

Zeitschrift: IABSE reports = Rapports AIPC = IVBH Berichte
Band: 37 (1982)

Artikel: Fatigue of anchor bolts in reinforced concrete foundations
Autor: Elfgren, Lennart / Cederwall, Krister / Gylltoft, Kent
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-28943>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 14.09.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Fatigue of Anchor Bolts in Reinforced Concrete Foundations

Fatigue des boulons d'ancrage dans les fondations en béton armé

Ermüdung von Verankerungsbolzen in Stahlbetonfundamenten

LENNART ELFGREN

Associate Professor
University of Lulea
Lulea, Sweden

KRISTER CEDERWALL

Professor
University of Lulea
Lulea, Sweden

KENT GYLLTOFT

Sr Research Eng.
University of Lulea
Lulea, Sweden

CARL ERIK BROMS

Sr Project Eng.
AB Jacobson & Widmark
Stockholm, Sweden

SUMMARY

Analytical methods to design anchor bolts are compared to test results from 16 tests with cyclic loading. The level of prestress is the most important factor for the life length of a bolt.

RESUME

Des méthodes analytiques pour le dimensionnement des boulons d'ancrage sont comparées aux résultats expérimentaux de seize essais soumis à des charges cycliques. Le degré de précontrainte est le facteur de plus important qui influence la durée de vie des boulons d'ancrage.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Analytische Methoden für die Dimensionierung von Verankerungsbolzen werden mit Ergebnissen aus sechzehn Versuchen mit zyklischer Belastung verglichen. Der Vorspanngrad hat den grössten Einfluss auf die Lebensdauer des Verankerungsbolzens.



1. INTRODUCTION

Machines are often anchored to reinforced concrete foundations by means of anchor bolts. It is desirable that these anchor bolts meet the following specifications:

- They are able to withstand static and cyclic loading
- They are able to anchor a load within a short anchor length even when the load is situated close to the edges of the concrete foundation
- They are easy to install in the foundation even long time after the foundation was cast.

These requirements have led to the development of various types of anchor bolts.

To be able to withstand cyclic loading, it is advisable to use prestressed bolts. In other cases very heavy bolts are required to withstand also relatively small cyclic loads. This is due to low fatigue capacity of bolts [1].

Two major types of anchor bolt arrangements are tested in this project [2]-[6]. In the first one, the recess for the bolt is provided by drilling a hole in the cast foundation, see Figure 1a. This type of recess has two main advantages. No special arrangements are needed during the design and the casting of the foundation and there is a complete freedom of where to drill the hole. On the other hand, this type of anchorage is likely to have a rather poor capacity for sustained load due to shrinkage of the mortar grouted in the hole.

In the other type, the recess for the anchor bolt is provided by a conical shell, which is placed in the foundation before casting; see Figure 1b [2]. The cone is provided with a spiral reinforcement which helps to carry the splitting forces in the concrete. This type has a good ability to carry sustained and cyclic loading although some more effort is needed during construction.

