



Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

March 2015
Volume 19, Issue 3

A Trip to Tamiya HQ

By Eric Choy

Wednesday. Rainy (Tokyo), Sunny (Shizuoka City).

I woke up late in the morning. My feet still hurt after yesterday's hobby shop crawl all over Tokyo. I turned on the TV and was told an earthquake struck the northeast corner of Honshu overnight, not far from the big one in 2011. Granted it was only a magnitude 4.5 quake, tsunami alerts were issued anyway all along the upper east coast. It is a common threat that the Japanese face on a daily basis. Two and a half months into 2015, there were already over 40 earthquakes recorded.

My destination today was Shizuoka. Mount Fuji may be the top tourist site in this scenic prefecture, but we modelers all know the capital **Shizuoka City** is the *de facto* capital of Japan's plastic model industry. The original "Big Four" that started here were **Hasegawa** (1941), **Aoshima** (1945), **Tamiya** (1946), and **Fujimi** (1949). The list grew over the years. Nowadays



Bandai, Platz, Asuka (formerly Tasca), Ebbro, and Sweet all called Shizuoka City home in addition to the four that I mentioned.

As far as I know, Tamiya is the only plastic model company in town that has showrooms open to the public.

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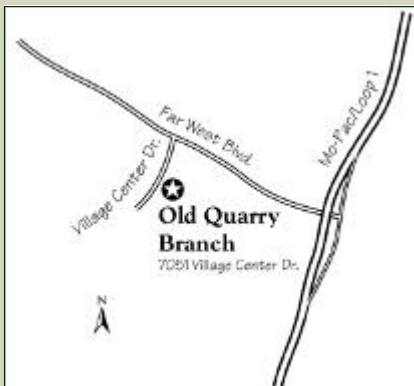
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Austin Armor Builders Society (AABS) meets at 7PM each month at the **Austin Public Library Old Quarry Branch**. Our next meeting is on

March 4, 2015

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

- ♦ **March 4 - AABS Club Meeting**
- ♦ **March 12 to 14 - Lone Star Figure Show 2015**
DFW Airport Marriott South, Forth Worth, TX
- ♦ **April 1 - AABS Club Meeting**
- ♦ **April 11 - Lone Star Military Miniature Society Modeling Day** Shady Hollow Community Center, Austin, TX
- ♦ **April 25 - Modelmania 2015** Stafford, TX
- ♦ **May 6 - AABS Club Meeting**
- ♦ **May 30 - Scalefest 2015** Grapevine Convention Center Grapevine, TX



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Upcoming Program Presentations and Newsletter Articles

Month	Program Presentation	Newsletter Article
January, 2015	Tom Pachalos	Tom Pachalos
February	Tom Pachalos	Dave Bourland
March	Eric Choy	Eric Choy
April	Dave Bourland	TBA
May	Jake McKee	Jake McKee
June	TBA	TBA
July	TBA	TBA
August	TBA	TBA
September	TBA	TBA
October	TBA	TBA
November	TBA	TBA
December	TBA	TBA
January, 2016	TBA	TBA

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. Tom Pachalos' article for January was due on the last Wednesday of December).



From the Turret

And so, another month has come and gone... The February meeting was very interesting, busy maybe, but interesting. Club member **Robert Mesch** had recently passed away, and his widow **Sheri** gave the club a fair number of models from his collection. The club had a lottery for selection of models from Robert's collection to take home and build. The lottery went well, and members were able to choose from a nice selection of kits. Please be sure to build the model (or models) you've taken home in memory of Robert and share the results with us at a future club meeting.

Tom Pachalos also gave a very nice presentation on German Imperial Military Headwear from 1850 to 1918, including some interesting samples from his personal collection. The breadth and depth of expertise in this club never ceases to surprise me.

With such significant 100, 75, and 70 year military history anniversaries to ponder, I'm going to continue this section of From the Turret...

1915: One hundred years ago this month, bloody trench warfare ensued in attacks launched by the

British in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. The high casualty rates and lack of success of the first major offensives against well prepared defenses directly impact the future of warfare and the role of armor.

1940: Seventy-Five years ago this month, German plans were locked in for invading Norway & Denmark. More importantly to the development of armored warfare, the Germans decided to go with Manstein's plan for Army Group A to lead the spearhead with a majority of the panzer units through the Ardennes. This was a major shift from the previous plans created by the infantry generals, which would have led to a head-to-head clash in Belgium, exactly where the Allies expected the German attack to come.

1945: Seventy years ago this month, Germany launched one of its last counter attacks in Hungary. Early gains were made, but it was ultimately stopped. The Western Allies reached the Rhine and began crossing in March. The Russians closed off German holdings in Eastern Prussia and made further gains in Poland. *Blitzkrieg* had come full circle and the noose was closing on Germany.

