



Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

December 2017

Experiments In Scale Wood Grain Painting

by John Talley

Wooden items in a scene can provide a lot of details and great background or accent colors depending on how they are used. The problem is that most scale model wood is painted with techniques that are lacking in realism and the full interest and warmth of natural wood grains. Some modelers with extraordinary painting skills manage to pull off a nice looking simulation, but the amount of time spent painting wood grain details and the abilities required are beyond most of us.

I want to paint beautiful wood grains, but since I am a lazy engineer and my painting skills can legitimately be questioned, I need something that is quick and fairly simple. With the goal of beautiful, quick, and simple in mind,

I set about searching for a new wood grain painting technique.



Beautiful natural wood grain Panel. Note the arched grain layers created by the cross-cut milling.

Common Scale Wood Graining Techniques

I started my search by examining the current videos and tutorials for painting model wood grains online. You are probably familiar with the two most common techniques. The first technique involves painting a light wood color base coat followed by a dark wood grain coat that is brushed with a large coarse brush or a sponge.

(Continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

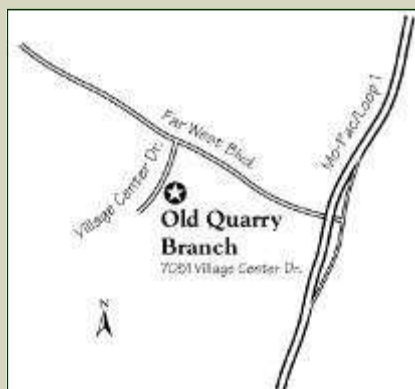
CALENDAR OF EVENTS	2
UPCOMING PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS AND NEWSLETTER ARTICLES	2
FROM THE TURRET	3
2018 AMPS INT'L CONVENTION	7
JOIN AMPS TODAY	8
NEW ON THE BLOCK	9
BORESIGHT PREVIEW	9
ABOUT US	10
MEMBERS' GALLERY	10



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

December 6, 2017

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

- ◆ December 6 - AABS Club Meeting
- ◆ January 3 - AABS Club Meeting
- ◆ January 28 - CALMEX XXXI Civic Center, Lake Charles, LA
- ◆ February 7 - AABS Club Meeting
- ◆ February 17 - Modelfiesta 37 San Antonio Event Center, San Antonio, TX



AABS Officers May 2016 – Apr 2018

John Talley, President
(512) 388-3473, johnwtalley@hotmail.com

Ted Andreas, Jr., Vice-President
tedandreas1@yahoo.com

Eric Choy, Treasurer
(512) 554-9595, aabsco@gmail.com

Ted Paone, Secretary
(512) 635-9516, theopaone@att.net

Eric Choy, Newsletter Editor
(512) 554-9595, aabsco@gmail.com

Joe Fisher, Webmaster
(512) 350-6936,
fisherjoe2014@gmail.com



Upcoming Program Presentations and Newsletter Articles

Month	Program Presentation	Newsletter Article
January 2017	Worth Haggerton	John Talley
February	Russ Holm	Greg Beckman
March*	Bob Bethea	Eric Choy
April	Randy Bumgardner	Bob Bethea
May	Ian Candler	Ian Candler
June*	Dave Bourland	Andrew Bodin
July	Ted Andreas, Jr.	Ted Andreas, Jr.
August	Ted Paone	Rick Herrington
September*	AMPS Judging Review	Greg Beckman
October	Kit Auction	Kevin Hutchison
November	Aaron Smischney	Aaron Smischney
December*	Chris Chany	John Talley
January 2018	Greg Beckman	Chris Chany

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. John Talley's article for January was due on the last Wednesday of December).

* Quarterly contest month



From the Turret

December is always a busy month, both personally and in the club, but I hope our activities around the club, the Christmas party, the monthly meeting, and modeling in general, give everyone some time to have fun and relax.

