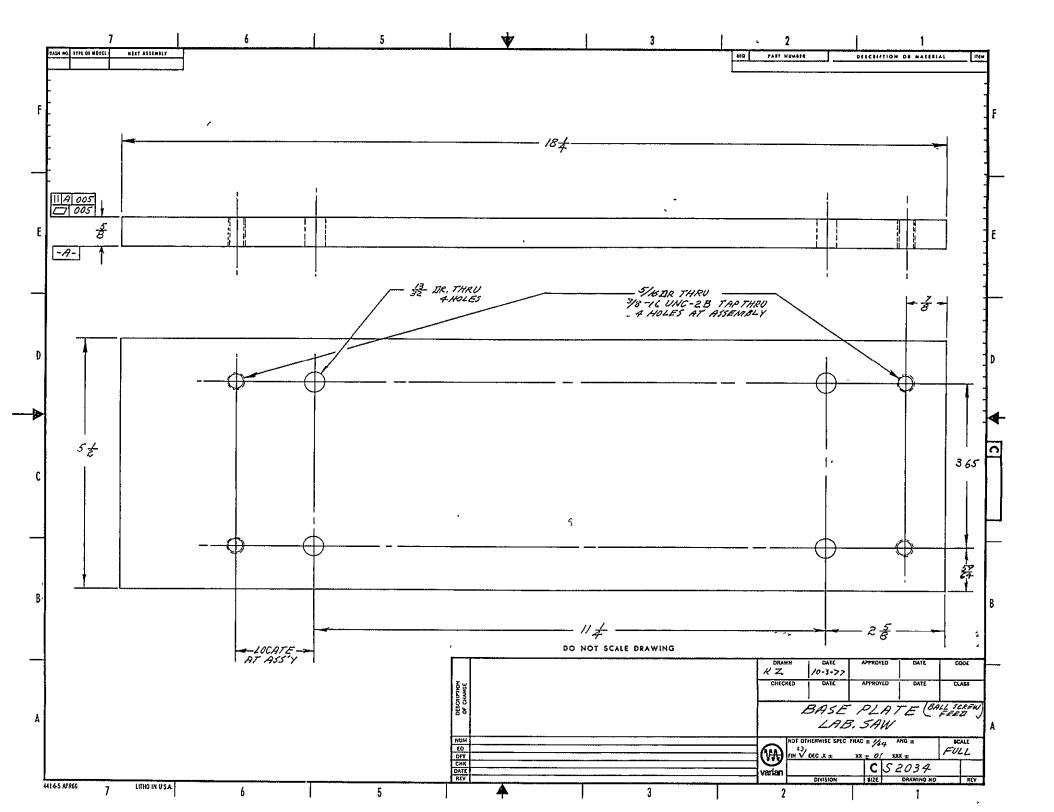


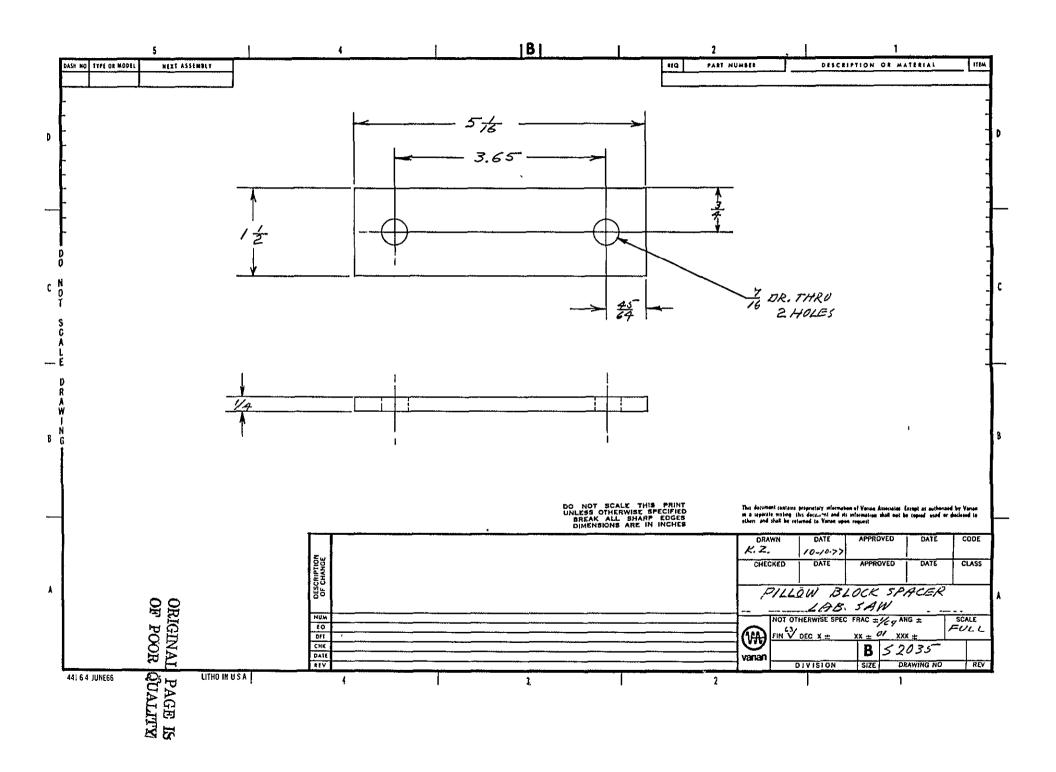


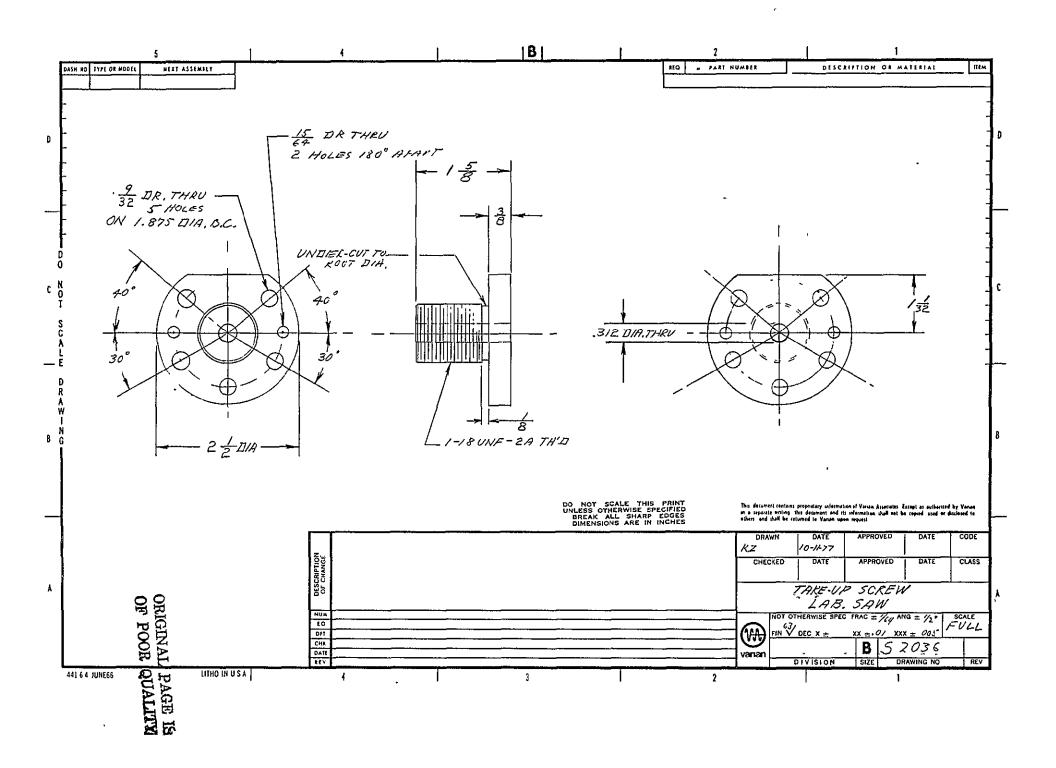


