



The Navigator

August 2020

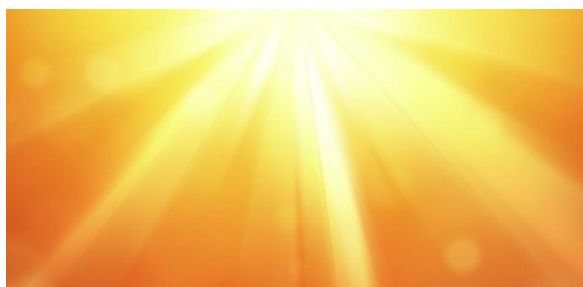
The Newsletter of the Alamo Squadron IPMS Chapter

The San Antonio chapter of the International Plastic Modelers' Society

A registered 501c-7 organization

Team Lead for the National IPMS/USA Convention: 2023
IPMS/USA Region 6 Chapter of the Year: 2016

IPMS/USA Region 6 Newsletter of the Year: 2017
IPMS/USA Chapter of the Year: 1999 & 2005



Stay-at-home, Stir-Crazy Newsletter Edition #4

Yep. It's that time of year when staying inside to enjoy sweet air-conditioning makes the most sense. Good to see all are doing well (you shoulda been on the call) but we do miss the in-person interaction.

1. [President's Column](#)
2. [Special Feature](#)
3. [Work in Progress](#)
4. [Kit of the Month](#)
5. [On the Horizon](#)
6. [Our Fearless Leaders](#)
7. [Acknowledgements](#)
8. [One More Thing...](#)



FOR Modelers and BY Modelers ABOUT modeling...

From the parapet...



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Submitted by Keith Rule

“Rockin’ Thru COVID-19”

As I sit here as your neophyte President, I am trying to think of something positive to say about Alamo Squadron and the current state of affairs: COVID-19 Restrictions, no live meetings, cancelled and postponed contests, etc. It's obvious many in the club know a lot more about Alamo Squadron than I do and I welcome their help and leadership. But something positive:

- We are having meetings, albeit online. Some clubs have cancelled meetings for the foreseeable future. The club leadership will continue to put forth the effort to continue these online meetings. I encourage everyone who is able to attend online.
- Planning for Model Fiesta 40 continues. The committee is working with the San Antonio Event Center in an effort to put on a model contest that complies with whatever restrictions may be imposed. This is a moving target, but many options are being considered. I believe we will know more about our February situation come fall.
- IPMS Nationals 2020 have been cancelled but we will retain our position as host for 2023. I think this is great news for Alamo Squadron.
- We should all be finding more time to build. When live meetings resume (and I believe they will), our Monthly Contest table should be overflowing! And I think we will appreciate our meetings more than ever.
- I'm sure many clubs like Alamo Squadron (e.g., organizations not essential to life) are failing. But I see a determination among our members to carry on until we find the end of COVID-19. This determination has shown this relatively new member how important Alamo Squadron is to the membership, which encourages me to do what I can to lead us through these troubled times.

In closing, I want all members to know that I would welcome any and all comments, advice, and suggestions. If you have something to say about Alamo Squadron and our current situation, I want to hear it – krule1148@gmail.com.

Keith

SPECIAL “ON THE ROAD” FEATURE

Article, photos and images by Dick Montgomery IPMS #14003



A Modeler’s Bucket List – The IPMS/UK Convention in Telford – Why You Should Go and How to Get There.

For many modelers, attending the IPMS/UK Convention in Telford, England is high on their Bucket List. For some lucky individuals, the trip is an annual adventure. One of my friends has been to Telford 18 times! Every November these fortunate few can be found enjoying a full English breakfast at one of the hotels in Telford, followed by an easy stroll to the Telford International Centre. (Not a typo....It’s a British spelling). On my two trips to Telford I have seen other IPMS/USA members that I know from the annual IPMS/USA Convention here, in the States. Four members from my home IPMS Chapter have had the good fortune to attend the Telford show with two of them returning with awards. Having been to the Telford show only twice and having competed in the contest only once, I have some small sense of the pleasure of the experience and of putting a check mark in the “I Went to Telford” box that is on my Bucket List.

This article, and some others to follow, will address such questions as; where is Telford, England? Why is this large international show not in London or Birmingham, two much larger cities not too far from Telford? How does one get to Telford? When is the event scheduled and what fees are charged to gain entry? Is the trip expensive? And, of course, a big question is, “why travel all that distance and spend all that money?” ... And many other questions that come to mind as one contemplates going on such an adventure.

It is my hope that you find the idea of visiting Telford intriguing, and that the discussion of “where, how, when, how much” and other questions will encourage you to travel to the UK and enjoy this fantastic experience.



International travel is tiring, pricy, confining, and in many cases, frustrating. International travel is also a wondrous experience, meeting people of different cultures and histories, visiting historic sites, and expanding ones' understanding of humanity. Those, of course, are the “biggies”, but there is also the experience of different languages, different food, different modes of transportation, unfamiliar hand gestures, different currency, and stereotypes that those we meet have of Americans, and the stereotypes we carry with us of those we are traveling amongst. Then there is the fact that the Vendor Area at the Telford event is massive. Think B.I.G. Nope.....BIGGER. This image is only one of three such Vendor rooms. Included in the vendor area are tables set aside for SIGs. These Special Interest Groups add to the experience with presentations of subject areas with models of remarkably high quality. For those who want to enter models in the contest, the contest room is on the 2nd level and is good sized but not as populated with plastic as one sees at IPMS conventions in the States. This image of the contest area was taken early on the first day and shows only about 30% of the contest area. As with IPMS conventions in the States, one is hard-pressed to find an entry that is not an excellent example of modeling skill.

There are two actions that should be take early in the planning stage in order to travel to Telford. You will, of course, need a passport. Your local Post Office probably has a staffer who will take your photo and help you complete the application paperwork. Some stores, like CVS Pharmacy, can take passport pictures as well. It can be time consuming to get your passport so get that job out of the way months in advance. Not quite as time sensitive is the need to exchange some good old American greenbacks for British Pounds Sterling. Not all banks provide this service so you may have to search a bit. And keep in mind that most banks will not have the British currency on hand. The bank I chose (no account with

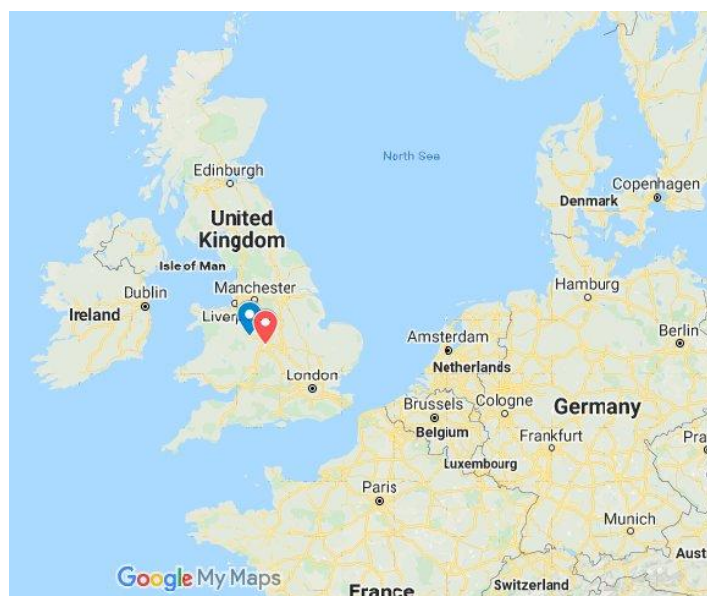
that establishment was necessary.) said that it would be 7 to 10 days to have the British currency ready, but they did the job in 4 days. I even asked for particular amounts in small denominations up to a couple of £100 notes. There is no need to exchange money months in advance of your trip, but it is wise to start the process 3 or 4 weeks prior to departure.

