



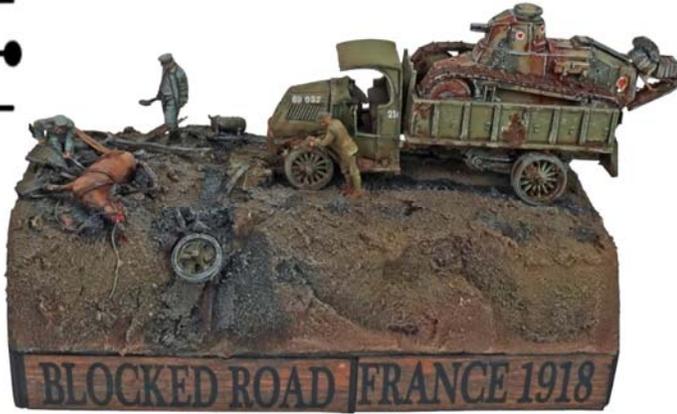
Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

March 2026

BRAILLE SCALE FUN



By **Bob Bethea**

Many years ago when Dragon came out with their 1/72nd scale line of military vehicles, I was able to buy a big stack of them at model shows very cheaply. I was very impressed with some of the detail, so I bought more. They are quick builds with very nice details compared to the old Airfix kits. However, I needed figures to go with them. I found nice resin ones from Warriors and plastic

ones from Preiser. Anatomy and scale were dead on, but detail was lacking sometimes. I can paint that on later.

As time went by, better and better kits came out from Flyhawk and Vespider that compare very favorably with 1/35th kits. These kits deserved to be shown in their native environment, and I started to accumulate diorama accessories to help display them appropriately.

Value Gear, a company based in Arizona, now makes top notch castings of stowage, boxes, blanket rolls, etc. Also, many companies sell buildings in resin for backdrops that are just as detailed as the vehicles. Groundwork can be scaled down as well.

I'm no sculptor or scratchbuilder, so with all the components in my stash, the next logical step was to put them together and VOILÀ, dioramas!



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ◆ **March 4 - AABS Meeting**
- ◆ **March 14 - KC CON 2026**, First Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO
- ◆ **April 1 - AABS Meeting**
- ◆ **April 16 to 18 - AMPS International Convention**, Century Center, South Bend, IN
- ◆ **May 2 - Modelmania 2026**, Stafford Center, Stafford
- ◆ **May 6 - AABS Meeting**
- ◆ **May 30 - Scalefest 2026**, Grapevine Convention Center, Grapevine



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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

Well it's March already! We don't have much to talk about during the business meeting, but I am sure we will get a wrap up of *Winterblitz*.

1628: The Massachusetts Bay Colony was granted a royal charter.

1681: Charles II granted a land charter to William Penn for the area that later became Pennsylvania.

1776: During the American Revolutionary War, the Continental Army fortified Dorchester Heights with cannon, leading the British troops to abandon the siege of Boston.

1789: The first Congress of the U.S. met in New York City, putting the Constitution into effect.

1791: Vermont was admitted to the U.S. as the fourteenth state.

1794: The 11th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed by the U.S. Congress.

1797: Inaugurated as the second President of the U.S., John Adams was the first President to begin his presidency on March 4.

1814: During the War of 1812, British forces were defeated at the Battle of Longwoods between London, Ontario and Thamesville (near present-day Wardsville, Ontario).

1837: The city of Chicago was incorporated.

1849: Zachary Taylor, 12th President of the U.S., and Millard Fillmore, 12th Vice President, did not take their respective oaths of office (they did so the following day), leading to the erroneous theory that outgoing President *pro tempore* of the U.S. Senate David Rice Atchison assumed the role of acting president for one day.

1861: The first national flag of the Confederate States of America (the "Stars and Bars") was adopted.

(Continued on page 4)

AABS 2026 Quarterly Contest Schedule



<i>Month</i>	<i>Theme</i>
May	Tamiya Kit
September	Blue!
December	White Elephant



(Continued from page 3)

1865: The third and final national flag of the Confederate States of America was adopted by the Confederate Congress.