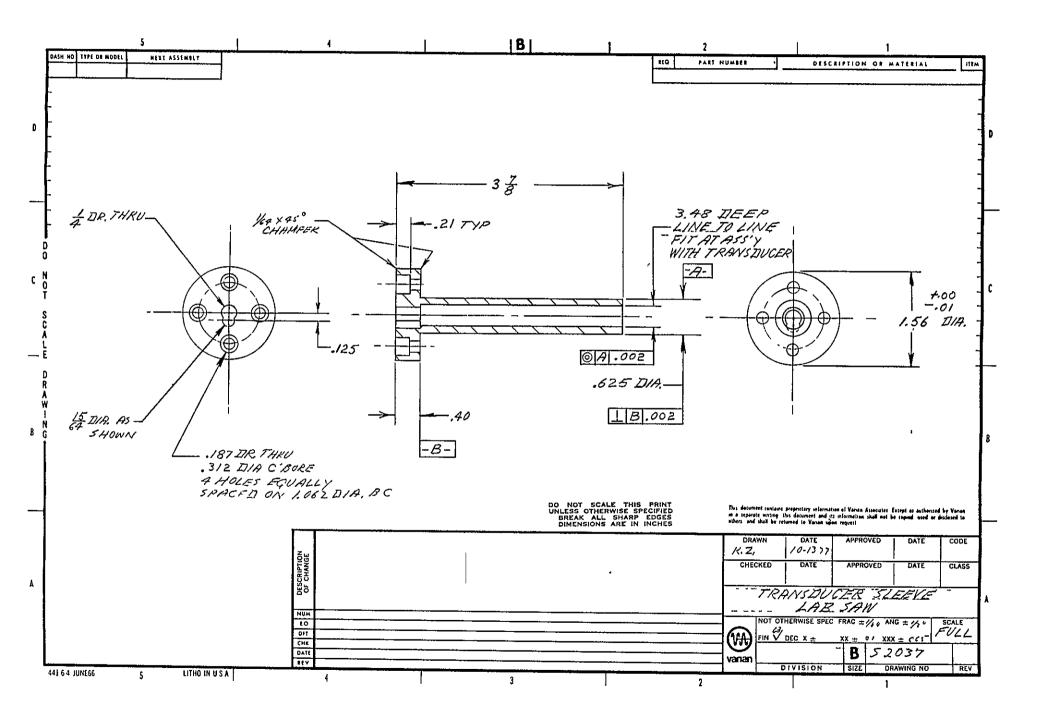


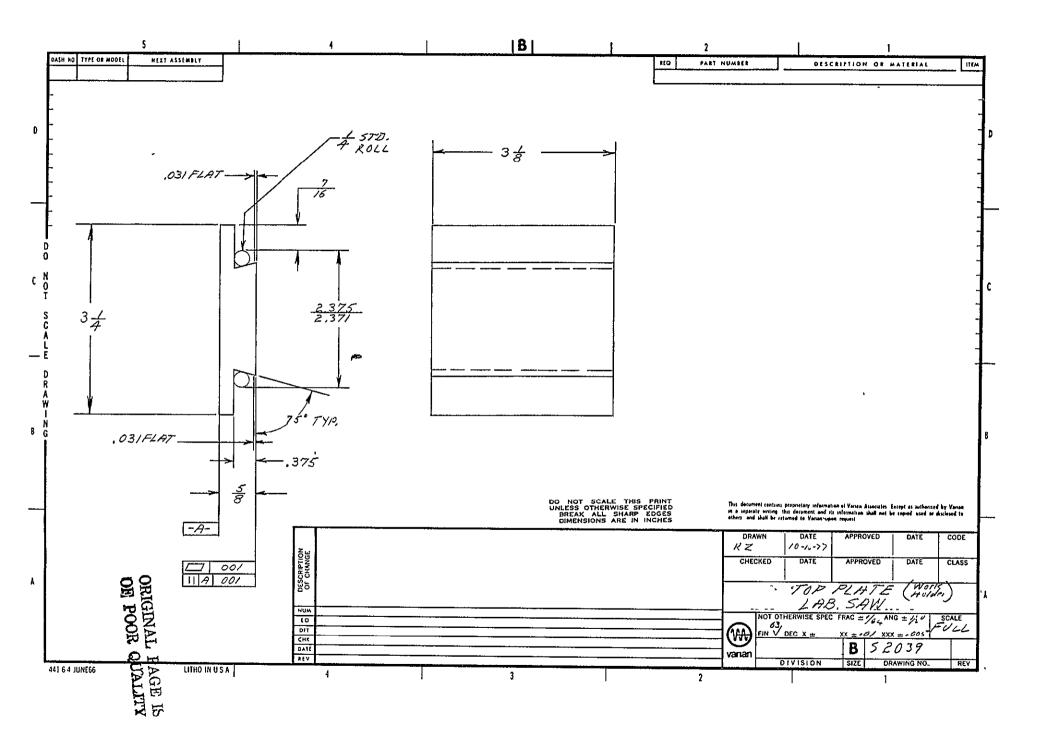


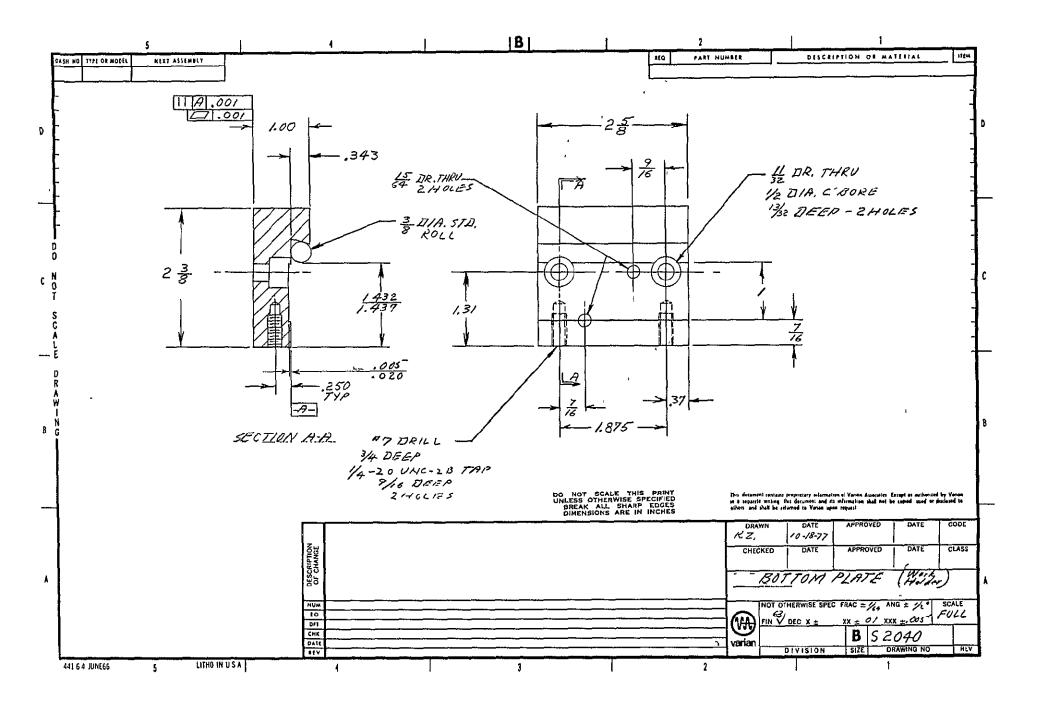