You will also need to contact your credit card companies to share your travel plans so that your credit cards can be used while overseas. Lastly, and I strongly recommend that you follow this suggestion, contact your mobile phone service provider and tell them where you are going and that you want to have your mobile device fully functional while overseas. I failed to take this step and realized early on that it would have been a wise decision to pay the activation fee. Live and learn.

So, now you've got your passport, you know where you will exchange currency prior to your departure, you've got your travel plans shared with your credit card companies, and you've got your mobile device set for international use. The next step that I recommend you take is to select a hotel in Telford, close by The Telford International Centre, or at least within walking distance. Let's look at where Telford is located, and then a closer zoom-in so that you can generate a list of hotels that you can contact for room availability.

Where is Telford?

It is inevitable that when traveling to Telford, someone in the UK will engage you in conversation and ask where you are going. And the response is always the same when you reply, "I'm going to Telford." The first words you will hear are, "Telford? Why are you going there?" with an emphasis on "Why?". Telford is not a major metropolitan area like Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, or London. (The blue pin on the map shows the location of Telford. The red pin shows the nearby city of Birmingham). Telford is not filled with historic sites as is London. Telford does not have an international airport. It does, however, have train service and that is all you will need.



A very important action is to identify a hotel close to the International Centre and reserve a room. There are seven hotels within 1 mile of the International Centre:

- International Hotel Telford / Old Park Villa and the Princess Lodge – 1 mile
- Mercure Telford Centre / Queen Elizabeth Place - .7 mile
- Ramada Telford Ironbridge - .6 mile
- International Hotel Telford/ Holiday Inn Telford - .1 mile

There is one little hitch in your "get-along" plans though. These hotels and some of those that are more than a mile away from the International Centre are completely booked for the next convention

almost as soon as the convention is over. I can only speak to one of these hotels that being the Mercure Telford Centre. That Mercure was “home base” during my 2013 Telford trip. I found a few short cuts to the convention site, so the walk was slightly less than the advertised 7/10th of a mile.... but it was not a problem to walk the short distance several times per day. On the 2018 trip, there were no rooms available and my traveling companions and I stayed at the Prince Rupert Hotel in Schrewsbury, a small town just 15 minutes by train to the west of Telford. Travel time from the Prince Rupert to the site of the convention was just under an hour. Actually, I enjoyed my stay in Schrewsbury and the Prince Rupert in 2018 more than staying in Telford in 2013. A big reason for that extra enjoyment was the daily train ride! I love riding trains! You may get lucky and find a room near the International Centre, but if not, then Schrewsbury is a great Plan B. Contacting the seven hotels on my short and asking if rooms are available is a good step to take as early in the trip planning process as possible.

Your first decision, and the basis for your flight plans, is to determine if you are going to travel to Telford with no side trips or extra excursions while in the UK, or if you are going to expand your travel plans to provide extra time for some adventures and site-seeing. For the purposes of this introductory article, we will assume that your free time is short, and you want to hold down your travel costs. You have decided to go directly to Telford, and upon the close of the convention, fly back home.

Now that you’ve made the decision to “go short” your destination airport should be Birmingham. You might be able to fly into Manchester or London but doing so would add hours to your travel-time to go from the destination airport to Telford. So, B-Ham it is.

Your next decision will be to select an international airport from which to depart and to which you will return. In Texas, there are a few airports that you might think would offer direct flights from Texas to Birmingham. (Remember when Googling, to enter “Birmingham, UK”, otherwise you might end up in Alabama!). A quick Google check resulted in finding that San Antonio, Houston, and El Paso do not offer direct flights. Dallas-Ft.Worth (DFW) and Austin have direct flights to Birmingham, or at least did offer direct flights in 2018. While preparing for this article, Google searches revealed direct flights were few and far between but that may be due, in part, to the current Covid-19 crisis. In any case, from a Texas location direct to Birmingham or London will take about nine (9) hours wheels up to wheels down. That is an important bit of information to know. You will want to plan your arrival in Birmingham accordingly.

Let’s assume that there are currently no restrictions on American citizens visiting the UK, and that the Telford convention is not going to be canceled due to the Covid-19 virus or other issues. And, we are still working on the assumption that you are going to fly direct from Dallas or Austin into Birmingham.

It’s time to plan your flight and the first step is to secure a round-trip ticket using Birmingham as your destination airport. As you begin your online search for tickets, I suggest that the one factor that you should keep in mind is that Scale Model World (SMW), the official title by which the Telford Convention is called, opens its doors at 10AM on Saturday and shuts down around 4pm on Sunday. With those times in mind, it is recommended that you plan your departure to arrive at Birmingham between 7AM and 10AM on Friday. Those will most likely result in an arrival time in Telford in the early afternoon.

You can find more information about SMW at <https://ipmsuk.org/calendar/scale-modelworld-2020/> or just Google Scale Model World. Note that the times are GMT, or Greenwich Mean Time. I do not wish to digress too much, but time zones are set to zero at the Prime Meridian, zero degrees Longitude, and you probably know that the Prime Meridian goes through Greenwich, a suburb of London. It is strongly recommended that you plan your arrival in Birmingham on Friday. Depending on your starting point, and the time zone in which you reside, the time difference between your home location and Birmingham can be up to 8 hours. On my trip to the UK in 2018 I calculated the time difference at 6 hours. A handy site for time conversion is <https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converted.html?p1=136&p2=104>

On my first day in the UK I noticed that by 5pm (17:00 GMT) jet lag was in full force. Arriving at your hotel in Telford by 2pm or 3pm (1400 or 1500 GMT) on the day before SMW opens will allow you to check in to your hotel, to do a bit of site-seeing in the local area, get something to eat and then call it a day. Some would recommend that you try to remain awake until about 9pm or 10pm (21:00 or 22:00 GMT) and then go to bed. You will cycle to UK time fairly well by using that method to overcome jet lag.

Most of the hotels in which I've stayed in the UK will tell you that your room reservation will be ready for you starting at about 2PM (1400 GMT). You can arrive earlier, of course, and have your luggage placed into a storage area, but arriving several hours later will begin to bring on lag jet. So, if 2pm is your ETA then planning your departure time from the States, and your arrival time at B-Ham becomes easier.

