



# Sabot Away!



Newsletter of the Austin Armor Builders Society

January 2026

# MARINE AMBULANCE HOLDEN JEEPS

Part 1 by  
Ted Paone

**E**arly in WWII, the U.S. Army was using the Dodge 1/2-ton 4WD G505 utility trucks as ambulances and upgraded to the 3/4-ton WC54 in 1942. The Navy (and the Marines) continued to use the International Harvester 1/2-ton M-1-4 cargo truck for casualty evacuation. The M-1-4 was a fine vehicle for the task, but it lacked off-road ability to support the front-line troops. As the jungles of the Pacific War were impossible to standard ambulances, each wounded man needed two or more Marines to carry him back to the collecting station. It made sense to employ the versatile jeep to bring back the wounded from the front lines.

As more and more jeeps with ad-hoc field modifications appeared, it became a logistics and maintenance challenge for the Marine Corps. The Navy, who supply the medical personnel to the Marines, came up with a standardized solution: the Holden Ambulance Jeep.

The prototype was created by USN Commander French Moore, battalion surgeon with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Medical Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division in March 1942. The modifications included a pipe framework to hold two litters by removing the right front seat and turning the back seat to accommodate "fore and aft" casualties. Under where the front passenger seat used to be, a medical supply box that opened to the outside was installed. A rear door was cut into the back of the jeep tub for the walking wounded, so the spare tire had to be mounted on the hood.

The ambulance jeep could carry two patients



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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ◆ **January 3, 2026 - ModelFiesta 44**, New Braunfels Civic/Convention Center, New Braunfels
- ◆ **January 7 - AABS Meeting**
- ◆ **January 24 - WinterBlitz 2026**, Museum of the American GI, College Station
- ◆ **February 4 - AABS Meeting**
- ◆ **March 4 - AABS Meeting (tentative)**
- ◆ **March 14 - KC CON 2026**, First Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO



## AABS Officers

Feb 2025 – Jan 2027

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**Mike Bird**, Vice-President  
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## Schedule of Upcoming Program Presentations and Newsletter Articles

Month	Program Presentation	Newsletter Article
January <sup>‡</sup>	Chris Chany	Ted Paone
February	Ted Paone	TBA
March <sup>‡</sup>	TBA	TBA
April	TBA	TBA
May	TBA	TBA
June <sup>‡</sup>	TBA	TBA
July	* KIT AUCTION *	TBA
August	TBA	TBA
September <sup>‡</sup>	TBA	TBA
October	TBA	TBA
November	* KIT-SWAP NITE *	TBA
December <sup>‡</sup>	TBA	TBA
January 2027	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 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).

<sup>‡</sup> Quarterly contest month



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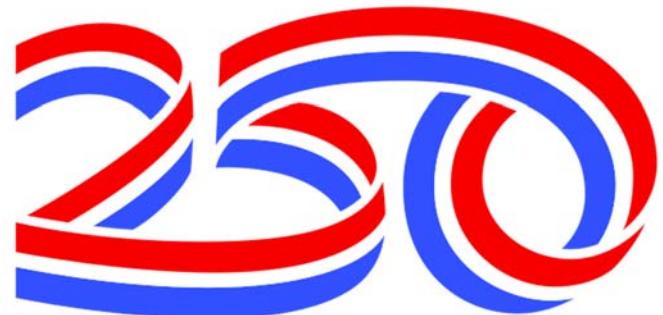


## *From the Turret*

**H**appy New Year, everyone!

As I save what you are reading on my computer with January 2026 as the filename, I thought back to year 2000, the end of the world as we knew it when every single computer supposed to crash... It was a quarter century ago! I recalled CNN was doing a rolling New Year's Eve Celebration every hour as midnight moved around the world (I still haven't figured out why India had theirs on the half hour!) My wife Patti planned a celebration with our kids (Chris 15 and Kate 11 at the time) each hour with regional foods, and we had a great time. Chris is now 40, and Kate is 36. As the T-shirt says: "I ❤️ being the same age as old people!"

# AMERICA



This year we celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday (Editor: "semiquincentennial") of the U.S.A. I am sure there will be many patriotic festivities to attend. As for AABS, we are back to our usual Bat-time and Bat-library this month. We will have a business meeting, Show&Tell, and I will have the program. We will also pick volunteers for 2026 articles and programs.

See you on Wednesday!

**Chris Chany**  
President

**I**t is club dues time again. Due to the library's "no money exchange hands" policy, please send your dues (\$15) by **PayPal** to **payaabbs@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!





