



Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

February 2026

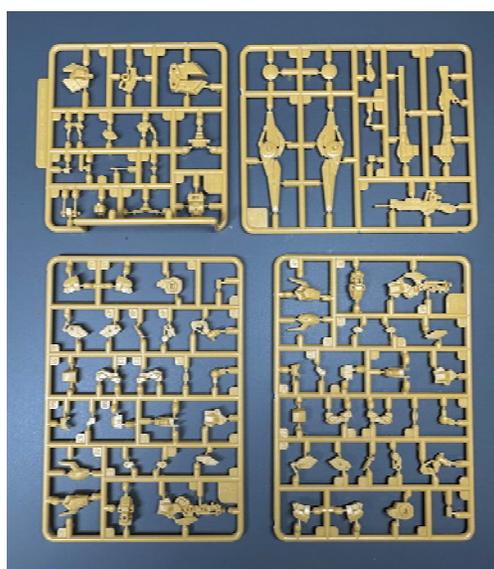
A BITESIZE GUNDAM PROJECT

By Mike Bird

As I browsed the shelves at Barnes and Noble late last year, I spotted a small box with an eye-catching “Plastic Mini-Kit” badge on the front. On closer inspection, I found it was a scaled-down Gundam kit produced by Bandai with a price tag of just \$7. I decided to give it a go!



Upon getting the kit to my bench, I found that it contained four sprues and many more parts than I was expecting! The box doesn't give a scale, but



Internet sleuths estimate somewhere in the 1/350th scale range. Unlike the larger Gundam kits, the parts were produced in just one color, but there are a lot of fine details molded with Bandai's typical finesse.

The build sequence followed the typical Gundam pattern of separate steps for each of the individual limbs, the torso, and the head. All parts are then combined to create the finished figure. In Gundam modeling it is common to paint parts before construction, but I decided against doing this due to the small size. In hindsight it would have made for less brush painting later, so it may have been beneficial.

(Continued on page 5)

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ◆ February 4 - AABS Meeting
- ◆ Feb 28 - WinterBlitz 2026, Museum of the American GI, College Station
- ◆ March 4 - AABS Meeting
- ◆ March 14 - KC CON 2026, First Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO
- ◆ April 4 - AABS Meeting



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Schedule of Upcoming Program Presentations and Newsletter Articles

Month	Program Presentation	Newsletter Article
January ‡	Chris Chany	Ted Paone
February	Ted Paone	Mike Bird
March ‡	Bill Zych	Bob Bethea
April	Eric Choy	Eric Choy
May	TBA	Allan Romer
June ‡	* KIT AUCTION *	Christian Carrington
July	Allan Romer	Greg Beckman
August	Craig Bland	Craig Bland
September ‡	Marty Hebda	Marty Hebda
October	Mike Bird	Mike Bird
November	* KIT-SWAP NITE *	Ron Askew
December ‡	Chris Chany	Mike Reeves
January 2027	Bob Bethea	Chris Chany

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 at 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. Ted Paone's article for January 2026 is due on the last Wednesday of December 2025).

‡ Quarterly contest month



From the Turret

Happy February! I hope everyone has recovered from this year's "Snowpocalypse." Speaking as a New Yorker, Texas really needs to have some snow fighting equipment. We would get 22 inches of snow, and a day later the roads would be drivable. Up in the Adirondacks, where my in-laws lived, they didn't even plow. They would just keep sanding the roads and let it pack down. And the schools never closed!

First, if you haven't paid your dues, now is the time to contact Eric. Second, *Winterblitz* is now on the last Saturday of February (**Feb 28**), so you still have time to finish another model.

February 4 has a lot of historic dates, not all armor related. So here goes:

1703: In Edo (now Tokyo) Japan, all but one of the forty-seven ronin committed *seppuku* (ritual suicide) as recompense for avenging their master's death.

1789: George Washington was unanimously elected as the first President of the United States by the U.S. Electoral College.



George Washington being sworn in at Federal Hall in NYC in April, 1789.

1861: Amidst the American Civil War, delegates from seven breakaway U.S. states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas) met in Montgomery Alabama and initiated the process that would form the Confederate States of America on February 8.