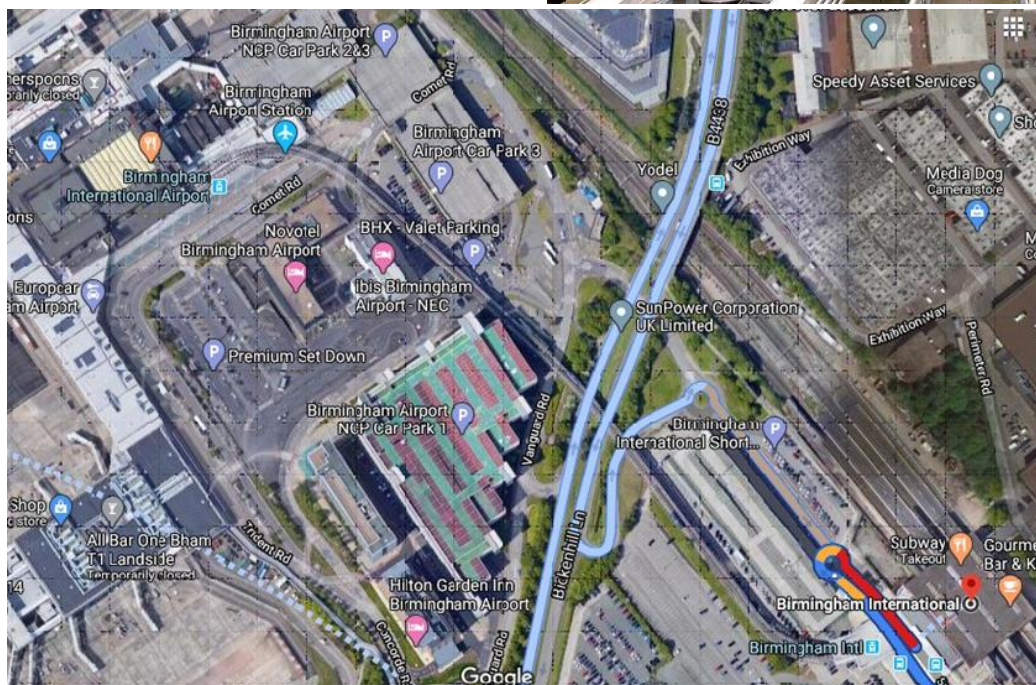
Let's look at other issues that will impact your schedule, namely, deplaning, going through Customs and picking up your luggage and then travel-time from B-Ham to Telford. On my 2018 trip the trio I was traveling with and I arrived at B-Ham and I began to note the time it took to go through the various stages of leaving the airport and arriving in Telford. You can expect getting off the aircraft and walking through the terminal to Customs will take 15 to 25 minutes.

Customs at B-Ham is not as intense and time-consuming as at Heathrow simply due to smaller crowds arriving at B-Ham. Our wait in line at the Customs station was about 45 minutes, as compared to an hour and 40 minutes at Heathrow. Of course, the line length will be impacted by the number of aircraft arriving around the same time as your flight. But I would suggest that it is safe to say it will take about an hour at a minimum, to get off the aircraft, clear Customs and head to the baggage carousel. By the way, the Customs Agent will ask two questions. What is the purpose of your trip to the UK? (To attend a convention in Telford), and where will you be staying? (Be able to recite the name of the hotel and the street where it is located). And you are through Customs!

Put your passport back in a secure pocket and follow the signs to the Baggage Claim area. Your wait for your luggage will be between 15 and 20 minutes. In some cases, the luggage will be orbiting on the carousel awaiting pickup before you have gone through a long Customs line. If memory serves, on my 2018 trip the carousel began to orbit at about the same time that my group arrived to wait to our bags. Check the signage and listen for announcements to locate the correct carousel. Once you have picked up your luggage look for signage pointing you to the Air-Rail link monorail system. This link will transport you to the Birmingham International railway station and the very short transfer is free of

charge. The link operates between 0515 and 0200 daily. Travel time between the airport and rail station is about two minutes.

Be aware that there are two train stations in Birmingham, and the Monorail will take you to the Birmingham International Rail Station. I did some research and found what appears to be a direct train from Birmingham Int. Airport Station to Telford. Some require one transfer and some require none. Check this website: <https://www.thetrainline.com/train-times/birmingham-to-telford>. Read all of the directions and information about the route carefully to make sure it is a direct route with few stops and no transfers. While you are purchasing your ticket for the train ride you might as well buy a round-trip ticket. There are tickets available good for any time, on any day, for a specific length of days. The more time you spend on the website, the more familiar you will become with the route and the times.



The Google Maps image shows the Birmingham Int. Airport in the upper left corner marked by the Blue Stick pin with the white aircraft profile on the pin. Follow the Monorail tracks that run under the blue pin down and to the lower right corner of the image. You can see the Birmingham Int. Rail Station at the end of the Monorail tracks, as well as the rail tracks

heading out of town toward the northwest.

<https://www.londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk/train-times/birmingham-new-street-to-telford-central>

There are several websites which offer tickets from Birmingham to Telford. The previously mentioned website shows some offerings with no transfers or few transfers. Another site offers tickets to Telford, but from a different rail station than the Birmingham International Rail Station. The 2nd rail station is

known as Birmingham New Street. Be sure you understand from which of those two stations you will be traveling.

Sign in Create Account Compensation Share Search			
Earlier trains			
Dep. From	Dur. Chg.	Arr. To	Status
Departs at 13:10	51m 0 change(s) view details	Arrives 14:01	
Birmingham International [BHI] Platform 1		Telford Central [TFC] Platform 2	
Single from £11.70 Based on 1 adult			
CHEAPEST FARE			
£11.70 Buy Now			
Off-Peak Other tickets			
Other services you can travel on			
Departs at 13:38	1h 09m 1 change(s) view details	Arrives 14:46	
Birmingham International [BHI] Platform 1		Telford Central [TFC] Platform 2	
Departs at 14:10	51m 0 change(s) view details	Arrives 15:01	
Birmingham International [BHI] Platform 1		Telford Central [TFC] Platform 2	
£11.70 Buy Now			
Off-Peak Other tickets			
Other services you can travel on			
Departs at 14:38	1h 09m 1 change(s) view details	Arrives 15:46	
Birmingham International [BHI] Platform 1		Telford Central [TFC] Platform 2	
Departs at 15:10	49m 0 change(s) view details	Arrives 15:59	
Birmingham International [BHI] Platform 1		Telford Central [TFC] Platform 2	
£11.70 Buy Now			
Off-Peak Other tickets			
Other services you can travel on			

All of the times and fees can change, as can travel time. In the end, there are people who can steer you to the proper rail station, and then you can buy your ticket to Telford from a real human at a ticket counter making sure that you get the proper ticket and know the departure time and departure platform.

And trust me, British trains run “on time”. It is not as hard as it may sound, and riding on the British rail system is rather pleasant. By the way, there is a luggage rack at one end of the coach in which you will be riding. Place your suitcase on one of the racks and

don't forget to retrieve it when you arrive at Telford Central. There are also overhead storage areas

above the coach seats. These storage areas are not enclosed as on airplanes. They are simply a set of racks consisting of a few long rods and you can store small items on those rack spaces.

A special reminder here...if you plan on departing Telford on Sunday afternoon to return to Birmingham to catch your return flight home, you would be well advised to plan your departure from Birmingham on a flight that is fairly late in the evening. It has been suggested to me by those who know to plan for at least five hours from your departure from Telford to arriving at your departure gate at the Birmingham airport. “Better late than never” does not apply to international travel.



