



# Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

May 2020

**MEETING  
CANCELLED  
AGAIN!!**

## NO AABS MEETING IN MAY!

**B**limey! Another month without AABS meeting! This COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is like an un-invited relative from out of town — it is not going to depart politely in any hurry!

Besides interrupting our regularly scheduled meetings, the pandemic has also wreaked havoc on all scale modeling events everywhere. Here are the current status of local shows and national conventions that I am aware of (as of May 3<sup>rd</sup> and subject to change):

- **Scalefest 2020** (Grapevine, TX) - **CANCELLED**

- **SoonerCon** (Bethany, OK) - **AS SCHEDULED** on **June 13**
- **2020 IPMS/USA National Convention** (San Marcos, TX) - **AS SCHEDULED** from **July 27** to **August 1**
- **RiverCon IX 2020** (Shreveport, LA) - **POSTPONED** to **Aug 15**
- **SuperCon 2020** (Arlington, TX) - **AS SCHEDULED** on **Sept 12**.
- **2020 AMPS International Convention** **POSTPONED** to **Sept 24-26** and **MOVED** to **Danbury, CT**
- **Modelmania 2020** (Stafford, TX) - **POSTPONED** to **Sept 27**
- **ASMS Capital Classic 2020** (Austin, TX) - **AS SCHEDULED** on **Oct 3**.

Stay safe, practice social distancing, and model on. We all have plenty of kits to build and paint. Don't forget we have a fun contest (June) and a club build project (September) coming up soon (see page 4 for more details)!

**Eric Choy**  
**AABS Editor**

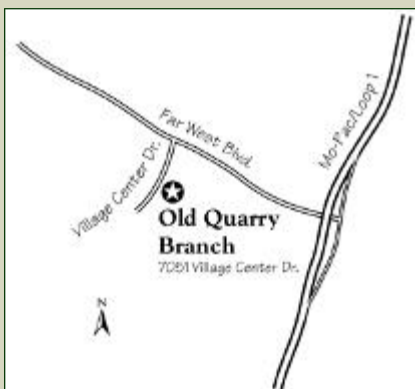
### Inside this issue:

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	2
UPCOMING PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS AND NEWSLETTER ARTICLES	2
FROM THE TURRET	3
TOON TANK CONTEST	4
T-54/55 GROUP BUILD	4
FROM THE AMPS E-BOARD	5
BUILD REVIEW: STAR WARS TX-225 "OCCUPIER"	6
2020 AMPS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION	9
JOIN AMPS TODAY	10
NEW ON THE BLOCK	11
BORESIGHT PREVIEW	11
ABOUT US	12
MEMBERS' GALLERY	12

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

**June 3, 2020**

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

- ◆ ~~May 6 - AABS Club Meeting~~ **CANCELLED**
- ◆ ~~May 7 to 9 - AMPS International Convention~~, Radisson Hotel Harrisburg, Camp Hill, PA **POSTPONED**
- ◆ **June 3 - AABS Club Meeting**
- ◆ ~~June 6 - Scalefest 2020~~, Grapevine Convention Center, Grapevine, TX **CANCELLED**
- ◆ **June 13 - SoonerCon 2020**, Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany, OK
- ◆ **July 1 - AABS Club Meeting**
- ◆ **July 29 to August 1 - IPMS/USA National Convention**, Embassy Suites and San Marcos Convention Center, San Marcos, 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 2020	Eric Choy	N/A
February	Chris Chany	Greg Beckman
March*	Martin Hebda	Russ Holm
April	N/A	Kevin Hutchison
May	N/A	Ian Candler
June*	<b>Election of Officers</b>	David Bourland
July	David Bourland	Greg Beckman
August	Rick Herrington	Rick Herrington
September*	Ian Candler	Chris Chany
October	Ted Andreas, Jr.	Ted Andreas, Jr.
November	Bob Bethea	Bob Bethea
December*	Keith Townsend	Eric Choy
January 2021	Aaron Smischney	Aaron Smischney

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 February 2020 is due on the last Wednesday of January).

\* Quarterly contest month



### *From the Turret*

**G**reetings! In case you have not gotten the word yet, we are not meeting in May. Hopefully, we will be able to convene in June for the election of club officers and quarterly contest (Toon Tank).

I have now completed two tanks that could be part of our club build. One is an NVA/PAVN T-54, and the other is an Egyptian T-55 with markings from the 1973 Yom Kippur War. I hope we have several others built or being assembled.

As I left off last month on the history of World War II, seventy-five years ago, the Battle for Berlin was coming to an end. German resistance to the Red Army ended on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May.

