



Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

February 2016



From the Turret

We are well into the winter months when it's completely acceptable to lock oneself inside and put time into your hobbies. I hope you all are taking better advantage of this time of the year for modeling than I have been finding for myself. At least we can all share our successes and disasters since they are usually better stories at the monthly meetings.

The club meeting in January featured a great presentation by Ted Paone covering creation of rocks for dioramas and vignettes, as well as making and working with dry and wet palettes when brush painting. Some lucky

members even walked away with palette paper and wet palettes.

I was looking back at the development of armored vehicles recently and noticed that this month marks another interesting chain of anniversaries:

One hundred years ago this month was the first demonstration of the Mk. I prototype to the British cabinet ministers, which was followed within days by the first order for production tanks. That led directly to the first 150 tanks being delivered to the front in late summer of 1916.

Seventy five years ago this February had the British seeming to come to a

(Continued on page 3)

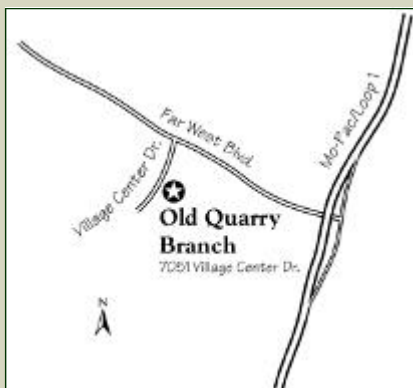
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Austin Armor Builders Society (AABS) meets at 7PM each month at the **Austin Public Library Old Quarry Branch**. Our next meeting is on

February 3, 2016

Annual dues for full membership are USD \$12 to be collected at each January meeting. Upon receipt of payment, a membership card will be issued. This card is valid for one year, and it entitles holder to discounts at various local hobby shops in the Central Texas and San Antonio areas.



Sabot Away! is the official newsletter of AABS and is published twelve times a year on/before each monthly meeting. Any inquiry on subscription issues or assistance on article contribution please contact editor Eric Choy via email aabsco@gmail.com.

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of AABS.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ◆ February 3 - AABS Club Meeting
- ◆ February 20 - Modelfiesta 35 San Antonio Event Center San Antonio, TX
- ◆ March 2 - AABS Club Meeting
- ◆ April 6 - AABS Club Meeting
- ◆ April 7 to 9 - 2016 AMPS International Convention Sumter County Civic Center, Sumter, NC
- ◆ April 23 - Modelmania 2016 Stafford Center, Stafford, TX



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Upcoming Program Presentations and Newsletter Articles

Month	Program Presentation	Newsletter Article
January 2016	Ted Paone	Rick Herrington
February	Kevin Hutchison	Ted Paone
March*	David Davis (Guest)	Alex Gashev
April	Aaron Smischney	Rod Bell
May	Dave Bourland	Russ Holm
June*	Bob Bethea	Greg Beckman
July	Ted Andreas, Jr.	Eric Choy
August	Kit Auction	Ian Candler
September*	Rick Herrington	Ted Andreas, Jr.
October	Ian Candler	Joe Fisher
November	John Talley	Greg Beckman
December*	Eric Choy	Bill Menzie
January 2017	Worth Haggerton	John Talley

Here is a list of members who are responsible for providing articles for the newsletter and program presentation at our monthly meetings.

Please note any member may contribute as many articles as he wants any time. The purpose of this schedule is to ensure we have at least one article in the newsletter each month.

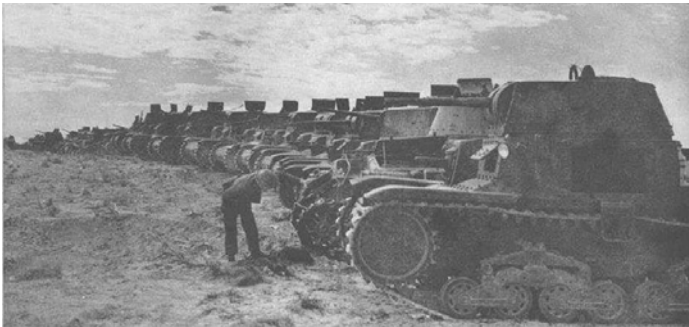
Prompt submission of your article is much appreciated. The deadline is always **11:59PM on the last Wednesday of the previous month** (e.g. Rick Herrington's article for January was due on the last Wednesday of December).

