



Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

August 2025

Ein Kleiner Panzer

by **Allan J. Romer**
(a.k.a. The Rookie)

Having built Panzer II, III, IV, V, and VI, it was time to turn my attention to construct a Panzer I. I was able to find one from Charlies Plastic Models at a very good price and purchased the Dragon Pz.Kpfw. I Ausf. B (Kit # 6186). It has been sitting in my stash for the past 2½ years until now...

A little background on the Panzer I is in order. Upgraded from the earlier Ausf. A, the Ausf. B came equipped with a more powerful engine and a revamped suspension system which required the lengthening of the rear hull. The front hull, turret, armament, and armor protection remained mostly unchanged. The suspension is the most obvious distinction between an Ausf. A and an Ausf. B.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ♦ Aug 13 - AABS Meeting
- ♦ Sept 3 - AABS Meeting
- ♦ Sept 13 - SuperCon 2025, Bob Duncan Community Center, Arlington
- ♦ Oct 8 - AABS Meeting
- ♦ Oct 11 - AMPS Centex Armor Expo, Georgetown Community Center, Georgetown



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Feb 2025 – Jan 2027

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Schedule of Upcoming Program Presentations and Newsletter Articles

Month	Program Presentation	Newsletter Article
January 2025	* OFFICER ELECTIONS *	Ted Paone
February	Ted Paone	Eric Choy
March‡	Bob Bethea	Kevin Hutchison
April	Ron Askew	Bill Zych
May	Mike Reeves	Greg Beckman
June‡	Quiz Night!	Craig Bland
July	* KIT AUCTION *	Aaron Smischney
August	Eric Choy	Allan Romer
September‡	Marty Hebda	Marty Hebda
October	AMPS Judging Review	Bill Menzie
November	* KIT-SWAP NITE *	Mike Bird
December‡	Chris Chany	Chris Chany
January 2026	Ted Paone	Ted Paone

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 2025 is due on the last Wednesday of December 2024).

‡ Quarterly contest month



From the Turret

Hello everyone from Big Bear Lake, CA. Not much to say this month as I will not be at the meeting, but I'm sure our veep Mike (Bird) will do an excellent job in my place.

I'm not sure who is doing the program this month because I know our presenter Allan Romer is also out of town. Don't forget to bring in your models for show and tell. As usual, if you won the door prize last month, you owe us a door prize this month!

August 13, 1940 was *Aldertag*, the beginning of the Battle of Britain.

August 10, 1945 Mongolia declared war on Japan.

On August 13, 1945, the day before VJ day, about 1,600 US aircraft flew over Tokyo and other Japanese cities dropping millions of leaflets explaining the position reached in the surrender negotiations and the state of affairs in Japan. Despite radio announcements declaring the intention to surrender, most Japanese "hawks" still refused to admit defeat. During the night, Sub-Lieutenant Saburo Sakai, the one-eyed Imperial Navy fighter ace with 64 victories, shot down a B-29 near Tokyo.



Meanwhile, up here in Big Bear there is a huge ongoing battle against a wildfire. While not armor related, a lot of ex-military aircraft are at work: two Sikorski



Skycrane water bombers, one Chinook water bomber, a Grumman S-2T Airtanker, a bunch of Hueys water bombers, some Blackhawk water bombers, a C-130 Airtanker, and even a North American OV-10 (a 'D' model) Bronco Air Tactical Aircraft for forward air control (FAC))! Airtankers dump red fire retardant to prevent the spreading, and the helicopters hover over the lake to refill. I noticed the other day on flightaware.com it showed five helicopters, a C-130, and the Bronco FAC circling the fire.

I did find one tracked vehicle up here during a National Night Out event. I have enclosed a picture:



Well, have a great meeting, and to quote the title of an oldie but goodie song: *See you in September!*

Chris Chany
President



Quarterly Contest Next Month!

Get ready for another round of face-off at our September meeting! The theme of this upcoming contest is **"White Washed & White -Painted Vehicles."** There will be two categories: White Washed and White-Painted. Each category's first place winner will be awarded USD \$40!

To enter in any of our in-house contest, you must be a member in good standing. i.e. pay your 2025 dues!!!