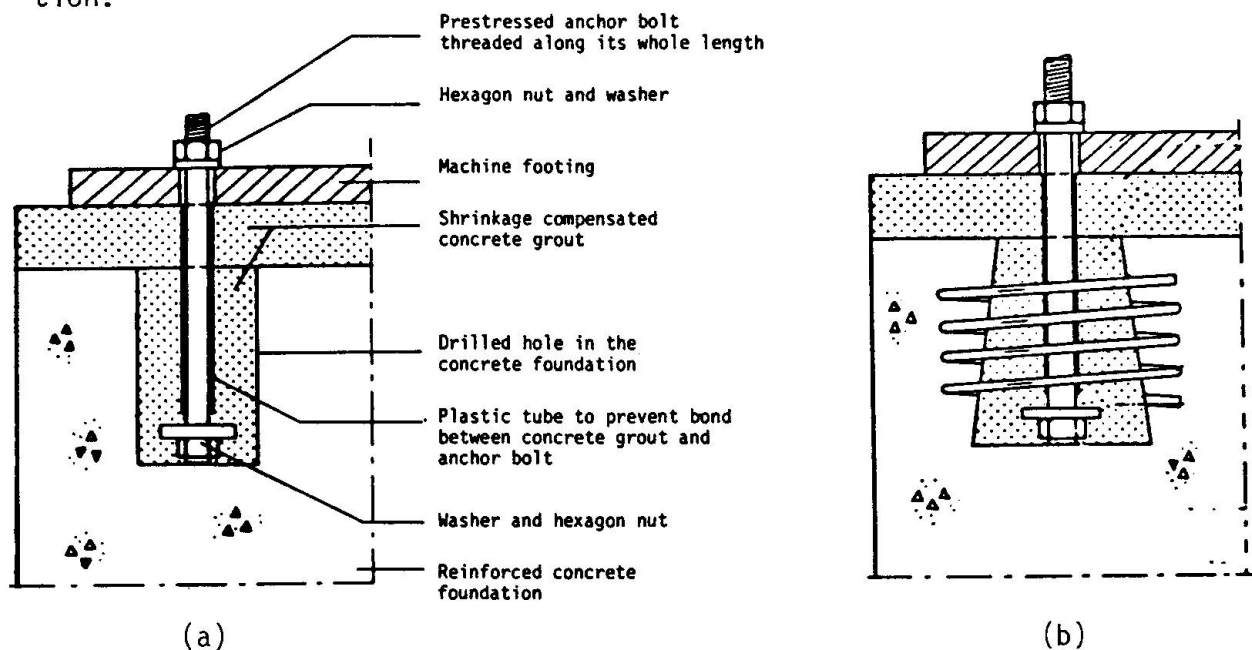


Fig 1 Tested anchor bolts. (a) Bolt placed in a cylindrical hole drilled into a reinforced concrete foundation. (b) Bolt placed in a cylindrical recess. The recess is formed by a 0.5 mm thick metal sheet

2. ANALYTICAL MODELS

2.1 Crack propagation

In order to study the propagation of a crack in the concrete, a fracture mechanics finite element model was used [6]-[8]. The model is illustrated in Figure 2 a, b and some results are given in Figure 2 c - f.

As can be seen from Figure 2, the fictitious (dashed line) and the real cracks (full line) grow as the load is increased. The cracks form a cone and the crack tip has to penetrate a larger area the more it grows. This implies that the crack is very stable also for fatigue loads. As soon as the crack tip penetrates a small distance, the stress in the zone around the crack tip will decrease and thus the crack propagation will be halted. For this reason there is usually no fatigue problems for the concrete [9], for a bolt which is loaded at a level reasonably below its static failure load.

