



Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

March 2021



Yay, AABS is meeting this month! To celebrate making through Covid and last month's deadly winter storm, we're going all out not just for a club meeting but a modeling day! Whether you come to get parts glued, have your modeling questions answered, parade your latest work, or reconnect with others you haven't seen since the lockdown, you can do all that and more in one seating at this spring thaw event!

Here are the details:

Date & Time: **March 6th Saturday, 10am - 5pm**

Place: **Wingate by Wyndham Hotel & Conference Center**
1209 North I-35 Frontage Rd, Round Rock, TX 78664

Map:



Important: We are meeting in the **Conference Center** (the two-story building behind the hotel) on the **second floor in the BASTROP Room**. As You walk into the building, there is an elevator on the left. You can park anywhere around the Conference Center building.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ◆ **March 6** - AABS Club Meeting & Modeling Day
- ◆ **April 7** - ?AABS Club Meeting?
- ◆ ~~**April 29 to May 1**~~ - ~~**AMPS 2021 International Convention**~~, Newport News, VA **CANCELLED (more info on AMPS website www.amps-armor.org)**
- ◆ **May 5** - ?AABS Club Meeting?
- ◆ **May 8** - **Modelmania 2021**, Stafford Center, Stafford, TX



AABS Officers Jan 2021 – Dec 2022

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Schedule of Upcoming Program Presentations and Newsletter Articles

Month	Program Presentation	Newsletter Article
January 2021	N/A	Aaron Smischney
February	N/A	Eric Choy
March*	TBA	Greg Beckman
April	N/A	Ian Candler
May	N/A	Ted Paone
June*	TBA	Bob Bethea
July	TBA	Chris Chany
August	TBA	Mike Maloney
September*	TBA	Kevin Hutchison
October	TBA	Joe Fisher
November	TBA	Ted Andreas, Jr.
December*	TBA	Dane Sherry
January 2022	TBA	Rick Herrington

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. Eric Choy's article for February is due on the last Wednesday of January).

* Quarterly contest month



From the Turret

Greetings! As I am writing this piece, we are still amid some very un-Texas like weather. I hope club members and families are faring well. By the time you read this, we should be in better weather and hopefully be able to meet in March.

I do not know if we have many fans of Friulmodel tracks in our club. I use them on probably more than half of my armor projects. However, I did notice that some of the more commonly used tracks were getting hard to find. One of the sellers I use on eBay stated he did not have one of the sets I was looking for. He did not elaborate or give me any estimate on when he might have them. When I went to Friulmodel website to report this supply situation, I found out as of this year, 2021, they sell directly to end users and

not to wholesalers or retailers. So I ordered two sets of tracks for my upcoming projects and ended up paying about \$56 a set. That is a little higher than my usual source in Poland but still quite a bit cheaper than from most retailers. Both 1/48th and 1/35th tracks are priced at €27 (about \$33). That is not bad at all, but once you add shipping and other surcharges, it runs up the tab a bit. Nevertheless, if you like the product, it is worth the cost.

For those who take the time to read our newsletter, I hope you did not mind the change of format here and the addition my “Tank In-Focus” column. As I mentioned, it seemed time to change from battles to armor subjects. My first choice was based on our upcoming contest, T-54/55 tanks. For this month, I have chosen an U.S. built vehicle, the M4 Medium Tank. According to my basic research, it was the Brits who dubbed the original M4s and M4A1s as “Shermans” with American Civil War’s General Sherman as the inspiration.

Well, that is all for now. Thanks to all who make this club one of the very best! May the rest of 2021 turn out well for everyone.

Ted Andreas, Jr.
President

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In-person Meeting Guidelines:

- Please **STAY HOME IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL**. The last thing we need is to turn this into a “super-spreader” meeting!
- **MASK WEARING IS REQUIRED AT ALL TIME** unless you are actively drinking or eating. It’s for your own protection as well as the others.
- This modeling day is **STRICTLY FOR AABS MEMBERS ONLY**. If you like to join the club, please contact our treasurer **Eric Choy (aabsco@gmail.com)** before the day of the event.
- Lunch (in the form of pizzas) will be provided by the club, but you have to **BRING YOUR OWN BEVERAGE**. There will be **NO SHARING OF DRINKS**, and **NO ALCOHOL** inside the building please!
- Kit swapping and selling is allowed before and after the club meeting. We ask anyone who is selling items to please donate a good-quality kit to the club. We are in need of raffle prizes for the 2021 show, so your donation is crucial and much appreciated. This rule is not applicable to those who are swapping kits.