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in litters, two seated in the back seat and the driver. Often an armed Marine would ride "shotgun" on the hood to provide protection.

The first seven prototype jeeps were deployed with Dr. Moore at Guadalcanal in January 1943. They were extremely successful, and the Marines needed more. A contract was made with Holden Ltd, a division of General Motors of Australia, to rebuild 200 regular jeeps to the ambulance specification. Thus the name applied to this variant. This was a fortuitous choice because Holden had been a coach (auto body) builders in Australia before being acquired by GM. The jeeps used were Navy contract Willys MB script model, and they can be easily identified by the tow rings on the front bumper.

The design was further improved after the New Guinea Campaign in early 1944. Most notably was an increase in height of the superstructure to provide more room for the stretchers. This resulted in a very tall and boxy vehicle, especially when the canvas cover was installed. The box and the box door were enlarged as well. These modifications are additional clues for denoting the different revisions.

When the new Marine divisions (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>) were raised for service, a second and third contract of ambulance jeep (approximately 250 each) were appropriated. Using a mix of Willys MB and Ford GPW, ambulance jeeps were assembled in the San Diego area, possibly at Camp Pendleton. They all

used the modification kits supplied by Holden, thus the name stuck. The supplied-jeeps were finished in OD and repainted Forest Green after the conversions were done. Some were camouflaged by their units with the addition of tan and black.

These new ambulance jeeps were deployed during the Saipan Campaign (June 1944), Iwo Jima and Okinawa. There are plenty of B&W photos of these jeeps in action and some in color film on Iwo Jima. According to reports, "the ambulance jeeps on Iwo Jima proved to be the most valuable single piece of motor transport in the medical organization. They were used to haul thousands of casualties in that operation."



After WWII, some of the Marines ambulance jeeps were distributed to our Allies and other armies such as the Royal Netherlands Marine Corp for use in Indonesia. Additional improvements were made to reinforce the stretcher carriers and carry extra fuel with a jerrycan on the rear. The Holden ambulance jeep continued to soldier on with the USMC through the Korean War until the early 1960s. By then most were scrapped or parted out, but a significant number have been resurrected by jeep enthusiasts.

There are many photos of the ambulance jeep in action, under restoration, or as restored vehicles on the web. Beware when you Google "Holden





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ambulance jeep," some restored examples have the wrong or post-war details, such as mixing a tall rack with a Navy contract jeep with lifting rings.

## Planning Is Everything!

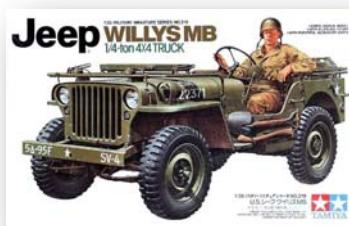
I first became aware of the Holden Jeep from some old newsreels of the battle on Iwo Jima. I decided to build one several years ago, and I went to the web to find plans. There were none, even today. There weren't many photos at that time, but this has improved. Nowadays I don't build anything without a plan; I did that once on an M32 ARV before the Italeri kit came out. My effort ended up being a big lump of Testors putty and never got completed. So, I had to make some plans from the photos I gathered.

I chose Tamiya's Jeep Willys MB (35219) for my conversion. It is a pretty accurate kit, but there are missing details such as the hood and windscreens hold-downs.

I prefer this kit because if I screw it up, it's only \$12 instead of a newer one that costs \$40 (or more) from Takom or Meng! I have a sad, frowning ambulance jeep which did not survive the heated paint dryer. I added some of the missing details such as the hold-downs from Tiger Model Design (RIP) but didn't go hog wild.

My most important tool is a digital caliper. It has many uses in all phases of planning and building a model project. You can get one at Harbor Freight for about \$20. It is well worth the price.

When scratchbuilding, there are things which need to be precise and measured so the variant can be recognized for the right shape and size. Other objects can be "guesstimated" with various degrees of accuracy. When we determine their sizes and positions relative to other objects, it helps to look through multiple photos for clues. For example, it was hard to measure the diameter of the pipes used for the rack from period photos. Common sense said



they were greater than 1" and at the most 2". One photo shows a man whose hand wraps completely around the pipe. I have an average-sized hand (no implications), and I duplicated this grip with various diameter plastic pipe from my workshop. I could make a SWAG (Scientifically Wild Ass Guess) that this was about 1.5 inches diameter. Shep Paine called that "gizmology!"