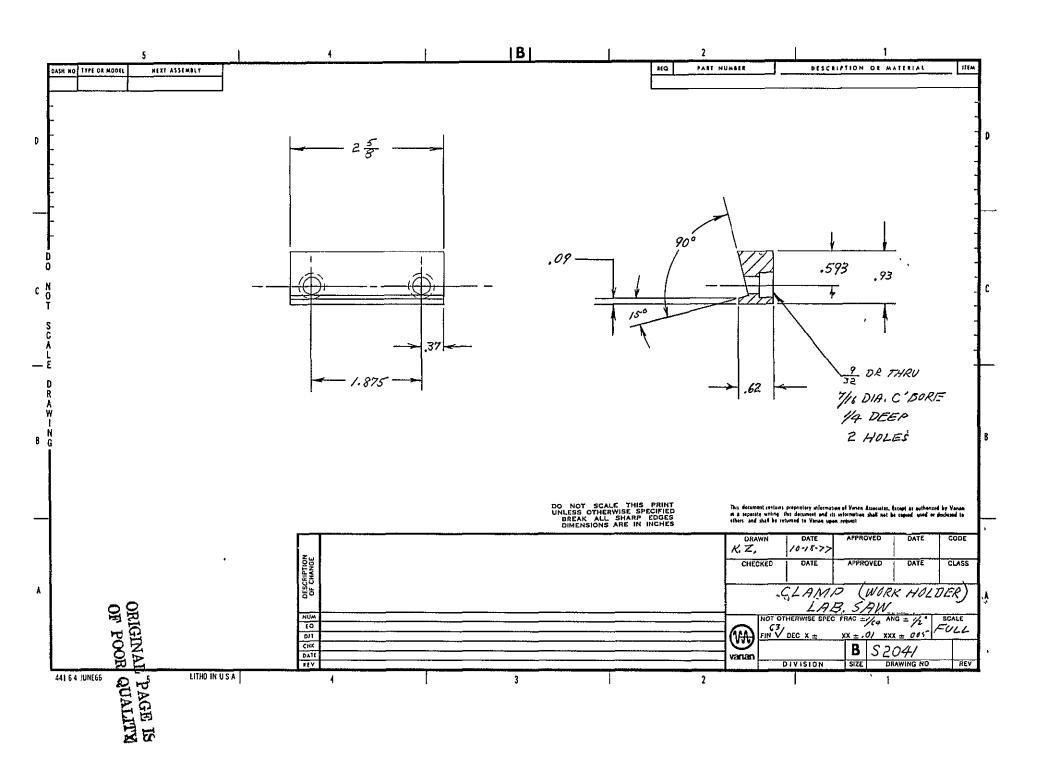


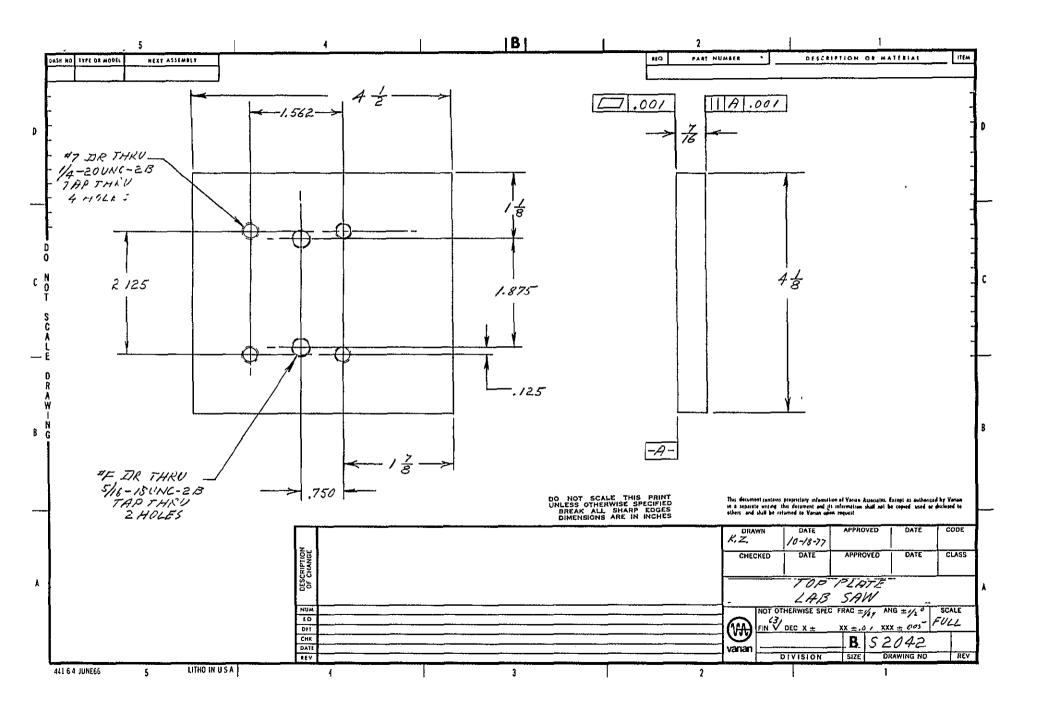


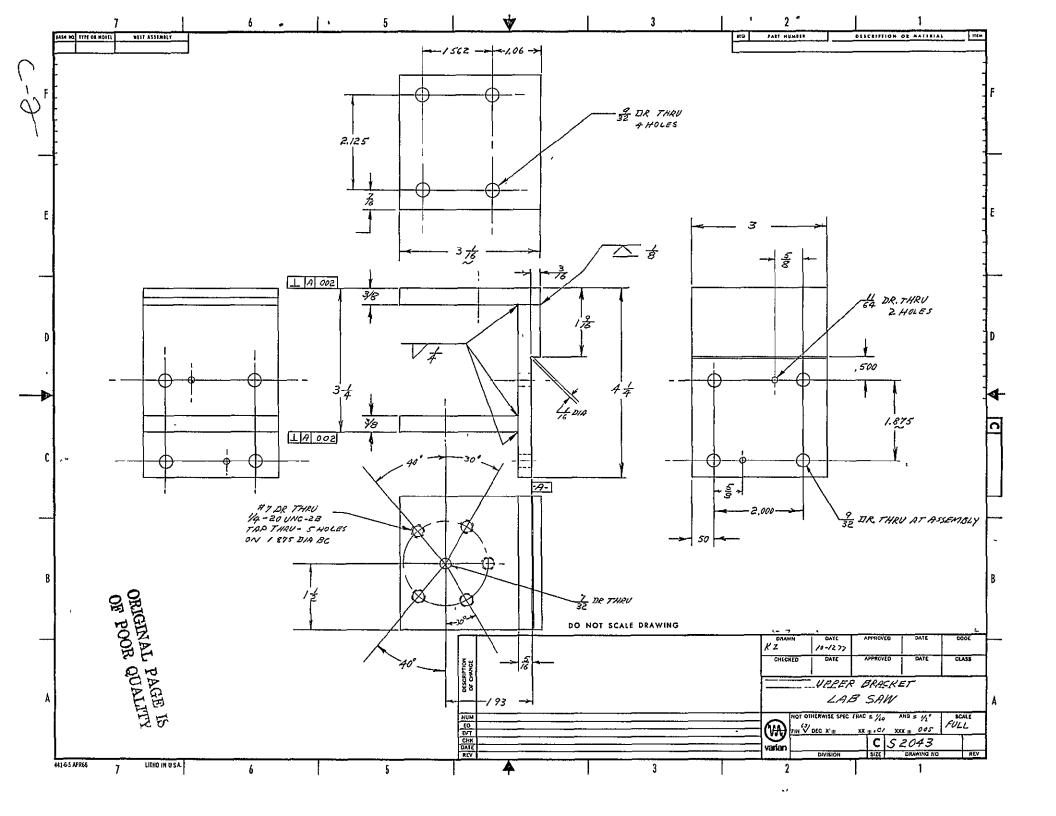


