



Sabot Away!

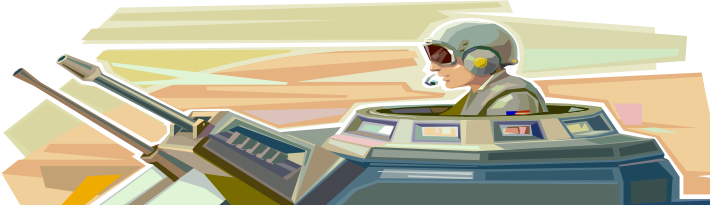


AUSTIN ARMOR BUILDERS SOCIETY

Volume 13, Issue 6

June 3, 2009

From the Turret



This is Shawn Merrell's Panzer II Ausf J by Alan. Photograph by **Eric Choy**.

As I'm writing this column, I'm also making final preparation for the road trip to Grapevine, Texas for Scalefest '09. This year **Russ Holm**, **Pat Rourke**, and I

decided to go up the day before so we can shop till we drop at **Squadron Mail Order**. As if we don't already have enough kits and aftermarket accessories to last for an-

other lifetime, but hey, a bargain is a bargain. How can any modeler say no to all the \$1 photo etched sets?

But honestly my reason for organizing this road trip has very little to do with shopping. It is just an excuse for enjoying the camaraderie of my compadres. Maybe because I have come to know who my true friends are, or maybe I finally realize unlike model kits, they will not be around forever.

Spending quality time with them is worth a lot more than the dollar value of a kit, the cost of a night stay at a hotel, or the satisfaction of winning a colorful trophy.

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Special points of interest:

- ◆ NAME THAT TANK
- ◆ ALAN 1:35TH PANZER II J
- ◆ MODELER OF THE MONTH: ROBERT "BOB" BETHEA
- ◆ WHITE ELEPHANT CONTEST IS SCHEDULED FOR JUNE MEETING
- ◆ KING'S HOBBY 20% DISCOUNT DEAL

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Austin Armor Builders Society Membership Dues

Dues are collected in January. This will make it easier for us to track and easier to maintain the membership cards.

As always, membership is \$12.00 USD per year. The membership cards will be presented to members at the January meeting.

The card will be valid for one year and a new card will be created each year as long as your club membership is in good standing.

New members will be given a card after they pay their dues. Dues will be prorated based on the month they join.



Sabot Away!

From the Turret - Continued

As they say in the commercial, it's priceless.

von Erich (Eric Choy)



Calendar of Events

- ♦ June 3, 2009 - Club Meeting; Presentation by: **Greg Beckman** - "Modeling on the Road"
- ♦ June 3, 2009 - White Elephant Contest
- ♦ July 1, 2009 - Club Meeting; Presentation by: **Rick Herrington**
- ♦ July 11, 2009 - Modeling Day: David C. Ellis Community Center 10AM - 5PM
- ♦ August 5, 2009 - Club Meeting; Presentation by: **Dave Edgerly**
- ♦ September 2, 2009 - Club Meeting; Club Auction
- ♦ October 7, 2009 - Club Meeting; Presentation by **Roderick Bell** - "How to use the Testors Custom Decal System"
- ♦ October 24, 2009 - AMPS Centex 2007
- ♦ November 4, 2009 - Club Meeting; Presentation by **Jeff Forester**
- ♦ December 2, 2009 - Club Meeting; Presentation by **Tom Ferris**
- ♦ January 6, 2010 - Club Meeting; Presentation by **Richard Eaton** - "The Mighty Sponge: How to simulate paint flaking and wear and tear"

Name this tank

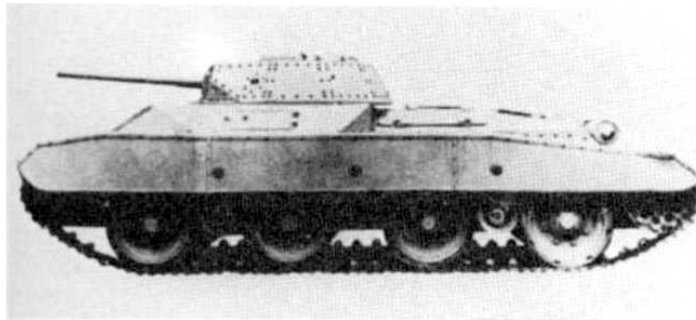
By Roderick Bell

While doing research on a particular armored vehicle I ran across this tank. It is a strange looking beast. I had never heard about this tank or have seen photographs of it. This tank is a prototype vehicle from the 1940's.

