



Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

April 2014
Volume 18, Issue 4



Tunisia Tiger by Eric Choy

Capable of destroying an enemy tank 3000 yards away, the German Tiger I tank personified WWII Teutonic military and engineering might, not to mention in my opinion, being one of the ugliest AFV produced during the war. For this

aesthetic reason, the Tiger I was never a priority on my to-build list.

Then I saw the last working Tiger (131) in action at the Tank Museum in Bovington. It was an eye-opening experience for me, and you could say I have finally found beauty in the beast! Now I want to build one in quarter

(Continued on page 4)

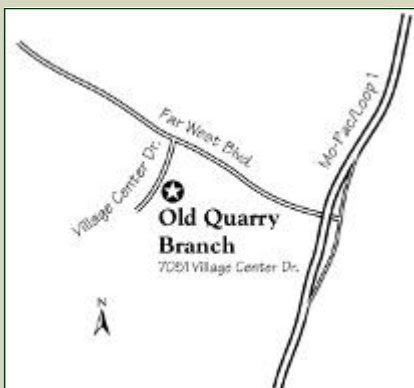
Inside this issue:

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	2
UPCOMING PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS AND NEWSLETTER ARTICLES	2
FROM THE TURRET	3
BORESIGHT PREVIEW	3
2014 FIRST QUARTERLY CONTEST WINNERS	11
WHEN THINGS GET RUSTY	12
AMPS 2014 CONVENTION	13
JOIN AMPS	14
NEW ON THE BLOCK	15
ABOUT US	16
MEMBERS' GALLERY	16

Austin Armor Builders Society (AABS) meets at 7PM each month at the **Austin Public Library Old Quarry Branch**. Our next meeting is on

April 3, 2014

Annual dues for full membership are USD \$12 to be collected at each January meeting. Upon receipt of payment, a membership card will be issued. This card is valid for one year, and it entitles holder to discounts at various local hobby shops in the Central Texas and San Antonio areas.



Sabot Away! is the official newsletter of AABS and is published twelve times a year on/before each monthly meeting. Any inquiry on subscription issues or assistance on article contribution please contact editor Eric Choy via email aabsco@gmail.com.

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of AABS.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ♦ **April 3 - AABS Club Meeting**
- ♦ **April 3-5 - AMPS International Convention**
Fredericksburg, Virginia
- ♦ **April 26 - Modelmania 2014 Stafford Convention**
Center, Stafford, TX
- ♦ **May 1 - AABS Club Meeting; Election of Officers**
- ♦ **May 31 - ScaleFest 2014 Grapevine Convention Center**
Grapevine, TX
- ♦ **June 5 - AABS Club Meeting**
- ♦ **June 14 - Lone Star Military Miniatures Society**
Modeling Day Shady Hollow Community Center,
Austin, TX



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Upcoming Programs Presentations and Newsletter Articles

Month	Program Presentation	Newsletter Article
2014 - March	Ted Paone	Ted Paone
April	John Talley	Russ Holm
May	Pat Rourke	Pat Rourke
June	Eric Choy	Robert Mesch
July	Rod Bell	Rod Bell
August	Ted Andreas	Ted Andreas
September	Rick Herrington	Elliot Nowacky
October	Robert Mesch	Greg Beckman
November	John Hernandez	John Hernandez
December	Bob Bethea	Bob Bethea
2015 January	Tom Pachalos	Tom Pachalos
February	Dave Bourland	Dave Bourland
March	Jake McKee	Jake McKee

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/she wants anytime. 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 March was due on the last Wednesday of February).

Editor



From the Turret

The Lone Star Figure Show was held in Fort Worth over the weekend of March 21st. Several Austin folks were on the organizational staff including **Eric Choy**, **Keith Townsend**, **Kevin Delashmit**, **Darren Tice**, and **Bob Bethea**. Other locals in attendance included, **Rick Herrington**, **Bill Delk**, and **Russ Holm**. Quite a turnout for a great show. I'm sorry any of us missed it, but it will be held the same weekend next year at the same location.

The ordinance, including armor was very well attended this year. The award for best ordinance went again to the big guy, **Chris Mrosko**, who also gave a well attended seminar on weathering armor.

