



# Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

March 2019



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## A DAY AT THE DMZ

By Eric Choy

**M**y sister Kay and I woke up super early (6am) in preparation for our tour of the DMZ. We showed up, according to instruction, at the tourist office at 7:40am to sign in, show our passports, and get our passes. At 8am the tour bus left Seoul with only six tourists onboard: Kay and I, a couple from

Orlando, and two other guys. Apparently no one else in the capital of South Korea wanted to visit the “beautiful” DMZ on a late January chilly (34°F) morning! (We found out later that was not true...)

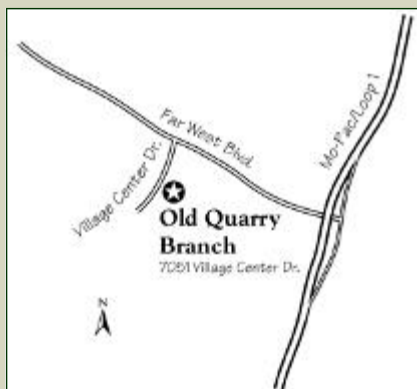
Our guide was a cute twenty-something Korean lady named Sophie. Her English was good but not so well with American humor (I put that to a test later on during the tour). Sophie

*(Continued on page 5)*

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

**March 6, 2019**

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](mailto: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

- ◆ **March 6 - AABS Club Meeting**
- ◆ **April 3 - AABS Club Meeting**
- ◆ **April 27 - Modelmania**, Stafford Convention Center, Stafford, TX
- ◆ **May 1 - AABS Club Meeting**
- ◆ **May 9 to 11 - 2019 AMPS International Convention**, Adam's Mark Hotel, Buffalo, NY
- ◆ **May 11 - LSMMS Modeling Day** Shady Hollow Community Center, Austin, TX
- ◆ **September 14 - AMPS Centex Armor Expo** Georgetown Community Center, Georgetown, TX



### AABS Officers May 2018 – Apr 2020

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## Schedule of Upcoming Program Presentations and Newsletter Articles

Month	Program Presentation	Newsletter Article
January 2019	Mike Lamm	Greg Beckman
February	Ian Candler	Mike Lamm
March*	Eric Choy	Eric Choy
April	Bob Bethea	Bob Bethea
May	Dave Bourland	Greg Beckman
June*	Chris Chany	Ted Paone
July	Ted Andreas, Jr	Ted Andreas, Jr
August	Rick Herrington	Rick Herrington
September*	AMPS Judging Review	Chris Chany
October	Kit Auction	Bob Bethea
November	Aaron Smischney	Greg Beckman
December*	Alex Gashev	Russ Holm
January 2020	Mike Maloney	Kevin Hutchison

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. Greg Beckman's article for January 2019 was due on the last Wednesday of December).

\* Quarterly contest month

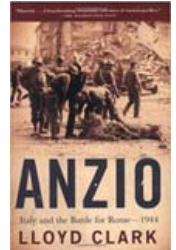


## *From the Turret*

**G**reetings! We are into March already. I would like to compliment **Bob Bethea** and **Henry Nunez** for another great workshop at Andrea Depot USA (February 3-4). I am always amazed at both of them regarding their talent and skill level.

As mentioned last month, a great deal of fighting in Anzio took place seventy-five years ago. Churchill was not pleased at the results, and by March, neither was Adolph Hitler. At Hitler's insistence, the Germans were constantly trying to eliminate the Anzio beachhead, and they suffered massive casualties in defeat as a result.

By the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, the US 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division had blunted a major German counteroffensive. The Germans went on the defense at this time. *Anzio* by Lloyd Clark is a good read about this aspect of the fighting in Italy.



Elsewhere in the world, Australian forces concluded the Huon Peninsula campaign with a victory over Japanese forces in Papua New Guinea. This campaign had started in late 1943, and was fought over extremely rough terrain.



*An Australian Matilda in New Guinea*

*(Continued on page 4)*



It is that time of the year again. Please have your club **\$12** dues ready at the next meeting. 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.**"

Some members may notice his dues are slightly higher than usual. That may be a result of the incurrence of last year's White Elephant (WE) contest penalty. As we all aware there is a \$10 mandatory "donation" to the club treasury if one fails to build his WE kit!



(Continued from page 3)

In other fighting against the Japanese, the Chindits under General Orde Wingate were scoring victories behind the lines in March. Unfortunately, towards the end of the month, Wingate would be killed in an airplane crash.

On the Russian Front, Joseph Stalin was of the opinion that victory in Estonia was key to knocking Finland out of the war. Yet, in spite of a great numerical superiority, the Russians were unable to beat the Germans and their Estonian conscripts. During the month of March, the Red Army's second and third Narva offensives were soundly defeated.

