



Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

June 2019

Flat, Straight and Square

By Ted Paone

The title of this article may remind you of a crazy old girlfriend joke, "Put down that Xacto knife, honey. I love you more than photoetch!" But **flat**, **straight**, and **square** are three properties that armor modelers must be aware of when building their models.

Humans can easily detect things which are out of kilter as our eyes are tuned to symmetry. Model judges often detect that "something doesn't look right" before zooming into a symmetry problem which twists the chassis (Gamma Goat excepted). Although new plastic kits are better engineered, my stash contains a dozen older Shermans and a cupboard full of resin kits which needs to be properly built. How do you make sure that your tank/vehicle has all the road wheels aligned or that all 18 tires are flat on the ground?

Establishing a Baseline

You don't need a machinist's tool chest, but you will need a few tools to establish your baseline accuracy. A stout metal straight edge defines straightness and flatness, and a metal square sets right angles. Xacto and Zona make squares and triangles. You can also pick up a short metal ruler at any DIY stores. Always check the accuracy of your tools before you start using it. I have a cabinet which leans because I was using a new but inaccurate square! You can make them more useful by gluing sandpaper to their backsides to stop them from sliding when drawing or scribing a line.

One tool I recommend is the **True Sander** from Northwest Short Line (maker of the Chopper). This tool holds sandpaper in the sides of an aluminum carrier which you use to sand the part held against a perpendicular fence. There is an additional protractor miter bar for sanding other angles. Sanding all the edges of a rectangle makes it a true rectangle with right angles and parallel sides.

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

June 5, 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.

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

- ◆ June 5 - AABS Club Meeting
- ◆ June 8 - 2009 SoonerCon Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany, OK
- ◆ July 3 - AABS Club Meeting
- ◆ August 7 - AABS Club Meeting
- ◆ September 14 - AMPS Centex Armor Expo
Georgetown Community Center, Georgetown, TX



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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	Ted Paone	Greg Beckman
June*	Rick Herrington	Ted Paone
July	Ted Andreas, Jr	Ted Andreas, Jr
August	Chris Chany	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

Greetings! I hope everyone had a great Memorial Day weekend. I certainly enjoyed my little break from work.

Although this is old news by now, CONGRATUALIONS to all who participated in the Sherman group build (see page 10). We racked up two top awards at the Houston show, and we plan to enter again at the ASMS show later this year.

This month I want to write briefly about two big events that happened in June 75 years ago. One is sometimes referred to as the “forgotten” event, while the other is one of the best remembered battles of World War II.

In June 1944, the Allies took Rome away from the Germans. It is sometimes referred to as the “forgotten” event because it was overshadowed by the Normandy invasion. But being the first Axis capitol city to fall to the Allies, the timing of this significant event is also controversial.

General Mark Clark had finally gotten his breakout from Anzio and his breakthrough at Cassino. Clark could have used both prongs of advancing Allied troops to encircle the retreating German forces. Instead, he redirected many of the troops under him to head for Rome. This was not at all pleasing to Field Marshall Alexander, his superior in Italy. Alexander wanted the elimination of as many of the battle-hardened German forces as possible, and Rome could wait a while for the inevitable capture. It is suspected that Clark was putting his personal glory ahead of sound strategy. And as already mentioned,

the taking of Rome did not get nearly the attention as Normandy did.



Mark Clark entering Rome

Nevertheless, for the Allied soldiers who had endured great hardship during the struggles to liberate Italy, it was a grand event. The American troops entering the city were greeted by large cheering crowds.



D-Day is a military term and was used numerous times in World War II to mark the beginning of a military operation. However, D-Day is now almost exclusively the term used for the cross-channel

assault on German occupied Normandy on June 6, 1944. Preceding the seaborne assault was the airborne assault. Hours before allied troops hit the beaches, thousands of American and British forces were dropped behind enemy lines by parachutes and gliders.



US airborne troopers applying "Indians war paints" to their faces.