The **Best of Show** and the **People's Choice** awards both went to the same piece by **Alex Deleon**, who we all know well from our own AMPS shows. Again it was a scratchbuilt 1/9th boardtrack motorcycle with a section of track, the rider, his dog, and some spilled cracker jack. Immensely well done and well deserved. Though a "figure show", we saw not only world class figures but also some world class armor, aircraft, and ships. Don't miss this one next year or you will be sorry.



REMINDER: Our ELECTION OF OFFICERS is coming soon. Don't miss it or you cannot complain about who gets the jobs. Also I'm sure some of you are tired of the same old faces and ideas at the front of the room. Think long and hard about who you want to nominate. ESPECIALLY, you should consider running for office. We can use new blood. If you want to run and don't want to nominate yourself, feel free to let any one of the current officers know and we can nominate you. Everyone in the club is capable of being an officer, and now would be a great time to throw your hat in the ring.

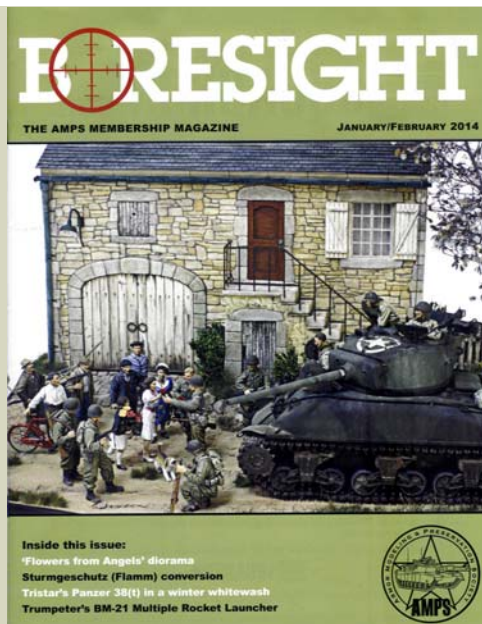
The modelers' day at the **Shady Hollow Community Center** is set for **Saturday June 14th** from 10AM to 5PM. Bring what you want to work on, and a few bucks for pizza and drinks. For Directions or details, call me at (512) 784-7002.

Bob Bethea

AMPS Boresight (Volume 23, Issue 1)

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

- ♦ **"Flowers from Angels" Diorama** by **David Vickers**.
A scene during the liberation of France.
- ♦ **Winter Wonderland Panzer 38(t)** by **John Robinson**.
Step by step building the Tristar kit in a dirty and worn whitewash.
- ♦ **Sturmgeschutz (Flamm)** by **Ashley Abernathy**.
Converting the DML StuG Ausf. F/8 into this rare variant.
- ♦ **BM-21 Multiple Rocket Launcher** by **Graham Ross**.
Trumpeter's pipe organ mounted on the Soviet Ural-375D chassis.



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Page 4

(Continued from page 1)

scale while 131's images are still fresh on my mind. Why do it in 1/48th? Because it is my favorite AFV scale these days. Plus I have a tiny axe to grind towards certain individual (you know who you are) who repeatedly denied my offer of his dust-covered 1/48th Tiger I kit in his collection. Good luck trying to build it now, mate!

My first order of business was to decide which Tiger I tank to model after. I opted to build 131, but I settled on one of the early Tigers in Tunisia, mainly because the kit I was after was this Tamiya's Tiger I Initial Production Africa-Corps (32529).



Unfortunately, this kit does not lend itself to be built into the initial version as advertised. It contains the same parts as in Tamiya's Tiger I "Early Production" kit (32504) plus a sprue G for the "africanization." Although a good place to start (and good value for your money with all the extra unused parts), building it straight out of the box will only yield a crossover mutant with contradictory features! For it to be an accurate initial production Tiger, you need to perform a few backdating surgeries and spend some money on Hauler products to get things right.

Hull Construction

According to instruction, I started with the lower hull. The wheels posed no surprises, but for the life of me I could not install the tracks the way Tamiya suggested. So I resorted to my "divide-and-conquer" method based on experience (and errors) that I have with individual and link-and-length tracks.



I divided the entire track run for each side into three sections: the anchor (the nine links around the drive sprocket), the top run (from the middle of

the drive sprocket to the middle of the idler wheel), and the bottom run that covered the rest. Individual link and link-and-length tracks were glued together

with Tamiya Extra Thin cement, but the three sections were attached neither to each other nor to any of the wheels or sprockets.