In some ways the fighting in Estonia was almost a civil war. Estonians not only served with German forces, many Red Army units were also manned by Estonian soldiers.

Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the pressure on the Axis was mounting, and Hitler became concerned that

Hungary would drop out of the war. So, in March he ordered the occupation of Hungary.

Well, so much for history. I will sign off for now. In the meantime, keep building and painting!

**Ted Andreas, Jr.**  
President



Harald Nugieseks, a member of the 20<sup>th</sup> SS Estonian Division, survived the war and lived to be 93 years old. He passed away in 2014.

## The DMZ in Less than 500 Words

**A**fter the armistice was signed in 1953, a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) was created to serve as a buffer between the two Koreas:



Inside the DMZ, a **Joint Security Area (JSA)** is set up at the village of Panmunjom to meet and negotiate any matter that concerns the two sides. Contrary to common belief, the JSA is not run by goose-stepping North and Rayban-equipped South Korean soldiers. Instead it is administrated by **United Nations Command**.

While the DMZ is off limit to civilians, the JSA was open to the public everyday of the week (except Monday) when the tension between North and South was normal. All that changed after the US and North Korea summit in Singapore last year. One of the things Trump and Kim agreed to do was to reduce the military presence in the DMZ and turned the JSA into a tourist area. United Nations Command did not exactly know how to implement this new policy, so in late 2018 they barred all entries into the JSA to let the two Koreas work out the details.

What all that mean is I missed the chance of going to the JSA, the highlight of the DMZ. As far as watching the guards from both sides stare each other to death, the chance is slim we will experience it in reality ever again.

One last thing: you cannot go to the DMZ by yourself. You have to join a tour. There are a lot of sightseeing companies in Seoul that offer DMZ tours. The one I used was the official partner of USO. The price was slightly higher, but the tour was conducted in English, and we had better info and insights of the DMZ.

(Continued from page 1)

explained our itinerary and gave us some interesting (and amusing) facts of the DMZ. Among them were:

- In 2018 alone, over 1,000 North Koreans defected to the South. Only one “loony,” according to Sophie, attempted vice-versa by crossing the Chinese border. Apparently he did not fit the perfect defector profile and was later sent back to the South!
- In response to North Korea’s 24-7 propaganda blast on their loudspeakers, the South Korean Army retaliated by playing K-pop music non-stop to the other side. One North Korean Border Guard became such a huge K-pop fan that he defected to the South! He planned to become a singer after repatriation.

Even though it took our bus an hour to reach the DMZ, Seoul is only 35 miles from the border, well within range of the North Korean artillery units. The proximity explained why during the Korean War Seoul kept changing hands between the North Korean and UN forces.

Our first stop was **Imjingak Park**. The ground where the park is located now was a refugee camp during the Korean War. Nowadays it is a place to console families that were separated. The bridge over the Imjin River is called the “Freedom Bridge” because it was used by the South to repatriate POWs returning from the North. Among the relics in the park is a Korean built locomotive used and abandoned by the

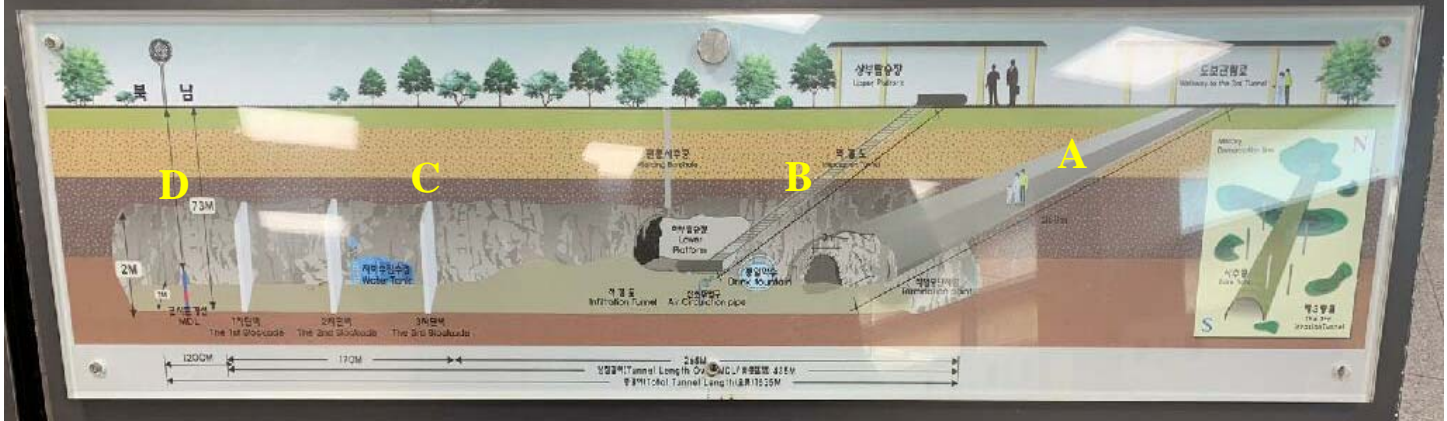


Red Chinese troops. As you can see in the photo, it got shot up pretty bad.