The airborne aspect of the invasion is well worth an article by itself. The bottom line, however, is that although this operation did not go well in all aspects, it had a significant impact on the outcome of the fighting. The airborne forces contributed greatly by disrupting Axis communications and denying important avenues of approach for the Germans to counterattack the beach landings.



Graffiti on the side of a British glider.

Cornelius Ryan's book, *The Longest Day*, provides a fascinating look at all aspects of the D-Day invasion. *Band of Brothers* by Stephen Ambrose highlights the actions of a specific airborne unit from D-Day to VE Day. Both are highly recommended.

On the seaborne assault, the American units were responsible for breaking through German defenses at Utah and Omaha beaches. Omaha turned out to be the hardest objective to take. The casualties suffered by the 1st and 29th U.S. Infantry Divisions were very high.



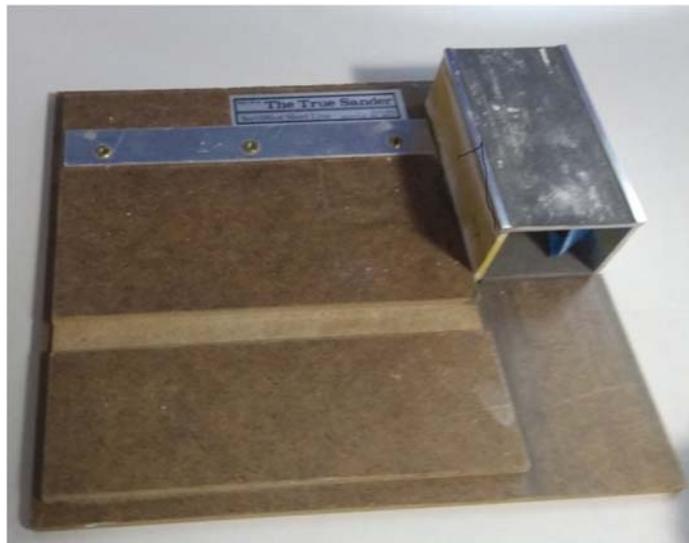
The success of the Allied assault may well have denied the Germans the time needed to fully develop their "super" weapons that could have possibly changed the outcome of the war. And even if the Allies, including the Soviet Union, would have still prevailed, the loss of life would have been even worse than it was.

Best wishes to all and remember to keep building and painting.

Ted Andreas, Jr.
President



(Continued from page 1)



The baseline tools can be pretty big, even if they are built for modeling. If you need to check the squareness of a tank hull, you have to make your own special tool which fits exactly where you need and does what you want. The True Sander makes that easy.

My favorite material for making additional tools is polycarbonate acrylic sheet. It is not affected by styrene glue (polystyrene cement does not affect acrylic. Acrylic has its own cement, Weldbond #4. You can build directly on it without the model pieces becoming permanently stuck). It remains flat and is easily shaped by hand and power tools. You used to be able to buy the cut-offs from the local plastic supply store cheaply, but they have all been recycled now. You can buy 10 pounds of it on the web, and that should last you several years. You can recycle some old acrylic award plaques as well.

Truly Flat

I build on platforms made of thick (3/8 inch) acrylic sheet. These are very flat and can be used as a reference when making sure all the wheels touch the ground or the track is not floating.

To make the platforms, I first checked the flatness of the platform using a metal straight edge. Then I cut

the platforms using my table saw to create a new straight machined edge. A light sanding with the True Sander removes any saw marks from the edges and squares them to the top/bottom. These are cut to fit my bench vice which tilts and turns to give me access to all sides of the model without touching it.

On my main building platform, I have glued strips all the way around the top the top to keep stuff from sliding off. On one platform I glued taller acrylic pieces to two edges to give me some 90 degree angles. I use this when I am building boxes, I can clamp to the edge with a small clamp. I left the corner open for access for gluing. Another one I used double sided tape to add some square ABS tube sections. These are useful for assembling lengths of indy tracks.