1899: The Philippine–American War began when four Filipino soldiers entered the "American Zone" in Manila, igniting the Battle of Manila.

1932: The city of Harbin, China fell to Japan's Kwantung Army. Puyi, former Manchurian emperor of China deposed in 1911, was made emperor of the puppet state of Manchukuo by the Japanese.

1938: Adolf Hitler appointed himself the head of the Armed Forces High Command (OKH).

1941: The United Service Organization (USO) was created to entertain U.S. troops.



1945: Santo Tomas Internment Camp was liberated from Japanese authority in the Philippines.



The Yalta Conference of the "Big Three" (Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin) opened at the Livadia Palace in the Crimea.

British Indian Army and Imperial Japanese Army began a series of battles known as the Battle of Pokoku and Irrawaddy River operations.



1961: The Angolan War of Independence and the greater Portuguese Colonial War began.

1974: The Symbionese Liberation Army kidnapped Patty Hearst, granddaughter of American publishing



magnate William Randolph Hearst, in Berkeley, California. She was found and arrested 19 months later for bank robbery committed with the members of the group.

Ted Paone has the program this month, and remember if you won the last door prize raffle, you are responsible for bringing in the next prize.

See you Wednesday!

Chris Chany
President

2004: Facebook, an online social networking site, was founded by Mark Zuckerberg with four other Harvard College students and roommates.



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AND
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DUES**

It is club dues time again. Due to the library's "no money exchange hands" policy, please send your dues (\$15) by **PayPal** to **payaabs@gmail.com**. Be sure to use the "Send Money to Friends/Family option" to avoid PayPal surcharge (or send \$16 if you can't find that option.)

For those who prefer to make an "old-school" payment, our treasurer's address is:

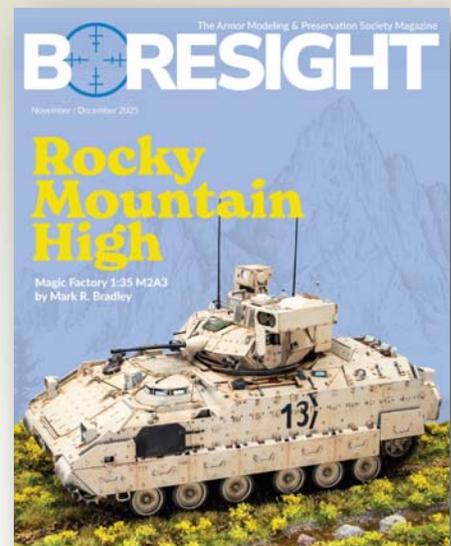
Eric Choy
13213 Marrero Drive
Austin TX 78729

Be sure you make the check/cashier check payable to "AABS." As usual, please DO NOT send cash by mail!

AMPS Boresight (Volume 33, Issue 6)

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

- ♦ **Springtime in the Rockies** by Mark R. Bradley
- ♦ **Modeling the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN)** by Bill Cross
- ♦ **Christmas Carrier** by Shon Stephens
- ♦ **Hungarian StuG** by Greg Beckman
- ♦ **Book Review: Zrinyi II Assault Howitzer: Armour of the Royal Hungarian Army** by Eric Choy



(Continued from page 1)

Construction was straightforward, apart from the wing-like pieces on the back of the suit which required some close study of the minimal instruction sheet. My only other issue was dropping the smallest piece of the kit on the floor, but a very careful sweeping of the garage floor resulted in a successful retrieval!



This was a quick build that took less than a week's worth of evenings, and I enjoyed it a lot. It was definitely worth the \$7 price of admission!

Mike

Once the build was complete, I gave the model a black base coat before giving it an all over coat of gold to match the color of this particular mobile fighting suit in the TV series. I picked out the accent colors by hand-painting with AK Interactive 3rdGen Acrylic paints, and I used Tamiya Black Panel Liner to add some depth. At which point the build was done.



I used a small circle of wood as a base and built up some basic terrain with cork, before using wood and styrene to give the impression of some debris to indicate a destroyed building. I also added some AK Interactive muddy terrain texture for the ground.