Speaking of the Christmas party, since it was early this year, it's already too late to remind you about bringing and receiving a white elephant gift for 2017, but it's not too late to remind you to bring your 2016 white elephant to the December meeting. The December meeting is the quarterly contest AND your last chance to bring in your 2016 white elephant completed. Hopefully this isn't the first time you considered your white elephant, or you're going to have a lot of gluing and painting to do in the next couple of days.

I acquired a pair of 1/144th scale Tigers from Rod Bell's collection, so although there are many inspirational images for tank modelers from 1942, 75

years ago, I focused on my searches on the diversity of the use of the Tiger tank already at this early stage of its life.

December of 1942 saw the tiger on two continents in vastly different environments, but pressed into desperate service as a hard-hitting work-horse.



A Tiger deployed to break into Stalingrad in Operation Winter Storm.

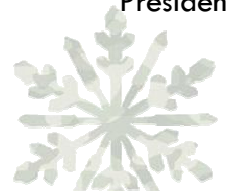
I hope you all enjoy my crazy exploits in the article I wrote for you this month. If it turns out you all know where to buy 1/35th scale wood graining rockers, keep it to yourself and let me enjoy my insanity!

Even though we just partied with each other a couple of days ago, or rather a few hours ago as I write this column, I'm really looking forward to seeing each of you at the meeting on Wednesday evening. It's my best chance to see what real modelers do!



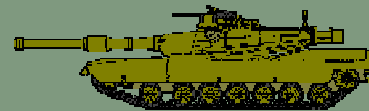
A Tiger in Tunisia, deployed in December to push back the allied advance.

John Talley
President



MERRY CHRISTMAS





(Continued from page 1)

This technique is simple, and it creates some decent looking fine grains. But it misses the arched graining found in real-world wood planks and siding.

The second most common scale wood painting technique involves physically modeling some of the grain in plastic, by either molding grooves or using a knife to cut grooves in sheets, and then using a thinned dark paint to flow into the grooves, creating a deep grain or dried and cracked wood look. This method is also somewhat simple, and it can look nice for particular purposes, but takes some time and in my opinion doesn't provide a more general solution.



A common scale wood grain painting technique.

Real-World Wood Graining Techniques

When I was a teen, I spent several summers working with my uncle restoring his Greek Revival mansion. One of the many things I learned during this time was the historical use of feathering to turn common wood, like cheap pine, into beautiful and expensive looking wood and marble. Not satisfied with the current scale wood graining techniques, and knowing there are other ways to create great looking faux wood graining at real-world scale (or 1:1 as we say), I started researching how "real" painters create their graining. To my surprise, other creative and inventive people have developed tools that enable less skilled individuals to paint faux wood grains that look very realistic.

The two most important tools are wood graining rockers and wood graining rollers. Rollers are similar

to the rockers, but wrap around a small tube, which would be far too small at scale for our use, so I focused on rockers.

A wood graining rocker is essentially a circularly concentric multi-grooved and ridged pad, mimicking the rings of a tree, wrapped on a curved surface and attached to a handle for control.



To create a faux wood grain, a light wood color base coat is applied to a surface, and once dried, a second coat of a darker color paint or stain is applied and then quickly wiped with the wood graining rocker, varying the rockers angle to the surface as it is pulled across the surface. The ridges of the rocker essentially scrape the wet darker paint off the surface in varying patterns depending on the surface angle. Because the grooves mimic a tree's rings, the paint removed simulates the varying cross-cut patterns of real wood cut in planes during milling.



Real-world woodgraining with a rocker. Note the arched and curved grains that provide a natural look.

Scaling Real World Techniques

After discovering wood graining rockers, I immediately searched for 1/35th scale rockers. It's possible my Internet search skills failed me, but I was disappointed to find nothing like these tools available in small scale. Not yet beaten, I determined I could make my own scaled down rocker, I just didn't know how.



My first experiments in creating a rocker were based on cutting grooves into sheet styrene, but this proved very difficult and didn't go far. Next, I tried carving grooves into craft foam sheets, but the foam was too soft, and it didn't hold shape with precision. I also tried slicing the same craft foam sheets and then wrapping the slices into concentric circles to form the rocker grain pattern. But, again, the foam was too soft to hold shape at such a small scale.