A closer view of the Telford area will begin to fill in some of the details. Telford is northwest of Birmingham, a short 43 miles from the Birmingham airport to the Telford International Centre (T.I.C.). The M4-M54 will get you to Telford in an estimated 45 minutes by taxi. I cannot imagine trying to

subdue the reactions I've developed during my 55 years of driving experience in the States while attempting to drive for the 1st time in a big city like Birmingham. You can take a taxi but I suggest you take the train.

If you have selected to go by train you will pass through Wolverhampton, pass close to Cosford and Albrighton and then into Telford. I mention this because Cosford is home to an RAF Museum filled with stunning displays. If you want to extend your trip by a day, plan to visit the Cosford Museum and make a day of it. Study the map labeled, "Telford to Cosford".

Telford to RAF Cosford

In the lower right corner a red pin marks RAF Cosford. Just below that red pin is a red graphic symbol that resembles the mathematical "Not Equal" sign, two red horizontal lines bisected by one vertical line. You will find maps that deal with British transportation use that same symbol to mark the locations of train and subway stations. Now look in the upper left corner and you will see the same symbol. That symbol, although not labeled, is Telford Central, the train station that is your destination station from Birmingham. Birmingham, by the way, is east of Cosford.



Travel Summary thus far

You have purchased your passport, have a stock of British currency in your carry-on, and you have your hotel reservations made. Your flight plans are set, and round-trip tickets to/from Birmingham are in your possession. You have notified your credit card companies and your cell phone carrier of your travel plans. You have put a "hold" on mail delivery until you return home. You have opted for the "go short" plan of arrival on Friday and departure on Sunday evening. You understand the train route from Birmingham Airport to Telford and you have decided to buy your tickets in advance, or to buy them upon arrival. And now you are thinking about the option of extending a day to visit RAF Cosford.

You are "good to go"! In the next article in this short series we will conduct a Virtual Tour of Telford, from the train station to one of the hotels and then to the Telford International Centre. In future articles I will provide some information about the contest at the convention and other random bits regarding the convention. And then we will open the door for the possibility of a lengthier trip, allowing for some major site-seeing, mostly in London. For now, it's time for a "cuppa" and some work on a model.

End of Part 1 – Stay tuned for Part 2 in an upcoming "Navigator" issue.



WORK IN PROGRESS

Article and model photos by Keith Rule

“Paint ‘em All?”

It was July 14 and I’m shaving my face at 6:00 AM and what am I thinking about. COVID 19 has the Model Show Circuit messed up. I have my first redo of the paint on the 55 Chevy and 78 Firebird Trans Am in my workshop. Yes, I mess up now and then. The gears are turning and I have an idea. I always try to get the body of the current project finished before the remainder of the project, but, for this reason and that, it never seems to happen, especially when you’re redoing (is that a word?). Besides the 55 Chevy and 78 Trans Am, I have a 2017 Camaro, a 32 Ford Delivery Sedan, and a Harley Davidson Ultra Classic on my future projects shelf. There is also a Freightliner Tractor and Dump Trailer on its way from Model Roundup. So why not prep and paint each one now? Having the body and related pieces finished will keep me inspired to complete the project. Engines, chassis, and interiors are, to me the easier part. Plus, the paints for the other components “follow” the body color(s). Would this make an



article for the Navigator? I think so. Could this be a multipart article? Possibly. So let’s take some pictures of the 55 Chevy and 78 Firebird and see where this goes.

Let me explain my redo’s of the 55 Chevy and 78 Trans Am because there is something to be learned from each. The 55 Chevy was to be painted with a silver

basecoat with metallic gray flames under blue candy. The flames were masked with an aftermarket mask. The silver was sprayed, mask applied, and the gray flames sprayed. The mask came off and everything looked great. What I didn’t see was a very fine residue of adhesive left along the edge of some of the flames by the flame mask. When I sprayed the candy blue, it reacted (bubbled) to this adhesive residue. There was no recovering from this. Redo!

The Trans Am was prepped and painted House of Kolor (HOK) Jet Black. I was getting ahead of myself. I then applied decals to the body. Getting ahead of myself even more. I THEN remembered that the Trans Am had gold pin striping. Laying out both sides of the pin striping over the Jet Black would not work. I dislike striping paint with any solvent, so I bought another kit. And, yes, that’s a chopped top on the 55. I always take a deep breath before taking a razor saw to a model!

It is now Sunday July 19:

The 55 Chevy has been successfully painted HOK Glamour Gold with HOK Galaxy Gray Flames (Red Tips). I used the same flame masks as before from Elm City Hobbies (New Brunswick, Canada). This time I used WD40 to make sure there was no residue left from the flame mask. Sure enough, a bit here and a bit there turned up on the Q-tip. My test spoon showed me that WD40 will work without causing problems with the clear coat. Goof Off will not

The 78 Trans Am has been prepped and painted Tamiya Gold Leaf. Pin striping has been laid out with very thin strips of Tamiya Yellow Tape. The body was then sprayed with HOK Jet Black and the pinstripe taping pulled. The gold pinstripes look good. Decals were applied. I was very concerned about the "screaming chicken" on the hood. But you have to jump in sooner or later. Microset and Microsol were readied and the decal dunked. The decal was laid with Microset and carefully brushed out. It centered perfectly. A little Microset and Voila! there it was. A little luck always helps. The Trans Am then received two mist coats and 2 wet coats of Zero Diamond Finish Clear Coat.



The 32 Ford prepped and Tamiya Gray test fit the body, and radiator hood side panels the fender unit. I wanted to use decision made! repaired with Polyester Glazing Testor's Revving been ordered to paint all these components except the discarded hood pieces.



Sedan has been primed with Primer. I have fenders, hood, housing. The do not fit well to wasn't sure if I them anyway, so The hood was Evercoat Putty where the meant to attach. Red Metallic has

The Harley Davidson Ultra Classic has been opened and all “body” parts have been cut from the sprue and cleaned up. I am going with a custom paint job on this one using HOK Pearl Yellow, Testor’s Blazing Black Lacquer, and Testor’s Diamond Dust Lacquer. More to come later.

The 2107 Camaro remains in the box, but the Paintscratch.com Lemon Peel Lacquer has arrived. The White-Freightliner Tractor and Revell Dump Trailer have arrived from Model Roundup. I have been thinking about them, but will not make firm plans until they are unboxed and inspected.

It’s now Sunday July 26:

Panel lines on the 55 Chevy were colored black with a .20 Rotring Isograph ink pen, then clear coated with two mist coats and four wet coats Tamiya TS-13 out of the can and finished with Tamiya X-22 (same as TS-13) out of the bottle cut with lacquer thinner (ran out of the TS-13). It’s set aside for a few more days before polishing.



The moldings on the roof of the 32 Ford Sedan were deformed. I sanded them off and replaced them with Plastruc .040 Half Round Rod. Minor repairs with the Evercoat and some Tamiya Gray Primer resulted in much better moldings. I then sprayed the roof with Tamiya Flat White and taped it off. This will be the final roof color after future clear coat. Still waiting for the

Testor’s Revving Red Metallic. Hobbyline is not expeditious!

