



Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

January 2022



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The Iron Riders The First Mountain Bikers by Dane Sherry

Everyone has heard about the Buffalo Soldiers. But have you heard the stories of the “Iron Riders?”

The U.S. Army’s 25th Regiment was established by Congress in 1866. This regiment was to be made up of black soldiers and lead by white officers. In 1877, the U.S. Army created Fort Missoula at the site which is now Missoula, Montana. Members of the 25th Regiment were assigned to the fort in 1888.

In 1896, Major General Nelson Miles (Commanding General of the U.S. Army) authorized the creation of the 25th Infantry Bicycle Corps. The purpose was to test the practicality of bicycles for military use, specifically in mountainous country. The regiment was to be commanded by 2nd Lt. James A. Moss. Lt. Moss was a 25 years old

Louisianan and a West Point graduate. At the time military assignments were based on class ranking. Because Lt. Moss was at the bottom of his class, he had little choice but to accept the assignment to Ft. Missoula and to be in charge of black troops. This was an assignment many felt was beneath them.

The “safety bicycle” was invented in the 1880s. This is a bicycle with two wheels of equal size as opposed to the “penny-farthing” style bicycle that had a giant wheel in the front and a tiny wheel in back. At this point in history, “safety bicycles” were considered advanced technology.

In the late 1880s, the German military began field-testing bicycles for military use. Initially the bicycle was used for communication and courier duty. Later they were used by scouts, medical orderlies, and then “shock troops.” Following Germany’s lead, England,

(Continued on page 6)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ◆ ~~January 5~~ - ~~AABS Club Meeting~~ **CANCELLED**
- ◆ **January 8, 2022 - Modelfiesta 40**, New Braunfels Civic Center, New Braunfels, TX
- ◆ **January 22 - Winterblitz**, Museum of the American G.I., College Station, TX
- ◆ **February 2 - AABS Club Meeting**
- ◆ **¿March 2 - AABS Club Meeting?**
- ◆ **March 12 - KCCON 2022**, First Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO



AABS Officers Jan 2021 – Dec 2022

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

Chris Chany, Vice-President
christopherchany@gmail.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



Schedule of Upcoming Program Presentations and Newsletter Articles

Month	Program Presentation	Newsletter Article
January 2022	N/A	Dane Sherry
February*	White Elephant Contest	Rick Herrington
March	TBA	Greg Beckman
April	TBA	Kevin Hutchison
May	TBA	Eric Choy
June*	TBA	Ian Candler
July	TBA	Craig Bland
August	TBA	Bob Bethea
September*	TBA	Bill Menzie
October	Club Auction	Ted Paone
November	TBA	Ted Andreas, Jr.
December*	TBA	Joe Fisher
January 2023	Officer Election	Mike Maloney

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. Rick Herrington's article for February is due on the last Wednesday of January).

* Quarterly contest month



From the Turret

Greetings and Happy New Year! Thanks to all who attended the Christmas Party. We had a great time of fellowship and dining delights. As always, Rudy's BBQ was a hit as well as our members' side dishes and desserts. The cheesecake was my personal favorite.



After our Christmas party, we had a short business meeting and decided our first club meeting of 2022 will be on **February 2nd** at the same location. The 2021 White Elephant Contest has been postponed to that day due to a low turnout of entries.

As you recall, we are doing a "Self-Propelled AA Weapon" group project to be entered in IPMS Houston's *Modelmania* in late April of 2022. I will be the coordinator for this effort. Once again, we will

need ten models to compete. So far, we have five commitments:

- Bob Bethea: Hungarian Nimrod
- Bob Bethea: Cold War era ZSU-57-2
- Mike Stevens: M42 Duster
- Stuart Wetterschneider: M16 (quad 50. cal)
- Eric Choy: *Bundeswehr Flakpanzer Gepard*

At the last meeting, I was able to give away two AA tank/truck model kits. Eric has in his possession of my third one (Tamiya M16). If anyone is interested, please let him know so he can bring it to the next meeting.

In addition to the ten completed kits, we will need something to show off our works of art on. Our last two efforts in *Modelmania* were greatly enhanced by the great display racks. We should discuss the design and designate someone for its construction in our upcoming meeting.

We do have a couple of shows coming up with Alamo Squadron's *ModelFiesta* on the **8th of January**. That will be followed by *WinterBlitz* on the **22nd of January**. This will be the first time a show/contest is held in College Station, TX.