I let the three sections sit on the wheels to dry. After a while gravity kicked in and track sag magically appeared (just like our aging bodies!).



Once the glue dried, I painted each section with Humbrol Track (173), a dark chocolate-like brown color with a reddish tint. After letting the paint dry overnight, I attached the anchor to the drive sprocket. Then I glued the top run to the anchor and to the road wheels with Faller plastic cement.

Next I attached the bottom track section. I hardly ever glue the tracks to the road wheels anymore. Instead I drilled a hole through the track link into a wheel, filled it with superglue, and pushed a miniature nail all the way into the hole. Rarely do I need more than three nails to secure the track run on each side, and I have yet to encounter any "runaway track!"



Once the tracks were in place, I painted the road wheels, drive sprockets, and the return rollers. When everything was dried, I wrapped the entire bottom with household aluminum foil so paint would not chip when I worked on the upper hull. Why aluminum foil? Because it is cheaper than masking tape, and it is easy to conform to different shapes and edges.



Next I turned my attention to the upper hull. To make things easier to explain, here are photos of what the Tamiya instruction calls for and what I ended up with after all the slicing and dicing:



The first thing I did was got rid off things that did not pertain to the production run of the Tiger I intended to build. Using the drawing on page 22 of *MMIR's Modeler's Guide To The Tiger Tank* as a reference, I removed the mounting brackets of the three S-Mine launchers (X), the rectangular plate (Y) over the ventilation slot, and the Bosch light ceramic sockets (Z). I then plugged the oversized locating pin holes for the sledge hammer and the tow cables. I also eliminated the molded on wire cutter (not marked in the photo).

The axe and shovel should swap places, but I was too lazy to do all the cutting and sanding. Besides, I figured the tools could be stowed anywhere on the tank in the field, so I left them alone.



The new items I added were (A) Hauler PE Bosch light base plates, (B) sledge hammer taken from Tamiya's Panzer III kit, (C) Bosch lights on the front deck with Hauler PE brackets and resin sockets, light cables, (D) reworked left tow cable with two instead of three cleaning rods, (E) wire cutter taken from Tamiya's Panzer III kit, (F) reworked right tow cable, (G) Hauler PE cable clamps, (H) scratchbuilt engine door handles, (I) Hauler PE brackets for the Feifel air tubes, (J) Hauler PE grills for tube openings, and (K) Hauler PE rear clamp for the fire extinguisher. Phew!



IMO Tamiya's rear mudguards are not so bad, so I did not bother to replace them. Don't create work for yourself. You don't get extra points for using EVERYTHING on the PE fret!

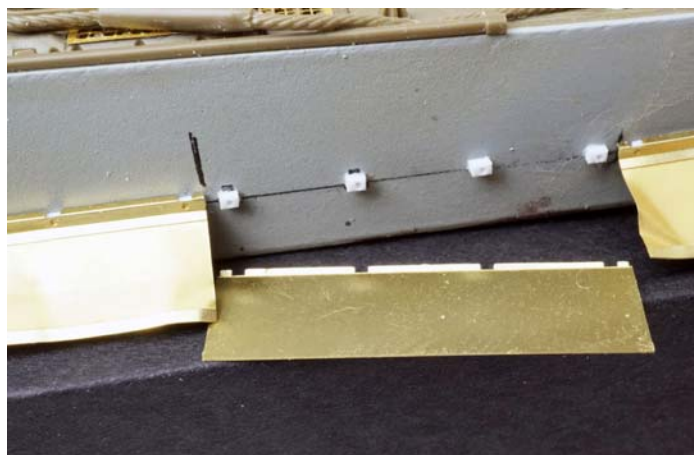
There were only two additions I made to the rear of my Tiger: the straps for the spare tracks and the angular exhaust shields, both from Hauler. To give the sheet metal shields a war torn look, I beat them up a bit with a pair of pliers and poked a small hole to simulate a large caliber bullet wound.



The mating between the upper and lower hull was not perfect. It left a small gap that needed filling. Nothing a little bit of putty (or in my case Liquid Paper correction fluid) could not fix. Beware not to destroy the fine line of weld mark adjacent to the gap when sanding off the excess filler.



The last thing I added to the hull was the side mudguards. The Hauler PE skirts set looks fantastic, but bending them in two step succession (60° and



then right angle towards the edge) was a real challenge. It took a while for me to get the hang of it, but the results looked really good.