The Harley parts have been prepped and Primed Tamiya Gray. I have roughed out on paper my Painting scheme. More on the Harley later. Still waiting on the HOK Pearl Yellow from Coast Airbrush.

Until next month

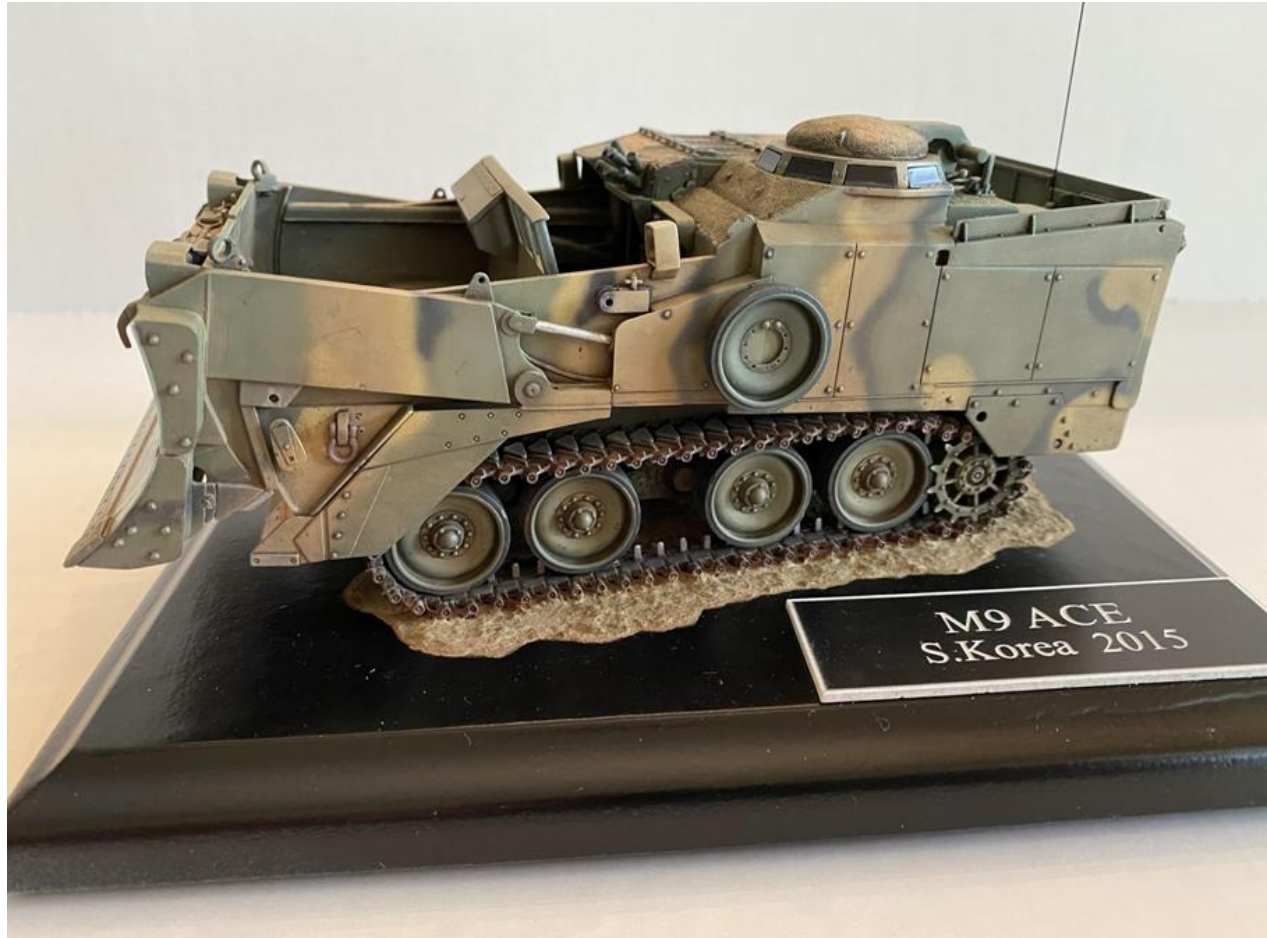
Model On,

Keith

KIT OF THE MONTH

Article, model photos and images by Dana Mathes

An A.C.E. with a Hole: 1/35 M-9 Armored Combat Earthmover



Introduction

Armor modelers tend to relish tanks and artillery pieces. Support vehicles, particularly engineering vehicles, get less love and attention. When I first saw Takom's model kit of the M-9 Armored Combat Earthmover (ACE), I thought it was some sort of sci-fi subject, perhaps from an apocalyptic movie. But as I researched the subject, its unique ballast cavity design and grittiness grew on me to the point where I wanted to build a model of it. To paraphrase George Strait, "You've got to have an ACE with a hole."

The ACE was developed as an air-mobile bulldozer to support armored formations of tanks and APCs. The M-9's roots reach back to a late 1950s development project known as the All-purpose Ballastable Crawler (tractor) or "ABC." A later incarnation of the concept was called the Universal Engineer Tractor (UET). The lightly armored vehicle was to be lightweight and air-droppable. To accomplish this weight savings, the vehicle would have a cavity that could be filled with locally-available ballast. The US Army, International Harvester, and Caterpillar collaborated to develop this unique vehicle. The M-9 weighs just 36,000 pounds; about a third of the M-1 tank's bulk. It is powered by a 295 horsepower diesel engine. The first production vehicles reached US Army and Marine Corps units in 1986.



The ACE is used to dig out fighting positions for guns, tanks and other weapons systems in order to increase their survivability. The ACE also can cut through berms, excavate anti-tank ditches, prepare roads, and demolish barricades. This bulldozer has been used in combat operations in the Middle East.

The M-9 has had a checkered history of reliability problems, particularly with its complicated hydraulic systems. It has not proven to be as reliable and efficient as the Army's more conventional bulldozers. Speed has been another issue as it is not fast enough to keep up with the later versions of the M-1 Abrams and M-2 Bradley vehicles.



In spite of these constraints, several US allies have deployed the ACE in their forces, including the South Koreans (ROK). This model depicts one of those ROK vehicles. While the M-9's in US service generally have the three-color NATO camouflage pattern or the solid desert tan scheme, the ROK vehicles generally sport a distinctive, four color scheme of olive-medium green, earth brown, light tan, and black. *YouTube* videos and reference photos from internet sites show that there are several subtle variations of this basic scheme. In some cases the black stripes and light tan splotches are applied only to the sides of the vehicle or not at all.

The light tan color varies from a sand color to a darker, more orange shade. In addition, the ROK vehicles are not in combat and appear to be well maintained with few scratches and little paint chipping. The ROK M-9s typically show the expected loss of paint on the bulldozer blade and the ballast cavity surfaces. The photos of these vehicles show various degrees of paint fading and splotching due to age and sun exposure.