1865: U.S. politician Andrew Johnson made his drunk vice-presidential inaugural address.

1901: William McKinley was inaugurated as the U.S. President for the second time. Theodore Roosevelt was the vice president.

1909: U.S. President William Taft used what became known as a "Saxbe fix," a mechanism to avoid the restriction of the Constitution's Ineligibility Clause, to appoint Philander C. Knox as Secretary of State.

1913: The Greek army engaged the Turks of the Ottoman Empire at Bizani in the First Balkan War, resulting in victory two days later.

1917: Jeannette Rankin of Montana became the first female member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

1918: A case of influenza was recorded at Camp Funston, Kansas, conventionally marking the beginning of the worldwide Spanish flu pandemic.

1933: Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated as the 32nd President of the United States. The U.S. Senate confirmed Frances Perkins as Secretary of Labor,

making her the first female member of the Cabinet.

The Parliament of Austria was suspended because of a quibble over procedures, and Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss initiated an authoritarian rule by decree.

1941: The United Kingdom launched *Operation Claymore* on the Lofoten Islands (Norway), the first large scale British Commando raid in World War II.

1943: The Battle of Fardykambos, one of the first major battles between the Greek Resistance and the occupying Royal Italian Army, began on March 4. It ended two days later with the surrender of an entire Italian battalion and the liberation of the town of Grevena.

1957: The S&P500 stock market index was introduced, replacing the S&P90.

2002: Seven American Special Operations Forces soldiers and 200 Al-Qaeda Fighters were killed as U.S. forces attempted to infiltrate the Shah-i-Kot Valley in Afghanistan on a low-flying helicopter reconnaissance mission.

Bill Zych has the program this month. Don't forget to bring in a kit if you won the door prize last month.

Chris Chany
President



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!



(Continued from page 1)

CONCEPTION AND COMPOSITION

1. Build, paint, decal, and weather the vehicle (It is the basis for the whole diorama)
2. Choose and paint your appropriate figures (In the right uniforms doing what you want them to)
3. Choose, build, convert, paint and weather buildings (A major part of the composition)
4. Build Base (Decide height, materials, size... its your picture frame)
5. Add ground work and paint it (Choose materials and avoid dead space)
6. Attach all to base and review (I recommend getting the opinions of modelling friends)

BLOCKED ROAD, FRANCE 1918

Composition

The two German figures and the dead horse were Paracel Miniature products from our editor. They are the inspiration of my diorama: clearing a horse carcass off of a muddy WWI French road. I already had a Flyhawk FT-17 built as well as a Mack AC Bulldog Truck by RPM. I've seen photos of the Macks actually carrying the tanks and thought that was too cool not to portray. The FT-17 fit perfectly. What a great combo to face my road blockage.

Execution

I built, painted and decaled the FT-17 and the Bulldog as American vehicles. The Germans were painted and "PW" added in white to their backs to show them as POWs doing the dirty work.





The base was minimized for impact and made from 2 inch insulation foam with black painted balsa sides. I simulated a muddy raised causeway to justify the need for the horse removal. I made ruts, shell holes and textured them with tile grout. The underside of the truck also received grout as weathering.

A British Tommy figure from Modelu (a 3-D printing company based near Bristol, England) was painted as an American doughboy driver. He leans on the front fender with a rifle as guard for the POWs.

I added assorted junk such as wheels, metal pieces, and burned wood to show destruction. Harness was added to the horse, and it was painted along with the groundwork. It became the center of attention of my diorama.

JAGDPANTHER REPAIR STOP

Composition

This one started with the excellent *Jagdpanther* kit by Vespider. I finished it and felt that it was so cool that it deserved an appropriate base. I searched my stash and found Diodump's resin kit of a French farmhouse that fit perfectly.



