



Vol. 2, No. 1

Published by AMPS Central South Carolina

January-February, 2011

Well guys, here we are at the start of a new year. Our club's not yet a year old, but I think we're well established and on our way to getting settled into a good organized routine. Membership has grown a bit since our first meeting. David Bridges had to leave us, but we were joined by John Sherrer, Tom Wingate and Eilere Tolan giving us about 12 regular members. Our treasury stands at \$143. This is due directly to our HobbyTown / USA, David Bridges, and Keith Frape all generously donating kits for our monthly raffles. Our first group-build (still in progress) has been an interesting event, and hopefully everyone has learned something from it. Finally, Tim Darrah did the heavy-lifting for us, and we now have club-logo tee- and sweat shirts. Not bad for just a few months!

This next year, promises to be a great one for us. We've got our "inaugural" contest in July, and we have a good chance to put on a club display this April at the AMPS National's in Fredericksburg, VA. Coming up next month, February, there's the Atlanta AMPS Regional contest which is a good opportunity for us to go and show the "club colors" and get some guys certified as AMPS judges.

All in all, I'm pretty enthusiastic about the future and hope you are too!

Last Meeting Minutes:

Unfortunately for me, last month the world imposed its harsh, 1/1 scale realities on my 1/35 scale preferences, and I missed the December 8 meeting.

However, Tony Kelly and Tim Darrah stepped up to the plate and honcho'ed things for the club, and, no surprises, everything went just fine! This is a sign of a healthy group – no single member is so critical that the group can't continue without him. So, a big "thanks" to Tony and Tim for taking charge and to everyone else who participated!

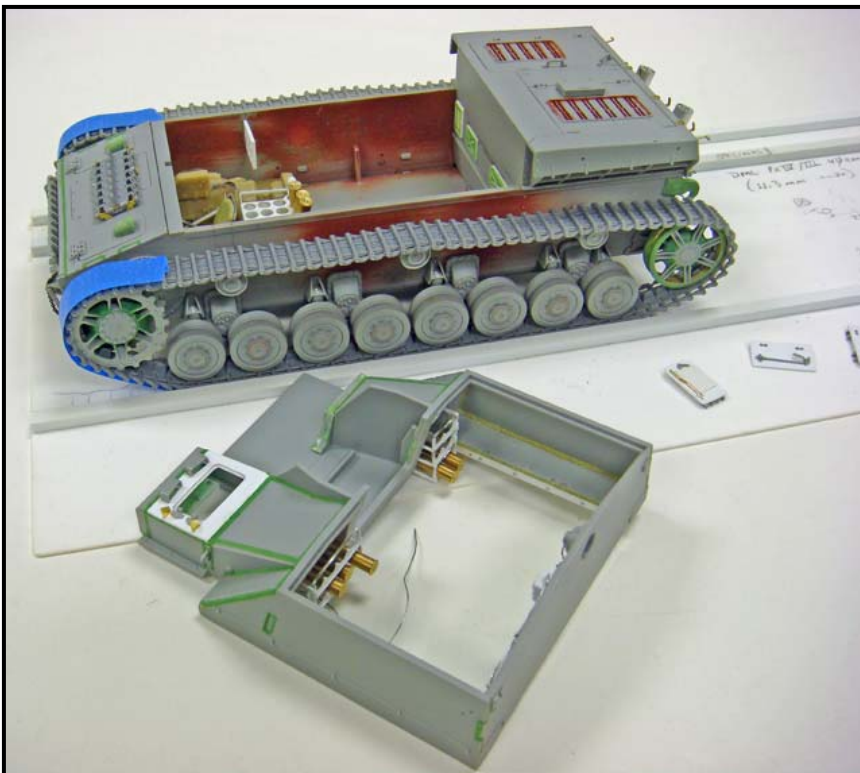
Last month we conducted a Christmas "Blind Gift Exchange," and by all accounts, it was a great success. (Thanks again to Tony Abbot for the rules.) Maybe next year, we can repeat the event and firmly establish it as a club "tradition." The rest of the meeting was a pretty casual affair, with lots of good discussion about models and model building.