History records that the Red Army was brutal to civilians in Berlin as well as military prisoners taken. Considering what the Russians had suffered when the German military occupied a large part of Russia, the reciprocal treatment is not at all surprising. Yet in spite of all that happened, life went on for those who survived the fighting.

The war in Europe would end on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May as Germany surrendered to the Allies. By this time, Admiral Doenitz was the leader of Nazi Germany. He would escape being tried as a war criminal whereas those of Hitler's inner circle, who were still alive, would not.

In the fight against Japan, the campaign to liberate the Philippines continued. The battle for Okinawa was also ongoing. While the American ground forces slowly captured chunks of real estate, the American and British navies were frantically fighting the kamikaze threat.



*Berlin after the fighting ended.*



*Attacking Japanese positions in the Philippines.*

Keep building and painting! Thanks to all members of AABS for making this organization one of the very best! Hopefully, things will start returning to a more 'normal' time, soon.

**Ted Andreas, Jr.**  
President

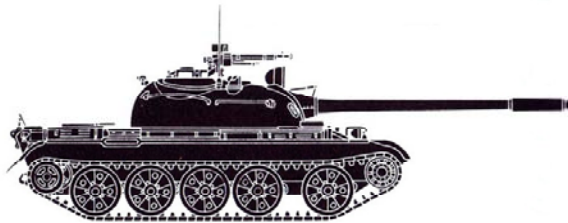


## “Loony Toon-Tanks!” June Quarterly Contest

**V**ive l’amour! Love may be what Pepé Le Pew is into, but for us modelers, it’s definitely the “amour” part that gets our attention!

The theme for our second quarterly contest (**June 2020**) is “**Looney Toon-Tanks!**” These whimsical egg-shaped models are fun, easy to build, and perfect for a weekend project! Should you want to make them more challenging, there are all kinds of not-too-serious conversions (e.g. Sherman Calliope, Bergtiger, T-34/85) that you can attempt.

Go build a Toon-Tank now. That’s all, forks!



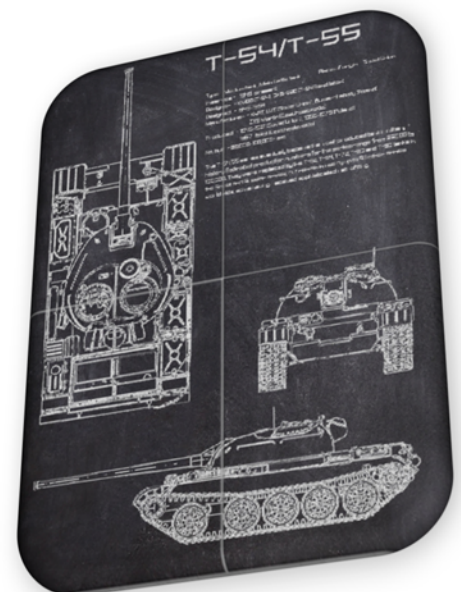
## T-54/55 Group Build

**H**ere’s a trivial question for you all tank enthusiasts: what’s the most produced tank of all time? No, it’s not Sherman or T-34, and yes, the honor goes to the Soviet T-54/55! With so many paint schemes and upgrades open for modelers, it is a logical choice as the subject of a group project.

Here are the criteria of this T-54/55 group build:

- 1/35<sup>th</sup> scale only
- Must have gun (or guns) of caliber 57mm or larger (i.e. ZSU-57-2 and SU-122/54 are okay but NO armored recovery, APC, bridging, or firefighting variant, please).
- No operator restriction (Angola, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, DDR, Egypt, Finland, Iraq, Israel, North Korea, Poland, USSR/Russia, Vietnam, former Yugoslavia states, etc. are all welcomed).
- 4BO is optional! (i.e. feel free to paint your tank any color other than standard Russian Green as long as your color scheme is historically accurate)
- Please close all hatches and DO NOT glue your model to a base!

We are aiming for a group entry in this year’s ASMS Capital Classic show in October 2020. So the rendezvous point for our T-54/55s is the **September club meeting**. That leaves us less than six months to build, paint, and weather our models. If you haven’t started yet, you need to get a move on NOW. *Ura!*





## From the AMPS E-Board

**AMPS 2020:** As everyone knows the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is upon us worldwide. The E-Board recently met to discuss how this virus is impacting our upcoming **AMPS 2020 International Convention**, slated for 7 to 9 May 2020 in Camp Hill, PA. Pennsylvania's Governor, along with many other federal and state leaders and leaders of other nations, have taken precautionary measures of cancelling events and gatherings over certain numbers to minimize the growth and spreading of this potentially fatal virus. As such, we can no longer hold our annual International Convention in May 2020.