I cheated a little when installing the left skirts on my tank: instead of scratchbuilding 16 square-shaped nuts (see above photo) for the four sheet metal skirts to sit on, I glued a long square styrene rod to the hull side for better support. One can hardly tell the difference unless you look under the skirts, something hardly any gentleman would do to a lady (or a model). I wonder if I can say the same thing about contest judges...



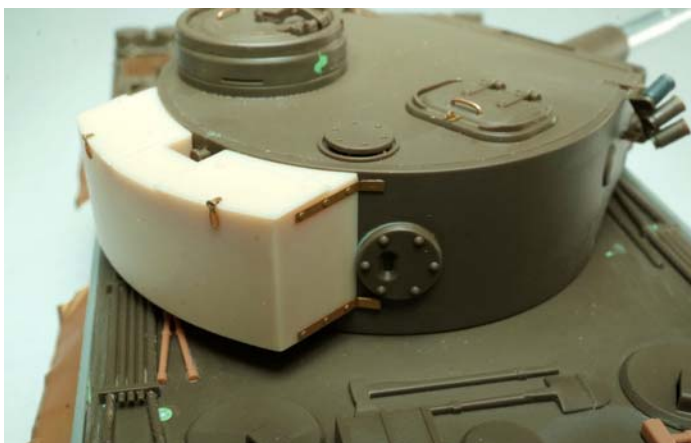
Turret Construction

The turret received a one-piece aluminum barrel from an early Lion Roar detail set. It may not be the best product out there, but it sure beats the hassle of assembling a six part barrel from RB Models!

I prefer Hauler's stowage bin for the same reason: one piece resin with no assembly required. Tamiya's version is a four part [sic] affair! Beware there is only one latch per lid instead of two. Hauler got that wrong on their bin.



It turned out Hauler's bin is slightly larger than Tamiya's stock plastic one, so it was tough squeezing the resin in between the pistol ports. In hindsight I should have the bin installed first.



The base of the drum style cupola is made up of two ring halves, and the fit was surprisingly poor. Filling and sanding were needed to make it perfectly circular. I replaced both grab handles on the hatches with thin wires and drilled out the inside of each smoke grenade canister to make them in scale with everything else.

The stock plastic smoke launcher brackets are way too thick, but the Hauler replacement look too flimsy to me. So I decided to scratchbuild my own with leftover Verlinden Productions (VP) PE fret.

These Belgian-made (before VP moved to O'Fallon, Missouri) PE products from yesteryears are not necessarily thicker but hell lot denser than anything modern Czech-based companies has to offer. The metal has tremendous strength but a female dog to cut and bend. But because the smoke grenade canisters were in high traffic area that were prone to be bumped into or knocked off, I needed something strong to withstand any abuses. Usually that happens a lot when I start painting and weathering my model.



Painting

When the remnants of *schwere Panzer Abteilung* (s.PzAbt) 501 was integrated into 10th Panzer Division in February 1943, many of the tanks were repainted with captured US Army Olive Drab (OD) paints to blend with the grassy terrain of Tunisia. Now that's something you don't see every day: a Tiger I tank in Sherman colors! I decided to give this unusual color scheme a try.

I always prime my model first when multimedia parts are involved, and this Tiger was no exception. I used Tamiya Gray Primer I purchased from my local Hobby Lobby store. With a 40% coupon, I paid less than USD \$6 (tax included) for a can! You just can't beat this bargain anywhere else. But I digress...



Originally my first choice of OD was Tamiya XF-62. It was a good thing that I experimented with the color first because I noticed it turned very dark (almost to the point of black) after just a few successive coats on the model. I wasn't sure if it was my spray mix or the paint itself, so I stayed away from my XF-62 for now.

Instead I grabbed the first Gunze OD I could find, and it turned out to be H304, FS34087. It sprayed fine on the model, but the tone was more brown than green to my eyes. Well at least it was not black! This was not a big deal as it could be easily fixed with a green filter. More on that later.

To create some zenithal light effect, I mixed Sandy Yellow (H79) with the Gunze OD to create three levels of highlights, each time with more Yellow added to the mix. The result looked amazing. If you are interested learning this technique, check out the tutorial in Javier Soler's most excellent modeling handbook *Color Modulation Techniques: Zenithal Light* (www.xtrememodelling.com/shop/catalog).