Let's hope that 2022 will be a great year for the hobby. I wish all club members great success in their efforts.

Ted Andreas, Jr.
President

It is that time of the year again. Please have your club dues (**\$12**) ready at the next meeting. We accept cash, check, or PayPal (payaabs@gmail.com. Please add \$1 more to cover processing fees). 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**)





U.S. Main Battle Tank M1 Abrams

After my second and last tour of duty in South Korea, I was reassigned to the 2nd Armored Division (2AD), then active at Fort Hood, Texas. It was during this point in 2AD history that it was re-equipped with M1 Main Battle Tank (MBT).

The M1 series of MBT began entering service in 1980. It is considered the third generation of American MBTs. Much of its development was based on research conducted in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War (1973).

The M1 Abrams was named after General Creighton Abrams, former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army and a World War II veteran who once commanded the 37th Tank Battalion of the 4th Armored Division.

The 68-ton Abrams has several unique features:

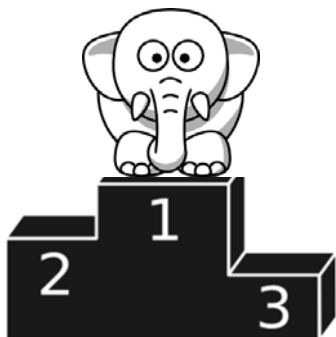
- Multi-fuel turbine engine
- Chobham composite armor
- Computerized fire control system
- Separate ammunition storage with a blow-out compartment
- NBC protection (Wikipedia article)

Abrams' first test of combat was in 1991 during the the First Gulf War (*Operation Desert Storm*). As a personal note, while my unit was residing in a Saudi warehouse at the main port waiting for our equipment to arrive, I got to see many Abrams being unloaded from anchored ships. They were freshly painted in desert sand. I could not help but wonder how the crews of these tanks would fare against the combat tested Iraqi Army. Later events would prove they did quite well.



An M1A1 (Wikipedia).

During the build-up of forces in Saudi Arabi, 1,848 M1A1 tanks were sent to help liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi Army. Only nine were lost in combat, of which none was caused by a direct hit from Iraqi forces. I did not find any stats on how many Iraqi tanks were destroyed by M1A1s, but in the Battle of



White Elephant Contest at February Meeting!

Bring your finished **White Elephant** kit(s) to win U.S. Treasury issued greenbacks! This special quarterly contest cash prizes are **\$40**, **\$30**, and **\$20** for the first, second, and third place winners. There will be a first place winner (**\$20**) for the Naked category (built but not painted) as well.

To enter you must be a member in good standing (i.e. you need to pay your dues). Any white elephant model that has not placed in previous quarterly contests is eligible to participate. Note: 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.



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Norfolk alone, 850 Iraqi tanks were destroyed. Many of which were victims of the Abrams.



Abrams tanks move out on a mission during Desert Storm in 1991 (Wikipedia).

As it turned out, the Abrams had several advantages over the tanks (T-55, T-62, and T-72 MBTs) of the Iraqi forces. One of which was the greater effective range of the Abram's main gun and fire control system. The M1A1 was able to knock out Iraqi tanks from a range that could not be matched by the Iraqis.

The Abrams would once again see combat in Iraq again as the U.S.-led coalition forces set out to depose the regime of Saddam Hussein in 2003. This time many of the Abrams had been upgraded to M1A2 standard. Against Iraqi armor, our Abrams was again superior. However, in later actions against Iraqi forces armed with RPGs, additional armor protections would be required.



Upgraded Armor Protection



M1A1 firing its main gun as seen from the loader's hatch (Wikipedia).

The Abrams has been in service since 1980 and has seen many improvements over the years. At the present time, there is no plan to replace this MBT but to continually upgrade in the near future as needed.