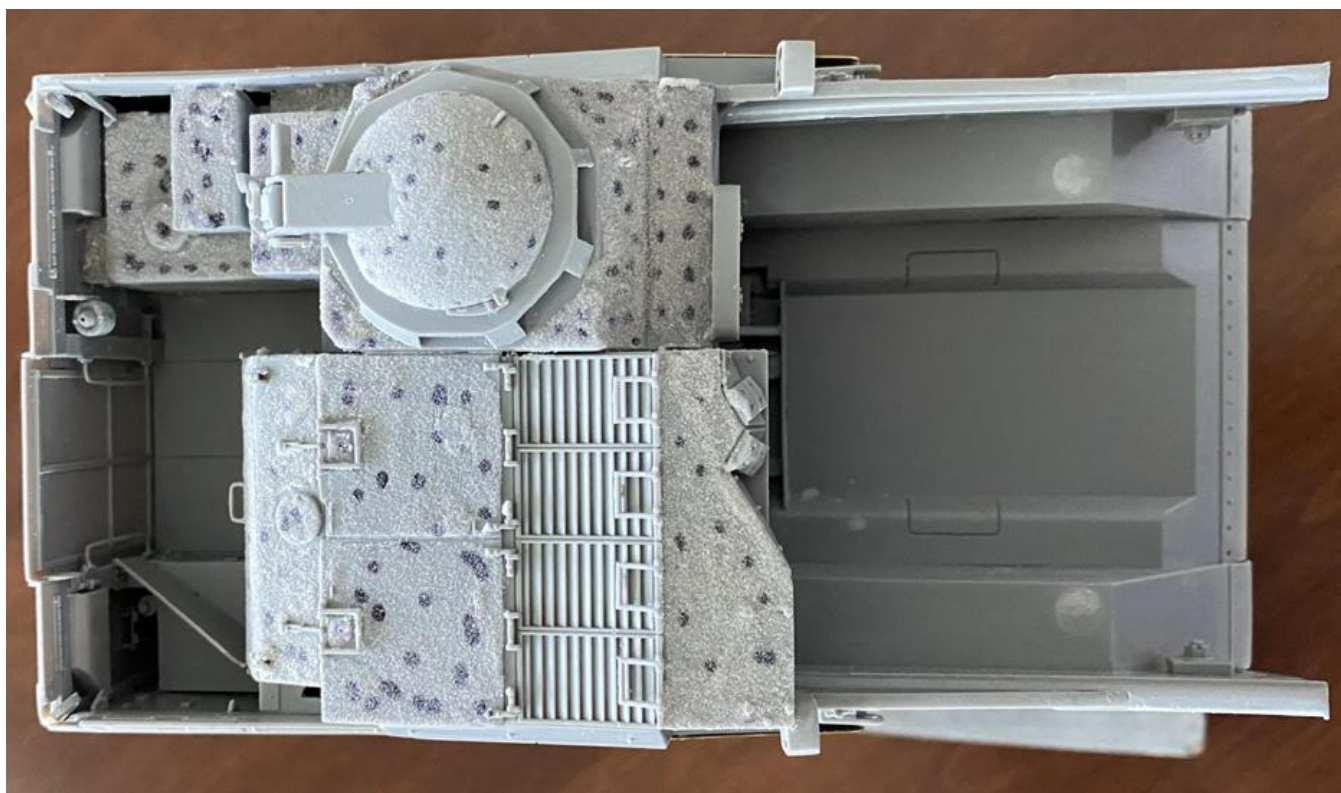
Construction



This project entailed building the Takom kit in an out-of-the-box (OOB) configuration. The kit has lots of nice detail, some photo-etch parts, and includes individual link tracks. Photo-etch details kits are available for the ACE but I did not feel that installing these parts would add that much to the project. The parts in this kit fit together nicely. The only tricky part of the construction was fitting the track and sprockets after painting the body of the vehicle.

Detailing

The M-9 has textured surfaces to aid safe access to its engine and hydraulics system compartments. In a recent club newsletter article, I described some of the techniques for modeling these surfaces.¹ The VMS Texture System method, as described in the noted article, was used for these surfaces on the ACE. This method has you apply an acrylic adhesive to the model surface and then, with an applicator similar to an eye dropper, sprinkle fine-grained sand onto the wet adhesive. While tedious, it enhanced the detail of the model. I applied this over the primer (I forgot to put the texture on before I had primed the model - Oops!) and you can see the marker dots I used to denote the textured surface area in the photographs. The only other details added were an antenna and hold-down straps for the gas and water cans, as allowed per OOB judging rules. The ROK vehicle depicted had no unit or national markings. It did have some instruction stencils on the rear panel and red safety markings on the front blade that I replicated with decals from my spares box.



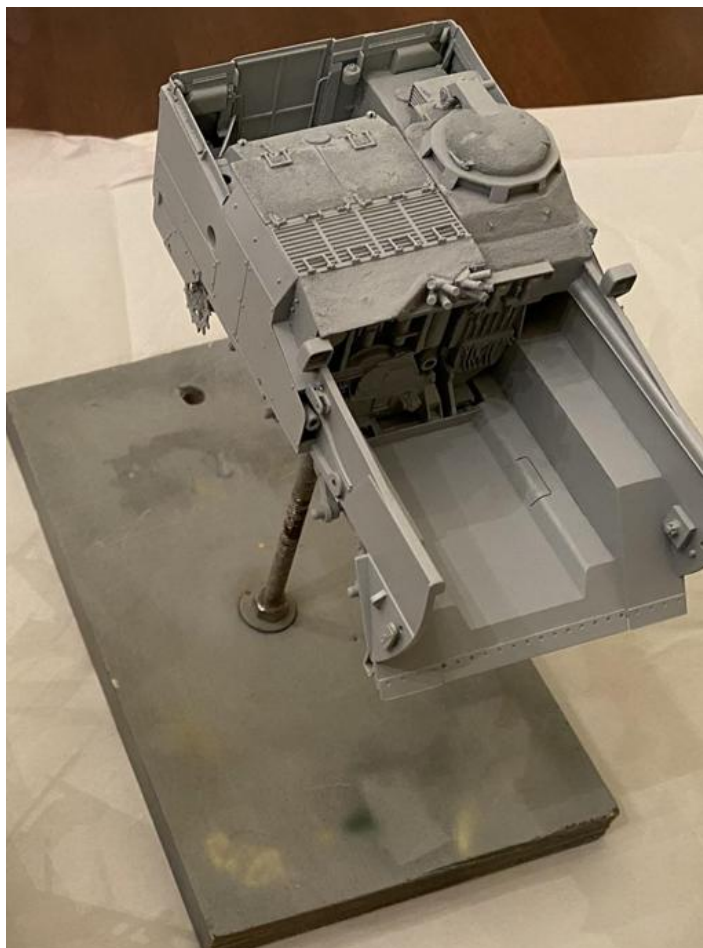
¹ Dana Mathes, "Replicating Armor Anti-Skid Texture," *Alamo Squadron Navigator* (October, 2018), pp. 22-27, <http://alamosquadron.com/Newsletters/2018/Alamo%20Squadron%20Navigator%20-%20Oct%2018.pdf>.