* Quarterly contest month



(Continued from page 1)

complete victory in North Africa at the Battle of Beda Fomm, in which they captured almost the entirety of the Italian forces opposing them. Unfortunately, February was also when the Afrika Korps was formed and began halting British gains and ultimately reversing the situation, albeit temporarily.



Italian tanks captured at the Battle of Beda Fomm.

Fifty years ago this month, US and Australian forces were beating back a Viet Cong regimental human wave in the Battle of Suoi Bong Trang. Surrounded and largely outnumbered, the US and allied forces fell back into defensive positions, with Patton tanks taking up key forward positions. The VC were scattered, beaten back, and dealt large numbers of casualties, but sadly the two most forward tank crews were overrun and killed in the action.

Twenty five years ago, Operation Desert Storm was unleashed to liberate Kuwait by a US lead coalition against Iraqi forces in Kuwait and southern Iraq. The ground attack, which followed a preparatory aerial bombardment lasting weeks, devastated the Iraqi forces and quickly brought the campaign to a successful conclusion.



A US Patton Tank in action in Vietnam

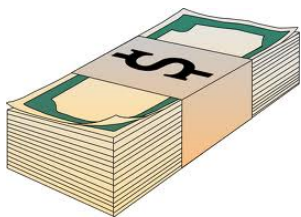


An Iraqi tank destroyed in Operation Desert Storm.

Surely, somewhere in this hundred years of armor history, each of us can find some inspiration for a new project, or reviving an old one.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all at the meeting on Wednesday night. It's always great to see what you've been up to!

John Talley
President



2016 Club Dues are Due!

It is that time of the year again. Please have your club dues (\$12) ready at the February meeting. We accept cash, check or money order. For those

who prefer to make a mail-in payment, our treasurer's address is:

Eric Choy
13213 Marrero Drive
Austin TX 78729

Please DO NOT send cash by mail. Be sure your check or money order is made payable to "AABS."



DISASTER IN PINK

by Ted Paone

For the diorama builder, plaster molds save time and money. You can make multiple copies of groundwork with inexpensive plaster. Walls, architectural details, roofs, cobblestone streets, pavements and rubble can all be made from molded plaster. Model Railroaders already know the value of plaster casting in rubber molds; **Woodland Scenics (WS)** sells at least twenty rock molds as well as plasters, casting supplies and tools. We will explore the available plasters, molds that are useful for dioramas, and how to use them effectively.

Plasters

There are many different types of plasters available for molding, WS has five, and there are many other commercial plasters. They have different strengths and brittleness. Some can be easily carved while others not so easily. All have different working and

cure times. Some plasters will capture detail almost as well as resin, the results of others record softer detail more like vacuum form.

I must admit, I have only used **WS Hydrocal**, **Cellucly**, **Plaster of Paris**, and **Durham's Rock Hard Water Putty (DRHWP)**. My go to choice is Hydrocal for casting. I use DRHWP for things that need strength such as a thin wall. Groundwork is usually DRHWP or Cellucly mixed with white glue and some screened dirt. Plaster of Paris is very weak, making it almost perfect for broken rubble, at least till I run out and never use it again.



PLASTER CHART	WS Super Strength	WS Hydrocal	WS Carving Plaster	DRHWP	Plaster of Paris	Cellucly
Strength (1 Weak - 10 Strong)	10	5	4	10	3	1
Working Time	5 min	10 min	10 min	1 hour		
Cure Time	40 min	40-60 min	60 min	24 hours		
Carvability (1 Hard - 10 Soft)	1	6	10	Before drying: 6, then 3	8	8
Detail (1 Low - 10 High)	10	7	5	4	4	2
Mixing Ratio Plaster to H ₂ O volume	2.5 to 1	2 to 1				
Mixing Time	5 min					
Usage	Highly detailed	Walls, bricks, pavement, cast cobblestones	Carved cobblestones	Brick, walls, high strength	Rubble, carved cobblestones, tree bark	Groundwork, tree bark



WARNING: Plaster will set while fully submerged. Do not clean tools in the sink or pour excess plaster down the drain. It will get stuck in the J trap and will eventually help you make friends with the plumber while watching your money go down the drain. Clean your tools and dump your excess plaster into a bucket of water. The plaster will harden in the water and you can toss it out in the trash the next day.