Ted

(Continued from page 1)

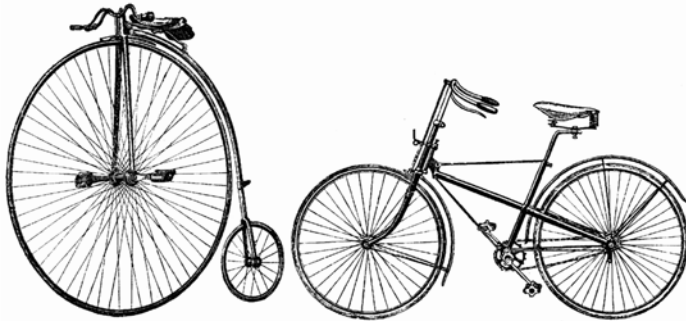


Fig. 2. Bicycle (Hochrad) von 1880.

Fig. 3. Rover (Niederrad) von 1886.

An 1880 penny-farthing (left), and a 1886 Rover safety bicycle (right).

France, and other European countries began limited use of bicycles in military service. Most of these countries already had a well-established system of roads. The American West was still under developed with paths of travel consisting of wagon trails, cattle trails, railroad right-of-ways, etc. In New York City, the police department had formed a 29-man "Scorcher Squad" consisting of bicycle-mounted officers used to chase down runaway horses and wagons within the city. Because of the raising popularity of bicycles, riding clubs began to be established in the U.S.

Lt. Moss was determined to prove that bicycles were faster than marching and cheaper than traveling by horseback. Knowing the rigors of the limited road system, Lt. Moss reached out to A.G. Spalding & Co. (now Spalding Sports Worldwide) to customize his bicycles. These bicycles were fitted with steel rims, reinforced forks, puncture proof tires, and an enclosed gear system to protect the chain from dust and debris. Each modified bicycle weighed 32 pounds.

In August 1896, Lt. Moss and eight volunteers began their first excursion. These volunteers included Lt. Moss trusted First Sgt. Mingo Sanders who was a 16 year Army veteran. It was a four-day 126 mile round trip from Ft. Missoula to McDonald Lake and back. Later that summer, they embarked on a 23-day 1,600 mile round-trip from Ft. Missoula to Yellowstone National Park. Each trooper was

required to carry his knapsack, tent, sleeping bag, cooking utensils, food, and every other soldier carried a carbine. Few issues were encountered, and both expeditions were considered successes.

In 1897, Lt. Moss decided to test his men and the concept of bicycle-mounted infantry. This excursion would be a one-way 1,900 mile trip from Ft. Missoula to St. Louis. Fortunately for the 25th Regiment, Private John Finley had joined their ranks. Finley had been a bicycle mechanic for four years with Ames & Frost's Imperial Bicycle Works. They were also accompanied by Post Surgeon James M. Kennedy and Edward 'Eddie' H. Boos, a news reporter with the *Daily Missoulian*. Lt. Moss arranged for the Quartermaster units to position supply drops every 100 miles along the planned route.

Around noon of the first day, the riders were caught in a heavy rain that turned the path into mud. They had to dismount and walk their bicycles. As they approached the Rocky Mountains on the fourth day, the rain turned into a blinding snow. Boos reported they had to navigate through eight foot drifts.

Once they crossed the mountains, the grade was so steep they again had to dismount. They encountered more rain and mud as they progressed. Often the soldiers had to shoulder their loaded bicycles and carry them through thick mud and to ford flooded creeks.

Because of the difficult path, the soldiers often spread out over miles as zig-zagged their way





through the mud and muck. But as they approached towns, they all formed back into a unified formation before arrival. They were welcomed by most people and treated to food and drinks. With the Civil War still a vivid memory, these Union soldiers encountered some hostility. Overall, townspeople were welcoming.

On June 25, its twelfth day on the road, the column reached Little Big Horn, resting amid the ghosts of George Custer's 7th U.S. Cavalry on the anniversary of its infamous defeat. Weather improved and progress was made.

As they crossed the border to Nebraska, they encountered miles of shifting sand. They took to the railway and road between the tracks as they bounced over cross-ties. This left many sore and bruised. Then many became ill from the alkali used to treat their drinking water. Lt. Moss had no choice but to stop for four days before recovering enough to continue.

As they approached the city limits of St. Louis, hundreds of local cyclists rode out to meet them. They were warmly welcomed into the city. At 6:30 that evening, after 40 days and 1,900.2 miles, the trek officially ended. Moss was pleased with the results; the troop averaged 6.3 mph and covered more than 50 miles each day. This was an amazing

feat, considering all of the adverse conditions they dealt with.