Editor



M4 to M51 Sherman Tanks

The following is taken from Wikipedia: *The M4 Sherman, officially Medium Tank, M4, was the most widely used medium tank by the United States and western allies in World War II. The M4 Sherman proved to be reliable, relatively cheap to produce, and available in great numbers. It was also the basis of several successful tank destroyers, such as the M10, 17-pounder Achilles, and M36B1. Tens of thousands were distributed through the Lend-Lease program to the British Commonwealth and Soviet Union. The tank was named by the British for the American Civil War general William Tecumseh Sherman.*

The Sherman has often been unfavorably compared to some of the best tanks made by Nazi Germany. In numerous historical interviews of German tankers who fought against the Sherman, there is often an expressed disdain for the tank. Yet, it was the tank that helped in a significant way to win the war.



An early M4A1 in action in Sicily

The main problem had to do with the doctrine developed by American leadership. The Sherman

was ideal for exploiting a breakthrough and racing ahead to disrupt the rear area of the enemy. It was believed that the role of destroying enemy tanks would be the job of tank destroyer crews.

It was a sound theory on paper, but the reality was different on the battlefield. Sherman tanks often had to slug it out with Panther and Tiger tanks. In terms of armor protection and firepower, the Sherman was at a serious disadvantage. However, the tank was often upgraded and with the long barrel 76mm gun. That eventually replaced the lower velocity 75mm gun, and the Sherman was quite capable against Germany's work-horse tank, the Panzer IV.

Also, just prior to D-Day, the Brits modified numerous Sherman tanks with their 17-pdr anti-tank gun. That improvement made the Sherman a far more effective tank killer and was dubbed "Firefly." Quite likely a Firefly was used to end the career of German SS Panzer Ace Michael Wittman. His powerful Tiger I was destroyed in action while he and his entire crew were wiped out.



A British crew with a Sherman in Germany.

In Adam Makos' book *Spearhead*, the veteran tankers of the U.S. 3rd Armored Division expressed their main complaint against the Sherman by wanting a more powerful gun. With the M26 Pershing, they got their

wish. However, the Pershing tanks came in late in World War II and arrived in few numbers. It was still the Sherman tanks that carried the main load for the allies in western Europe.



A British Firefly Sherman.

After World War II, it would seem the Sherman was set to retire. Interestingly, it was called on again for the Korean War where it had to slug it out with Russian built T-34/85 tanks. It fared well against the highly regarded T-34 at least in part because of well trained crews. In Korea, the M26 Pershing struggled because it was not robust enough to deal with the rugged Korean terrain. As a result, for much of the Korean War the Sherman again carried the main load of the UN war effort.



An upgraded Sherman in Korea.

It would again seem that the Sherman would become irrelevant in post-Korean War fighting. However, thanks to Israel, the warhorse Sherman would fight on.

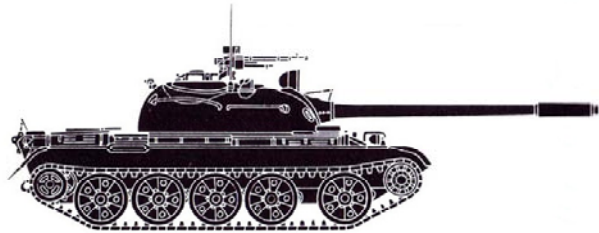
The Israelis modified their acquired M4 and M4A1 Shermans to make them capable of fighting Soviet equipped Arab armies. Along with crew training in long range gunnery tactics, the M50/M51 Super Sherman tanks of the IDF were very effective in the Six-Day War in 1967. They would again be called on during the Yom Kippur War in 1973. This time however, their use was in desperation as better IDF armor was in short supply. Nevertheless, they filled a need until better tanks arrived from the United States to reinforce the IDF and allow for an effective counter-offensive.



M51 and M50 "Super Sherman" tanks in retirement at an Israeli armor museum.

In conclusion, despite any knocks against the Sherman tank, it was a rugged warrior. In most wars it fought in, the Sherman was usually on the winning side, and in a large way, contributed greatly to victory.

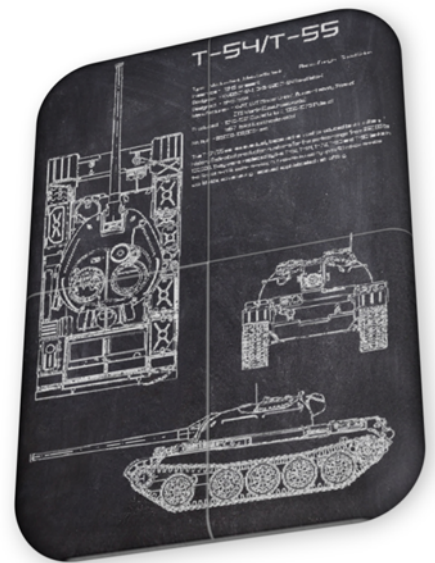
Ted



Next Quarterly Contest (March 2021) Theme is: **T-54/55**

In case you haven't heard, our first quarterly contest of 2021 will be held at the March meeting/modeling day. Since we all spent effort last year working on our T-54/55s, the club decided at the January meeting to make it the theme of that contest. Again, here are the criteria:

- 1/35th 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)



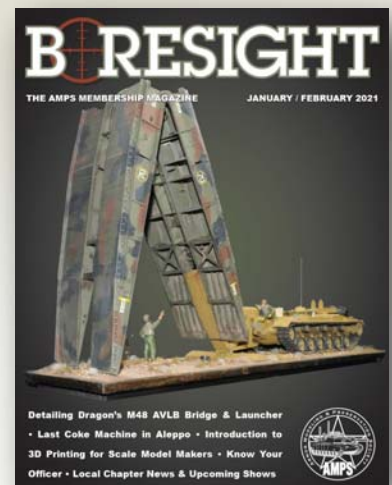
As usual, our quarterly contest cash prizes are \$40, \$30, and \$20 for the first, second, and third place winners. To enter you must be a member in good standing (i.e. you need to pay your dues).

The “no sweep” rule is strictly enforced (i.e. no single contestant is allowed to win ALL THREE cash prizes!)

AMPS Boresight (Volume 29, Issue 1)

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

- ♦ **Detailing Dragon's M48 AVLB Bridge & Launcher** by Brian Eberle
- ♦ **Last Coke Machine in Aleppo** by Greg Beckman
- ♦ **Introduction to 3D Printing for Scale Model Maker** by Mike Roof
- ♦ **Know Your Officers**
- ♦ **Local Chapter News & Upcoming Shows**



Pimp My BTR!

by Greg Beckman

I became interested in building a BTR-70 used in Afghanistan when I stumbled upon SP Designs' BTR-70 Afghanistan 1979-89 Add-on Armor and Side Skirts (#306) for Trumpeter's BTR-70 kit (#1593). When researching the Add-on Armor, I only found a few photos of it in action. One of them shows a vehicle in camouflage, which would be my inspiration for this project.



What distinguishes the Trumpeter kit as an Afghan-specific vehicle is the AGS-40 40mm automatic grenade launcher on top of the turret as shown in the kit's

box art. I have seen a few period photos of this actual setup by Soviet troops to augment the firepower of their APCs.

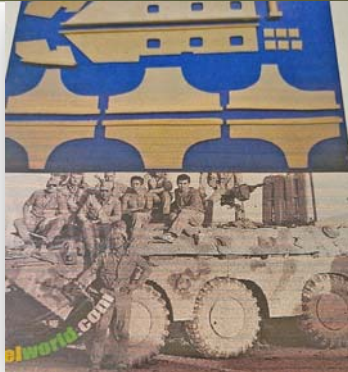
The SP Designs set contains bolt-on armor for the front top hull sides, additional armor for the infantry firing ports, rubber skirts for the lower hull, and an additional pintle mount, all in cream-colored resin. I found the set at Hobby Easy (hobbyeasy.com) along with the Trumpeter kit. I also purchased

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SP Designs' resin wheel replacement set as I hate kit-supplied rubber wheels. After about a three to four week wait due to Covid delayed shipping, I received the three items that I ordered.

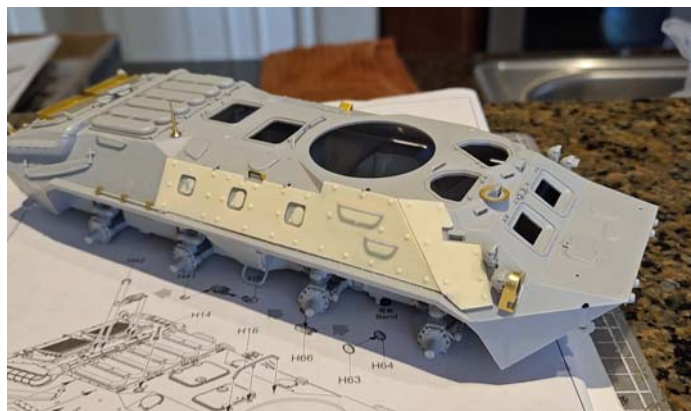


Construction

The Trumpeter kit is very nice and is worlds above the 30 years old Dragon kit that I built many years ago. Trumpeter gives you a nice interior, minus the engine bay, which I opted not to build. Since I skipped over the interior, the bulk of the build was focused on the chassis which is very busy. During the assembly of the front two wheels, I altered the construction a bit to turn them at an angle as I always think that this adds a bit of interest to the look of the completed model. This took all of about 15 minutes and just a bit of sawing and quick set Tamiya glue.

Once the chassis was completed, I joined the hull top and bottom parts together. Then it was time to apply the SP Designs Add on Armor plates. Before gluing these parts on, there were a couple of items from the hull top sides that needed to be shaved off with a new X-Acto #11 blade to assure that the add on armor rests on the hull side smoothly.