Finding the Molds

Plaster molds are made of RTV, the same stuff we use to make resin molds, in fact you can cast resin in plaster molds and vice versa. Resin does deplete the silicon in the molds and eventually wears them out, plaster casting does not harm them.

Various hobby stores have the **Woodland Scenics** rock molds, they are easy to find or you can order them from the web.

<http://woodlandscenics.woodlandscenics.com/>

For more sophisticated molds, shop the web. **Bragdon Enterprises** has many stone retaining wall molds, the scales include - O scale (1/48th) and 1/2 inch (1/24th). It looks like the retaining walls could be used for cobblestone streets.

<http://www.bragdonent.com/index.htm>

Although most of the molds from **Hirst Arts** are scaled for 28mm figures, Bruce has a wide variety of bricks, cobblestone streets, tile floors and blocks which can be used at larger scales. More importantly, Bruce provides lots of great advice including how to use his molds and make your own molds. This is one of the best websites for plaster casting knowledge.

<http://www.hirstarts.com/index.html>

There used to be several mold companies which specialized in armor and figure scales such as **Kencali** but I can only find one on the web, and it has some very good molds. **Diorama Debris**, in the UK, has individual brick molds as well as walls, cobblestone Setts, architectural details and roofs in 1/35th scale as well as other scales. This site has reasonable prices and some very good guides.

<http://www.dioramadebris.co.uk/>

You can make your own molds by building a master and using RTV, just like resin molds.

These are the molds I currently use, the pink are **Kencali** brick rubble molds, the company made molds and latex cobblestone sheets. The grey molds are homemade, one is individual bricks, and the other is a running bond brick veneer. The black rock molds are Woodland Scenics, I picked up a bunch from a show.

Mixing the Plaster

Supplies:

- ◆ Molds
- ◆ Freezer paper
- ◆ Plastic cups
- ◆ Coffee stirrers
- ◆ Paint brush
- ◆ Plaster
- ◆ Coloring
- ◆ White glue



Plaster can make a big mess even if you are careful. I cover my work area before starting; my favorite covering is Freezer Paper, paper on one side - plastic on the other. For messy projects like this, the plastic side is up. Wear clothes you can get splattered on, voice of experience.

For mixing, I use disposable plastic cups; I got a bunch at a dollar store (for just a buck). The sides can easily be scraped down, and I recycle them after a couple of uses. The stir stick is a wood coffee stirrer I borrowed from a coffee shop (not Starbucks: their long stirrers are too weak to work with plaster). I cut one end flat to be able to scrape the bottom.



Plaster is usually white, although you can get it colored. When doing so, make sure the color goes all the way through so if a piece chips off you are not left with a glaring white spot for contest judges to point out. Almost any acrylic paint can be used. I use craft paint as well as DIY paint samples. The white plaster will desaturate the color but don't keep pouring in the paint as it will make the plaster weaker. I mix up an intense color and then add it to the mix and am grateful for whatever color it turns out to be. If I use a lot of paint, I will add white glue to the mix. I am going to paint the casting to get the final look, but it is nice to have the insides colored as well.

This is where I screwed up. I did not know how much red craft paint I had before I started mixing. Once I added all my color, I had a nice shade of pink. And the craft paint was going bad so it added lumps. Pink rocks anyone?

You want to get your plaster to water ratio correct. Too thick and it will not flow into the mold, and you will have lots of bubbles. Too thin and the parts will be very weak. Think cream gravy, as in biscuits and gravy. As Goldilocks says, you have to get it just right. But just right has lots of variation. Plaster is kind

of hard to measure by volume as it can be densely packed or loose. You can mix by weight using a digital scale, but SWMBO doesn't let me use her kitchen appliances for modeling since she caught me cooking a figure in the oven!

I measure out the volume of water necessary to fill the molds in one cup. Pour off about half of it. Have your dry plaster in another cup and add it slowly. Always add plaster to water, not the other way around. I stir in the first three spoonfuls and add the color. Continue to add a spoonful at a time. Stir slowly to minimize the bubbles but be aware of the limits of the casting time. It will take a while to thicken, but don't be tempted to dump a glob in as it can go from thin to real thick pretty quickly.

Maybe it is safer to go buy a digital scale.