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TABLETOP GAMES

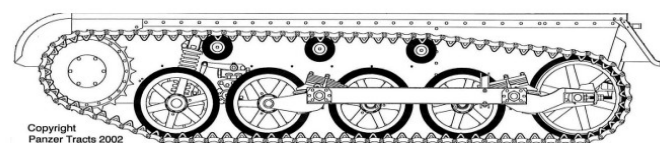
PUZZLES

CHESS

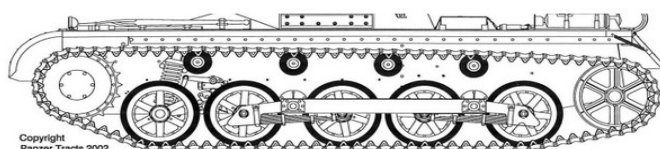
RPGS

CCGS

(Continued from page 1)



Ausf. A



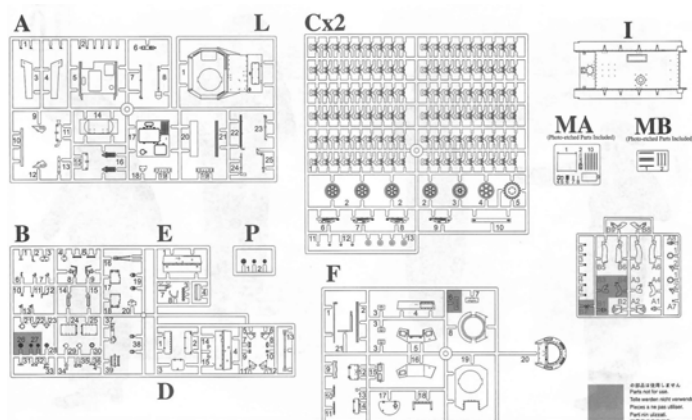
Ausf. B

Although ineffective in tank versus tank battles, the Panzer I performed well against softskin targets when utilized as part of a combined arms team. On the home front, the *Ausf. A* helped the factories to develop assembly line production while the *Ausf. B* trained the factories to quickly modify production lines as changes were required or new tank models introduced. Most importantly, the majority of German tank crewmen were trained on the Panzer I. The skills learned were easily transferred to larger and more powerful Panzers.

The choice of building a straight Panzer I *Ausf. A* or *B* is quite copious. Kits are available from Academy, Dragon, Hobby Boss/TriStar, Italeri/Testors, Takom (a neat kit that includes parts for both *Ausf. A* and *B*), and the latest Tamiya kit released in 2024.

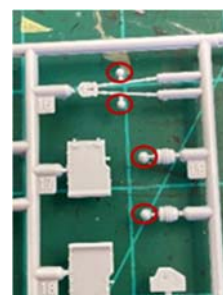
Let's Build!

Let's start the build by examining the Dragon kit parts. Judging from the sprues (see below), there is



not a significant number of parts, except for the tracks (more on that subject later). There are some photoetched parts and clear headlight lenses. The kit provides two figures, so you are able to build the tank commander of your choice. There are a fair amount of very small detail pieces. If you have experience with 1/48th or 1/72nd kits, you will be right at home. Just have your tweezers and magnifying glasses handy.

Right off the bat, be prepared to do a lot of clean-ups. This is a kit from 2004, so the old manufacturing methods are on full display. Be prepared with your nippers, X-Acto knife, and sanding sticks. Notice the cable cutter has three sprue attachment points and two nubs! All need to be cleaned up. Unfortunately, this was not an uncommon occurrence.



First Up – The Suspension

Despite the large amount of clean-up, the suspension was a pretty straightforward affair with no issues. The road wheels do not have a lot of additional details that required attachment. It took me about three to four hours (with breaks) to complete.



Completed Suspension

The Upper Build

I diverged from the instructions and chose to complete the tracks last for two reasons: 1) I knew it would take some time and effort, and, 2) I needed to paint the Panzer prior to attaching the tracks, which meant I needed to build it out.

Steps 6 thru 9 involve construction of the turret, front and rear hulls, and the associated parts. Again, I

jumped between the steps as outlined in the instructions. Knowing my fat fingers can cause lots of damage, I chose to affix the larger parts first, and then onto smaller and more delicate parts. (As an example, the headlights were the last items attached). What appeared a simple build ended up taking much longer than I expected.

For such a small tank, this Dragon kit has lots of small detail parts all requiring clean-up. Some are overkill, like the jack has twelve small pieces, while others are overlooked (e.g. there is no detail on the inside of the commander's hatch).