The 25th stayed in St. Louis for a week being hosted by local bicycle clubs before General Miles sent word ordering them to return by train. I'm sure they were happy that they did not have to make the return trip by foot and wheel!

General Miles thought the experiment was a great success but was still not convinced of the bicycle's true value within the military. Because of continuing issues with Indians (Native Americans) and the impending Spanish-American War, the bicycle program was put on a back burner.

Lt. Moss maintained his beliefs that bicycles were needed in the modern Army. They were quiet, easily hidden, needed little maintenance, and their direction of travel could not be determined from the tracks.

Eventually, the U.S. Army did adopt a two-wheeled vehicle in 1913, and in 1916 an expeditionary force under Brig. Gen. John J. "Black Jack" Pershing used that same vehicle to hunt for Pancho Villa in Mexico. It was called the motorcycle.

Dane

AMPS Boresight (Volume 29, Issue 6)

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

- ♦ **Soviet IS-4** by Eric Reinert
- ♦ **A Visit to the National WWI Museum** by John Kirkpatrick
- ♦ **Western Canadian Regional AMPS Model Show** by Anthony Sowards
- ♦ **TX-225 GAVw Occupier Combat Assault Tank** by the Editor
- ♦ **Armor Fiesta... Texas Style** by AMPS CENTEX
- ♦ **Book Review: Japanese Tanks & Armoured Warfare 1932-45** by Steven Andreano
- ♦ **Know Your Officer**
- ♦ **Local Chapter News & Upcoming Shows**





A Visit to the National Army Museum by the Editor

Last month I was in the UK on a “babysitting mission.” I had several hours of free time to kill in London, so I headed to the **National Army Museum (NAM)** in the Chelsea district for a short visit.

The NAM has gone through several major renovations in the last decade, and I kept missing an



A Challenger 2 MBT in front of the NAM. Notice the glaring error of the paint job so obvious only to modelers/armor enthusiasts and veterans...

Only Chieftain Mk. 10s served in British Army's Berlin Infantry Brigade were painted in this famous urban camo scheme. Challenger 1 was fielded by BAOR (British Army of the Rhine) towards the end of the Cold War but was never used by the Berlin Brigade!

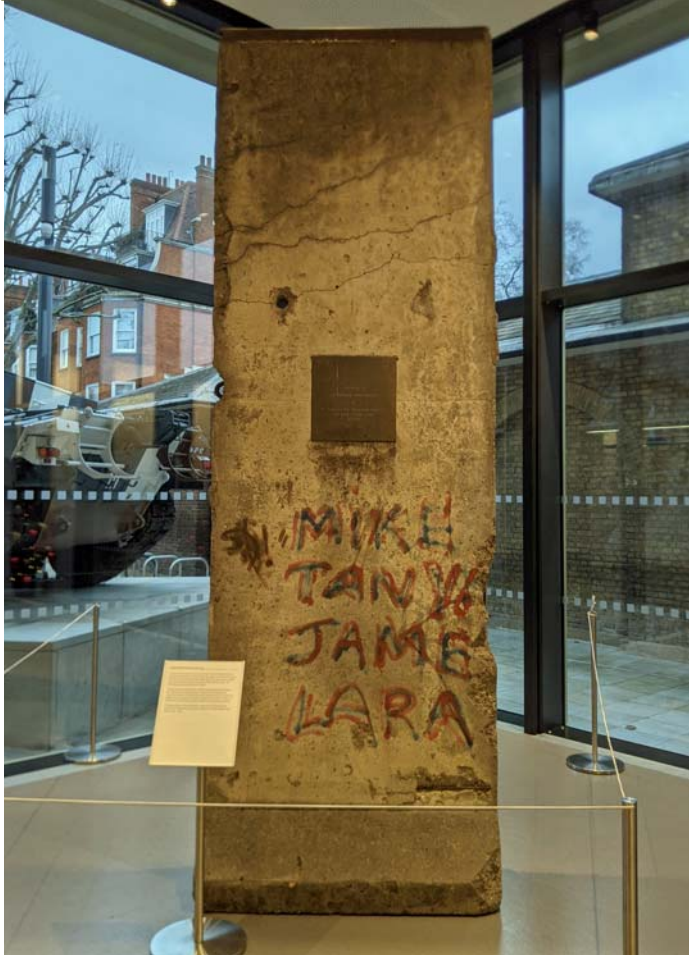
opportunity to stop by in my last three trips to London. Unlike the **Imperial War Museum** that covers the involvement of the UK in the two world wars, the NAM emphasizes on the individual corps and regiment histories of the British Army. Its exhibit includes lots of uniform, small firearms, field guns, and some armor vehicles (e.g. front half of a Churchill infantry tank, Bren gun carrier, Dingo armored car, and a Humber ‘Pig’ Squirt truck).