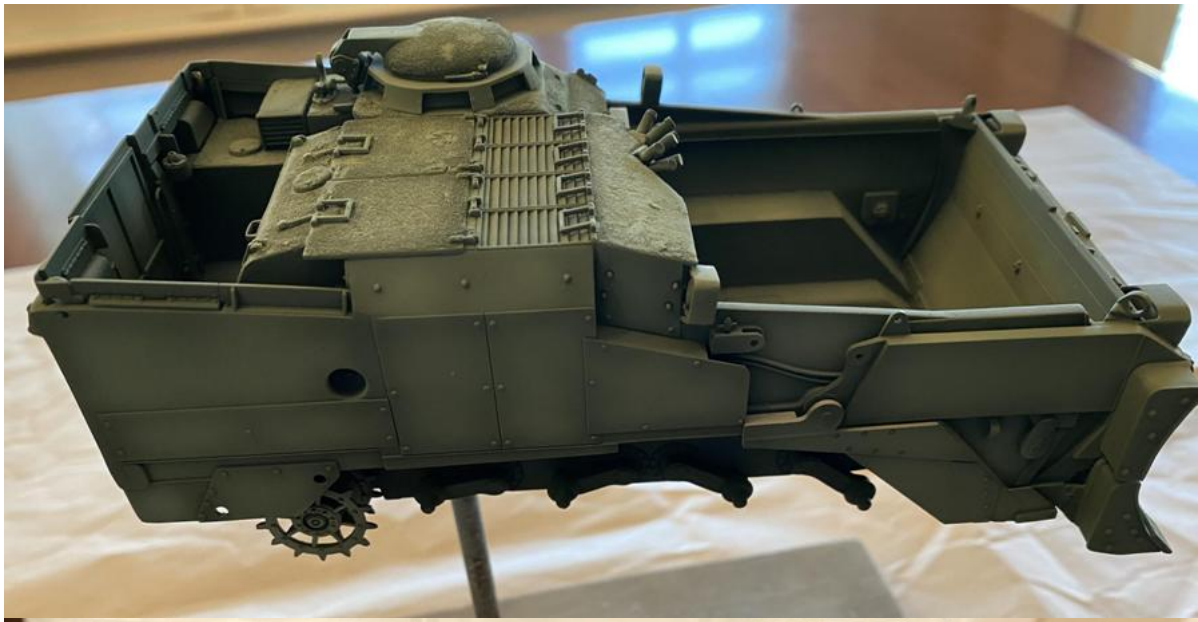
Finishing

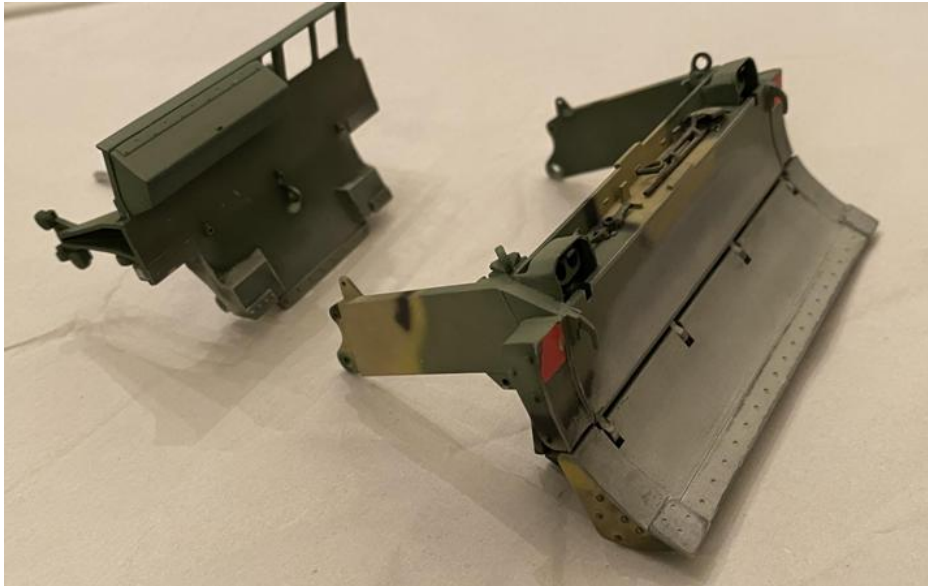
The model was primed with gray primer. The areas on the blade faces and ballast cavity that would show significant paint wear from the normal operation were painted with several shades of metallic enamel paint. The sections that would be the shiniest were over sprayed with Testor's metallic silver enamel. These silvered areas were sealed with acrylic satin varnish. The most severely abraded blade surfaces were then masked with tape.

The four color camouflage scheme was free-handed with an airbrush. The green color was applied first. It was a combination of Tamiya dark green and olive green. The earth color was sprayed on next. This was a mixture of Tamiya earth and buff. The light tan areas were a lightened shade of Tamiya dark yellow with a hint of NATO brown. The black bands were painted with a mixture of Tamiya flat black and NATO black. Each of the colors were applied with multiple lightened shades for color-modulation.

The tracks and various accessory parts were painted separately from the hull and blades. Those areas that were painted the metallic colors were scrubbed with a tooth brush and lightly sanded to portray the paint wear. I did not use hairspray as my experience has been that the hairspray reduces the level of control you have over the abrasion effect. It took me three tries to get the paint wear about right on the front blade.