Now you have to map that to the materials you have available: plastic strip and rod come in .010 increments. Since brass rod is only available in certain diameters, you just have to fudge a little to get the right look.

I also relied on period photos to build the rack, the door on the passenger side, and the rear door. These were the key parts of the ambulance jeep with lots of details which would be placed by eye. I used a method called photogrammetry to extract three-dimensional measurements from two-dimensional photographs. This was taught in old-school drafting classes. There are now software that can do this, but I didn't want to go that route.

1. Establish critical dimension (CD) for the each of the views that you need. These are the measurements between two identifiable points on the object itself. They can come from Technical Manual dimensions, measuring the real thing, or even measuring the model. I needed plans for the right and left sides and the back. I measured parts from the kit using a caliper, the side from the radiator to the back of the body, the body height at the back of the door, and the width and height of the back panel. This gave me my CDs, even though they are in 1/35<sup>th</sup> scale.



2. Find photos that squarely point at the object at least one from each side. I looked for the left and right sides and the back and found several that looked like they were square to the jeep. In manual photogrammetry, the camera is set



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square to the side and perpendicular to the horizon. Photos like these are often “official portraits” taken at Aberdeen Proving Grounds which you can find in reference books like those written by R. P. Hunnicut or David Doyle. Another treasure trove is Chris “Toadman” Hughes’ website ([www.toadmanstankpictures.com](http://www.toadmanstankpictures.com)). Some of the available (and free) software can use offset pictures as well, and I’m just going to fudge a little.

3. Align the photo with a T square and tape it down. I aligned the bottom of the side of the jeep and drew lines at the critical dimension points. For horizontal measurements, the lines were vertical. For vertical measurements, the lines were horizontal. I carried the lines outside the

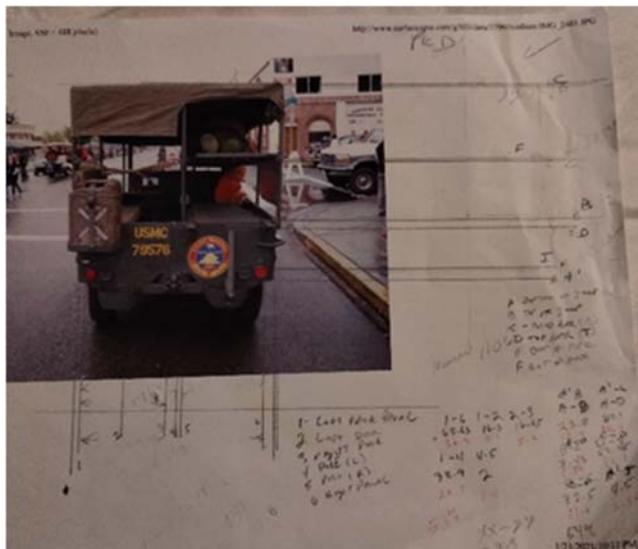
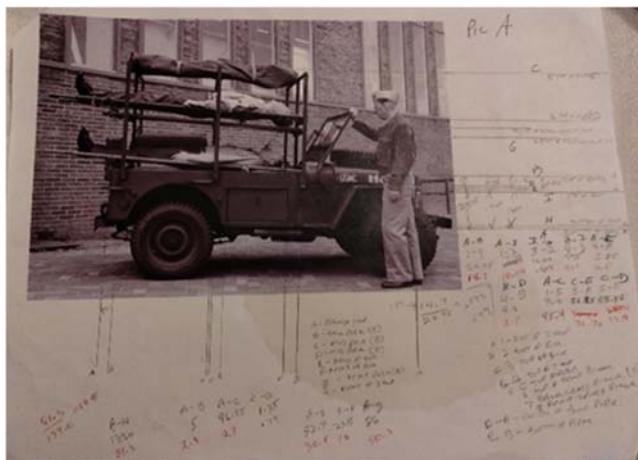


photo for better access. Continue to draw lines at any other measurement points you need. Be sure to label each line.

