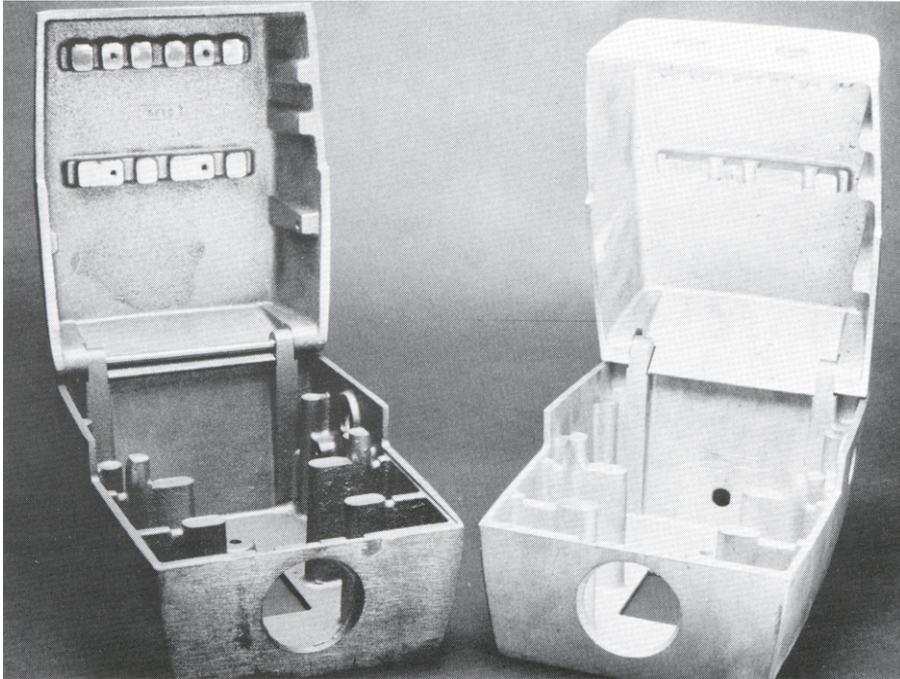


Switching to ZA-12 Zinc Ironed Out Headaches for Rapidprint Inc.



Rapidprint, Inc., switched their 25-lb. cast iron recorder housings (on Lt.) to ZA-12 zinc sand castings (on Rt.) and saved extensively on machining and finishing; ZA-12 was impact-tested over 300,000 cycles to assure years of rugged, dependable performance.

What do you do if you've developed a fine product but find yourself plagued by uncertain deliveries of raw materials and by excessive, costly finishing operations? The smart answer is to look for better alternatives, which is just what Rapidprint Inc., Middletown, CT, did; and the company found them in new ZA-12 zinc sand castings.

Rapidprint had been using a two-piece 25 lb. cast iron housing for their largest time, date and numbering machines and electric check signers. But they found deliveries from iron foundries too slow and uncertain. Production schedules were disrupted, and they experienced problems with the basic quality of the iron. Inclusions in the iron played havoc with expensive tooling. Finish was rough, castings were distorted and considerable grinding and hand fitting were required when mating the cover and base castings.

Then Rapidprint found a better alternative in ZA-12 zinc sand castings. By switching to ZA-12 at a non-ferrous foundry geared to low- and medium-sized runs of several hundred castings, deliveries are now on time. One headache solved.

How about quality? Rapidprint began by testing prototype ZA-12 housings made using the existing iron tooling. They cycled the ZA-12 housings in excess of 300,000 times. A rugged test. Result: the zinc parts showed no wear. There was no cracking in the critical pin area, which occurred too often in the formerly-used

iron castings. And, unlike aluminum (considered and rejected as too soft and lightweight), zinc had enough weight for the necessary stamp imprinting and strength to withstand the continuous cyclic hammering.

Zinc proved a boon in terms of production, too. Its excellent machinability and freedom from hard spots is easy on expensive automatic tooling and speeds up production (ZA-12 machines at least 3 times faster than iron). The zinc castings are also far smoother than iron, and provide a superior surface for the attractive blue hammer-tone finish Rapidprint gives its machines.

Walter Michalak, a Methods Engineer at Rapidprint, sums it up succinctly: "ZA-12 zinc sand casting eliminates all the costly headaches due to machining and finishing."

It's not very hard to see why full production of these machines at Rapidprint is now in ZA-12.

Actually, the ZA-12 castings cost more than iron before secondary operations. "Sure, raw cast iron is cheap but zinc's machining and finishing advantages more than made up any cost difference. In fact, we ended up with a very good overall

saving by going to zinc. Remember, zinc also improved our product quality and ended the short-run supply problem of cast iron," says Walter.

Zinc has again proved itself to be the best alternative: in terms of castability, finish, wear and impact resistance, cost savings, and total quality. With the results of this successful application in mind, Rapidprint is now switching to zinc for other components in its line of printing equipment. Rapidprint found ZA-12 was not the cheapest casting available but it sure was the least expensive in the long run, and the best performing.

That should be a potent hint for other manufacturers who are now experiencing problems with cast iron. Or, for that matter, who would like to save money and trouble by switching to ZA zinc alloys from expensive brass or bronze, or too-soft, too-lightweight aluminum.

There are many progressive manufacturers who have made the switch. ZA zinc alloys are relatively new. But there is a rapidly growing list of successful case histories in which ZA zinc alloys are paying very big dividends in terms of troubles eliminated, dollars saved, and improved product quality.

Why wait to reap the benefits of zinc? All it takes is a phone call or letter to **Derek Cocks**, Eastern Alloys, Inc., PO Box Q, Maybrook, N.Y. 12543, (845) 427-2151,



Rapidprint's attractive time, date and numbering recorder now uses ZA-12 zinc housings.



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