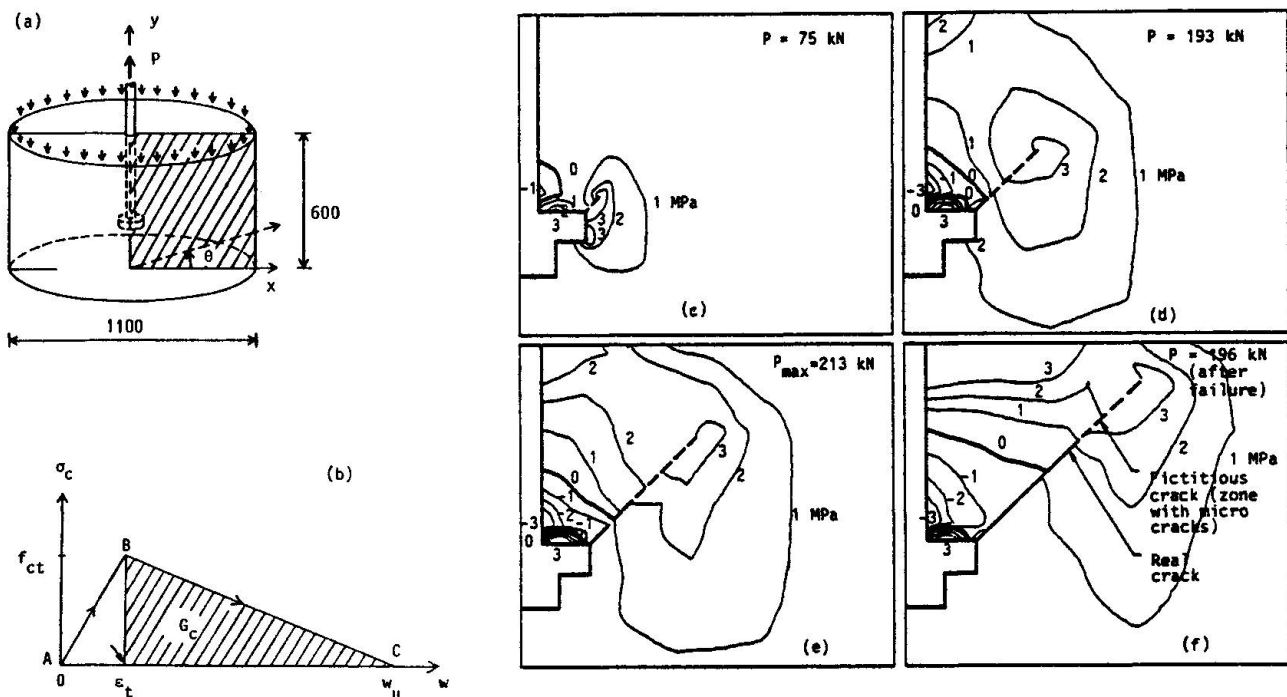


Fig 2 Fracture mechanics model used for study of crack propagation [4], [6]. (a) Dimension of finite element model (96 axisymmetric elements + 10 linear crack elements). (b) Material model for loading (AB) and unloading of crack element (BC), ϵ_t = tensile strain, w = crack width. The following material properties were used for steel and concrete $E_s = 210$ GPa, $\nu_s = 0.3$, $\rho_s = 7800$ kg/m³, $E_c = 30$ GPa, $f_{ct} = 3.0$ MPa, $\nu_c = 0.2$, $\rho_c = 2400$ kg/m³, $G_c = 60$ N/m (fracture energy) and $w_u = 40 \cdot 10^{-6}$ m (maximum fictitious crack width). (c)-(f) Isostress lines for maximum tensile stress for different load levels. A micro crack (fictitious crack) is marked with a dashed line and a real crack is marked with a full line. (c) $P = 75$ kN, (d) $P = 193$ kN, (e) $P = 213$ kN, maximum load, (f) $P = 196$ kN, after maximum load. The figure illustrates a test, where the anchor head deflection is the steering parameter.

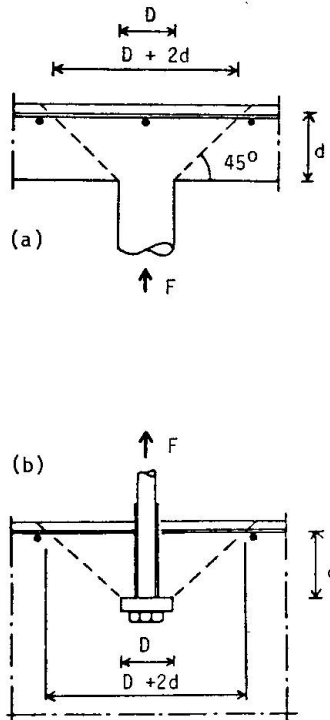


Fig 3 Comparison between punching (a) and anchor bolt failure (b)

2.2 Punching

The anchorage failure of a bolt is related to punching of slabs, see Figure 3. In codes, it is common to use a simplified calculation model for punching. An idealized failure cone is assumed, which is inclined 45° degrees to the horizontal plane. The area A of the cone is, see Figure 3, $A = \pi 0.5(D + D + 2d) d\sqrt{2} = \pi(D + d) d\sqrt{2}$, where D is the diameter of the column or the washer and d is the effective depth of the slab or the foundation.

The shear stresses along the cone are often given a constant value f_v at failure. A vertical projection equation then gives

$$F = Af_v/\sqrt{2} = \pi(D + d)d f_v \quad (1)$$

In the 1978 CEB-FIP Model Code [10] the value of f_v depends on the concrete strength, the depth d , and the amount of the reinforcement in the top of the slab. In the United States a similar approach has been proposed [12].