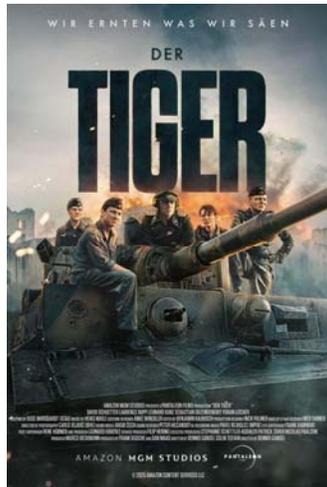
LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES !!!

DER TIGER (U.S. Title: "The Tiger")

Movie Review by Allan Romer

The five-man crew of a German Tiger tank is sent on a secret mission far behind the fiercely contested front line. Fueled by the Wehrmacht's methamphetamine, their mission increasingly becomes a journey into the heart of darkness.

In early summer last year (2025), I heard that a new movie about a Tiger I tank was being released. It was going to be an original Amazon movie by a German production and acting crew to be released in October. Details were sketchy but the synopsis said it would be about a lone Tiger I tank sent behind lines on a top-secret mission.



What little could be gleaned was that it was to be a harrowing look at a single tank crew on a perilous mission and the mental and physical effects of war. Being a German production, I anticipated to be an anti-war picture. My interest was piqued.

In October, word came out that it had been released on Amazon Prime. I was disappointed that the initial release was in Germany only. Even though I have an Amazon.de Prime account, I could not watch it. Amazon informed viewers that *Der Tiger* would not be released in the U.S. until January 2026. It's available now.

I would caution that you should not read any review or synopses until you have a chance to watch *Der*

Tiger first so you can make your own impressions without the baggage of what others say. The critics, both for and against, will color your judgement. After making your viewing, then you can feel free to read up what others say and see if you are in agreement, pro or con. I think *Der Tiger* is best summed up by one reviewer who said the film is "very polarizing. you either really like it, or you don't. Not a lot of middle ground."

Second caution: if you are looking for a tank movie with a historically accurate Tiger I tank, or want to pick at all the inconsistencies (uniforms, tactics, etc.), or looking for rousing tank battles (think *Patton*, *Battle of the Bulge*, or the miniseries *Valley of Tears*), you may wish to select a different movie. *Der Tiger* is not about action. It's the dialog that sets this movie apart.

NO SPOILERS! (Sorry 😊)

I divided the movie into three acts. Act One opens with a lone Tiger I tank on a bridge spanning the Dnieper River, covering the retreat of the *Wehrmacht* eight months after the failure to take Stalingrad. Think of the chaos similar to the opening scenes in *Saving Private Ryan*. This act closes with the intrepid Tiger crew receiving their top-secret orders to travel into a no man's land and bring back a Colonel Von Hardenburg who is in a fortified bunker - *Operation Labyrinth*.

Act Two is straight out of *Apocalypse Now*. But rather than travel upriver, the tank and its crew move cross country into the contested land, except for one scene that is reminiscent of *Das Boot*. Along the way they will meet trials that tests the mettle of the tank crew,



including minefields, tank battles, and witnessing Nazi atrocities.

Yes, there are some other strange occurrences that cannot be easily explained. But to be honest, there is not a lot of action. This is not a tank named "Fury," and the commander is not Don "Wardaddy" Collier. The Tiger I and its crew have orders not to take unnecessary risks that would jeopardize the mission.

Act Three begins when the crew approaches the bunker location of Colonel Von Hardenburg and proceeds on foot. Here is where *Der Tiger* becomes metaphysical. Borrowing heavily from Ambrose Bierce and Rod Serling's opening narration in *The Twilight Zone* TV series:

There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area which we call the Twilight Zone.

Act Three concludes by tying the strands from Act One and Two together in its finale.

The movie was directed and co-written by German film maker Dennis Gansel. As such you may assume that it is anti-war movie with a heavy dose of Germanic self-flagellation over the atrocities the Nazis committed on the Russian front. (AND there were atrocities! Should you have any doubt, please read Richard J. Evan's *The Third Reich at War*).

On my second viewing of *Der Tiger*, I had the subtitle setting enabled and was able to pay much closer attention to what was said. This is not dialog-heavy movie, but what is said is thought provoking. I reached a much higher appreciation for this film. Yes, it is anti-war, but it is a myopic view to assume this is only an anti-German war movie castigating the Nazis, Hitler, Fascists, etc. The questions it posits are easily transferred to any war, any army, any era.