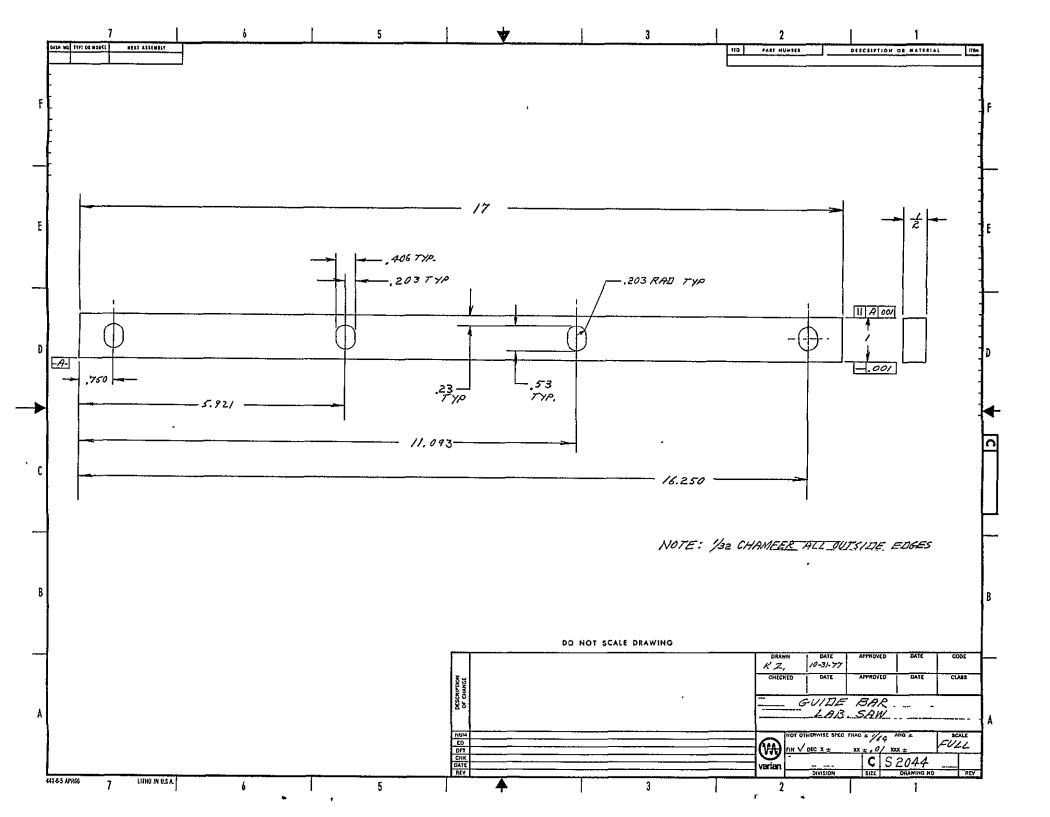


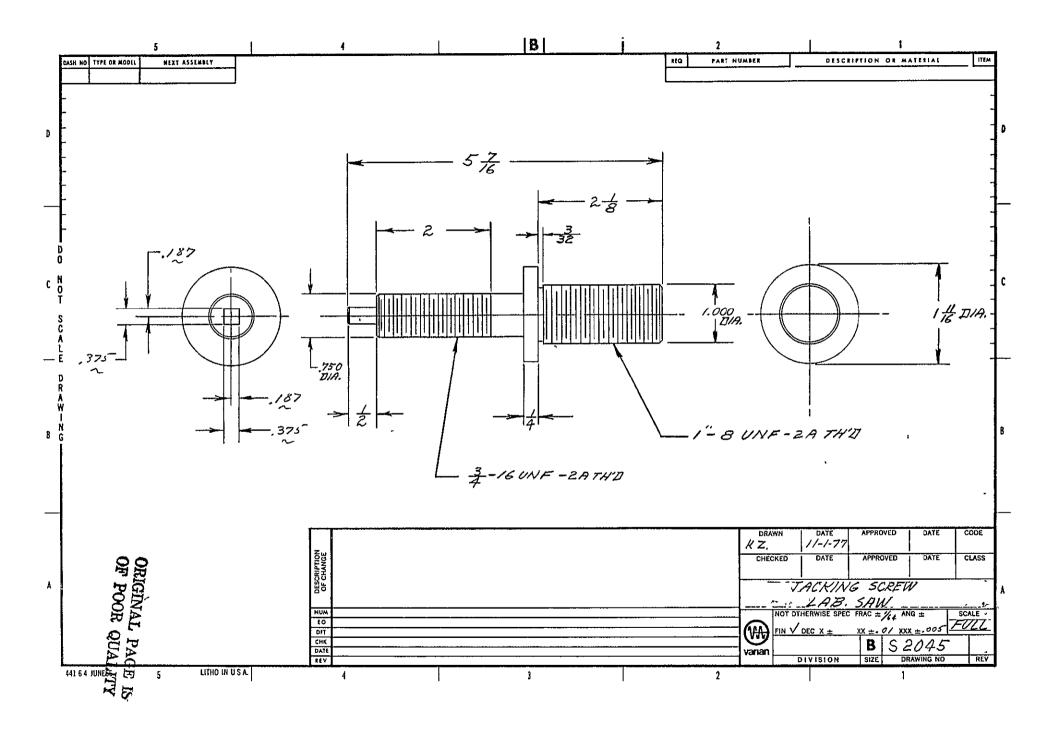


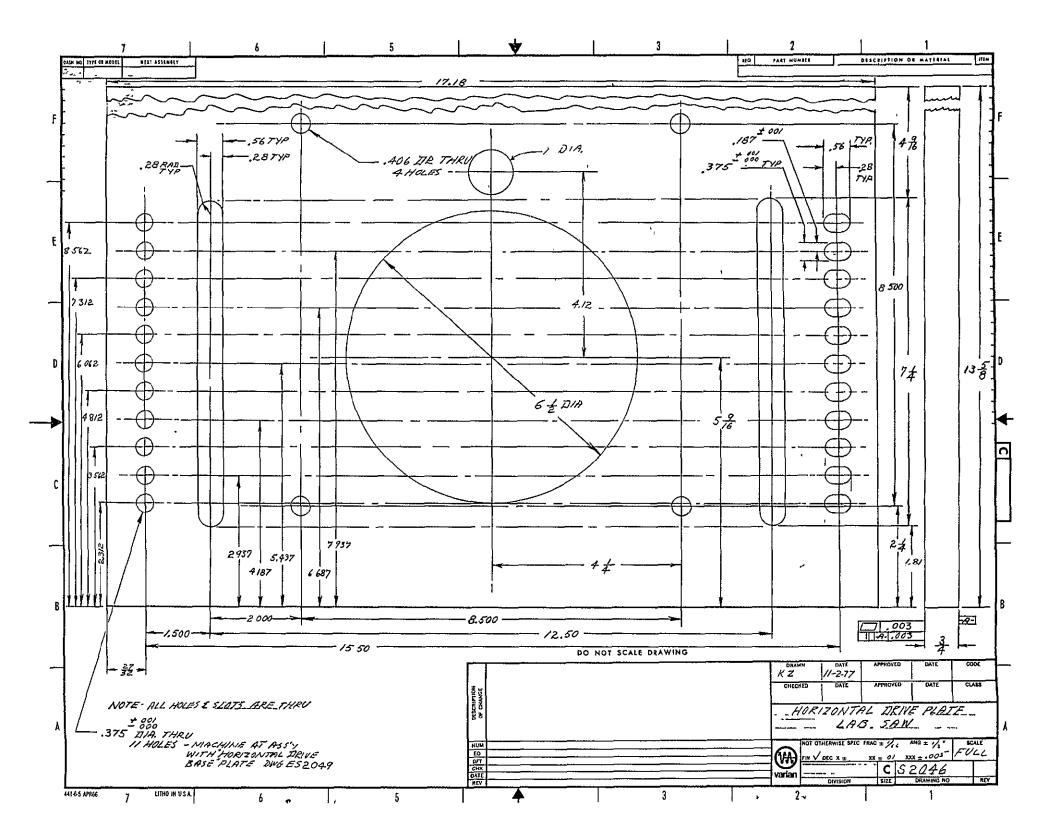