2.3 Influence of prestress

A simplified model illustrating the influence of prestress is shown in Figure 4. A prestressing force P_0 gives rise to a strain ϵ_{s0} in the steel

bolt and a strain ϵ_{c0} in the concrete grout under the machine footing. The bolt area is A_s , the effective concrete area is A_c , the length of the bolt is L_s , the effective length of the concrete is L_c , and the modulus of elasticity for steel and concrete grout are E_s and E_c , respectively. Equilibrium gives, see Figure 4a, $P_0 = E_s A_s \epsilon_{s0} = E_c A_c \epsilon_{c0}$. Here ϵ_{s0} and ϵ_{c0} can be written as $\epsilon_{s0} = v_{s0}/L_s$ and $\epsilon_{c0} = v_{c0}/L_c$, where v_s and v_c denote the elongation and the compression of the bolt and the concrete, respectively.

If now a force F (less than P_0) is applied to the machine footing, the bolt head will move a small distance v . The strain will increase in the bolt and it will decrease in the concrete grout. The applied force F can then be written as the difference between the tensile force F_s in the steel bolt and the compressive force F_c in the concrete grout, see Figure 4a and 4b, $F = F_s - F_c = E_s A_s v(r+1)/(L_s r)$, where $r = E_s A_s L_c / (E_c A_c L_s)$. This holds for $F \leq P_0$. If the applied force F is greater than P_0 , the concrete compressive force will be reduced to zero. The applied load will then be carried by the steel bolt alone, $F = F_s = E_s A_s (v_{s0} + v)/L_s$.

The applied force F , the tensile steel force F_s and the compressive concrete force F_c are shown in Figure 4b as functions of v . The numerical values are chosen to be representative for a bolt with dimension M 30. The applied force F is increasing steeply for small deformations v when $F < P_0$. When the concrete compressive stress disappears for $v = v_{c0}$ and $F = F_p = E_s A_s (v_{s0} + v_{c0})/L_s$ the applied load must be carried by the steel bolt alone. Accordingly, there is a change of the slope of the F - v -curve.

If the applied load F is varying with an amplitude $+\Delta F$ so that $F_0 + \Delta F < F_p$ only small variations ΔF_s will occur in the steel stress, see Figure 4b, P