**However, rather than cancel the show for this year, the E-Board decided to postpone this year's International Convention and move it to Danbury, CT on 24-26 September 2020.**

This decision was made in consultation with the leadership members of **AMPS Central Pennsylvania** and the **Northeast Military Modelers Association** and will take the place of ArmorCon 2020. We will continue to monitor information provided by government officials and medical professionals and, if it becomes necessary, make a decision on whether we can continue with AMPS 2020 at Danbury, CT approximately 30 days before our scheduled event.

The Radisson Hotel Harrisburg has automatically cancelled all individual reservations without penalty if these reservations were made using the convention code as advertised through the AMPS website. If you made reservations outside the AMPS room block, you will need to individually cancel those reservations. We will post reservation instructions for the Crown Plaza Danbury, CT on the AMPS website as soon as they are available.

We've posted on the AMPS website and Facebook page the refund policy for registrants, vendors and

sponsors. If for any reason you're unable to attend AMPS 2020, we encourage you to consider attending AMPS 2021, 29 April to 1 May 2021 in Newport News, VA.

We want to thank **Peter Espada**, Show Chair, his AMPS Central Pennsylvania show staff, and the Northeast Military Modelers Association for their time and cooperation in rescheduling AMPS 2020.

In closing, we wish everyone and their families' good health and encourage them to take appropriate safety precautions in regard to this virus. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend AMPS 2020, we encourage you to consider attending AMPS 2021, 29 April to 1 May 2021 in Newport News, VA.

Nevertheless, we look forward to seeing everyone at the AMPS 2020 International Convention in Danbury, CT 24 to 26 September 2020.

**Vendor Discount Program:** About a year ago we rejuvenated our Vendor Discount Program. One of the benefits of joining AMPS is the ability to take advantage of discounts at the following vendors. Their product lines consist of some of the most innovative products in our hobby:

- Armand Bayardi Model Maker
- Boomers' Books & Empire Models
- DavidDoyleBooks.com
- For the Historian
- HQ72 Resin Productions
- Michigan Toy Soldier Co.
- MicroWorld Games LLC
- SABOT Miniatures
- Scale 75 USA
- Tankvideo.com
- Thachweave Products
- Tiger Werke Resin
- Wanamaker Hobbies

Over the past few months, I've received inquiries from some of these vendors asking why our members are not supporting this program. While there may be a number of reasons you're not using the services



of some of these vendors, please remember this is a program established to add value to your membership. You can view details of our Vendor Discount Program on the AMPS website at:

<http://amps-armor.org/SiteMain/Discounts/VendorDiscounts.aspx>

When ordering, please contact the vendor directly and let them know that you are a member of AMPS. Each vendor has access to verify your membership status, so make sure you are up to date.

If you know of any other vendor who might be interested in participating in this program, have them contact me through the AMPS website.

Please support these vendors.

**The AMPS Store:** The AMPS Store is one of our most popular efforts we have undertaken for our

membership. Recently, several members suggested adding various types of hoodies to the apparel available through our website. Our Store Coordinator, **Mike Del Vecchio** (AMPS 2<sup>nd</sup>VP East) has added the hoodies to the Store and is working with our vendor to add additional items you've requested.

You can view all the items available through the AMPS store at:

<http://amps.deco-apparel.com/shop>

I see a lot of enthusiasm for AMPS and what we bring to the hobby. It's great to be a member of AMPS. We hope to see you at AMPS 2020 in Danbury, CT.

**Mike Petty**  
AMPS 1<sup>st</sup> VP

## Build Review **STAR WARS TX-225 GAVw OCCUPIER COMBAT ASSAULT TANK** by Eric Choy

According to the Star Wars Wiki, Wookieepedia, the TX-225 GAVw "Occupier" is a track-propelled ground assault vehicle used by the Galactic Empire. Crewed by a commander and two pilots, it can also be used for transporting heavy payloads on its cargo bed, such as kyber crystals as seen in the streets of the Holy City of Jedha in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*.

In case you wonder if the TX-225 in *Rogue One* was constructed from a real tank, the answer is yes, but no, it wasn't a T-34! Lucasfilm crew used a CVR(T) Stormer in a flat-bed configuration instead. These days many retired British armor vehicles are enjoying their second careers as "Hollywood Panzers," and



such is the case for the TX-225. Another fine example that I know of is a working StuG III replica in The Museum of the American G.I. at College Station, TX.