Wartime is not the only instance that tests one's moral compass. There are a lot of gray areas as we navigate the labyrinth we call life. Using a fictional setting during WWII in Russia, *Der Tiger* explores this realm and reminds us that individually we make decisions and face the consequences.

Der Tiger will not appeal to everyone. There are not a lot of battle scenes to get your blood pumping. There are plenty of scenes of the tank driving through open country or bivouacked for the night. Instead it does an excellent job of showing the tension, stress, and camaraderie of a five-member tank crew confined in a very small space. And quite frankly, the prop department of this film did a very credible job of remaking a T-55 into a reasonable facsimile of a Tiger I tank.

I liked this movie. It makes me think and ponder. But then again, I am not a cinephile. I think *The Twilight Zone* is the best TV series ever made, and one of my favorite movies is *The Final Countdown*.

Der Tiger is available on Amazon Prime. It may be easier to find if you look for "The Tank" just be sure to get to this 2025 film ("The Tank" is also the name of another title released in 2023). You can change your language settings to English, but I recommend enabling subtitles so you don't miss any of the dialog. Oh, yeah, a pair of headphones helps hearing what is said much easier also.



Allan

WANTED

If you have built a 1/35th scale

Marder III Ausf. H (Sd.Kfz.138)

please bring it to our next meeting on February 4th.

No preference on manufacturer (e.g. Italeri, DML, TriStar). Allan is looking to get some good photos of the finished model for an article he is working on.

DSPIAE Multi-Purpose Processing Assistance Platform "The Cube"

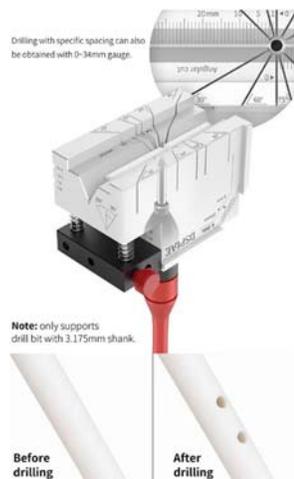
Product First Look by *The Editor*

Seldom do we review modeling tools here in this newsletter as we are more concerned with kits and aftermarket upgrades. When I was researching the latest products for the *New On the Block* column (page 15), I came across "The Cube" by the Chinese modeling tool company DSPIAE. Released in the summer of last year, somehow I was not aware of its existence until now.

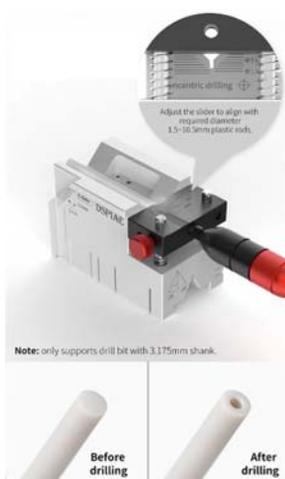


So what exactly does this "Multi-purpose Processing Assistance Platform" process? Basically it's a precision modeling tool that cramps no less than eight (8!) cutting/drilling functions inside one small aluminum alloy casing:

1. Vertical Drilling



2. Center of Circle Drilling



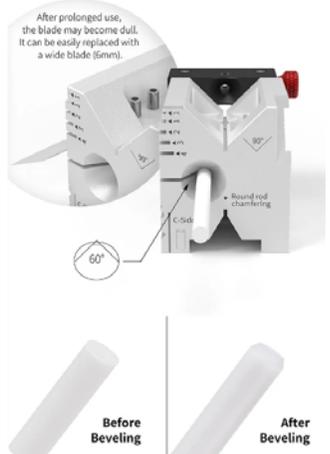
3. Half Circle/Triangular Rods Cutting

Hobby cube will pop them up for you. Sand off unwanted section to change them into half circle/triangular rods.