I thought it would be fun for the club to guess what it is. So write down your answer and bring it to the June meeting and we will see who found out what this tank is.

The answers will be put in a hat and drawn until we get a winner! Please make sure you identify the Country and the name of the tank. Maybe you will win a prize! See you at the meeting.

Roderick Bell



Here are four photographs of the mystery tank. Can you name this tank?

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Alan 1:35th Panzer II J

By Shawn Merrell

Based somewhat on the Panzer I F chassis, the VK1601 project was one of the further developments of the *Panzerkampfwagen* II series. Commonly known as "Panzer II J," it featured a larger hex-shaped turret and a 2cm Flak cannon in place of the two

machine guns of its predecessor. Its role was somewhat speculative, ranging from "infantry assault" to "heavy armored reconnaissance" tank by most accounts. Only 22 (some reported 24) examples were built by *Maschinenfabrik Augsburg Nuernberg* (MAN) in 1942, and a

few saw limited actions with the 12th Panzer Division (*Heer*) in Russia. The rest of them served as training tanks throughout German posts in Eastern Europe.

Despite my best effort in researching this vehicle, I only managed to locate three to four photos of this obscure

"DESPITE MY BEST EFFORT IN RESEARCHING THIS VEHICLE, I ONLY MANAGED TO LOCATE THREE TO FOUR PHOTOS OF THIS OBSCURE TANK (A FEW PHOTOS PURPORTED TO BE PANZER II J WERE ACTUALLY OTHER PANZER II EXPERIMENTAL MODELS OF THE PERIOD)."



Here is Shawn Merrell's 1:35th scale Panzer II J by Alan. Photograph by **Eric Choy**.

Alan 1:35th Panzer II J - Continued



A top side view of Shawn's Panzer II Ausf. J. Photograph by **Eric Choy**.

tank (a few photos purported to be Panzer II J were actually other Panzer II experimental models of the period). Interestingly enough, there is a photograph of what looks like a Panzer II J being used to haul some sort of sled through the snow. Infantry were positioned along each side of the sled like an armed land barge. I hope this was merely a training exercise; for said infantry would certainly have been sitting ducks for the Russians!

My initial impetus to tackle this model came from a web photo of Steve Palfy's excellent build with a bizarre bluish paint scheme. Alan is known for picking German

armor subjects that are not on the beaten path, and this kit is no exception. The kit parts are typical of Alan's quality; many of the details are rather "dulled down", and the plastic is of the softer variety. I also found the instructions, being done little better than freehand, difficult to visualize in some steps of the build. But with a low parts count, this was no major setback. Having acquired an Aber 2cm flak barrel and Part's photo-etched detail set (a very nice one done in a rigid copper), I set about building this "mini-tiger" tank.

Construction

The model went together rather well with very few ill-

fitting parts, and no filling/sanding was needed. The only difficult part of the build was the alignment of the suspension. Careful and meticulous adjustment of the suspension arms was a must as no actual torsion bar is supplied in the kit. One thing I would do in a subsequent build would be to fashion some torsion bars from plastic tubing so that a more "organic" footprint of the suspension could be depicted.

Once all of the major assemblies were put together, I added weld seams along the major plates of the tank by applying Squadron putty between masked areas and texturing with the back of an

"THE MODEL WENT TOGETHER RATHER WELL WITH VERY FEW ILL-FITTING PARTS, AND NO FILLING/SANDING WAS NEEDED. THE ONLY DIFFICULT PART OF THE BUILD WAS THE ALIGNMENT OF THE SUSPENSION. CAREFUL AND METICULOUS ADJUSTMENT OF THE SUSPENSION ARMS WAS A MUST AS NO ACTUAL TORSION BAR IS SUPPLIED IN THE KIT."

Sabot Away!

Alan 1:35th Panzer II J - Continued



A shot of the tools on the rear of the tank. Photograph by **Eric Choy**.