Photos of Models at Last Meeting:

(Note: Since I also missed publication of the Nov-Dec newsletter, the photos for this issue are of the models brought in for the November, 2010 meeting's Show & Tell.)



Eilere Tolan's
DML Tiger II WIP



Mike Roof's DML
StuG IV Project
Kit



Scott Amey's Tamiya LRDG Chevy and New World Miniatures Crew Figures





Tim Darrah's Leopard Recon Tank and DML StuG IV Project Kit



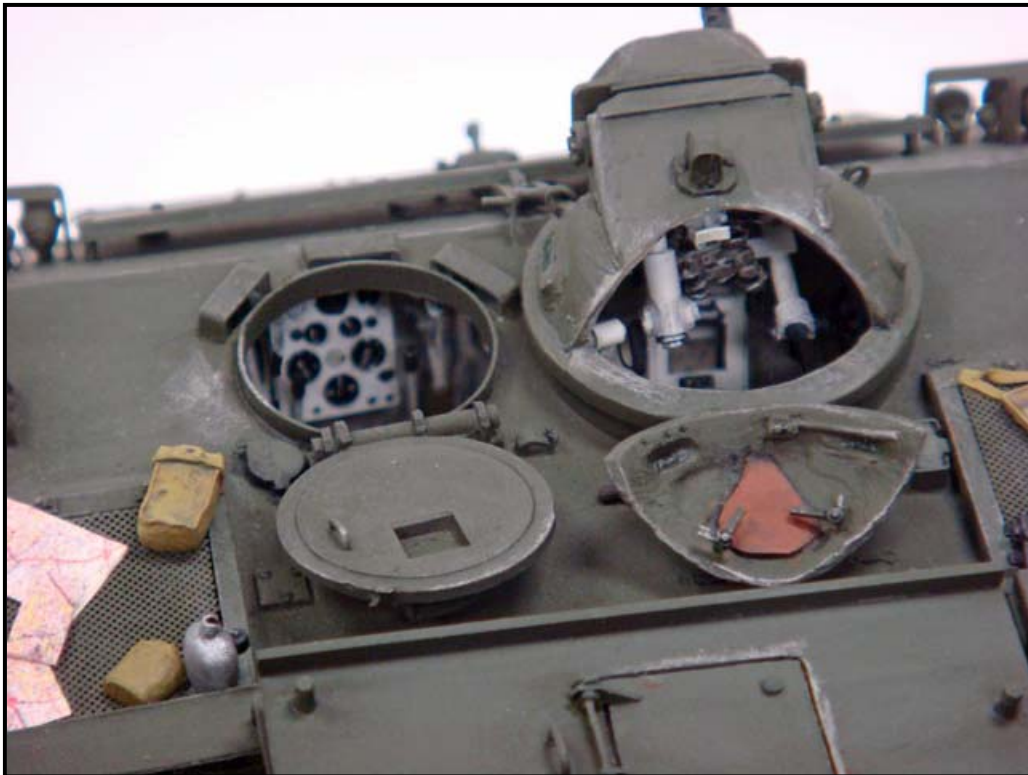


John Sherrer's Scratch Built (!) M84 Mortar Carrier





More of John's great mortar carrier!



Next Meeting Agenda:

Our next meeting will be January 12, 2010 on the same "Bat Channel" at the same "Bat Time."

Regular meetings are held on 2nd Wednesdays of each month at 6:00 pm (1800) at the HobbyTown USA store, 10120 Two Notch Road, Suite 5, Columbia, SC 29223, (803) 736-0959.

6:00 pm (1800): Meeting starts / Admin Business / Raffle

6:10 pm (1810): Show & Tell: Builds and WIP's

6:50 pm (1850): Break / Shopping / Mixer

7:10 pm (1910): Reconvene / Continue: Show & Tell: Builds and WIP's

7:30 pm (1930): Discussion of the Group-build StuG IV

8:00 pm (2000): Meeting ends (officially – but we'll carry-on as long as the store will stay open)

Classified Ads:

Research Assistance / Info Needs:

John Sherrer: Looking for information on the M44 Armored Personnel Carrier (aka: M44 Armored Utility Carrier). A post-WWII / late 1940's development vehicle. Possibly as many as six prototypes were made, of which, maybe one (or two) were later used by the USAF in some unknown capacity. (One reference says that an M44 was used by USAF TACP's during the Korean War.) John is looking for enough information to scratch-build an M44, so any data, photos, drawings, or textual information will be welcome.