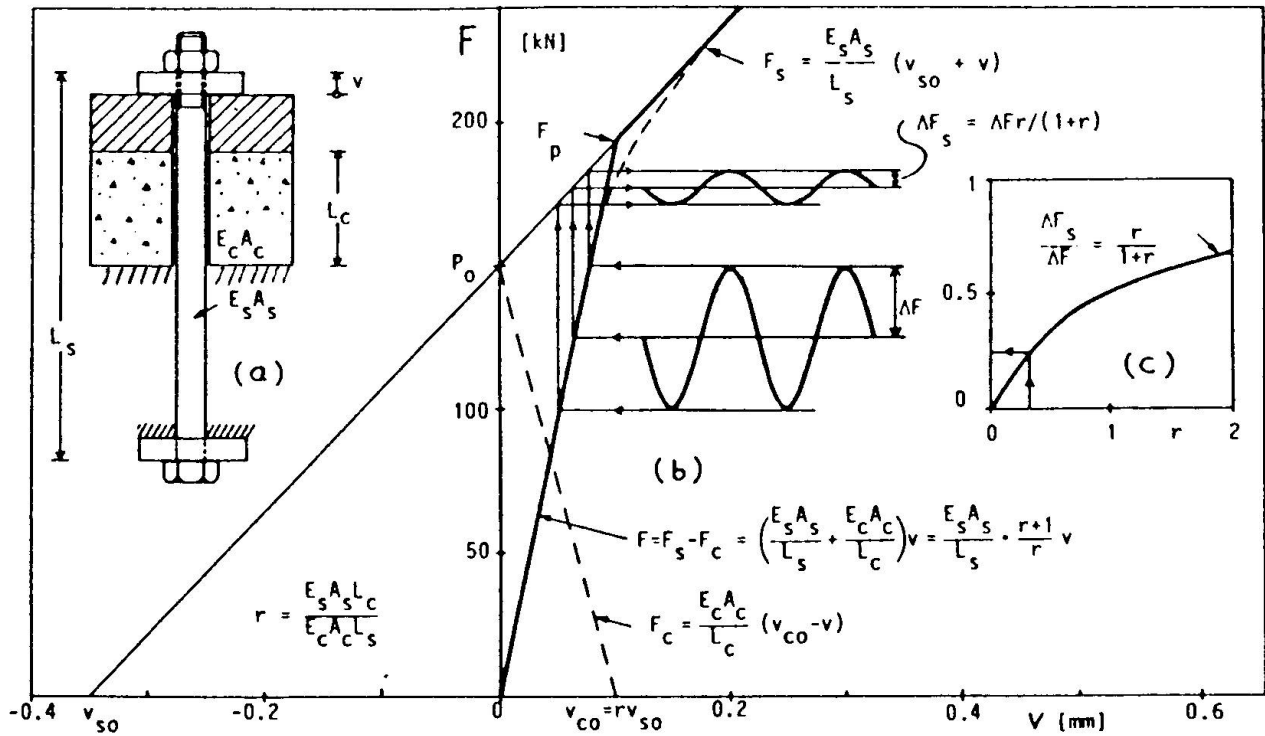


Fig 4 Prestressed anchor bolt. (a) Simplified theoretical model. (b) Applied force F , tensile bolt force F_s and compressive concrete force F_c as function of bolt displacement v . Numerical values: $E_s = 190$ GPa, $A_s = 561$ mm² (M 30), $L_s = 250$ mm, $E_c = 30$ GPa, $A_c = 2500$ mm², $L_c = 50$ mm, $P_0 = 150$ kN, $r = E_s A_s L_c / (E_c A_c L_s) = 0.284$, $v_{s0} = P_0 L_s / (E_s A_s) = 0.352$ mm. (c) Relation between bolt steel stress range and applied stress range, $\Delta F_s / \Delta F$, as function of r .

$$\Delta F_s = \Delta F \frac{E_s A_s / L_s}{E_s A_s / L_s + E_c A_c / L_c} = \Delta F \frac{r}{r+1} \quad (2)$$

The ratio of $\Delta F_s / \Delta F$ is illustrated in Figure 4c as a function of r .

The model is simplified. The effective concrete area is a fictive concept and is in reality influenced by the prestressing. For this reason there will be no sharp change in the slope of the F - w -curve as shown in Figure 4b. Instead, there will be a gradual change from the slope of the F - w -curve to the slope of the F_s - w -curve (indicated as a dashed line in Figure 4b).

3. TEST RESULTS

3.1 Test program

A general view of the test set up is shown in Figure 5. The dimensions of the tested foundations were 1450x1450x650 mm³ with two to four bolts in each foundation in Tests Nos 1-6 and 400x400x400 mm³ with one bolt in each foundation in Tests Nos 7-9.

The test program for the fatigue tests [4] are summarized in Table 1. Two bolt dimensions were used, M30 and 1 1/4". They were both made of a material with a



nominal yield stress of 640 MPa. The nominal yield load was 359 kN for the M30 bolt and 400 kN for the 1 1/4" bolt. The M30 bolts were used in Tests Nos 1-6 and the 1 1/4" bolts were used in Tests Nos 7-9. The M30 bolts had washers $\phi 104 \times 24$ and the 1 1/4" bolts had washers $\phi 100 \times 8$ mm. The concrete strength in the foundations is given in Table 1. For grouting, a commercial grout was used in Tests Nos 1-6 ($f_{cc} = 50-60$ MPa, $f_{ct} = 2.5-3.5$ MPa) while a concrete made of Standard Portland cement was used in Tests 7-9 ($f_{cc} = 13-20$ MPa).

As a comparison, ultimate loads from equivalent static tests [3] are also given in Table 1 together with accompanying punching loads calculated according to Eq (1). The punching loads predict the ultimate loads with a reasonable degree of safety.

3.2 Stress range

Test results are summarized in Table 2. The ratio σ_r/σ_{r0} of the stress range with and without prestress varies between 0.04 (for a very low load level) to 0.63 (for higher load levels). The value of the ratio is linked to the value of the parameter r as discussed in section 2.3. For example, if the bolt length L_s is doubled, the parameter r will be half as big as before and the ratio σ_r/σ_{r0} will be reduced considerably. This phenomenon can be seen in Table 2 if tests Nos 2A and 2B with $L_s = 250$ mm are compared to Tests Nos 3 and 4 with $L_s = 450$ mm. The ratio σ_r/σ_{r0} is here reduced from 0.53 and 0.43 to 0.29 and 0.26.