I also considered using baked modeling clay, which I was fairly certain I could mold to the precision needed for the concentric rings, but I had no idea how to maintain a consistent level across the grain of the rocker surface that is necessary to maintain contact with the painted surface the entire width of the rocker no matter what angle the rocker is tipped.

The first sign of success came when I stopped trying to scale down a real-world scale rocker. I realized what I really needed was not a 1/35th scale model of a rocker but to create the same concentric ring pattern on a curved envelope (application surface) with rings appropriately spaced for 1/35th scale wood. Turning that thought in my brain and applying the little creativity I have remaining, I came up with a plan.

To create the rings, I wrapped sheet styrene around a core of a styrene rod inside a tube that itself was inside a larger tube. The inner rod and tubes were to form the inner most rings, while consecutive wrapped sheets formed more and more outer rings.

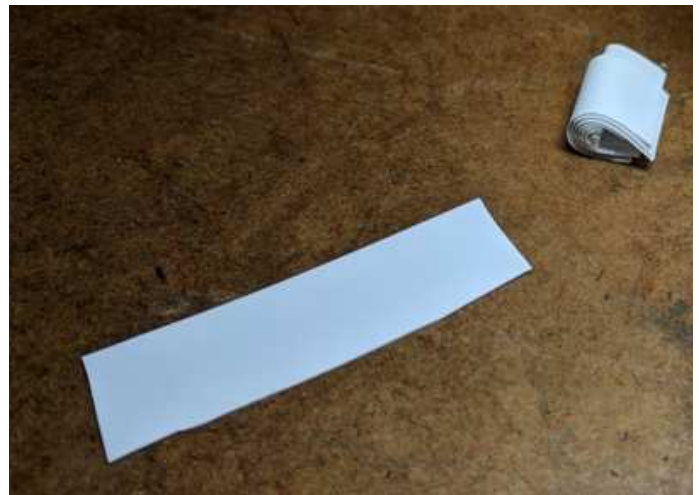
To put space between the rings, I wrapped shorter styrene sheets between taller styrene sheets. To allow for the grain to become a uniform parallel pattern, I only wrapped each layer in a half-pipe, allowing for a flat edge at the center of the tube being created.

After all of the styrene sheets were wrapped, I shaped the top of the tool in a curved envelope to allow varying cross-cut patterns similar to the full-sized rocker tools.

The images below show this contraption better than I can describe it.



Initial styrene cut to form the inner core of the graining tool.



Midway in the sheet wrapping process of forming the tool.



Left: Styrene sheet wrapping complete. Right: The wrapped sheet ends shaved down to form a half-pipe.



I was quite pleased with the “Wood Graining Tool” (WGT-1) I had created until I tried using it. I found I had completely underestimated how flat the surface of the rings needed to be for the tool to be effective in scraping paint. All I made was a mess.

So using my ingenuity as it were, I sanded the curved top surface of the tool to get a flat cross-cut at any angle I tilted the tool. The problem was I hadn’t taken the sanding into account when determining how tall the styrene sheets needed to be or how much shorter the spacing sheets needed to be. After sanding the outer area of the curve, the inner rod-tube core had all become solid surfaces without spacing between grain-layers.

When I tried to use the “WGT-1a”, the results I found were exactly what I expected: the solid outer area and solid core area of the tool made the tool useless. But I was encouraged by the results from the areas of the tool where spacing between sheets remained. The work on WGT-1 and WGT-1a was frustrating and encouraging at the same time.

After a break of a week or so to quell my frustrations and regain my creative energies, I used lessons learned from WGT-1 and went to work on “WGT-2.” This time I dropped the use of the inner core of rod and tubes because I couldn’t put space between them to provide the “grain” deeper than a few millimeters, and I wanted more than a centimeter of play for the flat-surface sanding I knew would be necessary.

I also made the sheet styrene taller and left the spacing sheets short to provide enough depth for quite a bit of sanding. The extra depth in the space between sheets would end up helping with paint scraping as well since it gives the paint someplace to go.