Once the paint was dried, I applied the filter I mentioned earlier using Mig's SIN Filter Green for Light Green (P244). The same effect can be achieved with artist oil, except it will take longer to dry. Be sure you pick a transparent color like Sap or Olive Green for the job.

With the colors in place, I sealed everything in with a coat of Future, and I was ready for decaling.

Decals

Finding a proper number for my tank turned out to be a challenge. Tamiya provides only two vehicle numbers, 731 and 813, in the kit. The famous 731 "Norbert" might had been painted green, but it was a later production model with nothing in common with my tank. Vehicle 813 was never green at all. It was painted in a two-tone camo similar to Tiger 131 at Bovington. A raid for 1/48th scale white numbers with red border in my decal box turned up empty. Now I had a model built but no decal to go with it. What to do?

The solution came to me after I looked through all the 1/48th kits in my collection: the decals sheet inside AFV Club's Early Tiger I kit (AF48002). One of the numbers provided is 724, formerly 112 in the First *Kompanie* of *s.PzAbt 501*. A photo on page 50 of Bruce Culver's book *Panzer Colors III* (Squadron Signal) shows 112 has the same trappings as my model. Is it possible that it still look more or less the same when it waxed into 724? Was it ever painted green? I had plenty of doubts but no alternative. So I took a leap of faith and went with the number 724.

The AFV Club decals turned out to be something of a dog. It had a spotty sheen that refused to go away no matter how many coats of setting solutions I put on. It finally disappeared after two coats of Future. Something tells me I definitely will not be using these decals again when I get around to build the kit.

The other marking, *s.PzAbt 501* Tiger emblem, came with the Tamiya kit. Following the example of 731, I gave my tank the name "Siegfried," and I plundered the decal from ICM's SdKfz.222 Armored Car kit.

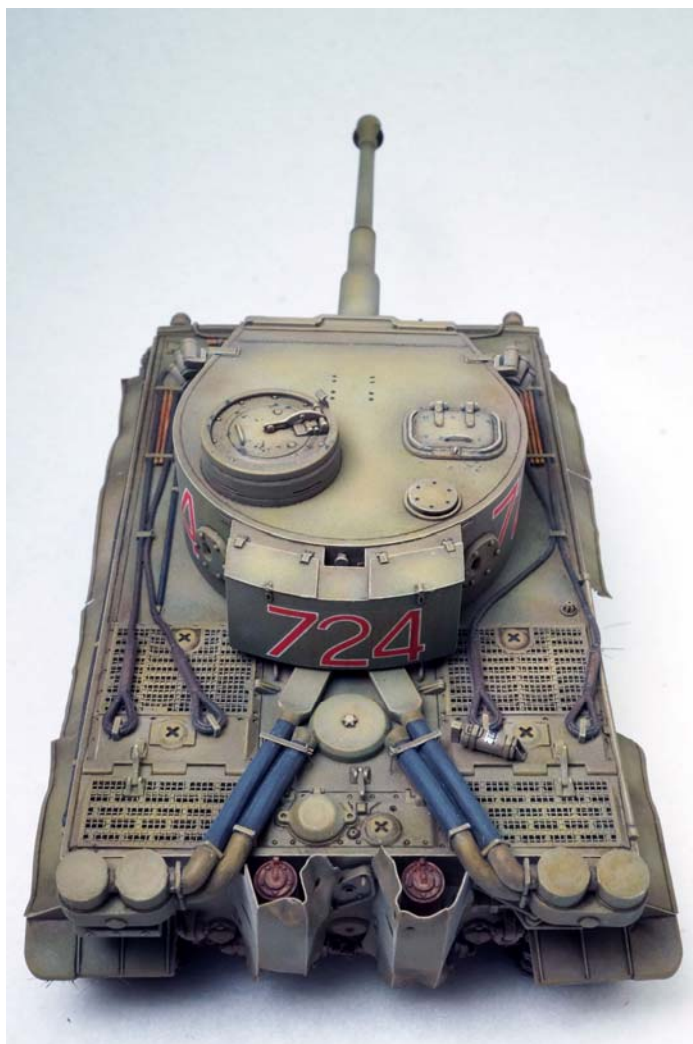


Weathering

As I become more comfortable with the "dot filter" method, I have gathered a few ideas of my own on how to apply this technique. First and foremost, I limit the choice of color to secondary colors only. The use of white has to be avoided as it only make things chalky. I also discovered magenta is a nice alternative to blue or red.

