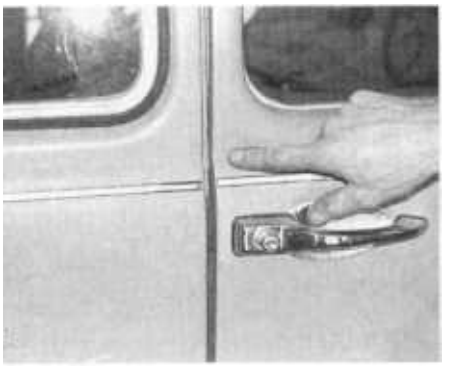
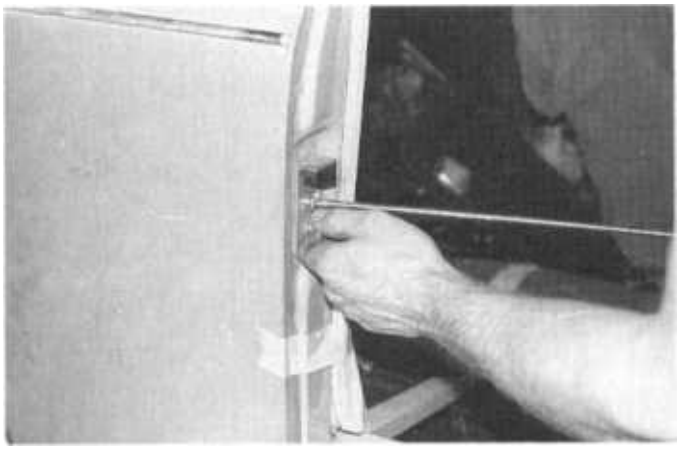
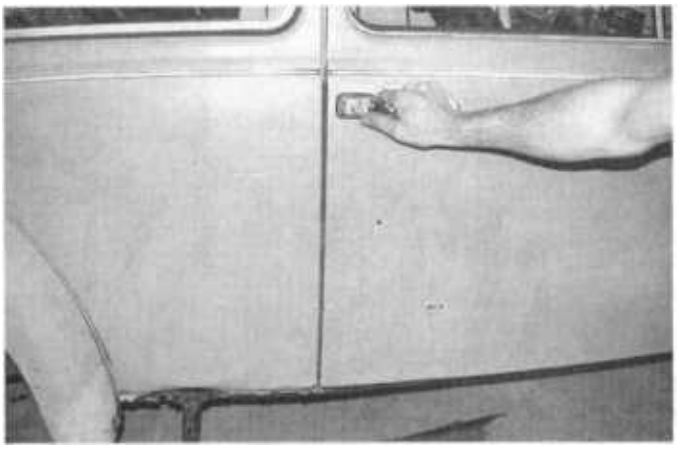
Professional level metal working skills are required and the repair requires what Paul refers to as "finesse." You don't just rip into the repair blindly, careful prep and attention to detail is a must. VW Restorations has been been fixing heater channels for quite a few years and has refined the repair process considerably, but it is still a very complicated procedure.

On the surface, this repair seems simple enough—just cut out the old rusted channel and weld in a new replacement. Unfortunately, it's not that easy. Since the heater channel is a structural component, steps must be taken to insure that its integrity is maintained both during and after the repair.

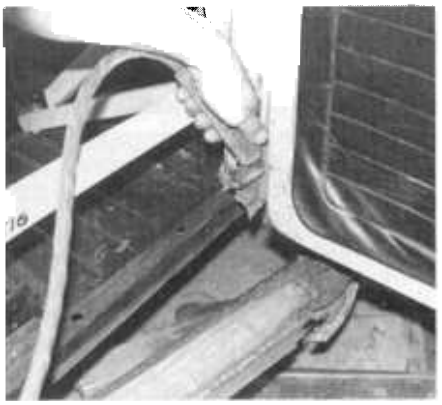


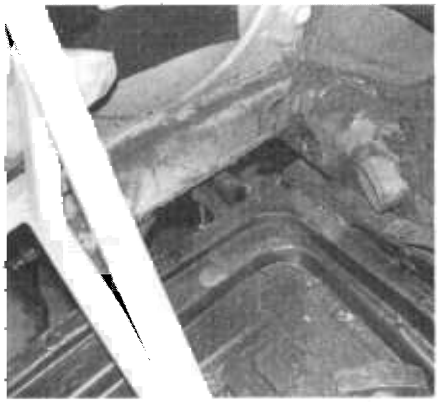
ABOVE LEFT, before welding the alignment jig in place, check to make sure the door gap fit is correct. If off, it's necessary to tweak the car back to its factory alignment. ABOVE RIGHT, using a floor jack and a piece of wood, the '67 was jacked up directly under the front post. When the gap is correct, you are ready to weld the jig in place.





ABOVE LEFT, proper striker plate-to-latch adjustment is critical for a good door fit. ABOVE RIGHT, double check alignment. Next, crawl in from the other side of the car and weld the jig in place. It attaches at two places on the chassis, two spots on the front post, two more on the rear quarter panel — all inside the car. You should be able to open and close the door with no change in the gap.





The car must be properly supported while the section is cut out to maintain proper alignment of the door, rear quarter section and front cowl area. If the heater channel is already rusted through, the car may already be out of alignment and the doors won't close properly.

To eliminate this problem, VW Restorations has developed their own special jig that holds the car in proper alignment throughout the repair process. According to Suplizio, this fixture is the only way to go. When used properly, the

ABOVE LEFT, VW Restorations uses a plasma cutter to remove the old heater channel. Here the channel is being cut along the factory weld at the front door post. CENTER, make another cut at the rear door post along the factory weld seam. Cut right along the weld and clean-up any jagged metal with a die grinder, file, or de-burring tool. ABOVE RIGHT, scrape away the factory seam sealer. RIGHT, the heater channel is also welded to the outer sheetmetal at the bottom of the quarter panel just above the jack support. Cut along the spots welds and the body seam, the heater channel should come loose from the rear of the car.