Fitting was generally good, although I did have some issues when attaching the rear intake vents. If I were smart, I would have fitted them the same time I attached the rear deck and save me the filling and sanding. It probably took me a couple of days working on and off to complete the build.

After priming the model, I initially painted with Mission Models Panzer Gray. I was really happy with the spray job. HOWEVER, the color was way too dark, almost to the point of black. I attempted some color modulation with Tamiya Dark Gray to little effect. I ended up painting it over with said Tamiya color.



On to the Tracks

The next step was to assemble the tracks. The parts diagram shows there are two Sprue Cs which contain all together 218 individual track links! Each link must be individually cut off and cleaned up. Suffice to say, you will need a good pair of nippers and a good sanding stick (check out my *Hobby Tool of the*

Month in the March 2025 issue of *Sabot Away!* Spending some time cleaning up the individual links saves a lot of headaches when it comes time to assemble them later.



Just a little clean-up



Bagged and ready to go

Assembling each track-run requires a hundred of individual links. Thank heavens for fellow member Kevin Hutchison's track jig. Without it, my track run probably would have ended up in a semi-circle!



This was my third attempt at constructing tracks with individual links. I have made progress, but there is still room for improvement. Doing individual links is a slow and tedious chore. I can see why one would be tempted to purchase aftermarket tracks.

Final Steps

Once the tracks were installed (again some very good lessons learned for the future), I finished the detailed painting, applied a coat of clear gloss, affixed decals, and finished it with a matte varnish.

Since my last figure painting class, I have become a glutton for punishment. In this case, I really wanted a commander to give a visual scale of just how small the Panzer I was. The commander that comes with the

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kit and is not very detailed. I've seen a few old photos that show the tank commander really sat up high with an open hatch.

Speaking of the hatch, since the kit does not provide any interior details, I fashioned a couple of hatch handles and locks. I also added a suitable imitation of a ventilator opening from my spare parts box.

Conclusion

When you are a rookie, every kit is an enjoyable build because you learn so much. You get to build upon your previous mistakes and make new ones. You try new techniques that may or may not work. This Dragon *Ausf. B* kit is no exception. Details are sporadic; some places are good and some are not so good.

As mentioned, the kit parts require a fair amount of cleanup. However, the overall fit is pretty good. The fillings required were mostly due to my mistakes.

Dragon's instructions are reasonably clear. However, I would recommend NOT following them in the exact sequence. It is much easier to affix larger followed by smaller parts regardless of the instructions. The Panzer I was a small tank. Hence there are many small and delicate parts. Individual track links still scare (and scar) me.

Six different marking options are provided on the kit's decal sheet, but they all call for the same color scheme: overall *panzergrau*!

This Dragon kit is not perfect, but it builds out to a rather nice *ein kleiner Panzer*. I'm glad that I finally got around to build this kit.

Allan

Austin Scale Modelers Society

Presents The

2025 CAPITOL CLASSIC



Show
Theme

250th
Anniversary
of the



Saturday, November 8th 2025

8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Williamson County Expo Center

5350 Bill Pickett Trail, Taylor, TX 76574

★ IPMS Model Contest ★
Gundam Contest ★ Figure Contest

★ Vendor Tables ★

Make 'N' Take ★ Door Prizes

General Admission:

\$5 per person 12 and under FREE.

Contest Entry (includes admission):

Senior (≥18): \$12 for first model, \$3 each additional

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Junior (≤17): \$5 for first model, \$1 each additional

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Book Review by The Editor

Zrinyi II Assault Howitzer Armour of the Royal Hungarian Army by Attila Bonhardt

PeKo Publishing, 2015
Hardcover 120 pages
ISBN: 9786158007238
Available at Amazon.com for USD \$23

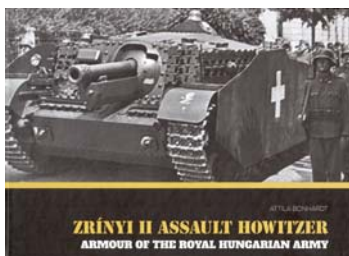
The author starts off with a brief vehicle history, and all of the 110 B&W photos in the book are reproduced each on full page. I'm impressed by how well documented of such an obscure vehicle. Some of the photos are destroyed/abandoned examples taken after February 1945 when Hungary switched to the Allies' side. Unfortunately, the engine and fighting compartments can be seen in only one photo, and it is not clear enough as a reference to scratchbuild the interior of a *Zrinyi II*.