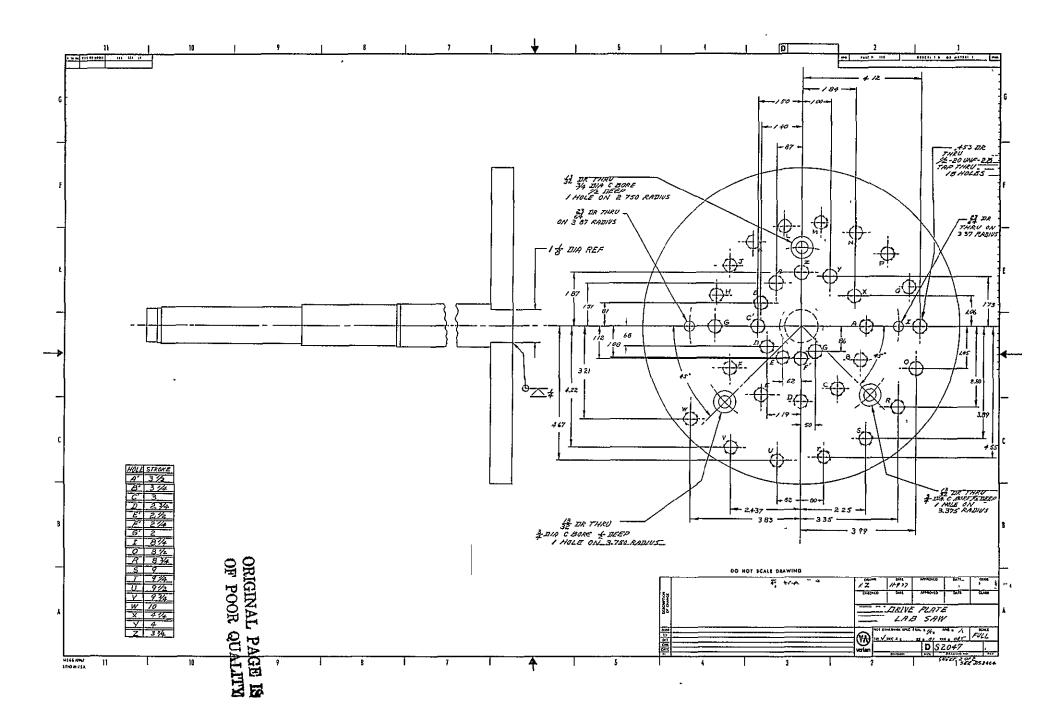


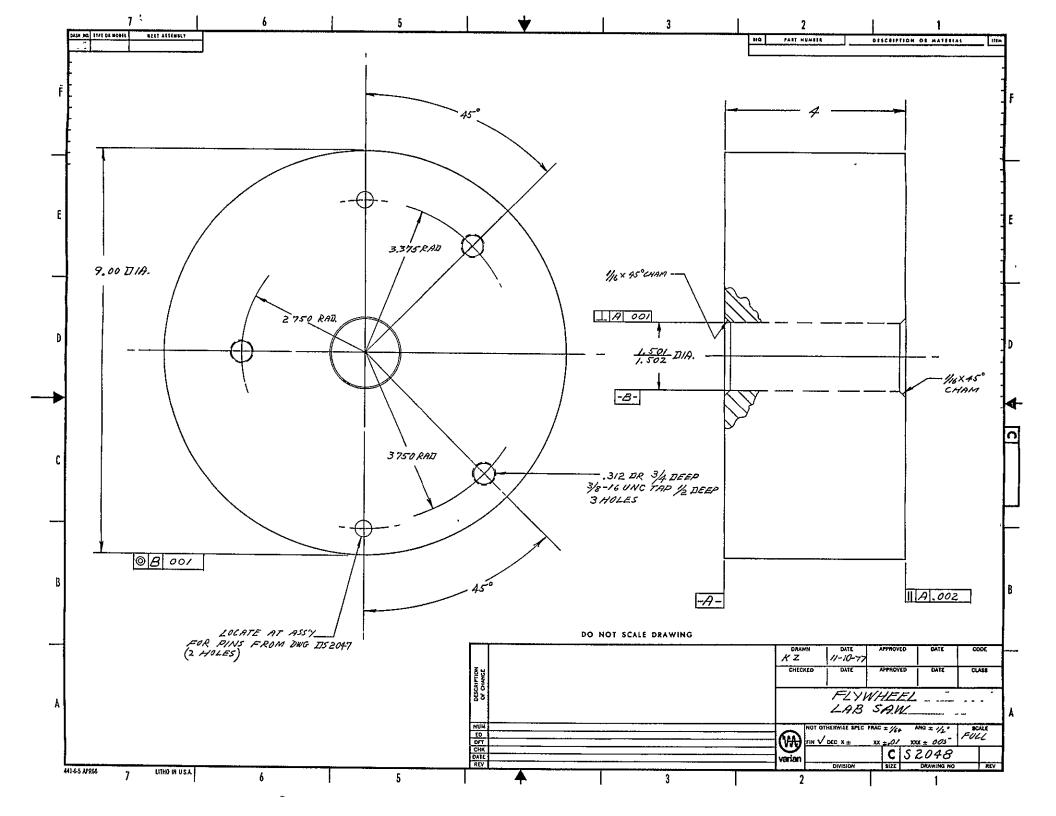


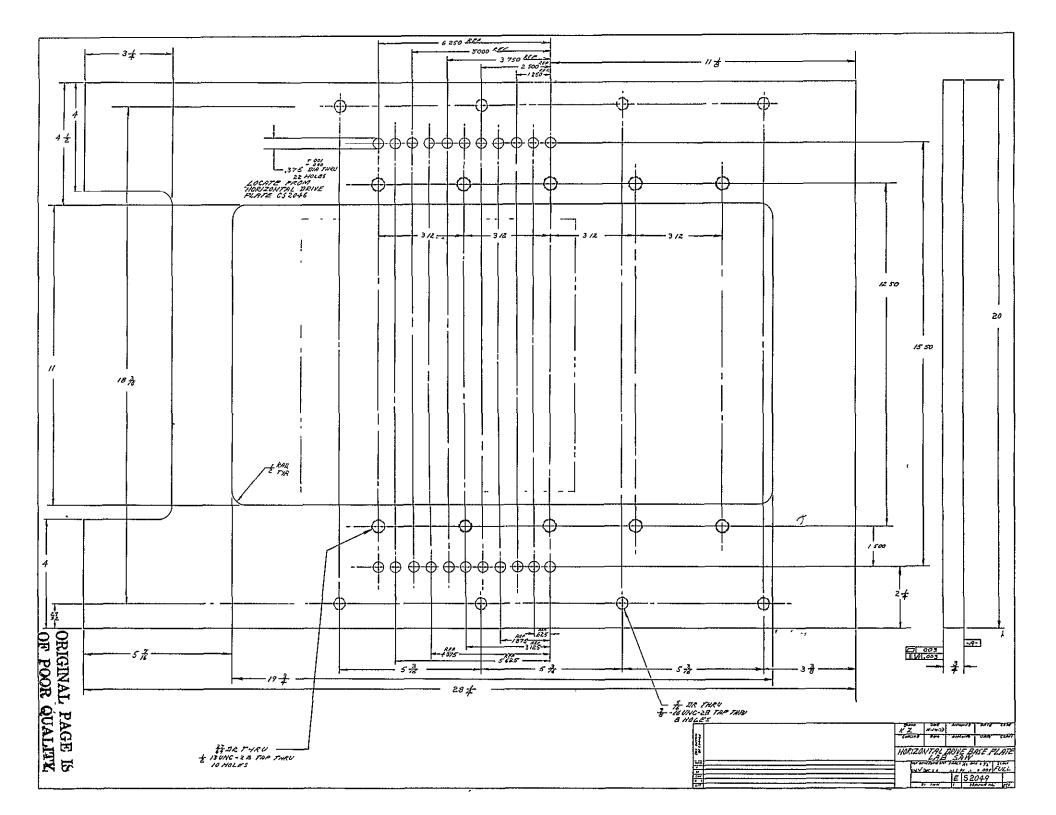