4. **Obtain a scaling.** Measuring the distance between the lines marking the critical dimension (MD). Divide your original critical dimension by the measured dimension. This will give you the scaling (SC) in that direction. The X scaling may differ from the Y scaling, but it should be very close.  $SC = CD / MD$ . You will have different scales for each photo and possibly different scales within the same photo if the photo is not taken squarely.
5. **Create a table** that list the measurements that you need (ND) using the line labels for size of the back door, size of the box, frame geometry, etc. That way you can easily figure out what each measurement means when drawing up the plan.
6. I measured the photo for each required measurements (PD), then multiplied by the scaling. This is the scaled measurement you need for your plans. Because we use the model for our critical dimensions, we do not have to do any more calculations.  $ND = PD * SC$ . If you use tech manual dimensions or direct measurements, you will have to divide scaled measurement by the model scale you are building.
7. Try getting several photos of the same view and then take the average of the scaled measurements.
8. **Draw up your plans.** They don’t need to be detailed, but they should be in scale. Mark each measured distance on the plans and use the same labels from your photos. From the plans, I made a story stick. I marked an old business card at each marked place on the plan and used that to copy the marks on the model. I also transferred measurements from one side to the other to make sure they are the same.

Stay tuned to see how I used my plans to build my Holden Ambulance Jeep...

**Ted**



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## Gifts of Christmas Past

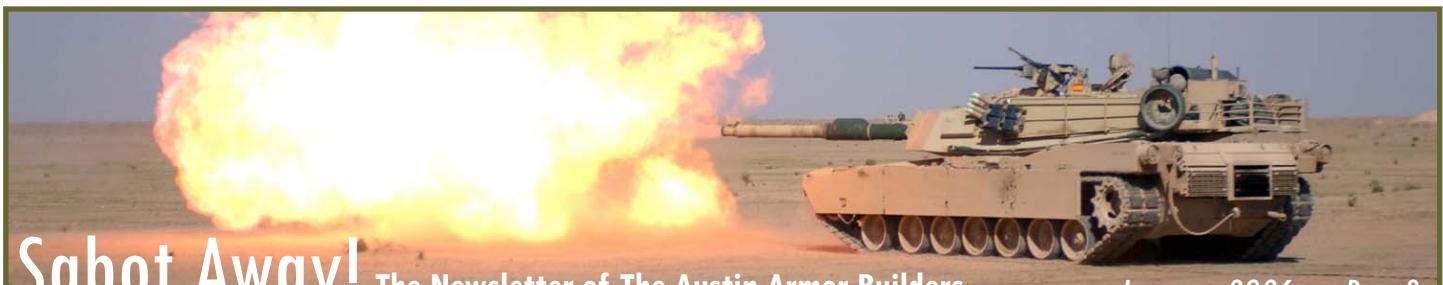
It's White Elephant Contest this month. Remember there are two categories in this contest: **Finished** (built and painted) and **Naked** (built, primed BUT not painted). In case you have forgotten what you received from our past Christmas parties, here are photos from...

2025:



2024:





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2023:



2022:



2021:





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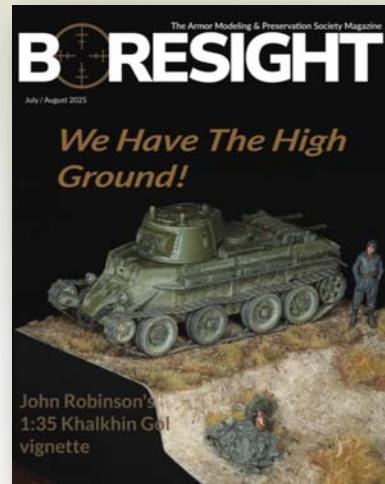
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## AMPS Boresight (Volume 33, Issue 4)

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

- ♦ **Battle of Khalkhin Gol BT-7 Vignette** by John Robinson
- ♦ **Modeling the First Vietnam War** by Bill Cross
- ♦ **M24 Chaffee "ARTHUR"** by Shon Stephens
- ♦ **Tiger I Interior Project T.I.I.P** by Francesco Maria
- ♦ **Armageddon III** by Gulf Coast AMPS



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## WINTERBLITZ 2026



SATURDAY JANUARY 24, 2026

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

*Museum of the American G.I.*  
College Station, Texas

- Raffles
- Best of Awards
- Hall of Fame Inductees
- Door Prizes
- Vendor Room
- Demonstrations