Despite what I have read and shown by others, I don't think the color of the dots should be random at all. Dark colors should be used in shadowed areas





and applied gingerly in highlighted areas. The last thing you need is the filter destroying all the hard work you put into painting the zenithal light effect.

Lastly, when feathering the dots on a horizontal surface, the colors should float over the thinner layer and pool in one spot. This I learned from Bob Bethea, our resident master of colors and figure painting.

Bearing these thoughts in mind, I “dot filtered” the model lightly. I wanted my Tiger to look fairly fresh from the paint shop with its OD not too weathered. I think it worked out okay.

Next I tackled the mundane task of pin wash. I must be out of practice because it took me over 18 hours to “wash” my tank. Painting the highlights, on the other hand, was a breeze, and it barely took an

hour. Two levels were applied, a normal highlight with Vallejo Green-Brown (879) and a super one with Reaper Terran Khaki (9122).

One of the latest paint releases from Tamiya is XF-86 Flat Clear. I bought a few bottles when I was in Canada two years ago (still not available in the US! Why?) It went on well but not exactly dead flat as I would like. However it was good enough to seal in what I had done so far.

Weathering generally means dirtying and chipping. So I rounded up my usual suspects of Polly Scale Dirt (F414308), Humbrol Dark Earth (29), and Tamiya Buff (XF-57) for the job. My latest addition is Gunze Sail (H85). It contains less yellow than Buff, and I think it is on its way to permanently replace the Tamiya color.





The chipping was done with a sponge and Reaper Primer Black (9214) acrylic paint.

If dogs truly love trucks, mud and tank must be a match made in heaven! Judges be damned, I want my tank muddy then! Tamiya's Weathering Stick is

my *modus operandi* for simulating mud these days. Using a model putty knife, I applied the mud paste on the tracks and lower hull just like spreading butter on a piece of toast. For hard-to-reach corners, I used a toothpick instead. Since the paste is pre-colored, no painting or clean up is necessary. Don't you just love model gadgetries?



For the final "flat assault," I turned to my trusty Alclad II Klear Kote Flat (314). NOTHING shines after I spray this stuff on a model! In fact, It tends to make everything dusty when too much of it is used.

With that done, I was pleased with what I saw.

Eric Choy





2014 First Quarterly (March) Contest Winners

1st



1/35th WWII Italian 305mm Gun (Criel Model) by Russ Holm

2nd



1/35th WWII German Panther D (DML)
by Pat Rourke

3rd



1/48th WWII Soviet KV-1 (HobbyBoss)
by Bob Bethea



When Things Get Rusty

by Russ Holm

We, all, have had days when we didn't feel like doing our hobbies, chores or "honey do's, but when those days stretch into months, or even years, the comeback can be frustrating. The chores and honey dos' will get done. The wife or the IRS will see to that. However, it is the hobby that is pushed to the back of the priority list, and when it is ...we seem to forget the many (but basic) steps and sequences that we have learned when we were in our prime, best, or heyday.

I recently took a (for lack of a better word) a sabbatical for about a year, during which, I would walk by my modeling area, give heavy sigh and keep the light off. But the prospect of another \$10 fine for not building my model, much less painting it, haunted me. I decided that this year would be different! I would complete the model I drew in the annual Christmas White Elephant gift exchange.

My draw was the Lee Tank from Tamiya. I appreciated it for its direct and simple build. I can do this!! I was at the point of applying a basic paint finish to the model, when my friend, Eric Choy, gave me a conversion kit to make it a "Canal Defense Version" of the Lee. This was way more interesting than the basic Lee tank and it also provided additional pressure to get it done.

I decided to skip the painting of the running gear with the basic Olive Drab color and "cut to the chase" with dirt and earth tone colors. But it was still



necessary to mask the road wheels. Once completed, it looked OK but there was a difference in how the colors looked.....hummmm. Why did I do that? It saved no time and I had to doctor the colors later. ONWARD!

I stirred up a panel fade mixture and guessed at the lightness of the resulting paint. It was too light. I thought that when filters and a final dull coat was applied it would dummy down the whole finish and that the window of a COOL paint job could still be achieved.