Despite the lack of interior shots, this book is still a must-have for anyone interested in building Bronco's 1/35th *Zrinyi II* kit. Highly recommended.

BTW, on the back cover is a photo of a *Zrinyi II* with two 55-gallon fuel drums secured on the engine deck by a rope (same photo with better details on page 105). I'm pretty sure that's the purpose of the undocumented drums and string included in the Bronco kit!

Editor

The *Sturmgeschütz* (*StuG*) series of assault gun had a profound influence on self-propelled infantry support weapons fielded during WWII. Many countries, both Axis and Allies, copied the German concepts (and designs) to produce their own versions of *StuGs* (e.g. Italy's *Semovente da 105/25* and Soviet Union's *SU-122*). With the Hungarian Army it was the *Zrinyi II*. Around 70 vehicles were built between 1943 and 1944, and many saw actions against the Red Army from late 1944 to early 1945.



This title from PeKo Publishing is not new as it has been around since 2015, but in my opinion it is still the only definitive reference devoted to the subject.

AMPS Boresight (Volume 33, Issue 2)

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

- ♦ **AMPS Atlanta 2025 Show Report** by David Black
- ♦ **Gees Mine Protected Vehicle** by Ray Boniwell
- ♦ **Talking with an AMPS Master** *Boresight* interviews Stan Spooner
- ♦ **British Ferret Group Build** by Rob Booth & the Texas Hill Country Modelers



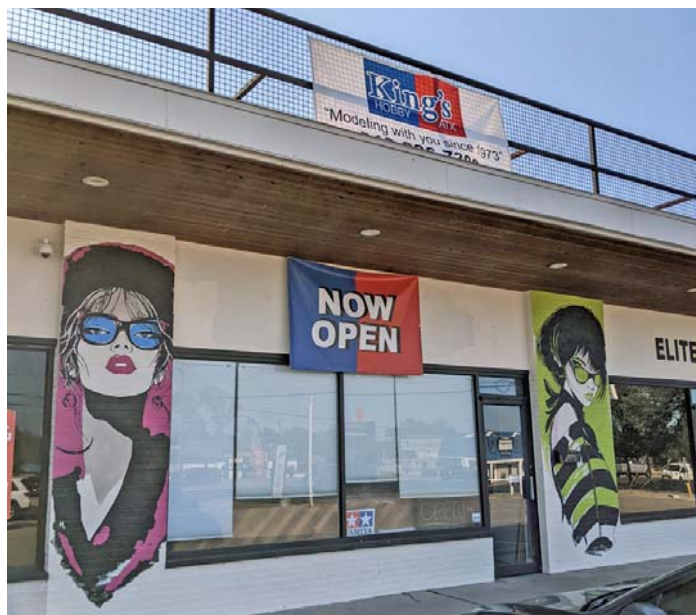


King's Hobby Moved Again!

by Eric Choy

In case you haven't heard, King's Hobby has moved again! This is the third time in the last seven years our Austin-based iconic hobby shop relocated. The new address is:

7323 Burnet Road, Austin TX 78757



I was there at King's "soft opening" last month and had a candid chat with owner **Marc Hobbs**. He believes the new locale will bring better visibility and a fresh look to our neighborhood hobby shop. Plus, the retail area is larger and way brighter than the previous venue at Centre Business Park.