Medium density fiberboard (MDF) is manufactured so the top and bottom sides are flat and parallel. You can glue wet/dry sandpaper to scraps from the wood shop to create some very flat sanding tools. Each side is a different grit. You can wet sand with them, but if the edge gets wet, it will absorb water and





get screwed up. Throw it away and varnish the edges of the replacement so it will last longer. If you ever build vacuum formed kits, you will thank me for this tip.

Straight

Straight is pretty easy: just use a good steel straight edge.



This is a specialty tool from Micromark.

I'll tape a short ruler to my platform to align the road wheels. I would think this would be helpful if you are doing a tank with overlapping roadwheels, one layer of wheels at a time, but I don't build those types of armor. I glued sandpaper to the back of some of my rulers to prevent them from sliding when I am scribing a line.

It is tricky to create parallel lines. I tape down a piece of plastic abutting the original line. This gives me an edge from which I can then use a compass to draw several arcs of the proper separation. I connect the tops with the ruler.

For a line of rivets which follow an edge, I create a tool by gluing a square shaped crosspiece to a flat plate. Then, from the edge of the crosspiece edge, I measure and drill a hole big enough for a pencil lead. I put the plate on the work surface, and butt the crosspiece against the edge. The pencil fits in the hole, and everything is glided along the edge. I extend to the corners with a straight edge. I've used this method to align the photoetch sand shield brackets on Shermans. It's easier than eyeballing.

The flat sanding tools made above can sand a

straight edge on plastic held perpendicular to the surface. However, you must be careful you are not tilting the plastic one way or another. This takes a little practice. I usually will cut the edge slightly outside the pencil line and sand it down to the line.

Like Square, Man

Right angles and perpendicular plates are used everywhere when scratch building and are also important as you build some of the older DML (Dragon) kits. There are squares available for model building. The two I use are a metal Xacto square which I glued sandpaper to the bottom and a Midwest Products triangle. The triangle has a lip which you abut to your shape. The lip is pretty tall so I sanded down one side to 30 mils, the thickness I use most of the time when scratchbuilding. It also has angle markings if I need to draw or scribe a specific angle.



When using the metal square, I abut both the workpiece and the square to a straight piece of plastic so they are easier to keep aligned.





Commercial squares are usually pretty big. If I want to make sure the tires of my jeep are perpendicular or the bogies on my Dragon Sherman are aligned, I have to use a much smaller square. I save most of my acrylic scraps so I can easily make a tool I need. Using the True Sander, I can sand all four sides of a small piece of acrylic. The tool ensures it is a rectangle.



I can glue on a foot, and it will stand upright. The edge will be perpendicular to the build platform. I can also glue a cross piece on it and make a little T-square. I scratch a square line to make an alignment tool.

Once the tool works, I label it. I've learned from experience as I have many dozen tools and templates whose purpose is unknown.

The Chopper does not cut square; the blade pierces the plastic and cuts at a slight angle. Commercial miter boxes don't clamp the saw tightly enough and

eventually wear down. I built an accurate square miter box for use with razor saws, but it is several of those unlabeled pieces whose use is a puzzle.

I may build slow and not win a lot of medals, but I've learned to build models so the wheels are aligned, the tracks are straight, and the model sits on the base. And if something is floating or out of alignment, well, just put it in a diorama.

The True Sander, which I picked up on a whim and on sale, is an essential tool. It's even more useful than the Chopper. Don't scrimp on a good steel straight edge and a small modeling square. Don't be afraid of modifying your tools or creating new ones.

Few of these ideas are mine. I have learned much from club members, people on the Internet (Paul Budzik – I mean you) and books by such authors as Steve Zaloga and Chris Mrosko. I stand on the shoulder of giants, desperately trying not to fall off.

Ted



March Is Quarterly Contest Month!

Bring in your finished model this month to win U.S. Treasury issued greenbacks! Our quarterly contest cash prizes are **\$40, \$30, and \$20** for the first, second, and third place winners.