The layout for this diorama was a little more difficult as after I attached the farmhouse, it left several "dead spots" on the base. After consulting with fellow modelers, I filled the space behind the *Jagdpanther* with a Dragon SdKfz.251 halftrack I built a while back. To crew it, I used Preiser artillery crew in SS camo smocks (colorful) and an Andrea SS Schutze Infantryman. I also added several appropriate tankers from Scale75, Andrea, and a mechanic in overalls with a tool chest from Preiser's *Luftwaffe* figure set.

The front dead spot needed additional height, so I added HO trees from Hobby Lobby cut down appropriately.

Execution

I built, painted, decaled, and weathered the *Jagdpanther* and the halftrack. I converted the SS artillerymen to sit on a scratchbuilt bench against the house resting. Their heads and limbs were moved to get the poses that I wanted. The SS planetree autumn camo as the orange is so striking. I painted them



Sabot Away!

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three times until the result was acceptable by my friend Henry Núñez, a local expert on painting SS camo.

The building consists of only two beautifully cast pieces, but the painting was a project in itself, especially in 1/72nd scale. The individual roof tiles and individual bricks were all painted differing colors and later blended and weathered.

Next I added Woodland Scenics foam (the finest version) to the roof and bricks simulating moss typical of northern Europe. I then sanded them down to bring them into scale.

The base is my usual 2" foam cut with my hot wire cutter covered in black painted balsa. Groundwork was my usual tile grout painted appropriately with scaled down versions of my 1/35th scale grasses.

Lastly, I dusted the vehicles and roads with pastel dust made by scraping artist pastel sticks with an X-Acto blade.

Epilogue

These dioramas were lots of fun to build, easy to store, inexpensive, and a surprise to viewers. I will be expanding my collection.

Bob





Feeling Blue?

by
Mike Bird

The theme for our September quarterly contest and the ASMS 2026 Show is "Blue." Starting this month, I'll provide some inspiration in this newsletter to get you feeling blue!

Did you know that in 1975, Israel supplied 75 M-50 Shermans to various Lebanese Christian militias during the Lebanese Civil War? Some were repainted with a blue-gray camouflage with black stripes while others received a light blue camouflage. Eden Camp in the UK has a running example painted in this scheme!

Star Decals sheet 35-C1280 will give you the markings you need to build your own example.



Mike

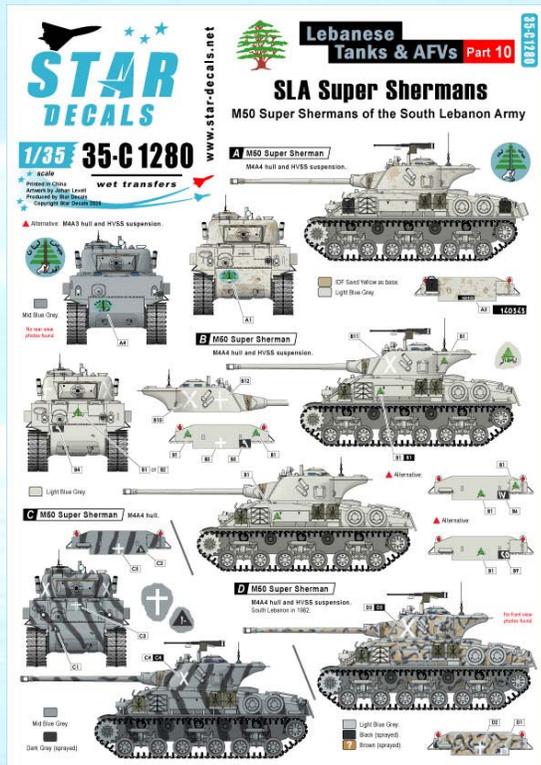


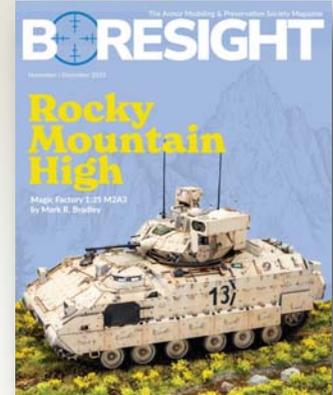
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- <https://edencamp.co.uk>
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AMPS Boresight (Volume 33, Issue 6)