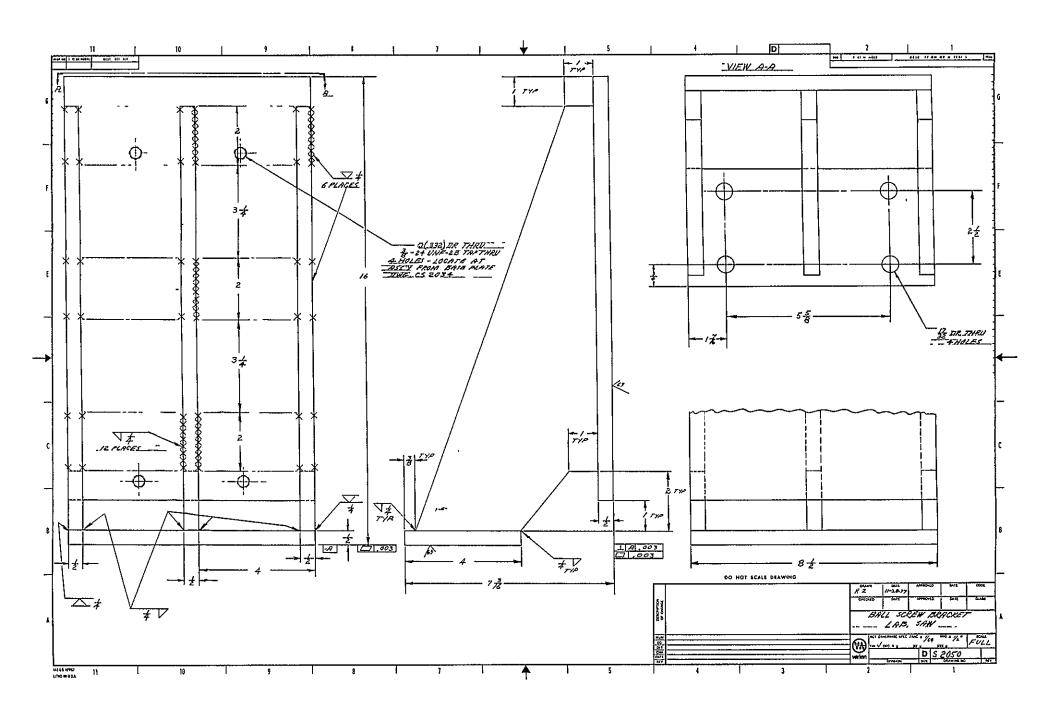


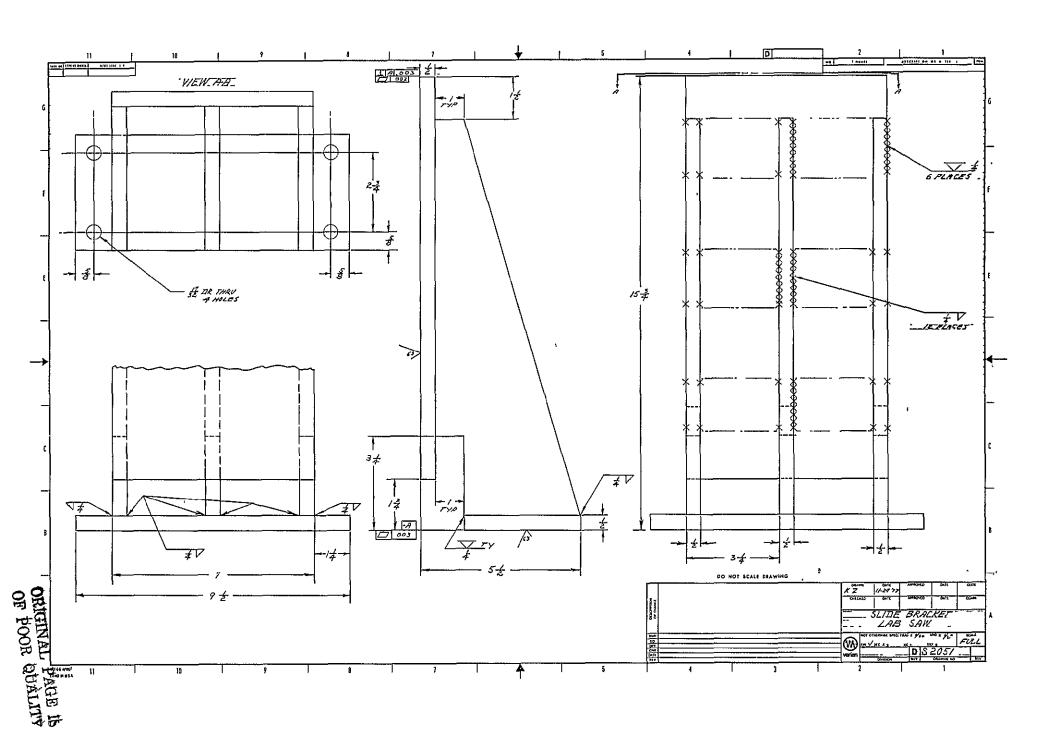


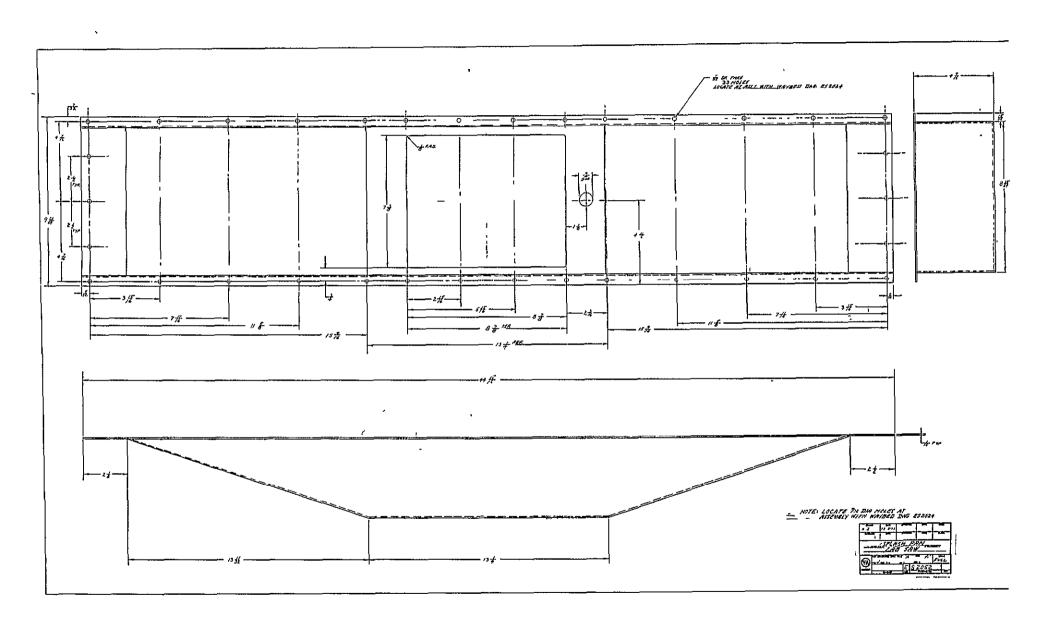