White glue (PVA, Elmers glue) is another additive. I always add it to Celluclay and Plaster of Paris. If I am forming the bark of a tree with plaster, I will add quite a bit of white glue. This allows the plaster to flex when bending the limbs. If I add a bunch of paint to the plaster, I also add white glue. I don't know if it helps.

I mix by eye, continuing to add the powder until the water won't soak up any more. If all of the powder is wet, the surface is lumpy and there's no layer of water on top, then you've mixed it perfectly. If the surface has dry powder, add a little bit of water with a dropper. If it has gone soupy, add a teaspoon of plaster and stir it in. This mix looks about right.



Don't mix too much plaster. I get out a WS rock mold or two to take any leftover plaster. I usually can fill three molds before the plaster gets too hard so I try to mix just enough for that. Again, courting disaster, I mixed way more plaster than I should have; I guess I was showing off. And PINK!!!

PLASTER TYPE	Weight of Water	Weight of Plaster
Hobby Plaster	65 units	100 units
Moulding Plaster	70 units	100 units
Pottery Plaster	70 units	100 units
White Art Plaster	70 units	100 units
Hydrostone	32 units	100 units
Hydro cal	45 units	100 units
Tuf-stone	32 units	100 units
Ultra-Cal 30	38 units	100 units
Plaster of Paris	65-70 units	100 units



Warmer water helps the plaster set faster, colder water means more working time. The 65 degree room almost doubled the working time. Depending on the working time, let the plaster rest for a minute or two before molding.

Molding the plaster

Supplies:

- ◆ Bucket filled with “wet water.” See instructions below. This will be reused as the cleaning bucket.
- ◆ An old spoon
- ◆ An old brush
- ◆ Scraper such as a wide putty knife or wide tongue depressor
- ◆ Bucket of water
- ◆ Paper towels

First, CLEAN YOUR MOLDS with a toothbrush. Even if I had not neglected cleaning them after their last use, I would still give them a light scrub to get off any dust. If your mold is new or you have properly stored it with talcum powder, wash it to remove the powder.

A key to getting good casts is eliminating any air bubbles in the plaster. As with resin, air will get trapped in the molds as they are filled. Dip the mold in the “wet water” and agitate to get rid of any air bubbles. Extract the mold and shake off the extra

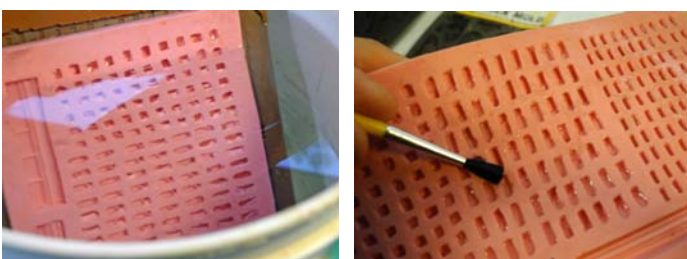
water. Be sure you cover the mold’s complete inner surface. Use a paint brush to do this if you have to. The treatment will help break the surface tension as the mold cavities are filled and help release the bubbles. You can see bubbles in the mold below, shaking the mold in the water will eliminate them.

Set your mold out on the freezer paper. For flat molds, like brick or cobblestone molds, the mold should lie flat on the table. For the WS rock molds I support the mold on a paper towel.



Start filling the cavities with your plaster mix using your spoon. Use the brush to push the plaster into all the corners. Overfill the mold cavities. When they are all filled, agitate the mold. I pick up one corner and bounce it on the table for a bit then do another corner. When the bubbles come up, pop them and the hole will fill with plaster.

If the plaster is no longer filling the cavity, add more. Continue to do this, feeling silly if anyone sees you (SWMBO just walked in). The plaster shrinks when it first starts drying.





Excess plaster gets poured into the WS rock molds so it does not get wasted. I'm cheap that way.



Now wait for the plaster to begin to set up. It will go from watery to gummy. The web sites say 5 minutes, but I found with paint added, it will take a longer, maybe 15 minutes or more. In that time, clean up your brush and spoon in the bucket of water. Do not clean them in the sink.

After the plaster has begun to set up, blot the top of the mold with a paper towel. Then, when the plaster has the consistency of tooth paste, scrape the mold with the scraper. Wipe the scraper on the paper towel and continue to scrape till the mold top is clean. Don't do this too early, especially with runny plaster because it will shrink in the mold and you will get a bad casting.