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



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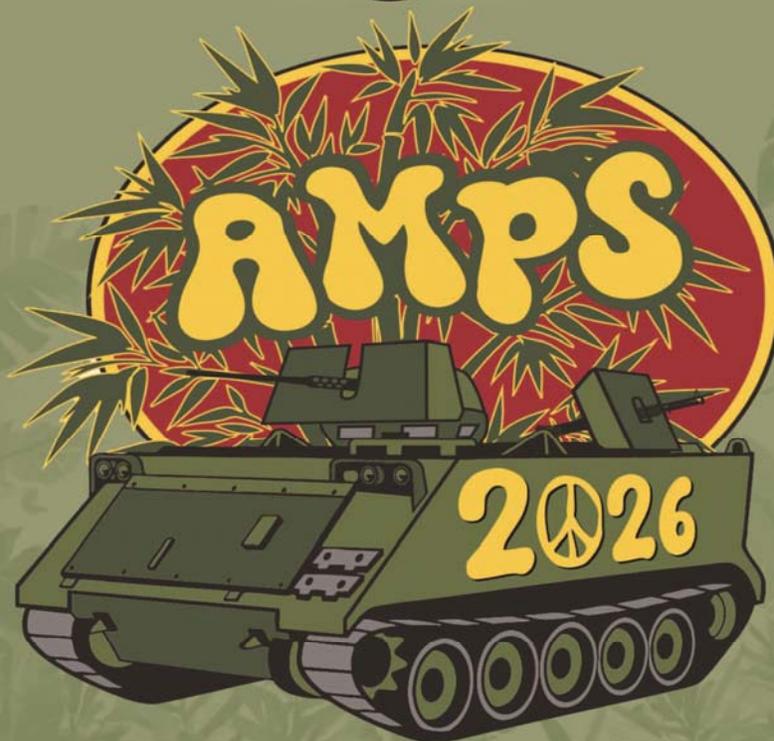
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The Armor Modeling & Preservation Society



2026 International Convention



Vietnam: Welcome to the Jungle

April 16-18

**Century Center
120 Doctor M.L.K. Jr Blvd
South Bend, IN 46601**

AMPS-Armor.org

WINTERBLITZ ★ 2026 ★



***On Her Majesty Service Award
(Best British Vehicle 1952-2022)***



Best Tamiya Award



Best Maschinengewehr Armor Suit



Best Camouflage/Creative Paint



Best Figure



**Best NOT Fully Tracked Vehicle
(Halftrack)**



Best NOT Tracked Vehicle



**Best Diorama/Vignette
and
Museum of the American GI Award**



Best Fully Tracked Vehicle and Best of Show

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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.

To join using PayPal, visit AMPS website: www.amps-armor.org
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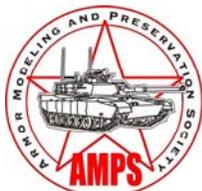
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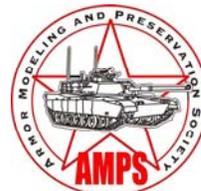
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New On The Block



What do you get when you mate a Leclerc turret to a Leo2 chassis? 1/35th EMBT (aka LeoClerc!) from Amusing Hobby.



Flyhawk's 1/72nd kits rarely disappoint. Their latest release is the WWII German Flakpanzer "Wirbelwind." The kit comes with metal barrels, 3D printed parts and a small PE fret!



AGV Club's latest 1/35th M113 variant is the Australian Army LRV (Light Recon Vehicle).



If you like unmanned combat vehicles, check out Takom's new 1/35th PLA ground drones: ZRY-222 and "Robot Wolves." Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war!

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