Our next stop was the **Third Infiltration Tunnel**. Its existence came from the tip of a North Korean defector in 1978. Compared to the other two discovered earlier, this tunnel was most alarming to the South as it was over 5,200 feet long. The North







Third Infiltration Tunnel layout: (A) Service tunnel built by the South, (B) mine-cart sized rail tunnel, (C) Third Barricade, (D) Military Demarcation Line (MDL).

initially denied and blamed the South Korean military for building it. Then the North admitted its construction and claimed it was solely for the purpose of mining coal. That turned out to be a poor excuse as the geological makeup of the area is nothing but granite! (Since 1953, four tunnels have been discovered by the South. Many believe there may be over twenty yet to be found!)

Because the tunnel is beneath a South Korean Army base, no camera or phone is allowed inside the tunnel, but we were permitted to take a photo of this illustration inside the greeting hall (see photo above).

After surrounding all our electronic gears and putting on hardhats, we walked down a steep incline (a 390 yards service tunnel!) to the actual infiltration tunnel itself. We noticed a small track was installed for padded seat mine carts to transport VIP visitors. Since we were nobodies, we walked!



Some illegally taken photos of the service tunnel I found on the Internet.

Once we reached the bottom of the service tunnel, we were now 240 feet below ground. The temperature was at least 10°F warmer than the surface. The portion of the infiltration tunnel that was opened to the public was about 290 yards. It was wet, dimly lighted, and the clearance was less than five feet in most places.

It took another 15 minutes of walking and ducking before we reached the third barricade, the end of the public tour. Through a tiny window in the wall of the barricade, we could see the second barricade. Our guide Sophie told us before the three concrete barricades were built (by the South), both sides had soldiers armed to their teeth stationed on each side of the MDL!



And then we went back up the same way we came down! On the way back to the service tunnel, I spotted many holes in the wall drilled by the North Koreans for placing dynamites, and indeed some portions of the tunnel were painted black to look like it had coal in it.



Going up the incline was painful! We had to stop twice to catch our breath. While resting on a bench, we saw people going down like we did earlier. I was tempted to tell them “Go back! There is nothing to see down there!”

Back in the parking lot, we found a small museum and a huge gift shop [sic]. Sophie mentioned North Korea leader Kim Jong-Un has a taste for home grown whiskey made from mushroom, and the couple from Orlando made a beeline to the gift shop to look for some! Kay and I barely crawled our way back to surface, so we went to the museum instead. Inside the only thing of interest was a model of the JSA.



Outside the museum we saw huge colorful DMZ letter blocks. The whole place had a theme-park feel to it. Chances are it won't be long before it actually turns into one!

By this time of the day, more buses showed up, and I could hear Mandarin spoken everywhere. They were tourists from the Mainland. I asked Sophie if the other tour guides had a different story to tell since China was on the other side of the Korean War. Sophie did not know, and she told me all the Chinese tours were organized by companies in China.

Our next stop was the **Dora Observatory**. Built on top of Mount Dora, I'm still not quite sure the exact purpose of this observatory. On the roof top there were a line of binoculars to look over the DMZ, JSA, and the nearby North Korean city Kaesong. The building had an auditorium and a café on the third

floor, but the other floors were absolutely empty. The structure was civilian, so obviously it had no military value. Yet it was located inside a South Korean Army base. Bizarre!



DMZ in the foreground and North Korea in the mist.

As we made our way back to the tour bus from Mount Dora, we encountered a military installation that was covered with slogans for reunification. Both Pyongyang and Seoul are obsessed with the notion of it. So much so that each government has a “reunification ministry” set up so that it can spring into action to govern the other side should the two countries become one at any minute's notice!



**Dorasan Train Station** was the last stop of our tour. But before we got there, we made a quick detour for lunch inside the cafeteria of the nearby Dorasan “Transit Hall” (more like a Customs House in western terminology). Dorasan also has a checkpoint where the southbound traffic from North Korea — hardly any these days — must stop for customs inspection.







*Trying my luck on this South Korean guard's sidearm, it turned out he was just a dummy!*



economic development project in Kaesong so workers from the North and South could work together. Unfortunately, this project turned into a political football for Pyongyang and Seoul. Any time the tension of the peninsular rose, the work in the park suspended (actually not the work but the workers were barred from entering the park!). The last closure took place at the height of the North Korean Nuclear/Missile testing program in 2016. After the Pyongyang expelled all workers from the South, Seoul cut off electricity and water supply to the park.