To be able to determine r one must know the parameter A_c/L_c of the effective concrete. Using the relationship $\sigma_r/\sigma_{r0} = r/(1+r)$ and the test values for σ_r/σ_{r0} , we calculated the value of A_c/L_c for the different tests. We got low values, $A_c = 10 L_c$ to $75 L_c$. Consequently, to be on the safe side a low value should be used for design purposes, e.g. $A_c/L_c = 5$ to 10 mm.

The test results are plotted in a Wöhler diagram in Figure 6. In the figure is also drawn a line which represents the Swedish Code for bolts [11]. There is a fair agreement between the test results and the code.

The level of prestress is reduced with time due to shrinkage and creep in the grout. Tests on four commercially manufactured so called non-shrinkage grouts show larger reductions in prestress force than normal concrete under equal conditions [5]. In most of the tested bolts the ratio of σ_r/σ_{r0} has increased with time. However, for some of the short bolts the opposite phenomenon appeared. The maximum stress level in a cycle here remained constant whereas the minimum stress level increased slightly. This was probably due to some interlocking effect which prevented the bolt to unload completely.

3.3 Conclusions

No concrete fatigue failures have appeared for prestressed anchor bolts (except for cyclic loads on a very high level close to the ultimate static load for the bolt). Consequently, there is no fatigue problem for the concrete.

Steel fatigue failures have appeared in several tests. The most important factor governing the life length of a prestressed bolt is the stress range in the bolt. The stress range can be reduced by prestressing the bolt. Reductions of 50 to 75% of the stress range can be achieved. The magnitude of the reduction depends on the length of the bolt and the level of prestressing.

It is important to use a grout with a small shrinkage and it is advisable to check the level of prestress periodically in order to ensure a low stress range.



Table 1 Test program

Test No	Depth of hole or recess	Diameter of hole or recess	Distance to edge of foundation	Spiral reinforcement	Concrete strength		Results from equivalent static tests		
					Compression f_{cc}	Tension f_{ct}	Punching load (Eq 1) F_{th}	Ultimate load F_u	Bolt No Ref [3]
	mm	mm	mm	mm	MPa	MPa	kN	kN	
1 A-B	200	$\phi 120$	150	-	35	3.0	48	147	SD 3:1
2 A-B	200	$\phi 120$	300	-	35	3.0	59	206	SD 3:2
3	400	$\phi 120$	150	-	35	3.0	151	344	SD 3:3
4	400	$\phi 120$	300	-	35	3.0	191	>400	SD 3:4
5	250	$\phi 120/200$	150	(a)	35	3.0	86	418	SC 3:1
6	250	$\phi 120/200$	300	(a)	35	3.0	95	425	SC 3:2
7 A-B	200	$\phi 150/200$	200	(b)	65	4.0 (d)	-	300	ML III
8 A-D	200	$\phi 150/200$	200	(c)	23	2.0 (d)	-	190	ML 3:1
9 A-B	200	$\phi 150/200$	200	-	28	2.5 (d)	-	-	-

Notes: (a) 4 $\phi 10$ Ks400, $f_y = 400$ MPa; (b) 5 $\phi 10$ Ss260, $f_y = 260$ MPa; (c) 4 $\phi 10$ Ss 260, $f_y = 260$ MPa; (d) The value f_{ct} is an estimation based on f_{cc}