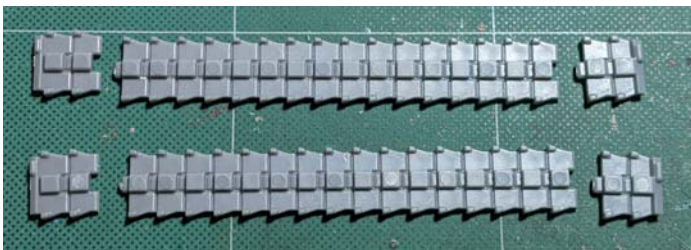
No one makes a kit of the TX-225 in 1/35<sup>th</sup> yet (although I very much like to see one from Bandai!). If you don't want to dive into scratchbuilding (or 3-D printing) one, maybe you should check out Fantasy Flight Supply's ([www.fantasyflightgames.com](http://www.fantasyflightgames.com)) TX-225 unit expansion, the subject of this review.



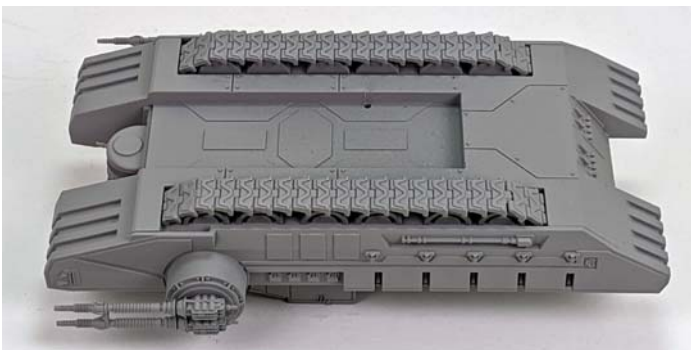
Inside the box is a snap kit of the Occupier along with two half-figures (pilot/driver and commander), two “unique” machinegun (MG34 look alike) options, and three kyber crystal pods (squirrel traps!). Quick measurements of both vehicle and figures confirmed that they are almost 1/48<sup>th</sup> scale, which suites this quarterscale modeler just fine. The double-sided instruction sheet contains detailed assembly directions (very helpful) on one side and the expansion game rules (no use at all, at least to us modelers!) on the other.

Contrary to other snap kits, this TX-225 model has fairly decent details. I chose mostly not to modify or enhance any and built it pretty much straight out of the box.

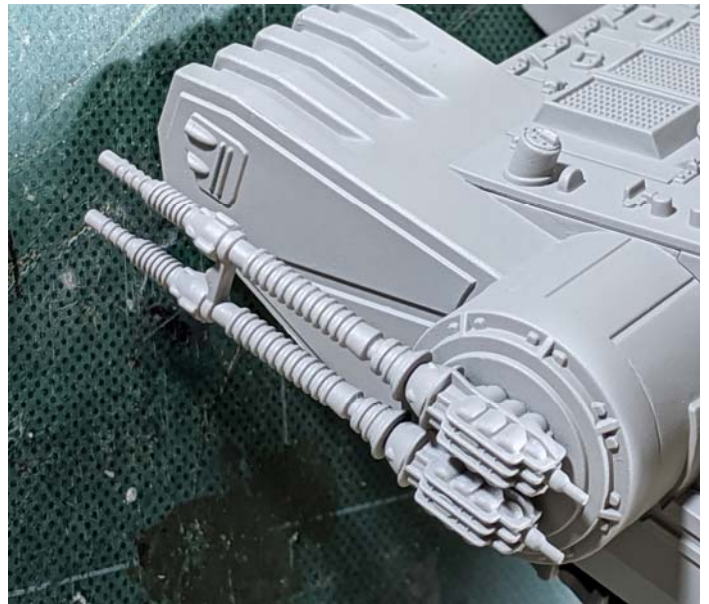
The bulk of the work of putting the tank together was already done by the poor souls in a Chinese sweat shop. That only leaves us modelers with less than ten parts to finish the rest of the assembly. The wheels are molded in half and into the lower hull, so I didn't have to do a single thing. The track run on each side contains just three sections: the long one for the bottom and two short ones that touch (but not wrap around) the driving sprockets and idler wheels.



Once assembled, the overly simplified track runs look quite convincing.



Next I tackled the two twin-mounted cannons on each side of the tank. Again there are obvious seams on the barrels that run down the cooling fins. They are, pardon my carefully chosen word, a “female dog” to clean! Why would the Empire in a galaxy far far away employ early 20<sup>th</sup> century terrene technology to cool their weapons is way beyond me!



Anyway, by the time I finished cleaning the seams, I was in no mood to do the same to yet another twin-mounted guns under the bow. So I snapped them off, installed a 1/35<sup>th</sup> MG34 barrel to make it look like a flamethrower nozzle, and called it a day! Ah, the best part of sci-fi modeling: nobody can accuse you of any historical inaccuracy in your work!