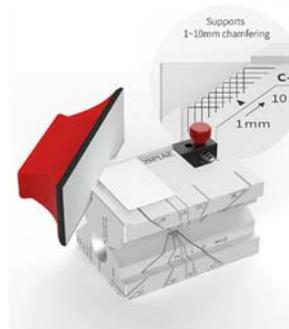


4. Plastic Rods Beveling

Let the hobby cube do the professional stuff for you, as simple as a pencil sharpener.

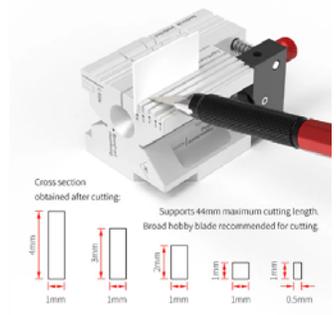


5. Plastic Chamfering

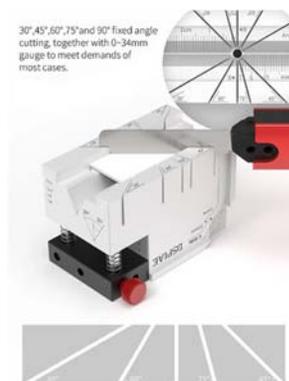


6. Equal Width Cutting

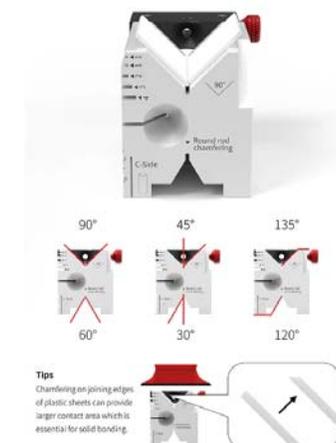
Say good bye to pencil and ruler



7. Fixed Angle Cutting



8. Joining Plastic Sheets



Sabot Away!

The Newsletter of The Austin Armor Builders

February 2026

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"The Cube" appears to be the perfect tool for anyone who performs occasional or full-time scratchbuilding (Ted, are you reading this?). Can a single tool about the size of your palm (4.37" x 4.06" x 2.4") do all that? It sounds too good to be true, isn't it?

But here's the best part: unlike other DSPAIE tools that cost over \$100, the MSRP of "The Cube" is only \$58 (!) plus shipping if ordered direct from DSPAIE www.dspaie.com. After a quick calculation of how

many Whataburger lunches I have to skip (just five) to get "The Cube," I promptly ordered one from Amazon (even cheaper at \$52!).

Stay tuned for an in-depth review of "The Cube" once it arrives.

Editor

MODELS PAINTS TOOLS ACCESSORIES ROCKETS



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TABLETOP GAMES

PUZZLES

CHESS

RPGS

CCGS



WINTERBLITZ 2026



SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28, 2026

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Museum of the American G.I.
College Station, Texas

RESCHEDULED
NEW DATE ANNOUNCED

- Raffles
- Best of Awards
- Hall of Fame Inductees
- Door Prizes
- Vendor Room
- Demonstrations

- 100 – Youth (younger than 18) (all scales, all eras)
- 200 – Classic Kits (kits, accessories, and add-ons manufactured before 1979)
- 300 – Artillery (all scales, all eras)
- 350 – All Things Towed (all scales, all eras) – must have BOTH “tractor and trailer”
- 400 – 1/48th Scale (Allied)
- 450 – 1/48th Scale (Axis)
- 500 – 1/72 and smaller (all eras)
- 600 – Fully Tracked Origin to 1934 (all scales)
- 700 – Fully Tracked Open Top Vehicles 1/32nd and 1/35th (all eras)
- 800 – Fully Tracked WWII Axis 1/32nd and 1/35th (closed top)
- 900 – Fully Tracked WWII Allied 1/32nd and 1/35th (closed top)
- 1000 – Fully Tracked Post WWII to 1990 (e.g. Korea, Vietnam, Cold War) 1/32nd and 1/35th (closed top)
- 1100 – Fully Tracked Desert Shield/Storm to Present (1991 to 2026) 1/32nd and 1/35th (closed top)
- 1200 – Paper Panzer/Fictional (all scales)
- 1300 – Halftracks (all scales and all eras)
- 1400 – Armored Cars (wheeled) (all scales, all eras)
- 1500 – Softskin Vehicles (all scales, all eras)
- 1600 – Motorcycles – with or without sidecar (all scales, all eras)
- 1700 – Miscellaneous Military and Support Vehicle (all scales, all eras)
- 2000 – Fully Tracked Full Interior (all scales, all eras)
- 3000 – Larger than 1/32nd (all eras)
- 4000 – Self Propelled FlaK (anti-aircraft) Vehicles (all scales, all eras)
- 5000 – Figures (all scales, all eras)
- 6000 – Dioramas/Vignettes (all scales, all eras)
- 6500 – Rotary Wing (Helicopter) Tank Busters (all scales, all eras)
- 7000 – The P-47 Challenge U.S. P-47s ONLY (all scales, all eras)
- 7500 – Brown Water Navy – Vietnam Riverine (all scales)
- 8500 – Landing Craft - watercraft that delivers men and/or equipment to shore (all scales, all eras)
- 9000 – Maschinen Krieger Armor Suits (all scales)