Here's looking forward to seeing you all at the meeting on Wednesday. I never get to see enough of our members work.

By the way, we seem to be gaining on a Facebook likes and reach. So keep up with spreading the word!

John Talley
President



March Is Quarterly Contest Month!

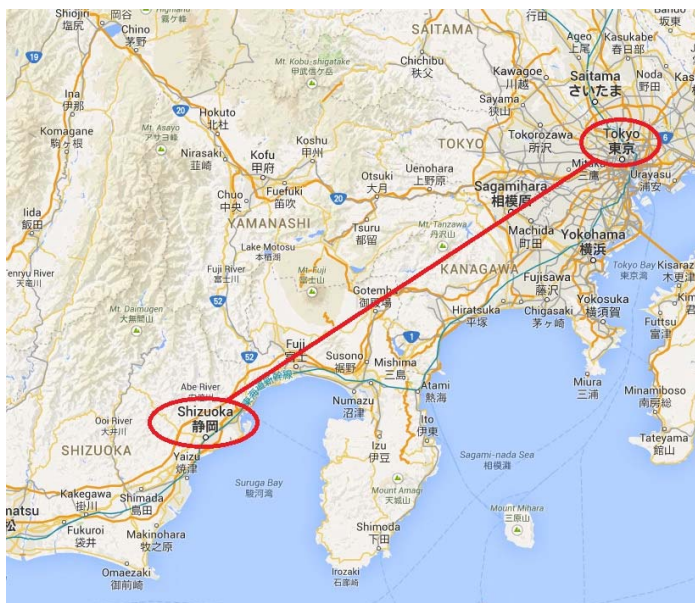
Bring in your finished model this month to win U.S. Treasury issued greenbacks! Our quarterly contest cash prizes are **\$40, \$30, and \$20** for the first, second, and third place winners.

To enter you must be a member in good standing. Any model that has not placed in previous quarterly contests is eligible to win. The "no sweep" rule is strictly enforced in these in-house contests.

If you like to participate but haven't paid your 2015 dues, please do so before our meeting or the show-and-tell session.



(Continued from page 1)



Shizuoka City can be reached by car/bus in 3.5 hours, but by *Shinkansen* (bullet train) it takes less than 60 minutes. Needless to say how can one say no to going 170 mph to cover the 103 miles journey?



Riding inside a bullet train does not give you a good sense of how fast you are going. The only time that I felt its speed was when a *Shinkansen Nozomi* (express) passed through Shizuoka Station

after I just got off from my train. Standing in the platform I heard rumbling from a distance, then zooooooooom a white shadow appeared for about five seconds, and it was gone. Impressive!

I followed Tamiya's advice on its website and took a taxi there. The corporate office has two showrooms and a display area that are open to the public every day. Two friendly receptionists handed me a map with ground rules explained in English: take as many photos (or videos) as you want but stay within the public area; dress properly and wear appropriate shoes (i.e. no sandals, flip-flops, or heels over 2"(!); no drinking, eating, smoking, and talking on mobile phone; be quiet as this is a business office not a place for relaxation [sic].

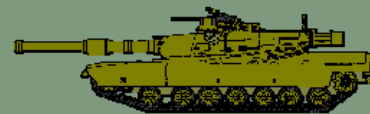


The first showroom contained most, if not all, of Tamiya's early products including the 1/800th battleship Yamato and the Panther tank produced in the early 1960s. Along with them were masterpieces that won the Tamiya/Cons (1997-2006). Tucked to one corner of the room was the trophy itself in dire need of cleaning and repair.



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The second showroom included some current Tamiya products as well as a few abstract art objects.

The display area in the middle exhibited some actual vehicles that were used for research (e.g. M151 MUTT, 1974 Porsche 911, 1976 Tyrrell P34 F1 Six Wheeler, 1982 Lotus 91 Ford) or took part in F1 races that Tamiya sponsored (1992 Lotus S107 Ford).



In the middle of everything was a Kawaguchi plastic injection molding machine (similar to what Williams Bros has) that cranked out kit samplers for visitors. I was told from time to time the staff changed out the mold to provide a variety of the giveaways. Today I got a samurai figure.



There was a small gift shop next to the display area. The Tamiya brand biscuit and bread caught my eye. I thought it was a bit overboard to market your own food items until I realized they were Tamiya's fundraising effort for the 2011 Tsunami relief. Why not? I paid for one of each. You'll never know when you need emergency ration anyway!



An hour was all it took to look over what Tamiya has to offer for the general public. The company makes fun stuff for us to enjoy, but the business end of it is dead serious. Nowhere is this more evident than here at the corporate head office.