To close or not to close, that's the next question, hatch-wise. I reckon the pilot/driver needs to know where he is going, so I glued his hatch in open position. Before I did that, I had to fill the big ejection pin mark on the inside of his hatch first. At this point I noticed something inconsistent about this kit: while the tank model is molded in hard plastic, the figures and the machineguns are not. They are the soft vinyl kind but not as “chewy” as green army men. You don't use glue to attach body parts; you just push the stubs in



the arms into the sockets on the torso. The pilot/driver was not a problem as he is a quadriplegic. But the tank commander is supposed to be either holding the machinegun on a swivel mount or hanging on to the edge of the hatch opening. I couldn't get his hands to

do either in a convincing pose. So I decided he better stays inside the tank. Hatch/case closed!

Once that was done, I had no more parts to glue, but that was not the end of assembly. Apparently the work done by the sweat shop folks was not up to par with any decent modeler's standards. Between the upper and lower hulls, there were gaps, seams, sprue scars, and, worst of all, alignment problems. All that needed a lot of filling and sanding. I kept telling myself "fix the big and obvious issues and ignore the small ones" as I didn't want to turn this little weekend project into a shelf-queen! So all the imperfections in this model will be hidden with mud/dirt later on!



Fantasy Flight Supply's rendition of the TX-225 is quite good, considering it is nothing but a snap kit for gamers. Its MSRP is on the high side (\$59.95!), but I was able to purchase it locally at the Game Goat (6929 Airport Blvd #134, Austin, TX) for less than \$45. Recommended.

**Eric**





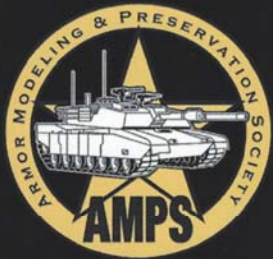
## 2020 AMPS International Convention

**SEPTEMBER 24 - SEPTEMBER 26**

**At The Crown Plaza, Danbury, CT**

SHOW THEME:

# LAST BATTLES



HOSTED BY:



For more information contact: Peter Espada (Show Chair) at [pespada@icloud.com](mailto:pespada@icloud.com)

Get the latest Event, Registration, Schedule, and Theme information at:

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

# JOIN AMPS TODAY

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ZIP CODE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **COUNTRY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

<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)
Regular Canada/Mexico	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$35)	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$65)	<input type="checkbox"/> (\$95)
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.



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

**AMPS**

**ATTN: MEMBERSHIP DEPT.**

**P.O. BOX 227, FAIRHAVEN, MA 02719**

**U.S.A.**



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

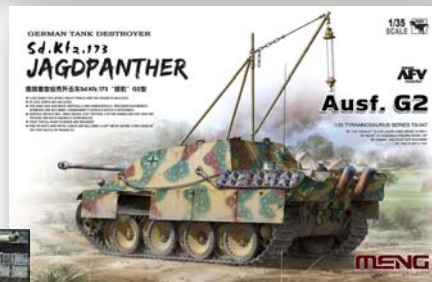
## New On The Block



Another 1/35<sup>th</sup> Centurion variant from AFV Club: early production Mk. I. It was field-tested in Europe weeks before Germany surrendered in May 1945.



The use of Bofors 40mm AA gun never gets old! The LvKv90 entered service with the Swedish Army in the early 1990s. Hobby Boss has just released a kit of it in 1/35<sup>th</sup> scale.



What the heck? A Jagdpanther G2 with a crane? Only zee Germans (and Meng) will do such a thing!



Three new sets of airbrush stencils from Dream Models/Liang (China): Weathering, Streaking & Wet, and Mud Splashes Effects. Made with heavy compressed paper, they are reusable and unlike etching templates, they can absorb bleeding paints under the stencils.

## AMPS Boresight (Volume 28, Issue 2)

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

- ♦ **Holy Holt!** by Brandon Jacob
- ♦ **Desert Raider Jeep** by Richard Senges
- ♦ **AMPS Atlanta 2020 After Action Report** by Mike Reaves
- ♦ **M4A1 Sherman CDL Toon Tank** by Marcos "Panzer" Serra
- ♦ **Local Chapter News and Upcoming Shows**
- ♦ **Book Review: FV4201 Chieftain** by Michael Reeves



## 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.

19990424

We are on the web @ [austinamps.org](http://austinamps.org)



Hey, your editor managed to finish something! This is an 1/48<sup>th</sup> scale diorama of a Hetzer ST-III school tank wreaking havoc through a cabbage field in post-war Czechoslovakia.