RESCHEDULED
NEW DATE ANNOUNCED

Tank of the Year: Panzer 38(t) – special prize for the best 38(t) or 38(t) variant (all scales, all eras)
Show Theme: Military Support Vehicles (all scales, all eras)

VISIT www.winter-blitz.com FOR MORE INFO



MARINE + AMBULANCE + HOLDEN + JEEPS +

Part 2 by
Ted Paone

Building the Model

I used the story stick to transfer the measurements from the plan to the jeep body. The first thing I worked on was the medical box. I cut the body so I could use a single piece of .020 x .156 strip to go from the back to the front and form the side above the medical box. I bent the piece to follow the jeep side and had to fill in a small section underneath. Both in-action photos and restorations show the sides were modified in a similar manner, and the welding was a little rough. It was hard to find pictures of the box itself but I got some clues from some restorations and built it with .020 plastic sheet.

The box top, bottom, and sides protrude from the jeep side to give it the lip seen in photos. I added an inset door with a hasp. I used a LOT of Evergreen



white plastic in this build! Tamiya Extra Thin eats this stuff up. I prefer using Testors Liquid Cement because it is a little slower but can still make a mess.

I flattened the back panel except for the lights and used a story stick to transfer the door and other markings from the plan. I cut in the sides of the door. I only scribed the bottom so the piece was still part of the panel. When I added the hinges and back sides to the door, I used a double wide strip and just scribed in the gap. This made the whole panel strong.

The racks are the most identifiable parts on the Holden ambulance. I chose to build a later model used on Iwo Jima. They are a complex set that have to meet many requirements. The racks have to hold two stretchers one above the other. The racks are all of the same height and are attached to the jeep body on a .010 plate (1/4 inch in scale). The top and all the legs are square. The rear and middle racks are almost the same. The difference is the cross pieces holding the upper stretcher. I had to find stretchers to determine dimensions. Gecko makes a British set with different legs, but I'm not telling...

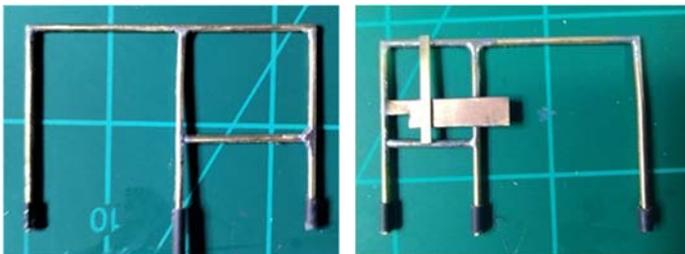
I made the litter carriers first as they would determine the middle pole on the back two racks. These were made of .010 strip as I could not find channel thin enough.

I decided to use the 3/64th brass wire from K&S for the rack. This was the closest to the estimated pipe

diameter. I developed a versatile jig to rigidly hold the pieces while I soldered them together. The rear and middle rack were almost identical and could use the same jig (otherwise a separate one had to be built for the front rack). The jig had a corner cut off so I could solder the pieces, and it was configured so I could solder all the joints while the rack was securely held. I used silver solder for strength. Taking a clue from Shep Paine, I soldered the pieces to shape and then cut them to size. I had to build each one multiple times to get the sizing correct.