"I HAD ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO USE PART'S PHOTO ETCHED FENDERS, BUT I FOUND THEM TOO SUFFER FROM THE SAME FAULTS THE KIT FENDERS HAD; NAMELY THE LACK OF THE VERY FRONT "FLAPS" THAT ARE FEATURED ON THE BOX ART (A SIMPLE PAINTING-OVER OF THE WAR-TIME PROTOTYPE ENGINEERING PHOTO). "

X-Acto blade. Photo etched items went on next, starting with the tool brackets. The stowage box on the rear left fender was a nice little gem. I brazed the bracing indents with a mechanical pencil along the etched "X's" in the box lid, and I used my Etch-Mate to fold all the angles. I elected to display this box unsecured and open so that I could load it up with maintenance tools such as track pin hammers, chains, and wrenches taken from the Tamiya's Panzer IV tool set.

I had originally intended to use Part's photo etched fenders, but I found them too suffer from the same faults the kit fenders had; namely the lack of the very front "flaps"

that are featured on the box art (a simple painting-over of the war-time prototype engineering photo). I also determined the difficulty in installing the aftermarket fenders was not justified by any better detail; the fold line along the outside edge of the one fender I started was less crisp and distinct than the edge of the plastic kit part. I borrowed some Aber chains from another detail set for the smoke launcher tubes in the rear of the vehicle, and brass rod was used to fashion a pin to hold in the spare track on its mount. For the springs of the fenders, I used thin copper wires, and I made the fenders look like they have been "torn off" by whatever

stress encountered in the field.

It was roughly at this point of the build that I discovered that Eduard also makes a photo etched set for this vehicle, which ironically features not only the missing front fenders but the springs that hold them roughly in place. I would have received this information with a simple shrug and nod if it were not for the further discovery that the Eduard set also features engine grills, which are also sadly missing from the Part set.

Perhaps the most elaborate photo etched detail is the construction of the commander's hatch and peri-



A front view of the Alan Panzer II Ausf. J by Shawn Merrell. Photograph by **Eric Choy**.

Alan 1:35th Panzer II J - Continued

scope section. This involves multiple rings stacked on the periscope "boxes", all of which have to be precisely folded and inserted into slots in the rings. Surprisingly this took a very short time to complete, and it presented little if any difficulty. The armor glass in the outer periscope lenses was cut from some holographic stickers I acquired some years ago. This material lends itself well to the task, and it simulates the polarized aspect of precision optics. As the viewer changes his or her viewing angle, so changes the reflectivity (and hue) of the glass. A look at the optics on a real AFV reveals this characteristic. The Aber barrel comes with not one but two muzzle flash suppressors. The instructions suggest one of them be attached by soldering, so I suppose the extra parts are there just in case soldering skill is not one's forte. I found it easier to attach them simply with CA glue once the parts were formed using the tip of a mechanical pencil.

As I decided early to cast this little brute in a forward reconnaissance role, I followed a friend's suggestion of adding a scissors periscope on a tripod to the on-vehicle equipment inventory. I also added a star antenna that was used with the long-range radios in such vehicles as the *Luchs* and *Aufklärungspanzer 38(t)*.

Painting and Decaling

I started with Krylon Red

Primer over the entire model and then a base coat of 50-50 Tamiya Desert Yellow and Dark Yellow with my Tamiya/Iwata airbrush. After allowing a week for the colors to setup, a mixture of Tamiya NATO Green and Field Grey was used for the outline of the green portion of the camouflage. Red Brown was used in various mixtures of Desert and Dark Yellow for brown swatches. These areas were then filled in with slightly lightened mixtures of these colors, using Dark Yellow for highlighting.

A wash of Burnt Umber oil paint went on next, and a sort of buff highlight using oils was applied by dry-brushing. Vallejo Gun Metal Grey was utilized for paint chips and weld seams. The turret numbers and balkenkreuz insignia were then applied and smoothed down using Solvaset in several applications. Finally a coat of Pactra Flat Finish was sprayed on using my Paasche H airbrush. Care has to be taken with Pactra's finish; while it dries dead flat, it has a tendency to cloud if sprayed on too thickly.