Also in urban camo is this Fox armored car. The paint job is correct this time. Fox was used only in West Berlin for border patrol duties but not with BAOR.



A retired British Army Lynx helicopter hanging from the ceiling of the museum.



A section of the Berlin Wall.



Front half of a Churchill infantry tank.



Universal carrier.



Lots of British Army ceremonial uniforms on display.



Dingo Scout Car.



Various British firearms of different eras.



Examples of WWII anti-tank weapons:
British Projector Infantry Anti-tank (PIAT) and
German Teller mine.

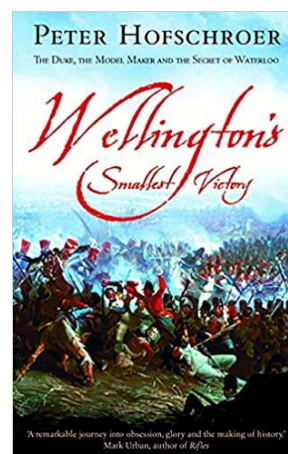
What interested me the most in this museum is a diorama of the Battle of Waterloo built by Captain William Siborne in 1838. It measures approximately

6m by 8m (19.7'x26.25') with 80,000(!) 10mm lead figures representing the 160,000 Allied, French, and Prussian troops that participated in the battle.



The diorama is both huge in size and controversy at the time. While popular with the public, it incurred the wrath of Duke of Wellington as he was not enamored with the significant role the Prussians played in the battle. Under his influence a smear campaign was undertaken, and funding was soon withdrawn. Siborne had to use his own money to finish it and died a penniless man.

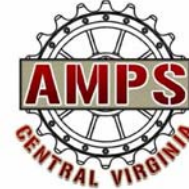
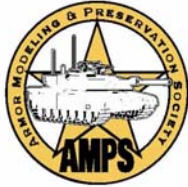
Over the years the diorama was mostly forgotten and went through several ownerships. It is a miracle that it survives and finally has a permanent home at the NAM.



Interested in finding out more about Siborne and his work? I highly recommend Peter Hofschroer's excellent book *Wellington's Smallest Victory: The Story of William Siborne & Great Model of Waterloo*.

If you happened to be in London, don't miss visiting the NAM. Be prepared to spend an entire afternoon there!

Editor



Join us in Virginia for the 26th AMPS convention! Scale modelers are invited to bring their creative work for display and plug into the friendly and instructional atmosphere.

The convention theme is Move It! Build a subject that hauls, moves, or transports supplies, vehicles or people and you could receive a theme special award.

AMPS-2022

7-9 APRIL

Many of the best armor modeling product vendors will be with us to help you find great deals on new and old kits, tools, books and accessories.

Seminars from inspiring hobbyists and historians will teach you new techniques.

Come early and visit the many museums and military collections in the region.

**CONTEST/DISPLAYS · AWARDS · VENDORS
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Visit the AMPS website for all the details: AMPS-Armor.org



Members Show & Tell

3. Iraqi BTR-50PK (Trumpeter)

Greg Beckman:

1. Syrian T-55, Golan Heights (MiniArt)



2. Syrian D30 (Trumpeter) with anti-government forces



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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



Taking advantage of its new T-72 mold, Amusing Hobby just released a T-90A in 1/35th with full interior.



Gecko's 1/35th Daimler Armored Car Mk.I came out just before Christmas last year. I believe this is the first time this car being done in injection plastic in this scale.



Soldiers in raincoat, what a great idea! How come no one thought of it before?



Zvezda's brand new 1/35th TOR-M2 model comes in a big box (19"x12"x3.5") with relatively few parts (336). The kit comes with link-and-length tracks. Unfortunately, no missiles are included.

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. We also hold regular in-house model contests and organize out-of-town trips to museums and modeling events. Every odd-numbered year AABS hosts the biggest armor modeling show 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.

For more info, please visit www.austinamps.org