Construction / Building / Finishing Problems that Need Help / Advice:

No requests this month.

Parts-Swap Needs:

No requests this month.

Modeling Calendar:

January 12, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

February 9, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS Central SC Meeting, HobbyTown USA, Two Notch Road.

February 18-20, 2011: "AMPS Atlanta 2011" in conjunction with "34th Annual Model Figure Show," Jointly hosted by AMPS Atlanta and The Atlanta Military Figure Society, Atlanta Marriott Century Center, 2000 Century Blvd, Atlanta, GA.

March 9, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

April 6-9, 2011: "17th AMPS International Convention," Fredericksburg, VA

April 13, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

May 11, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

June 8, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

July 13, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

July 16, 2011: Our Inaugural Contest, jointly-hosted with the Midlands Chapter of the SCMA! Gymnasium, Ball Park Road Recreation Facility, 432 Ball Park Road, Lexington, SC 29072.

August 3-6, 2011: IPMS / USA National Convention, Omaha, Nebraska.

August 10, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road. **(Our one year anniversary!)**

September 14, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

October 12, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

November 9, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

December 14, 2011, 6:00 pm (1800): Our next meeting at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road. **(Christmas party anyone?!)**

"The Virtual Armor Modeling World"

Send new sites and links to the editor for inclusion in the next newsletter.

AMPS Homepage: <http://www.amps-armor.org/>

Armorama: <http://www.armorama.com/>

Historicus Forma: <http://www.hfmodeling.com/>

Missing-Lynx: <http://www.missing-lynx.com/>

Track-Link: <http://www.track-link.net/>

Tanks & Things: <http://tanksandthings.com/>

New Sites and Links:

IDF in Scale.com: <http://www.idf-in-scale.com/index.html>

Armour Workshop:

<http://www.armourworkshop.ca/index.php?sid=042e18c7e22a67e8049fcb153c9d89d8>

Ralph Nardone's "Iron Modeler Blog": <http://www.ironmodeler.com/>

(This is so cool! Drop by and leave some comments for Ralph. He's quite the model-building-Renaissance-man-samurai-warrior-philosopher.)

Mike Roof's Firefly:

<http://www.armorama.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&artid=3516>

Mike Roof's StuG IV Project Kit:

<http://www.network54.com/Forum/110741/thread/1294345393/DML+StuG+IV+Late+WIP>

Newsletter Feature Article:

Clear Parts for Armor Models

or

"I thought only airplane modelers had to mask canopies!"

There has been a growing trend in armor model kits over the last few of years where the kit makers have been including more and more clear parts, especially periscopes and armored glass vision blocks, in their kits.

Many model builders look askance at these parts with a kind of smirk, and wonder why the bother? Armor models are supposed to be dirty and banged up, and finicky clear parts just seem too much like the stuff prissy airplane modelers would worry about. So, these stalwarts simply treat these small wonders of the engraver's art as just so many other OD or Panzer Yellow parts and install and paint them accordingly.

Wow! All I can say is, what a missed opportunity! One of the finishing jobs I really hate to deal with is painting periscope lenses. They never really look like clear glass no matter what you do. For years, I've usually just painted them black, and, after weathering, gave them a clear coat. Looks OK, but really lacks something. Another option is to apply an appliqué of exposed camera film, but that adds a layer sticking out from the face of the lens when the majority are actually recessed and looks, to my eye, a bit odd (like there's something stuck on that doesn't really belong).

On my war-gaming, 28mm vehicles, I've painted on "sparkles" and "highlights," and these do make the glass parts "pop," but try getting away with that at a major, "serious" modeling competition!