The Base

I enlisted the help of master modeler **Bob Bethea** to learn the fine art of base construction. I wanted to depict the tank rolling down a slope diagonally, and the wooden hexagonal base was chosen to represent a "hex" from an old Avalon Hill war-game "Squad Leader." This shape

also accentuates the geometry of the turret as well as the star antenna. With the model situated on a downward slope, the base is quite a departure from your typical "put a plaque under it" vehicle-on-base scenario.

Conclusion

Since the completion of this model, I have purchased this Alan kit again with all of the aftermarket parts available, including the new Lion Roar Flak38 metal barrel. This one-piece barrel eliminates the need to bend and fold the muzzle flash suppressor. I will probably depict my next build as one of the training tanks. Although this model has done only marginally well at shows, I heard at least two modelers decided to build this tank after they saw mine. To me, that is all the reward I need.

Shawn Merrell



Here is a rear shot of the Alan Panzer II Ausf J by Shawn Merrell. Photograph by **Eric Choy**.

Modeler of the Month: Robert Bethea



Robert "Bob" Bethea. Photograph by Roderick Bell.

By Roderick Bell

This month's Modeler of the Month is Robert "Bob" Bethea. Bob is a highly respected member of Austin Armor Builders Society and is an excellent modeler. Here are a few questions I asked Bob.

What is your hometown or where are you from?

♦ I am an Army Brat and was born in Montgomery Alabama, lived there two weeks and moved continuously till I made it to Austin, Texas in January, 1976.

How old were you when you began Modeling?

♦ The first models I remember building were when I was 11 and we were stationed at Ft Hood, Texas. I built all kinds of kits but loved the 1:40th scale Adams armor the best. I guess armor modeling has stuck with me to the present day.

What was your first model you built?

♦ I think the first model I remember building was the Revell 1:40th scale T34 and I really loved the figures they included...hmmm, I wonder if that was an omen.

Who has influenced your modeling building the most?

♦ The person that influenced my model building most were **Shep Paine's** diorama sheets and books, and the late **Dieter Mattingly** who taught me most of what I know about painting figures and going to figure shows.

What is your favorite type of modeling?

♦ I love figure modeling best with armor modeling coming in as a close second. I even occasionally do a plane or ship (if they are REALLY cool).

What do you like most about modeling?

♦ The thing I enjoy most about modeling is the process of making unrefined parts look like something real. I like correcting major errors, but am getting over the Advanced modeler Syndrome....I now only put on the model the NECESSARY photo etch.. I love the finishing and painting the best. The other thing I enjoy is meeting other people with similar interests.

What do you don't like about modeling?

♦ There is little that I don't like about modeling. Almost all the kits I've dreamed about have been done and done REALLY well. The only bad thing is not enough time to complete them all.

How many modeling clubs and organizations do you belong to?

♦ Five. **Austin Scale Modeling Society, Austin Armor Builders (and AMPS), Lone Star Military Miniature Society, Military Miniature Society of Illinois (Chicago)** and the **Historic Miniature Society of North East Oklahoma (Tulsa)**. Whew...

What scale is your favorite scale to model in?

♦ My favorite scale for figures is 75mm. It is larger than 54mm so it has more detail, but smaller than 90mm and 120mm so it is easier to handle and paint, is cheaper but has lots of detail. For Armor, it is 1:35th World War II. Duh.



Here is Bob's Cowboy bust. Photograph by Eric Choy.

Sabot Away!

Modeler of the Month: Robert Bethea - Continued



Here is Bob's Celtic Warrior. Photograph by **Eric Choy**.

"WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TANK

MODEL? MY FAVORITE TANK MODEL IS THE TAMIYA CHAR B1 BIS. IT IS THE MOST FANTASTIC ENGINEERING OF ANY MODEL KIT I'VE EVER BUILT. THE WAY THE FRONT END WAS CONCEIVED AND FITS TOGETHER IS PURE GENIUS. THE FIT IS PERFECT AND ONLY A FEW DETAILS NEED TO BE ADDED, MOST OF WHICH IRONICALLY SHOW UP ON THE BOX ART."

What is your favorite Tank model?