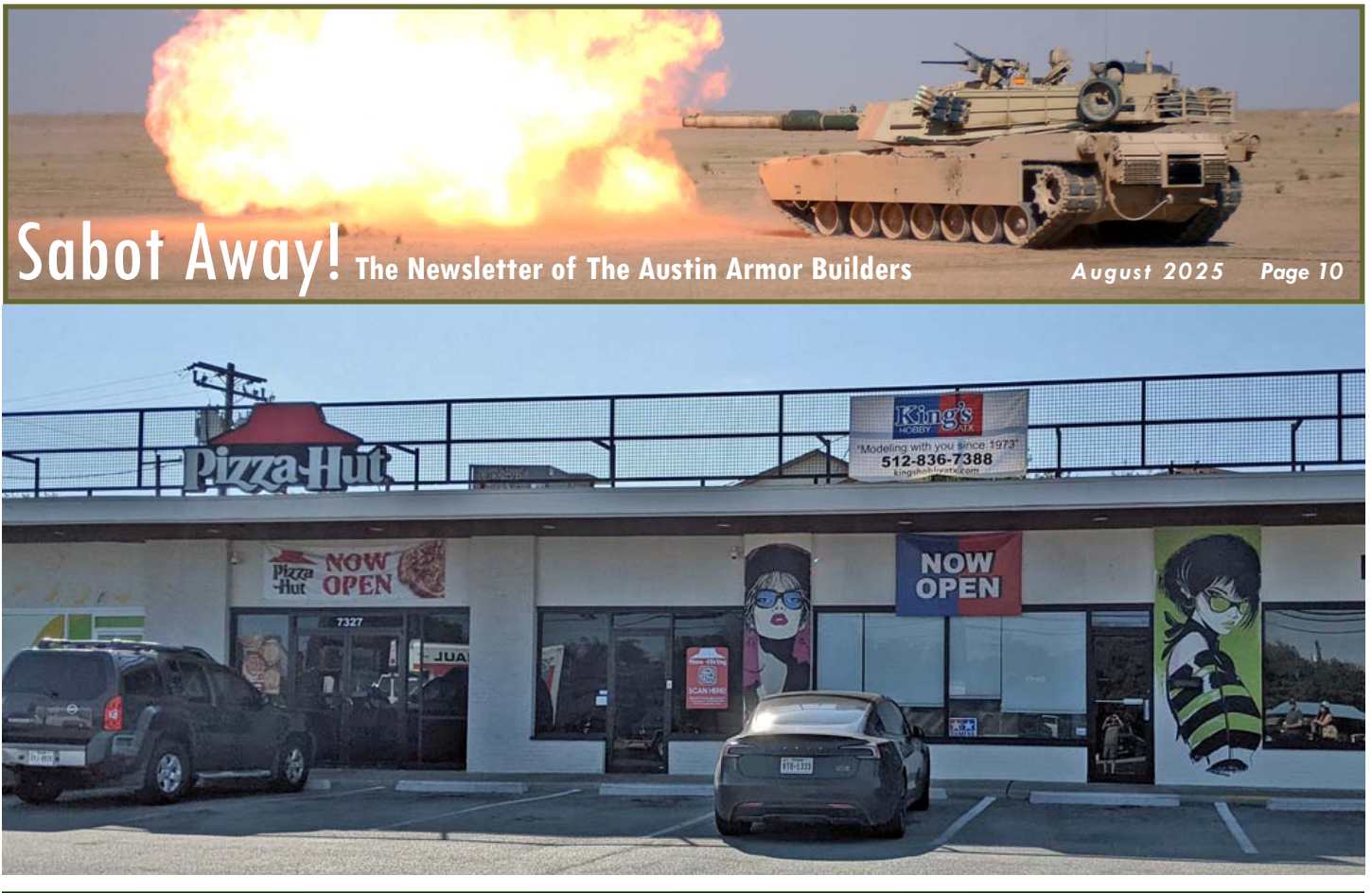
If you happen to be on Burnet Road, stop by the "new" King's to say hi to the friendly staff (that's Amber in the photo on the right). Be sure to check out its updated inventory. You'll never know what goodie you'll end up going home with!

Eric

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2025 AMPS CENTEX ARMOR EXPO

An AMPS Regional Show

October 11, 2025

**Georgetown Community Center
Georgetown, Texas**

Show Theme: Halftracks

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¹ Digital package includes four (4) Digital and two (2) Printed issues of *Boresight* per year.

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³ Juniors are members aged 17 years or younger.

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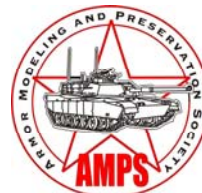
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New On The Block



Tamiya has a newly tooled 1/35th M36 out. Hard to believe the old M36 kit (below) was released over 55 years ago! Plastic modeling sure has come a long way since 1968.



Rest in peace to Mr. **Shunsaku Tamiya** who passed away on July 18, 2025 at the age of 90. We never thank you enough for all the joy you brought us all these years!

Border Model pulls out all stops for its latest IDF Merkava Mk.2 1/35th kit: full interior, one-piece ball&chain armor parts, metal spring suspension, and even workable tracks. Probably the only thing missing is the kitchen sink!



If armor in SE Asia is your thing, don't miss Gecko Models' 1/35th Vietnam-era M76 "Otter" (late production).

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 at 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