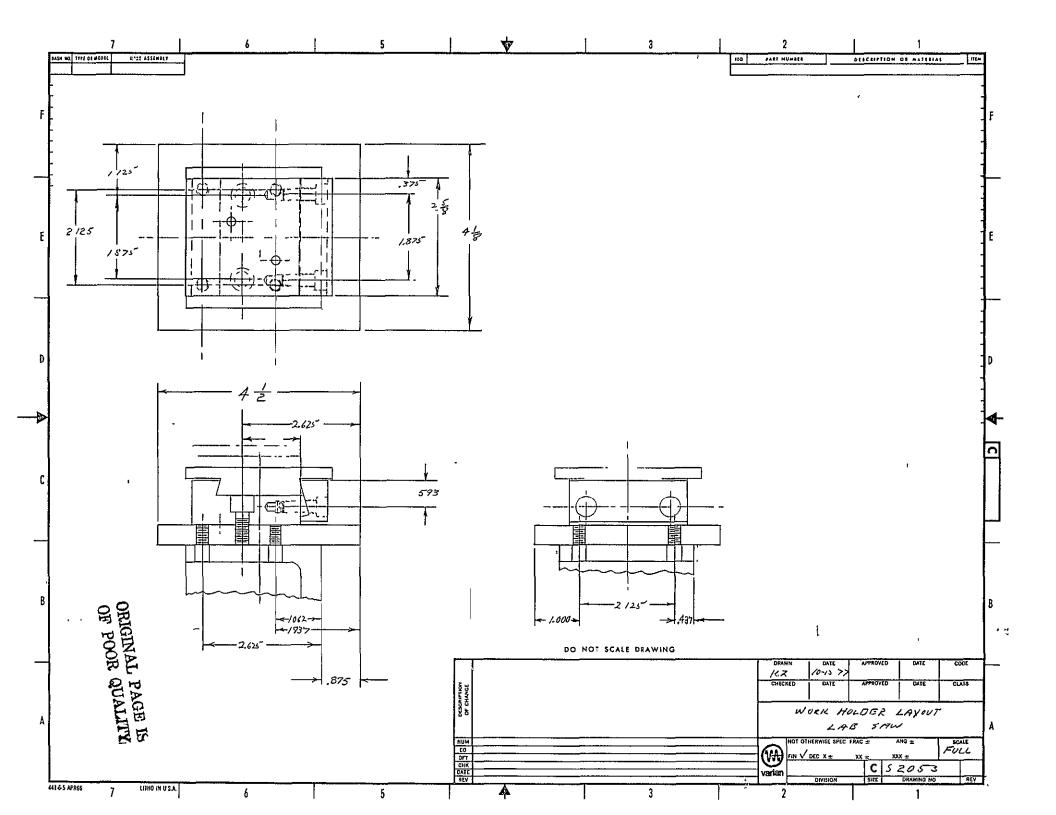












## APPENDIX II

MAN-HOURS AND COSTS

PROGRAM PLAN (UPDATED)