♦ My favorite tank model is the Tamiya Char B1 Bis. It is the most fantastic engineering of any model kit I've ever built. The way the front end was conceived and fits together is pure genius. The fit is perfect and only a few details need to be added, most of which ironically show up on the box art.

What is your favorite Figure model?

♦ My favorite figure model is the old Kirin Culloden Highlander sculpted by **Mike Good** in 120mm, but is unfortunately no longer available. It has perfect historical detail, animation, facial features, and casting. For me it was Mike's best piece ever.

Are you a builder or collector?

♦ I am both. I build a lot, but have a massive plastic, metal and resin Army. I build a lot more than I finish. I have about 50 tank kits built and really need to get them painted. Ha ha ha. I build them in front of the TV, but cannot paint them there.

Do you build for accuracy or build for fun?

- ♦ I love accuracy, and try for as much as possible, especially in paint and markings, but am not obsessive with tiny detail. It is still a HOBBY folks, and if its not fun, then you find yourself drifting away. Ill be here till I go to the great model shop in the sky.

How much research do you do before building a model?

- ♦ I have a really extensive library and have read most of the books. I use that information as much as possible to portray my model correctly. However, I seldom go ape and try to copy every aspect of a specific photo. I try to keep colors and markings within the appropriate timeframe of the mark of the vehicle, and correct what is obvious. Same for figures, and I do a little research on typical period saddle blankets and neckerchiefs for cowboys on the internet, rather than guessing.

What tool or technique could you live without?

- ♦ I use almost all the techniques I know in one way or the other. The key is to use it appropriately. Even drybrushing figures, which is frowned upon, can work for certain aspects, such as using it to find where the highlights should go. Of course, then you paint OVER the dry-brushing.

What tool or technique couldn't you live without?

- ♦ I could never do without my Windsor Newton Series 7 sable brushes. Nothing works as well as they do or lasts as long. X-acto knife, Tamiya Airbrush and sandpaper are close competitors.

Modeler of the Month: Robert Bethea



Here is Bob's Trumpeter E-10 Tank Destroyer. One of Bob's specialties is combining figures with armor subjects. Bob is able to bring two of his favorite modeling subjects together. Photograph by **Eric Choy**.

What do you think about modeling magazines?

- ♦ I love modeling magazines and subscribe to several. They let you know what is going on in the hobby, new kits coming out, what can be done by great modelers, and they inspire me to work on my models. Its always fun when they come in and get me all excited about models again. Plus they're and excuse to goof off and read them. My favorite is Military Modeling from England which is the perfect combination of professionalism, expert modeling and the right mix of armor to figures.

What do you think about modeling websites?

- ♦ I love modeling sites and go to them every day. My favorite Armor site is Perth military modeling for the latest updates on what kits are coming out, and for the best reviews of kits. My favorite other armor site is missing-lynx for the discussion groups and the photos of fantastic tank models produced by the best modelers around the world. For figures I go to timelines forum and planet figure for the same types of info.

Sabot Away!

Modeler of the Month: Robert Bethea - Continued



Bob recently built this Dragon Panther F for his and **Henry Nunez's** "**Achtung, Jabol!**" Diorama. Photograph by **Eric Choy**.

**"WOULD YOU RATHER
BUILD A STATE OF THE ART
KIT OR A KIT FROM WHEN
YOU WERE A KID? I**

**WOULD ALWAYS RATHER
BUILD A STATE OF THE ART
KIT. I'VE ALREADY DONE
THE OLD STUFF AND ITS
NEVER AS GOOD AS YOU
REMEMBER IT. SOME FOLKS
LIKE **RUSS HOLM** AND **ERIC
CHOY** CAN MAKE A SILK
PURSE OUT OF PIGS EAR,
BUT UNFORTUNATELY I
CANNOT. "**

What other hobbies do you have?

- ♦ My other hobbies are reading, and gardening.

Would you rather build a state of the art kit or a kit from when you were a kid?

- ♦ I would always rather build a state of the art kit. I've already done the old stuff and its never as good as you remember it. Some folks like **Russ Holm** and **Eric Choy** can make a silk purse out of pigs ear, but unfortunately I cannot.

I want to thank Bob for being our Modeler of the Month for June 2009 and for all work he does for the modeling community in Central Texas.

Roderick Bell

Sabot Away!