Table 2 Test results

Test No	Prestress force P_o	Applied load F	Stress range		$\frac{\sigma_r}{\sigma_{ro}}$	Number of cycles	Mode of failure Ultimate load F_u after fatigue loading [kN]
			Without prestress σ_{ro}	With prestress (measured) σ_r			
	kN	kN	MPa	MPa	-	Megacycles	
1A	102	62.5 \pm 27.5 (a)	98.0	16.2	0.17	8.556	Run out $F_u = 153$
1B	100	5.0 \pm 5.0 (b)	(17.8)	(0.7)	(0.04)	<0.001	Concrete spalling $F_u = 138.5$
2A	143	142.8 \pm 20.4	72.7	38.0	0.53	>13.000	Run out $F_u = 252$
2B	150	125.0 \pm 25.0 (c)	89.1	38.0	0.43	2.040	Concrete spalling $F_u = 225$
3	180	125.0 \pm 55.0	196.1	57.0	0.29	>4.000	Run out $F_u = 296$
4	220	137.5 \pm 82.5	294.1	76.0	0.26	>0.937	Run out
5	287	172.5 \pm 42.5	151.5	95.0	0.63	>3.780	Run out $F_u = 433$
6	215	161.0 \pm 54.0	192.5	120.0	0.62	0.671	Bolt fatigue failure
7A	-	112.5 \pm 37.5	120.0	-	-	1.700	Bolt fatigue failure
7B	-	112.5 \pm 37.5	120.0	-	-	>2.000	Run out $F_u = 285$
8A	-	112.5 \pm 37.5	120.0	-	-	0.600	Concrete spalling
8B	-	112.5 \pm 37.5	120.0	-	-	0.250	Bolt fatigue failure
8C	-	112.5 \pm 37.5	120.0	-	-	0.750	Bolt fatigue failure
8D	-	112.5 \pm 37.5	120.0	-	-	0.820	Bolt fatigue failure
9A	-	112.5 \pm 37.5	120.0	-	-	>1.000	Run out $F_u = 200$
9B	-	112.5 \pm 37.5	120.0	-	-	0.525	Bolt fatigue failure

Notes (a) After 3 megacycles increased to 82.5 \pm 27.5 kN; (b) Gradually increased to 65.0 \pm 65.0 kN with load steps of 5 kN after 10 cycles (c) After 2 megacycles increased with steps of 7.5 kN after every 10 000 cycles up to 162.5 \pm 62.5 kN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The project is sponsored by the Swedish Council for Building Research (Grant No 780949-3)

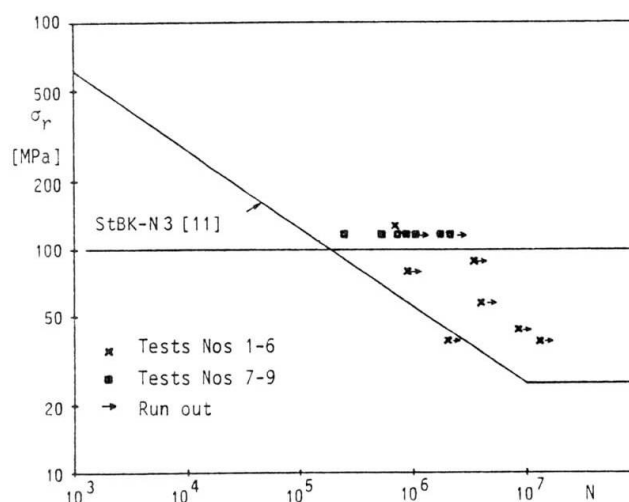
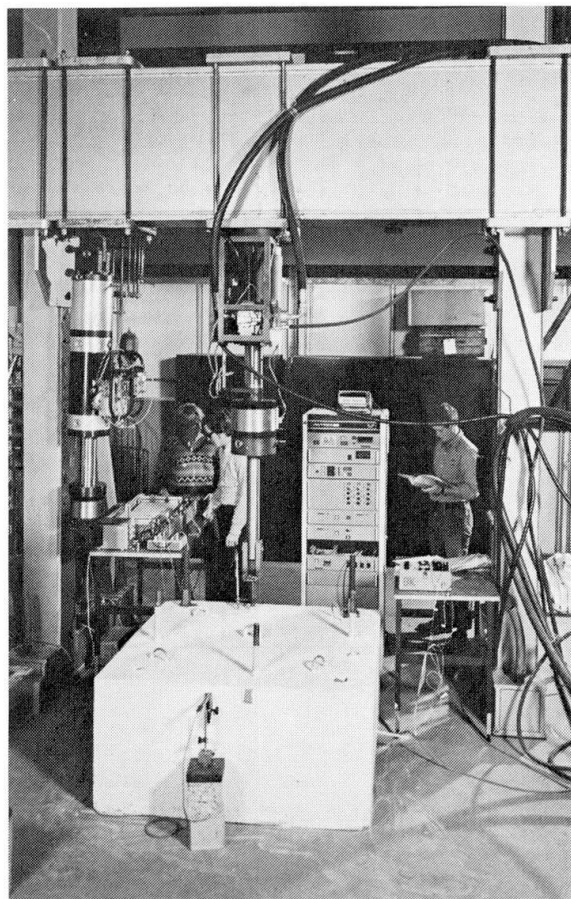