Feeling adventurous, I decided to take the bus back to the train station. Public buses in Japan operate very differently from elsewhere: you pay at the end



of the ride, not before. How does the driver keep track of who pay what? I came to find out I was supposed to pick up a ticket as I entered the bus from the rear and matched the number on it to a electronic fare display at the front of the bus. My fare was based on my destination and was updated on the display at each stop of the bus route. To me the whole process is confusing and awkward. But if it works for the Japanese, who am I to complain?

Near the train station was Shizuoka Hobby Square, a chamber-of-commerce style event center for the promotion of the plastic model industry. **Masahiko Nakasone** (ex ASMS member) and I agreed to meet there so I could deliver his model he sent to Milton Bell for ASMS' contest last fall. Since I arrived early, I spent some time wandering around trying to learn more about the history of the industry. Unfortunately everything was in Japanese. But I took pictures of them anyway hoping I would find some way to translate the text later.



At the exit of the Hobby Square was yet another hobby shop selling kits, paints, tools, and other model unrelated merchandise. By now I was getting a bit tired of model shopping (never thought I would say that), but I went in anyway. I was tempted by a few novelty items, but Masahiko showed up just in time to save me from burning more holes in my wallet.

Masahiko recommended a restaurant near the station for an early dinner. We talked about the hobby industry, his time in Austin, my impression of Japan, and what we like to build. He might have forgotten some of his English skills, but it was a thousand times

better than everyone I encountered in Japan so far. Against my objection, he paid for my meal and thanked me repeatedly for bringing his model back to him.

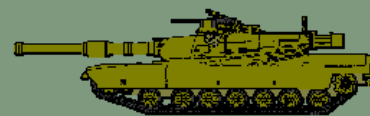
After dinner Masahiko took me to a nearby bookstore for a quick browse of hobby and military books. Before long it was farewell time. Then he remembered we needed evidence of us together, and we managed to find a young lady at the station to take a photo of us (Masahiko on the left and me on the right).



My Shinkansen train arrived exactly as printed on the schedule (something the Japanese are very good at and proud of: keeping their public transportation running on time), and by 10pm I was already back in my hotel room in Tokyo getting ready for bed.

The trip to Shizuoka City was not cheap. The round trip train ticket cost me over \$100. I'm not sure I can recommend anyone going to Tamiya HQ just for the few things that I saw there. Maybe it should be combined with other activities in the area (e.g. tour of Mount Fuji or the big Shizuoka Hobby Show in May) to make it more worthwhile.

Eric



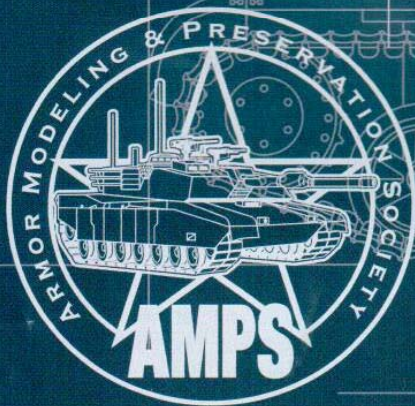
From the
drawing
board
to the
battlefield

There was always a first in line,
a MK.1, a Series A. We are celebrating
that innovative first model – the one
that led the way – with the
AMPS 2015 International Show theme:



Join us at the
WW2 Victory Museum
in Auburn, Indiana
from April 30 - May 2, 2015

Plan to be there!
More information to come at:
www.amps-armor.org





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New On The Block



Meng's latest WWI 1/35th A7V tank includes a full interior and individual track links.



Tamiya's 1/35th Somua S35 went on sale on the last day of February in Japan. We should be seeing it in our local hobby shops very soon now.



Another nice vignette from Bronco: a 1/35th six-figure set depicting a sermon before battle titled "God's Blessing."



For years we waited for a better 1/35th Saladin armored car, and we now have one from DML under its Black Label series.

AMPS Boresight (Volume 23, Issue 1)

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

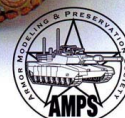
- ♦ **M48A3 Patton** by Henry Milton
Dragon's second kit of this old battleaxe.
- ♦ **M114 Towed Howitzer** by Mike Del Vecchio
Rounds complete! Building the Bronco 155mm "Pig."
- ♦ **M109 155mm Self-propelled Howitzer** by Carl Wethington
Firebase veteran from AFV Club.
- ♦ **AMPS Officer Election**
It's your turn to have a voice.
- ♦ **AMPS Local Chapter News**
What's going on in the AMPS community.

BORESIGHT

THE AMPS MEMBERSHIP MAGAZINE JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015



Inside this issue:
 Dragon's M48A3 Patton
 Bronco's M114 155mm towed howitzer
 AFV Club's M109A2 155mm self-propelled howitzer





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



**2015 Lone Star
Figure Show**
March 12 - 14, 2015

**DFW Airport Marriott
South
4151 Centreport Blvd.
Fort Worth, Texas 76155**