- 100 – Youth (younger than 18) (all scales, all eras)
- 200 – Classic Kits (kits, accessories, and add-ons manufactured before 1979)
- 300 – Artillery (all scales, all eras)
- 350 – All Things Towed (all scales, all eras) – must have BOTH “tractor and trailer”
- 400 – 1/48<sup>th</sup> Scale (Allied)
- 450 – 1/48<sup>th</sup> Scale (Axis)
- 500 – 1/72 and smaller (all eras)
- 600 – Fully Tracked Origin to 1934 (all scales)
- 700 – Fully Tracked Open Top Vehicles 1/32<sup>nd</sup> and 1/35<sup>th</sup> (all eras)
- 800 – Fully Tracked WWII Axis 1/32<sup>nd</sup> and 1/35<sup>th</sup> (closed top)
- 900 – Fully Tracked WWII Allied 1/32<sup>nd</sup> and 1/35<sup>th</sup> (closed top)
- 1000 – Fully Tracked Post WWII to 1990 (e.g. Korea, Vietnam, Cold War) 1/32<sup>nd</sup> and 1/35<sup>th</sup> (closed top)
- 1100 – Fully Tracked Desert Shield/Storm to Present (1991 to 2026) 1/32<sup>nd</sup> and 1/35<sup>th</sup> (closed top)
- 1200 – Paper Panzer/Fictional (all scales)
- 1300 – Halftracks (all scales and all eras)
- 1400 – Armored Cars (wheeled) (all scales, all eras)
- 1500 – Softskin Vehicles (all scales, all eras)
- 1600 – Motorcycles – with or without sidecar (all scales, all eras)
- 1700 – Miscellaneous Military and Support Vehicle (all scales, all eras)
- 2000 – Fully Tracked Full Interior (all scales, all eras)
- 3000 – Larger than 1/32<sup>nd</sup> (all eras)
- 4000 – Self Propelled FlaK (anti-aircraft) Vehicles (all scales, all eras)
- 5000 – Figures (all scales, all eras)
- 6000 – Dioramas/Vignettes (all scales, all eras)
- 6500 – Rotary Wing (Helicopter) Tank Busters (all scales, all eras)
- 7000 – The P-47 Challenge U.S. P-47s ONLY (all scales, all eras)
- 7500 – Brown Water Navy – Vietnam Riverine (all scales)
- 8500 – Landing Craft - watercraft that delivers men and/or equipment to shore (all scales, all eras)
- 9000 – Maschinen Krieger Armor Suits (all scales)

**Tank of the Year: Panzer 38(t)** – special prize for the best 38(t) or 38(t) variant (all scales, all eras)

**Show Theme: Military Support Vehicles** (all scales, all eras)

VISIT [www.winter-blitz.com](http://www.winter-blitz.com) FOR MORE INFO



# JOIN AMPS TODAY

## U.S. Membership Rates:

Type	1 year	2 years	3 years
Regular (Digital) <sup>1</sup>	\$30	\$55	\$80
Regular + All Printed <sup>2</sup>	\$55	\$105	\$155
Junior <sup>3</sup>	\$15	\$25	\$35
Family <sup>4</sup>	\$5	\$10	\$15

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

<sup>2</sup> All Printed package includes six (6) Printed issues of *Boresight* per year.

<sup>3</sup> Juniors are members aged 17 years or younger.

<sup>4</sup> 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](http://www.amps-armor.org)**

**-or- fill out this form below:**

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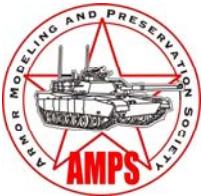
Did an AMPS member encourage you  
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All payments must be made in U.S. funds. For outside U.S. (Canada and International) rates, please visit AMPS website at [www.amps-armor.org](http://www.amps-armor.org).



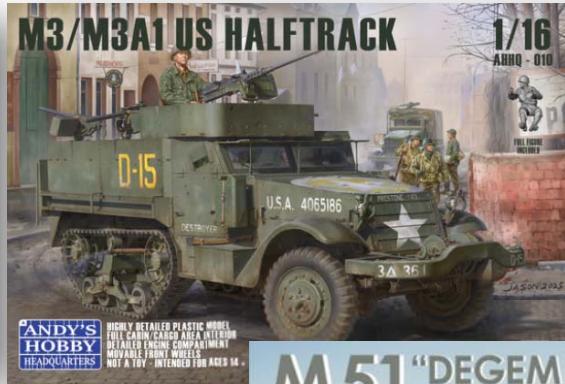
## New on The Block



Tamiya's latest quarterscale release: a Leopard 2 A7V. How exciting!



Incidentally, Meng also has a new Leopard 2 out... It's the A8 variant in 1/35<sup>th</sup> scale.



Andy's Hobby HQ in conjunction with Takom is making 1/16<sup>th</sup> fans very happy this holiday season with the release of an M3/M3A1 U.S. halftrack.



It's only logical that Takom brings out an IDF M51 "Degem Alef" (Hebrew for "Type A") after releasing three different 1/35<sup>th</sup> versions of the Sherman tank in 2025.

## 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](http://www.ampscentex.org)