To enter you must be a member in good standing (i.e. you need to pay your dues). Any model that has not placed in previous quarterly contests is eligible to win. The **"no sweep"** rule is strictly enforced (i.e. no single contestant is allowed to win ALL THREE cash prizes in any of our in-house contest.

If you like to participate but haven't paid your 2019 dues, please do so before our meeting or the show-and-tell session.

Rare Finds in Canada

By Eric Choy

Sometimes objects that you desire are a lot closer than you think. No, I'm not referring to the images in the passenger side mirror of your car! This is a case of finding historic AFVs used in both world wars.

Last month after the conclusion of this year's AMPS International Show in Buffalo NY, I decided to cross the border and spend a few days touring Ontario, Canada. While searching for things to do, I came across **Base Borden Military Museum** inside **CFB** (Canadian Forces Base, similar to our Joint Base designation) **Borden** about 60 miles north of Toronto.

The museum's website promises loads of armor vehicle on display, and sure enough there are many Canadian (Grizzly, Sexton, Leopard), Soviet/Russian (T-34/85, T-55, T-72) as well as British (Matilda, Valentine, Vickers 6-ton tank, Centurion) armors in its collection. But of particular interest are a **WWI Medium Mark A Whippet**, a **WWII Sherman Crab Mark II**, and a **Churchill Mark I**.

To my knowledge the only other museum that has a Whippet and a Churchill Mk.I on display is at The Tank Museum in Bovington, England. So I am glad to report we don't always have to cross the big Atlantic pond to go see "the tanks." There are some much closer to home right here in North America!

Eric



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AABS SHERMAN DISPLAY AT 2019 MODELMANIA



Thanks to **Mike Maloney's** fantastic display he built for our group project, not only we won first place in the category but also the Best Allied Special Award. As a small token of our gratitude, Mike took home the "Kilroy was Here" trophy at our last meeting.



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2019 AMPS CENTEX Armor Expo

September 14th, 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.

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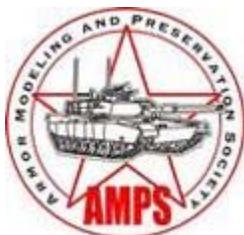
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*For anyone living at the same address with a regular active member. Family member DOES NOT receive an individual copy of *Boresight* but enjoy vendor discounts, website access, and can enter in the national competition as long as he/she is accompanied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



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www.amps-armor.org

New On The Block



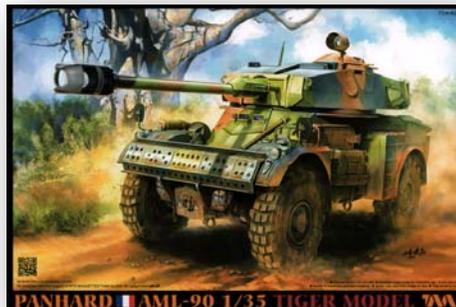
Yes, Meng is releasing a Sherman! It'll be an M4A3(76)W in 1/35th scale.



If RPG's last release was a bit conventional (T-80U), check out their latest: Phalanx CIWS and SeaRAM in 1/35th!



Also new from Meng is a 1/35th Wasp Flamethrower Jeep.



Another French armor car from Tiger Model? Yep, a new 1/35th Panhard AML-90.

AMPS Boresight (Volume 27, Issue 3)

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

- ♦ IJA Type94 Tankette by Bob Bethea
- ♦ Yugoslav M-84 by Chuck Aleshire
- ♦ The Overloon (Netherlands) Military Museum by Chuck Aleshire
- ♦ Book Review: Israeli Improvised Armored Vehicles & Jeeps (1947-49) by Fernando Sanchez
- ♦ Amusing Hobby 1/35th 12.8cm FlaK40 by Steven Andreano
- ♦ Know Your Officer
- ♦ Local Chapter News and Upcoming Shows



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 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



Taking a break from building Soviet/Russian armor, **Greg Beckman** showed up with two WWI French tanks: Saint-Chamond (left) and Schneider CA1 (right) at our last meeting.