Fig 5 (left)

General view of test set-up

Fig 6 (above)

Wöhler curve for tested bolts. The stress range σ_r is based on measured strain rates

REFERENCES

- 1 GYLLTOFT, KENT - ELFGREN, LENNART: Utmattningshållfasthet för anläggningskonstruktioner. En inventering (Fatigue of civil engineering structures. A state of the art report. In Swedish). Bygghälsan, Rapport R68:1977, Stockholm 1977, 160 pp
- 2 LORENTSEN, MOGENS: Dragförsök med skruv i igjuten betongursparing (Pull-out tests on anchor bolts embedded in concrete. In Swedish with English captions and summary). Nordisk Betong (Stockholm), 1971:1, pp 191-201
- 3 ELFGREN, LENNART - BROMS, CARL ERIK - JOHANSSON, HAKAN E - REHNSTRÖM, ARNE: Anchor bolts in reinforced concrete foundations. Short time tests. University of Luleå, Div of Structural Engineering, Research Report TULEA 1980:36, Luleå 1980, 117 pp
- 4 ELFGREN, LENNART - BROMS, CARL ERIK - JOHANSSON, HAKAN E - JOHANSSON, HAKAN V: Anchor bolts in reinforced concrete foundations, Fatigue tests. University of Luleå, Div of Structural Engineering, Research Report, Luleå 1981 (to be published)
- 5 HAKANSSON, MATS - JOHANSSON, HAKAN E - BROMS, CARL ERIK - ELFGREN, LENNART: Ingjutfningsbruk. Hållfasthet, krympning och krypning hos ingjutfningsbruk för förankringsskruvar i betongfundament (Strength, shrinkage and creep of grout for anchor bolts in reinforced concrete foundations. In Swedish with English summary). Högskolan i Luleå, Avd för Konstruktionsteknik, Teknisk Rapport 1981:47T, Luleå 1981, 50 pp
- 6 HAKANSSON, MATS - NILSSON, ROGER: Förankringar i betongfundament. Beräkningar med finit elementmetod. Försök med statiska och dynamiska laster. (Anchor bolts in reinforced concrete foundations. Calculations with finite element methods. Tests with static and dynamic loadings. In Swedish with English summary). Högskolan i Luleå, Avdelningen för Konstruktionsteknik, Examensarbete 1981:011E, Luleå 1981, 71 pp
- 7 HILLERBORG, ARNE - MODEER, MATS - PETERSSON, PER-ERIK: Analysis of crack formation and crack growth in concrete by means of fracture mechanics and finite elements. Cement and Concrete Research, Vol 6, 1976, pp 773-782
- 8 GYLLTOFT, KENT: Bond failure in reinforced concrete under cyclic loading. A fracture mechanics approach. University of Luleå, Div of Structural Engineering, Research Report TULEA 1980:29, Luleå 1980, 89 pp
- 9 GYLLTOFT, KENT - CEDERWALL, KRISTER - ELFGREN, LENNART: Fatigue strength of reinforced concrete structures. Nordisk Betong, Journal of the Nordic Concrete Federation (Stockholm), 1979:6, pp 27-32
- 10 CEB-FIP: Model Code for Concrete Structures. 3rd Ed., CEB (Comité Euro-International du Béton), Paris 1978, 348 pp
- 11 STATENS STALBYGGNADSKOMMITTE. Skruvförbandsnorm 76, StBK-N3 (Regulations for bolted connections 1976, StBK-N3, In Swedish), AB Svensk Byggtjänst, Stockholm 1977, 80 pp
- 12 CANNON, ROBERT W - GODFREY, DWAIN A - MOREADITH, F L: Guide to the design of anchor bolts and other steel embedments. Concrete International, Design and Construction (Detroit), Vol 3, No 7, July 1981, pp 28-41