“White Elephant” Contest is scheduled for June Meeting

By Roderick Bell

Our second Quarterly contest is fast approaching. June 3, 2009 is when we will have the “White Elephant” Contest. We have 18 contestants this year and are looking forward to seeing everyone’s models.

Several of the contestants have already completed their models. Here is the list I received from Eric after the Christmas Party back in December 2008:

1. **Jorge Aduna (Trumpeter)** 1:35th scale M1A2)
2. **Roderick Bell (Tamiya)** 1:35th 75mm PaK40
3. **Bob Bethea (Tamiya)** 1:35th M8 Greyhound
4. **Dave Bourland (Tamiya)** 1:35th M41 Walker Bulldog)
5. **Bruce Burden (Tamiya)** 1:35th LVTP7)
6. **Eric Choy (Mirage)** 1:35th Renault UE)
7. **Jeff Forester (ARII)** 1:48th SCUD)
8. **Angie Forester (AER)** 1:35th GAZ-67B)
9. **Worth Haggerton (ICM)** 1:72nd ZiL-157 Command Truck)
10. **Rick Herrington (Tamiya)** 1:35th Quad Gun Tractor)
11. **Marc Hobbs (Italeri)** 1:35th Panzerwerfer 42)
12. **Russ Holm (Tamiya)** 1:35th T-34/76 1943)
13. **Karl Leidy (Tamiya)** 1:48th Flakpanzer IV)
14. **Shawn Merrell (DML)** 1:35th 3cm Flakpanzer IV ‘Kubelblitz’)
15. **Bill Menzie (Roden)** 1:72nd Opel Blitz)
16. **Ted Paone (DML)** 1:35th M1A2).
17. **Oscar Perez (Zvezda)** 1:35th M13/40)
18. **Pat Rourke (Revell - Italeri)** 1:35th StuG IV)

So everyone please finish your “White Elephant” models and bring them into the June 3, 2009 meeting so we can hold our quarterly con-

test.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone’s completed models.

We also need a member to host the 2009 Christmas party.

Roderick Bell

“I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING EVERYONE’S COMPLETED MODELS.”

King’s Hobby 20% Off Discount Deal

By Roderick Bell

Every \$50 you spend at King’s hobby shop you get a 20% discount on your next purchase from Kings Hobby. If you were to spend \$100 you would receive two 20% discounts. If you were to buy \$150.00 you would get three, etc...

I tried it out and I received my 20% discount ticket. I came back a few days later and purchased another \$50.00 worth of kits and received another discount ticket (actually, they just gave back the previous one just gave them). So, I left the building and remembered I needed a reference book, so

I went back in and sure enough I purchased it and some smaller items to get it over \$50.00. You guessed it I got my discount and another 20% discount ticket (again it was the same one I had just used). See King’s Hobby for specific details.

Roderick Bell



King’s Hobby Shop has been in business since 1973.

New Kits

By Roderick Bell

Last month we announced the **Tamiya Matilda Mk. III/IV**. We have box art and new pictures of the model and I wanted to show you them. The Matilda is my favorite British tank and it is the only British tank to have served throughout the war.

The photographs show three distinct patterns of the "Caunter" paint scheme. Again, this is a newly tooled kit and it provides link and length track as well as the traditional "vinyl" tracks. This is also Tamiya's 300th 1:35th scale Armor Kit. Kit No: 35300.

I have already have mine on order.

Roderick Bell





Seek, Strike, and Destroy

AUSTIN ARMOR BUILDERS SOCIETY

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The Austin Armor Builders Society is an organization where members gather and share information on building scale armor and figure kits. The Austin Armor Builders Society was founded in 1997 and has about 30 active members. The Austin Armor Builders Society is the local chapter for the Armor Modeling and Preservation Society (AMPS). Every two years the organization host an AMPS Regional show known as AMPS Centex. This show attracts armor and figure modelers from around the state of Texas and is one of the Premier AMPS Regional shows.

We are on the web: AustinArmorBuilders.com

Support our Troops



A US Army M1A1 Abrams tank seals off a road juncture in Baghdad, Iraq after an IED explosion 26-Feb-2005. Photograph by AP photographer **Mohammed Uraib**.