I applied the DOT method of filters to the model after a coat of acrylic clear, only to realize that I had forgotten how faint or stark to leave it before the final coat of clear coat.

The classic drybrushing of a shade lighter than the panel fade color was applied after the final dull coat finish leaving the highlights too light.

All of these steps could have, should have, been done in the CORRECT sequence and with the CORRECT touch but I had not kept" in touch" with modeling in the artistic sense and it came to the forefront on this model.

The next effort was better and the next better yet! The point is that when we leave a hobby, a skill, an endeavor for a time we shouldn't expect to pick up exactly where we left off. There is a price to be paid for a sabbatical.

Russ Holm





April 3-5

Fredericksburg, VA

The AMPS International Convention - our 20th year



Your invitation

Join us in Fredericksburg, Virginia for the 20th AMPS convention, widely viewed as THE armor modeling event in the U.S.

Our site for the convention is the Fredericksburg Hospitality House Hotel and Conference Center. Drop your gear in your room and enjoy the convention just steps away.

The theme for this convention is 'Tanks on Film.' Get creative and build a subject that has appeared on TV or film and bring your references so we can see your inspiration.

Back to school

Seminars have always been an attraction at the convention. A first this year is the **AMPS University**, a hands-on instruction on a variety of modeling topics. This is a classroom format with materials included that enable you to try the techniques out for yourself as you listen live to the instructors. Take home the results of what you learned as well as the knowledge to apply to your future projects. It takes place on Thursday, so register early to secure one of the limited seats.

It's all there

The vendor spread at the convention is something to behold and we draw them from all over the U.S. and abroad.

Enter your models in the competition and get the feedback and reinforcement from your peers. You may even be rewarded with a Gold medal or be among the recipients of many special awards. Starting at this convention, it now requires model entrants be current AMPS members, so make sure your membership is up to date.

www.amps-armor.org

The Armor Modeling & Preservation Society



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NEW ON the BLOCK



Yet another IDF subject from Academy. This is a 1/35th Magach 6B, a M60 based MBT.

CANADIAN MAIN BATTLE TANK

LEOPARD C2 MEXAS

A DETAILED STATIC DISPLAY PLASTIC MODEL.
ALL THE WHEELS & SUSPENSION ARE MOVABLE.
DIGITAL WORKABLE TRACKS (ABS/Cement Road).
A 1/35th FIGURE INCLUDED.
A 4 TYPES OF RAILINGS.
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1/35

A READY TO ASSEMBLE PRECISION MODEL NOT A WOODEN BUILDING KIT. UNDER 14 YEARS OF AGE. A MODEL, NOT A KIT FROM BRICKS OR BOMBS. A CEMENT AND PAINT NOT INCLUDED.



What do you get when you combine Mexico and Texas? A Canadian Leopard C2 MEXAS from Takom, of course.



Tamiya surprises us all with a brand new 1/35th Nashorn coming next month (top). In their quarter scale series we have a new German Motorcycle & Sidecar (bottom). If only we get some Joneses figures to go with the kit...



The airborne version of the QF 6-Pounder from AFV Club in 1/35th scale.



There are over 600 parts in this 1/35th European Tram kit from MiniArt! A base (12.6" x 8.78") with power poles are also included. This should excites diorama builders with all sorts of possibilities.



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."

Since then AABS is the only modeling club in Central Texas devoted solely to armor modeling. We don't build planes because they are just plain! Our passion is armored fighting vehicles and military figures. Subject of our interest ranges from WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Middle East, to the most recent Gulf War Conflicts.



At each monthly meeting, we talk tanks, swap kits, and share our building techniques and tricks. We also hold regular in-house model contests and organize out-of-town field trips to museums and model shows.

Every odd-numbered year AABS hosts the biggest armor model show in AMPS South Central Region (AMPS CENTEX). Known as Lone Star Armor &

Figure Expo, we attract some of the best armor modelers in Texas as well as in the neighboring states to come participate.

To find out more about AABS, you can visit our website or pick up a club flyer at your local hobby shop.

We are on the web @ AustinArmorBuilders.com

Our president Bob Bethea's 1/72 WWII IJN Type 2 Ka-Mi Amphibious Tank with some joyriding Marines from Texas!