This looks almost convincing in photographs and at controlled angles, but is very "stylized" and still lacks the look of the prototypes.

But without scratch-building the entire assembly out of clear plastic, there wasn't much else you could do. But then along come Bronco, Tasca, AFV Club and DML to the

rescue! Clear periscopes and vision blocks are now routinely included in their kits, and I, for one, appreciate the trend. But like I said, I think I'm in a minority when it comes to using the potential these parts offer.

So, first off, what do the real things look like? Here're a couple snap shots of actual tank periscopes removed from the vehicles. The OD crackle green one is a US M6 periscope from my collection and the other two are German WWII Tiger / Panther commander's cupola periscopes.



Note the depth and translucence that the faces all show. Note also that at some angles, they appear to be lit from inside. No amount of paint or glossy surface coatings can quite replicate this look. However, the clear parts now provided in some kits will allow a careful modeler to capture much of this appearance.

(As an aside, the differences in construction are also interesting. The US periscope is made of a hollow metal box with replaceable prisms on either end. The German periscopes are solid glass laminate blocks, mirrored on their exteriors and contained in black plastic [Bakelite] boxes.)

So, how well do these clear parts capture the look of the prototypes on the model? I'll offer up the following as examples for your consideration and judgment.



It's difficult to get a sense of the depth that these parts convey from the photos, but one of the really nice things is that they give subtly different looks depending on the viewing angle and lighting. This is a great improvement over other finishing techniques that only add a gloss to the surface of the periscope faces.

If you're still with me at this point, I'll guess that you're wondering how to finish and install these wondrous little jewels. Here's my technique:

First, like all assemblies, study the instructions and determine at what point in your building sequence that you must install the periscopes (or other clear parts). I try to hold off installing them as long as I can, and, preferably, I will install them last during final assembly. Unfortunately, most often they have to be installed before major sub-assemblies are closed up (like lower hulls, turrets, etc). For these periscopes, you have no choice but to paint them before assembly.

I cut the parts off the sprue and clean-up the mold lines and sprue attachment points as per usual. I will use a Flexi-file with a 600 grit band for the final buffing of the areas cleaned-up. I then wash the parts in warm water using dish detergent and allow them to air dry. Doing this improves paint adhesion. This photo shows the clear parts for my group-build StuG IV cleaned-up and washed.



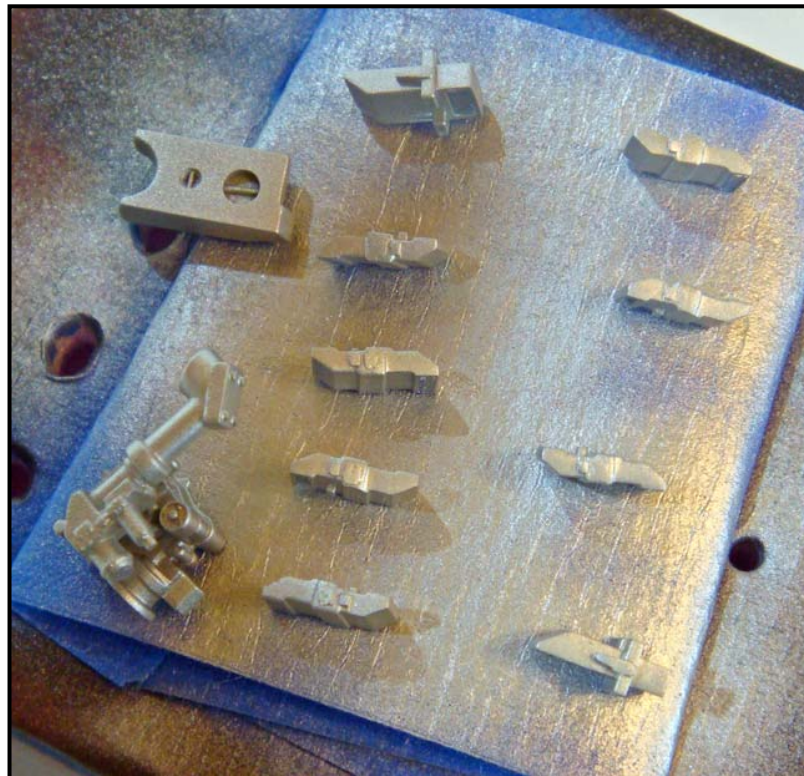
In this picture, the periscopic gun sight has been added to the sight mount since I want to paint the sight and mount as a separate assembly before installing them on the main gun.