Before adding the lower hull side skirts, I'd suggest temporarily mounting the Resin wheels for alignment



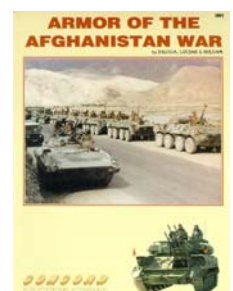
of the side skirts. This is where I ran into the only problem I had on the entire build: while the available photos show the side skirts fit snugly around the wheels, the front two wheels did not align with the resin side skirts on either side. I addressed this by cutting off a few millimeters of resin from the rear loop of the first wheel position and relocated it to the front loop sect of the second wheel position. This fix was repeated on both sides. Super glue and a little Tamiya gray putty addressed this quick fix.



After attaching the AGS-40 pintle mount on the roof, it was time for some paint.

Painting

During the Afghanistan War, the Soviets used a Green/Gray camouflage on their combat vehicles: the standard Russian Green with a Light Gray disruptive pattern over the green. Based on what I read in Steven Zaloga's *Armor of the Afghanistan*



War (Concord Publications), the gray was supposed to represent rocks. After a quick bath, I sprayed the entire kit with Tamiya Field Gray, which is a medium green, then over-sprayed with a Light Gray which I custom mixed to depict a vehicle based on a color photo in Zaloga's book.

Weathering

I only took four steps on the weathering front. First, I added some Vallejo Mud and Grass to the chassis and lower hull. Then I applied a diluted MiG Dark Wash to the entire model, including the Vallejo Mud and Grass areas. Next, I sprayed the lower hull with some AK Brown Earth Deposit and promptly blended the edges with a wide brush moistened with thinner. The last step was to apply a pin wash of the same AK Brown Earth over the top hull to give a representation of a very dusty vehicle.



Figures

To populate the vehicle, I purchased a two-figure set from TAHK out of Russia: "The Soviet crew of the BMP Afghanistan 1979-89" (#35244). The figures were obviously designed for the old Dragon BMP-2 kit with spaced armor, but they fit well on the Trumpeter kit. I wanted another figure sliding down the side of the hull, so I utilized an ICM Soviet figure from the same time frame and bashed together a few parts to match what I was looking for.

I decided to place the vehicle on a small base with some civilian figures from Miniart's Afghan Civilians set (#38034). I have heard that Afghanistan has lots of goats and goat herds, so I added two from Master Box Domestic Animals. I also dug up a water tank from Meng's Middle Eastern Roof-Mounted Facilities set and added an animal water trough from my spares box... a resin item I have no clue where it originated.

Final Analysis

I enjoyed the kit. I have used SP Designs items before, and I find them to be of good value despite the one issue that I had. The TAHK figures are also very nice. The Miniart set has a really nice sitting figure while the standing figure is just a little off in shape.

Greg





**2021
AMPS CENTEX
ARMOR EXPO**

AN AMPS REGIONAL SHOW

**September 18th, 2021
Georgetown Community
Center**

For more info, visit www.austinamps.org

or contact show coordinator **Eric Choy**
(email: aabsco@gmail.com)

Show Theme: *Operation Barbarossa 1941*



Members Show & Tell

Ted Andreas, Jr.:

1. Panzer IV Ausf.F (Tamiya + Fruilmodel tracks)



2. Kubelwagen (Tamiya)



Bob Bethea:

1. T-55AM (Takom)



2. Panzer I Training Vehicle (Hobby Boss/Tristar, work in progress)



3. WWI Belgian Minerva Armored Car (Copper State Model; work in progress)



4. Marder I (Tamiya, work in progress)



Greg Beckman:

1. Early IS-2 (Trumpeter)



2. BT-5 (Italeri/Zvezda)



It is that time of the year again. Please have your club dues (\$12) ready at the March meeting. We accept cash, check, money order, or PayPal (payaabs@gmail.com). 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 **Austin Armor Builders Society** (or **AABS**).



JOIN AMPS TODAY

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____

ZIP CODE: _____ **COUNTRY:** _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPES	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
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

NEW ON THE BLOCK



RPG just released a new 1/35th "1+1" combo kit of the Kamaz K-4386 Typhoon family of armored cars: an early type and an up-gunned version with 30mm 2A42 cannon.



Here's a kit I bet you would never expect from a model company: a life-size (1:1 scale) Pz III/IV track link in plastic! Only one link per kit, so if you want to build a full set of tracks for a Pz III, you'll need to buy 192 of them!!!



Lerchik, a figure company based in China, offers some unusual Soviet and Chinese subjects. Its latest are Red Army Female Tank Crew (left) and Red Navy Scout, Stalingrad '42 (right).



Rye Field Model has released yet another Panther kit. This time it's the ausf.F version.

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:

www.austinamps.org