Things may be looking up since the meeting of Trump and Kim in Singapore last year. Both Koreas apparently have expressed their desires to reopen the park, again.



*Kay, Sophie, and I back in Seoul*

After lunch as we were leaving the Transit Hall, Sophie warned us not to take photos since there were North Korean guards on the other side of the checkpoint. I jokingly asked her "if I wish to defect, is this place for me to run for it?" Her slim eyes opened wide, and I could see panic on her face. Then she realized it was just a joke, and we all laughed!

Anyway, back to Dorasan Station. This modern looking station was built for two purposes. First, it was supposed to be the future connecting point to Pyongyang, the rest of North Korea, and eventually the Trans Siberian Railway to Moscow and Europe (you can't fault the Koreans for planning way ahead!). Second, it was used by workers from Seoul to commute to work at the nearby **Kaesong Industrial Park** in North Korea. Back in 2002, the two Koreas agreed to initiate a collaborative

On our way back to town, both Kay and I dozed off on the bus. It was still early in the afternoon when we concluded our DMZ tour.

**Eric**





# **2019 AMPS CENTEX Armor Expo**

## **September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

An AMPS Regional Show



### *Show Theme "Artillery - King of the Battlefield"*

Any towed, emplaced, or self propelled weapon that lays **INDIRECT FIRE** (i.e. shell, rocket(s), or missile(s) delivered at a target which cannot be seen by the aimer) is eligible for the show theme award.

# AMPS International Convention

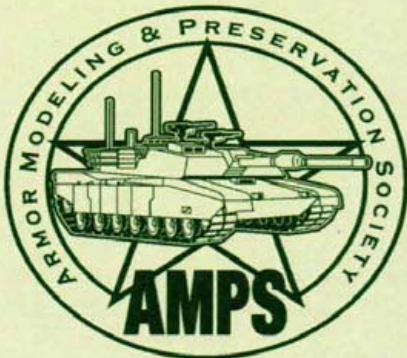
May 9-11

Adam's Mark Hotel  
120 Church St  
Buffalo, NY 14202

Brought to you by  
AMPS Niagara Frontier  
& AMPS Canada



# SNOW



Our convention theme this year is "Snow." Join us in Buffalo for the biggest and best armor modeling event in the U.S. Enjoy vendors, seminars and a huge raffle. The display room is well-lit for viewing the models.

The outstanding venue is located on the shores of Lake Erie, adjacent to the Erie County Naval and Serviceman's Park with indoor parking and easy vendor access. The hotel is a full service facility.

Downtown Buffalo affords easy access to I-90, the Peace Bridge from the QEW/Canada, the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport and Amtrak.

Get the latest event, registration and schedule information at [amps-armor.org](http://amps-armor.org)



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<b>MEMBERSHIP TYPES</b>	<b>1 Year</b>	<b>2 Year</b>	<b>3 Year</b>
Regular U.S.	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$30)	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$55)	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$80)
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Regular Rest of the World	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$40)	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$75)	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$110)
Junior (17 or under)	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$15)	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$30)	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$45)
Family Member*	<input type="checkbox"/> ( \$ 5 )	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$10)	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$15)

\*For anyone living at the same address with a regular active member. Family member DOES NOT receive an individual copy of *Boresight* but enjoy vendor discounts, website access, and can enter in the national competition as long as he/she is accompanied by the regular active member.



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[www.amps-armor.org](http://www.amps-armor.org)

## New On The Block



Made famous by the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Trumpeter's has released the FROG-5 artillery rocket system in 1/35<sup>th</sup> scale.



Two new Soviet-era 1/35<sup>th</sup> kits from Miniart have arrived: BMR-1 w/ KMT-7 Mine Plow (top) and the 1.5t truck based BM-8-24 "Katyusha" multiple rocket launcher (bottom).



The second Dioramag, a magazine devoted to diorama building, is out by PLA Edition.



The latest 1/35<sup>th</sup> kit from AFV Club is their ROC (Taiwan) CM-32/33 "Clouded Leopard" IFV. A painting mask is also available (sold separately) for applying the 4-color digital camo pattern.

## AMPS Boresight (Volume 27, Issue 1)

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

- ◆ Meng ZSU-23-4 by Paul Webb
- ◆ A Dutch Treat: Scale Model Challenge 2018 by Chuck Aleshire
- ◆ Tool Humvee by John Tapsell
- ◆ A Sino-Morphed Ha-Go by Eric Choy
- ◆ 2019 AMPS International Convention Update
- ◆ Know Your Officer





## 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.”



AABS is the first 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 @ [austinamps.org](http://austinamps.org)



*The War Memorial of Korea has this SU-100 in its outdoor collection. Most likely captured from the invading North Korean Army, the history of this Soviet-made tank destroyer remains unclear.*