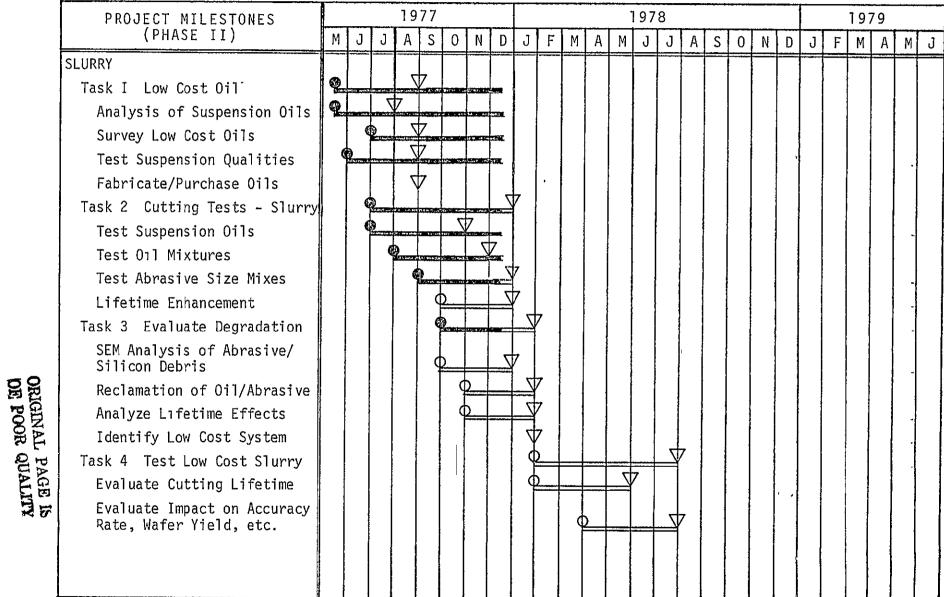
## MAN-HOURS AND COSTS (PHASE II)

During the reporting period of September 19, 1977 to December 17, 1977, total man-hours were 2768.2 hours and total costs were \$119,367. Previous expenditures were 2659.3 hours and \$136,242. As of December 17, 1977, total program man-hours were 5427.5 hours and total program costs were \$255,609.

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Varian Associates/Lexington Vacuum Division JPL Contract 954374 Starting Date: 1/9/76 (I) 5/19/77 (II)

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Varian Associates/Lexington Vacuum Division JPL Contract 954374 Starting Date: 1/9/76 (I) 5/19/77 (II)

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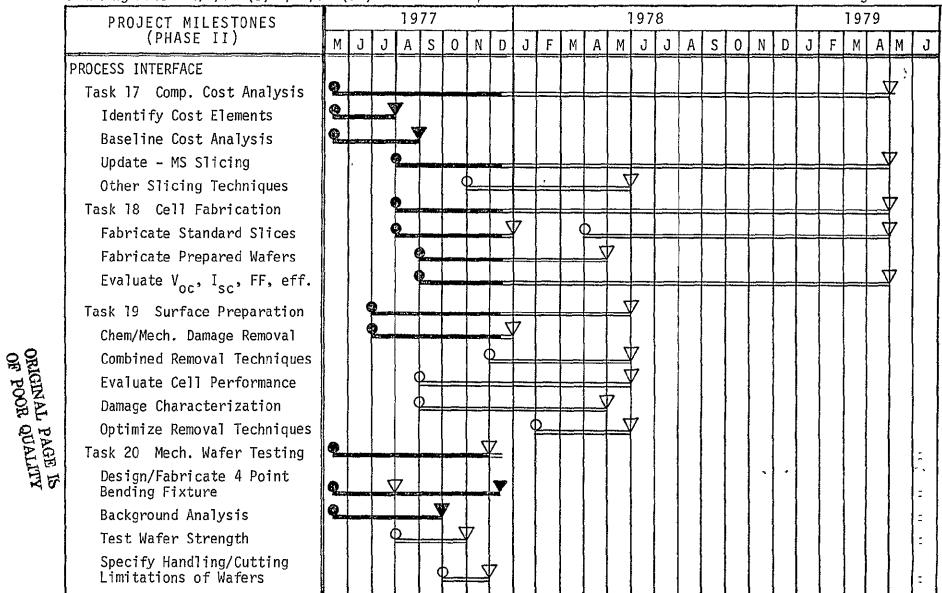
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Varian Associates/Lexington Vacuum Division

JPL Contract 954374

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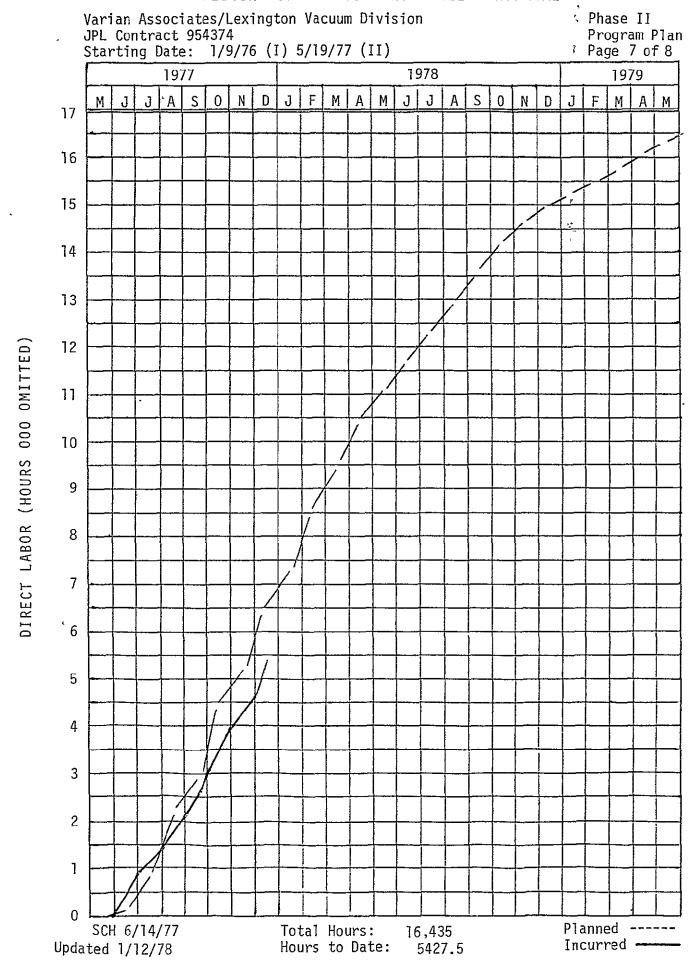
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Starting Date: 1/9/76 (I) 5/19/77 (II)

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