The next task is to mask the areas that will remain clear. Here I will mask the ocular and objective lenses of each piece. I use common blue painter's tape cut into rectangles on a piece of glass using a new X-acto knife blade. Most periscopes are easy, and the tape can be cut into a strip the correct width and then into uniform sections. For the round lenses on the gun sight, I applied a

piece of blue tape to a bit of waxed paper and used my punch and die set to make tape circles. The waxed paper is removed and the tape circles put on the lenses.



Next, I airbrush the periscopes with Citadel (Games Workshop) "Mithral Silver." I thin the paint with water, add a bit of acrylic drying retarder, and airbrush as normal on one side. I



allow the silver to dry hard, turn the parts over, and then airbrush the other side silver, too.

The final step is to airbrush the parts black. Again, I airbrush one side then, after drying, the other. This two-color paint finish seems to make the parts replicate the look of the prototypes. The silver reflects what ever light enters the 'scopes and the black seems to help intensify the effect.

The parts can be installed on the model using CA glue or epoxy during the normal building process. Once the final weathering is completed, the masks can

be removed using the tip of a new X-acto knife blade and tweezers. This is the last step for me after all other finishing tasks have been done. You might have to remove the interior / inside (ocular lens) mask sooner if the main kit assembly will block your access to it later, but leave the exterior masks on 'til last.

Although I've not tried it, I would assume that vision blocks that are made with tinted glass (in particular the German green glass blocks) could be replicated by first painting the lenses with thinned Tamiya clear green, which, after drying, could be masked and finished as above. I would only tint the actual lenses and not the entire block so the silver would still reflect light on the inside sides.

All this may seem tedious, and is probably not for everyone, but the extra effort is worth it in my opinion.

Happy modeling,
Mike Roof
AMPS #1632

“The Day Room”

I want to take this last bit of space to fill you in on the status of the plans for our contest in July.

Since our last meeting (that is, the last meeting that I attended 😊), I've been in contact with Chuck Willis (our Regional VP), Tom Faith (the AMPS Treasurer) and Mike Petty (the AMPS Head Judge).

Chuck and Tom are working to help us sort out the event liability insurance issue. Right now, I'm waiting on the venue and venue POC information from the SCMA club's POC. I had hoped to have that info by now to send to Tom. As soon as he gets it, he'll have the insurance company issue a certificate of insurance and send it to the venue.

Mike Petty, the AMPS Head Judge and the guy who oversees the judges' certification, offered up some advice to us, and I'm planning to discuss our show with him at Atlanta next month. He also said that he would try to attend our show and lend us a hand in getting things organized.

Speaking of the Atlanta AMPS Regional show: I highly encourage as many of you as possible to attend. Even if you can't get there early on Friday the 18th for the judges certification seminar, on Saturday the 19th you should have plenty of opportunity to get involved and "behind the scenes" with the Atlanta chapter's guys to assist with registration and "running" even if you're not comfortable judging. For those of you interested in the judging, I'd guess that some

opportunity will be available to sit at a judging table and observe or even assist as an "associate" judge for a shift or two. And if you can get there early on Friday for the seminar, you have a chance to get fully certified so that in April, you can assist in judging at the AMPS Nationals.

In any event, the Atlanta guys will appreciate all the help we can give them, so please make an effort to get to the show, and once you're there, get up with me so that I can get you "wickered-in" to the operation. Besides the AMPS National convention in April, the Atlanta show will be our only chance to get some hands-on experience with running an AMPS-style show, and the more we can learn early, the better our show will be.

So, Atlanta, guys – It promises to be a great show with some world-class models and figures on display. Hope to see ya there!

Mike Roof
AMPS #1632
Chapter Contact