Let the mold set for between a half hour and one hour. Then you can remove the casts by flexing the mold and they will pop out. Don't dig them out if they don't come. Allow them to dry a while longer. At this point, they are not totally solid so you can carve them, sharpening up engraved lines or breaking up pieces for rubble.

Clean your molds and your tools with a toothbrush. Do not clean them in a sink, use the bucket instead. Let the castings dry overnight.

When gluing plaster, use wood glue. It is stronger than white glue, and it will take any acrylic paint.

Home Depot to the Rescue

As you can see from some of the photos, I colored some bricks a deep red. This is using paint from Home Depot which I bought in sampler size. I mixed red and black to get the brownish color and started all over again.



Here is a pile of the bricks and other castings. PINK – Bah Humbug.



Making Wet Water

If you want good casts, you have to eliminate the bubbles. If the mold is wet, the surface tension is less and air can be easily expelled. The mold rubber is hydrophobic so spraying them with water will not make it wet; you will get a bunch of water bubbles.



The recommended way is to dunk the mold in some "wet water" made of one gallon of water and a couple of drops of dishwasher rinsing agent. Dunk in the mold and agitate it then shake off the excess.

Conclusion

Now that you know how to do it, go out and have fun getting plastered!

Ted



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For more information, contact Tim Darrah (Show Chair), tttimmy@earthlink.net
Mike Reaves (Vendor Coordinator), semperfi03732@msn.com
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NEW ON THE BLOCK



With the recent release of DML's 1/35th M60A2, the old Tamiya's 1970 era "Starship" kit can finally go into retirement!



The new 1/35th IDF Nagmachon APC "Doghouse" from Tiger Models looks fantastic. I wonder how it compares to the soon available HobbyBoss version.



Another 1/35th Merkava variant from Meng. This is the Late Mk.3D LIC (Low Intensity Conflicts) edition.



More 1/35th WWI figures from MB. This six-figure Tankmen kit includes two crew members each for British, French, and German tanks used in the Great War.

AMPS Boresight (Volume 24, Issue 1)

The latest issue of *Boresight* is out. Here is a quick look inside:

- ♦ **Oldie But Goodie Project** by Cesar "Manny" Rodriguez
Building a Tamiya's Panzer II from the 1970s.
- ♦ **IS-4M: "Screaming Mini," Soviet Style** by Cookie Sewell
Part I: History & Development of the IS-4 Heavy Tank.
- ♦ **Disaster In Pink** by Ted Paone
Having fun getting plastered.
- ♦ **Maschinengewehrswagen 36 Walk Around**
Photos by Steven Andreano.
- ♦ **War Stories of the Tankers**
Book review by the Editor.
- ♦ **2016 AMPS International Convention Update** by Tim Darrah

BORESIGHT
THE AMPS MEMBERSHIP MAGAZINE JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016

Oldie But Goodie Project • Disaster In Pink
IS-4M Heavy Tank: "Screaming Mimi," Soviet Style
Maschinengewehrswagen 36 Walk Around
AMPS 2016 International Convention Update



About Us

The Austin Armor Builders Society (AABS) started in 1999 when Don Jones, a member of the local IPMS chapter, decided "what a good idea to get out two nights a month, and on at least one night talk tanks."



AABS is the only scale model club in Central Texas devoted solely to armor modeling. We don't build planes because they are just plain! Our passion is armored fighting vehicles and military figures. Subject of our interest ranges from WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Middle East, to the most recent Gulf War Conflicts.

At each monthly meeting, we talk tanks, swap kits, and share our building techniques and tricks. We also hold regular in-house model contests and organize out-of-town field trips to museums and modeling events. Every odd-numbered year AABS hosts the biggest scale armor modeling show in Texas that attracts some of the best armor modelers in the Lone Star as well as neighboring states.

Since inception AABS is a local chapter of Armor Modeling and Preservation Society (AMPS), a national organization dedicated to the promotion of scale modeling and armored vehicle preservation.

To find out more about AABS, please visit our website or pick up a club flyer at your local hobby shop.

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We are on the web @ AustinArmorBuilders.com

Check out Anders Heintz's fantastic paint job on the 1/35th ISU-152 built by Bob Bethea. Anders' talent is not limited just to figure modeling!