My final adjustment was to extend the half-pipe into a U shape to give maximum space for

shaping the flat edge and to provide more groove depth for holding scraped paint when using the flat edge.

Scale Woodgraining Results

The evening of work on WGT-2 was much less frustrating than the one with WGT-1. The initial tests show vast improvements in quality of woodgraining results, and I’m quite happy with the progress. The test result images below were the results from my first use of the tool. I believe, through a little practice, the results could get even better. The experiences in creating, and results in using WGT-2 have also given me thoughts on WGT-3, but that will be for another day...

John



Initial test results using Wood Graining Tool-2 (WGT-2).



Looking closely, WGT-2 results are good, but I have hopes to improve with WGT-3.





THE 2018 AMPS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION DAYTON, OHIO, MAY 3-5

That's right. THE armor modeling event in the U.S. is heading to Dayton, Ohio, the home of the **U.S. Air Force Museum!** Our theme this year is 'Mishaps and Oh Crap!' Tanks get in all sorts of predicaments, so we hope to see lots of creative entries.

Enter your models in the competition and get the feedback and reinforcement from your peers. You may even be rewarded with a Gold medal or be among the recipients of 14+ special awards.

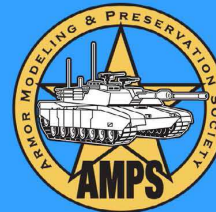
Our seminars connect you with experts in the field that will inspire you to finish that stalled project. Enjoy presentations on military vehicle history and research.

Modeling vendors come from all over the U.S. and abroad so you will no doubt find that book, accessory or model you've been looking for.

Mike Reaves, Vendor Coordinator
semperfi03732@msn.com
706.594.7109

Glen Martin, Sponsor Coordinator
WalkerBullDogBoy@verizon.net

Dave Koukol, Event Chairman
Dave.Koukol@ipmsdayton.com
937.602.6033



Hope Hotel &
Richard C. Holbrooke
Conference Center
10823 Chidlaw Rd.
Area A, Gate 12A
Wright Patterson AFB
Dayton, OH 45433

Please visit
amps-armor.org for
the latest event and
registration details.





JOIN *AMPS* TODAY

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ **POSTAL CODE:** _____

COUNTRY: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

1 Year US (\$30) 2 Year US (\$55) 3 Year US (\$80)

IF PAYING BY CHECK OR MONEY ORDER SEND YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES AND COMPLETED FORM TO:



AMPS
MEMBERSHIP DEPT.
P.O. BOX 543
ELKTON, MD 21922



All payments must be made in U.S. funds.

AMPS accepts payments by check and money order, as well as PayPal.

To join using PayPal, just visit the **AMPS** website:

www.amps-armor.org

and click on "join **AMPS**" If paying by check or money order, send dues and completed form to the address on the form.



New On The Block



A brand new 1/35th Archer with decent figures from Tamiya. Joy to the world!



Much anticipated M31 from Takom is finally here. Now that we have a proper 1/35th injection plastic kit, one has to ponder how to dispose of all the resin conversions that we all accumulated from yester-years...



Also arrived just in time for Christmas are this pair of quarterscale Tamiya kits: German Heavy Tractor SS-100 and US Army MBT M1A2 Abrams.

AMPS Boresight (Volume 25, Issue 6)

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

- ◆ U.S. Army T30 Cargo Carrier "Tiny" by John Kirkpatrick.
- ◆ Bright Lens, Dull Tank by Eric Choy.
- ◆ Soldier's Creed by Paul Webb.
- ◆ 2018 AMPS International Convention Update by Chuck Willis.
- ◆ Working with Photoetch (Part II) by Mike Roof.
- ◆ Local Chapter News





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 least one night talk tanks."



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.

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.

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.



New AABS website coming soon...

Another nice 1/35th diorama from Greg Beckman. The vehicle is Hobby Boss's latest ASU-57 airborne tank destroyer.