The front rack is smaller, and it has additional brass piece which, when I tried to solder, desoldered the previous made joints. I wet (pre-soldered) the pieces so the only heat needed was to melt the solder and not have to heat the brass, and this worked.

had to make sure the sides were parallel to the preceding rack and the tops were parallel to the back rack in all three dimensions. I trussed up the racks like a turkey before going into a fryer using Blu Tack® and rubber bands. One can easily detect when things are not parallel, and it drove me nuts! I also had to add the cross pieces to ensure the upper litter carrier was parallel to the lower one. It was a “parallelafest!”



The spare tire was moved to the hood; a rack was built using the original spare tire mount. It was hinged at the back and held down by two tie-downs in the front. I built the rack out of plastic strip, added a hinge to the model's tire mount, and used tie-downs from Tiger Model Design (TMD).

There were other additions and changes, such as windscreen sits upright and the back seat was mounted on the side over the wheel. I replaced the wheels with resin ones from TMD with chains as most pictures from Iwo Jima show their use.

Where's the Paint?

I planned to bring in the unpainted model to show the build process, but my talk has been preempted by Chris in January. I may be able to get some paint on it, no telling with the holiday season. Hopefully it will be ready for the upcoming WinterBlitz show (Editor: rescheduled to February 28, 2026!).

Once the racks were sized, I glued the back one to the jeep. With the help of my digital caliper, both sides were the same distance from the rear. I set the height based on measurements then created a jig to set the height of the other racks. As I added them, I

Why Are We Scratchbuilding?

Any time you add non-kit parts to your model, you are already a scratchbuilder! Whether you start with white plastic and brass, convert with resin parts, or use 3D-printed additions, you are creating a unique model, the main reason for scratchbuilding.

A scratchbuilding project like my Holden Ambulance Jeep here is not for the faint of heart. It's going to take you a lot longer, and you will probably have to rebuild parts multiple times to get it right. Many of my projects are put on pause, and this one was halted for several years due to frustration. There is a lot of research required and, if you don't already have plans, you have to make your own. Computer photogrammetry, CAD, and 3D-printing would make some things easier, but you still need to play with plastic and brass to make something that you can be proud of.

As for me, I still have a lot of jeeps in my stash and some ideas...

Ted

References

- ◆ <https://navymedicine.navylive.dodlive.mil/archives/6505>
- ◆ <https://navymedicine.navylive.dodlive.mil/archives/12411>
- ◆ <https://www.militarytrader.com/military-vehicles/holden-ambulance>
- ◆ <https://offroadaction.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Lt0Frt.jpg>
- ◆ http://toadmanstankpictures.com/gpw_holden_ambulance.htm
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¹ Digital package includes four (4) Digital and two (2) Printed issues of *Boresight* per year.

² All Printed package includes six (6) Printed issues of *Boresight* per year.

³ Juniors are members aged 17 years or younger.

⁴ Family rates are for anyone living at the same address as an active regular member.

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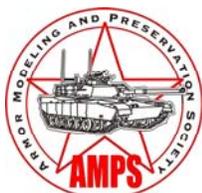
CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____

ZIP CODE: _____ **PHONE:** _____

E-MAIL: _____

Did an AMPS member encourage you
To join AMPS? If so, who was he/she? _____

Send completed form and check/money order to:



AMPS
Attn: Membership Dept
P.O. BOX 807, 1140 THORN RUN ROAD
MOON TOWNSHIP, PA 15108-9998



All payments must be made in U.S. funds. For outside U.S. (Canada and International) rates, please visit AMPS website at www.amps-armor.org.

New On The Block



AK continues its 1/35th civilian vehicle series with two new releases: the Citroën HY commercial van and the Trabant 601S. The 'S' stands for *Special Edition* with an odometer! Apparently a base model "Trabi" did not come with one!



What's inside the limited edition

of Thunder Model's 1/35th Heavy Wrecker Ward La France Model M1-Series 5 M1A1? Two resin figures and a 3-D printed folded cab canvas.

Academy has a new wheeled armored vehicle out in 1/35th scale: ROK Army K808.

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. Subjects of our interest range from WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Middle East, to the most recent war in Ukraine.

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.ampscentex.org