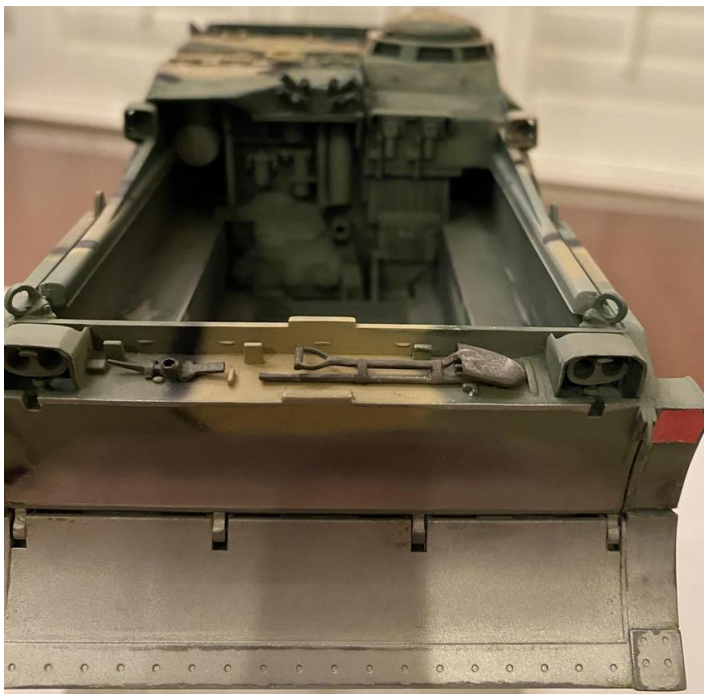


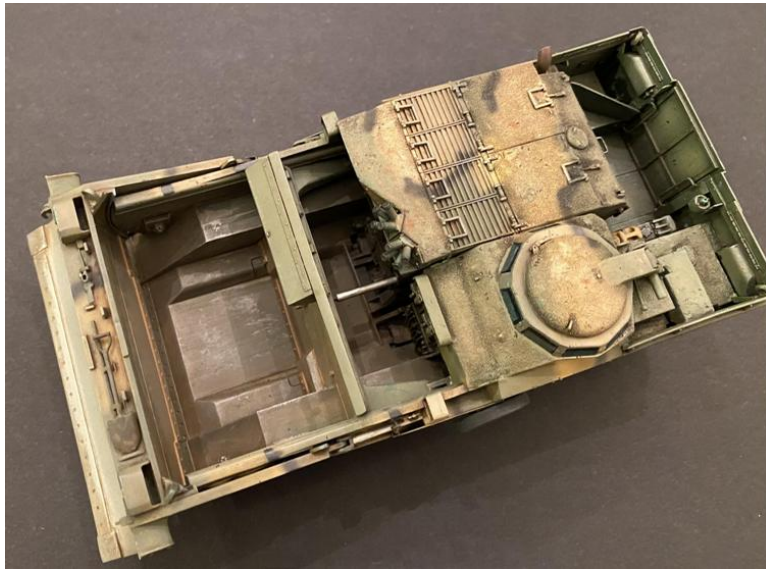




The model was then lightly weathered with the following treatments:

- Matte varnish seal satin varnish seal coat.
- Light chipping on high access areas with multiple colors.
- Medium brown oil filter.
- AK streaking grime wash.
- Oil dot streaking with multiple oil colors: white, gray, yellow, red, green, sienna.
- Very dark brown-gray enamel pin washes.
- Highlighting of areas known for hydraulic leaks.
- Dry brushing with multiple shades of tan and sand enamel paints.
- Minor scratching and chipping with artist pencils.
- Highlighting with Modelmaster^(R) metalizer colors and artist pencils.
- Overspray with dilute AK streaking grime, heavier on the lower hull.
- Overspray with dilute light tan (multiple shades), heavier on the lower hull.
- Light dusting of MIG pigments; heavier on the blade, ballast compartment, lower hull, and tracks.





Finished Model

When completed, the model was bolted to a wooden plaque. The ground cover was made from a mixture of Cell-U-Clay, white glue, and pastel chalks (same mix as used to dust the vehicle). It was blended into the tracks. The photographs of the finished model are provided below.

The ACE was fun to build and the project provided an opportunity to learn more about ROK vehicles and their camouflage schemes.







ON THE HORIZON

Kit of the Month Submittals

Each month club members are encouraged to promote one of their recent acquisitions at the virtual meeting and open its box to let others peek inside with a few brief comments and questions answered. We will get to know what is in the box and, chances are, rush home to order a copy. When you are ready to share your experience and thoughts, contact and coordinate with Club President Keith Rule at krule1148@gmail.com.

2020 – 2021 Monthly Club Contest Programs

Date*	Program¹
Aug 6	"Home Alone," Session I, guided tours of personal work areas (2)
Sep 3	"Home Alone," Session II, guided tours of personal work areas (2)
Oct 1	"My Best Modeling Experience," Sharing discussion related to time of friends, contests, projects, road trips, etc.
Nov 5	"Where do I buy my models and supplies?" Discussion of vendors.
Dec 3	White Elephant Gift Exchange
Jan 6	Model of the Year Competition (pending) "Paints and Airbrushes" Discussion
Feb 3	Model Fiesta Preparation, Judging Criteria Discussion
Mar 4	Model Summit Award (pending), Model Fiesta Debrief, Stash Management Discussion

*First Thursday evening of each month.

Source: ¹<http://www.alamosquadron.com/meetings.html>

Special Appeal

Ed: It is not a habit to accept solicitations from the outside world; however, this inquiry came directly to us from the IPMS Region 6 Chapter in Tulsa, OK:

“As a contact for your club, I’d like to ask a favor:

*The gentleman who manages the Asian Air Arms special interest group sent me some information and three photos, asking for help getting the word out about a new resource for Phantom modelers. It’s an upcoming book called **Samurai Phantoms**, and contains 74 never-before-published color photos of Phantoms. As a phellow Phantom phanatic, I’ve already ordered one for myself, and told him we’d be happy to spread the word.*

This will be a short-run publication, and there is a time limit, so if you think you might be interested, take a look sooner rather than later!

The details about the book and how to order one, and 3 photos from the book, are available on this page of our club website: <https://www.tulsaipms.org/samurai-phantoms>

By the way, our club has no financial interest in this project – I just told the author we’d be happy to help!

Thanks,”


*Greg Kittinger
Tulsa Modelers’ Forum
www.tulsaipms.com*

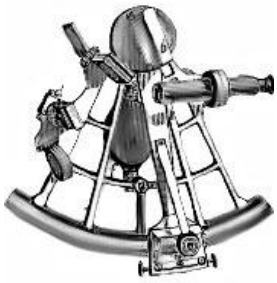
Note: Per information on the website, there is an August 31 deadline for the offer.

Upcoming IPMS Region 6 Area Club Events

Provided by Dick Montgomery IPMS #14003

Coordinate with Contacts to verify the schedule and location is accurate before finalizing plans.

Date	Title	Contact	Location	Address
<p>July 29-Aug 1, 2020</p> <p>Rescheduled for August 2023</p>	<p>2020 IPMS National Convention</p> <p>Convention website: http://www.nats2020.com/</p> <p>IPMS-USA website: http://www.ipmsusa.org/</p> <p>4 Days of seminars, presentations, massive vendor area, local tours, great food, and model contest – All Located Deep in the Heart of Texas</p>	 <p>COME AND MAKE IT IPMS/USA NATIONAL CONVENTION SAN MARCOS, TEXAS JUL. 29 - AUG 1, 2020</p> <p>Convention Dir - Len Pilhofer director.nats2020@gmail.com</p> <p>Vendor Coord - Craig Gregory vendor.nats2020@gmail.com</p>	Embassy Suites & Convention Ctr.	<p>San Marcos, TX (between Austin and San Antonio) 1001 E McCarty Ln San Marcos, TX 78666</p>
<p>March 28, 2020</p> <p>Rescheduled for August 15, 2020</p>	<p>RiverCon IX Reboot http://www.ipmsredrivermodelers.org/</p>	<p>Andy Bloom – Bloom4him@hotmail.com</p>	LSUS University Center	<p>One University Place Shreveport, LA 71111</p>
<p>April 18, 2020</p> <p>Rescheduled for August 22, 2020</p>	<p>Route 66 Model Expo https://www.tulsaipms.org/ Contest includes all modeling genres. Vendor Area www.tulsaipms.com</p>	<p>Greg Kittinger - greg.kittinger@gmail.com</p>	Bixby Community Center in Bixby OK.	<p>211 N Cabaniss Ave, Bixby, OK 74008</p>
<p>April 25, 2020</p> <p>Rescheduled for Sept 27, 2020</p>	<p>Modelmania 2020 Contest includes all modeling genres. Vendor Area http://www.ipms-houston.org/?page_id=11</p>	<p>Ken Jackson – kw.jackson.1@hotmail.com</p>	Stafford Center	<p>10505 Cash Road, Stafford, TX 77477</p>
October 3, 2020	<p>Capital Classic 2020 http://www.austinsms.org</p>	<p>jrforster@gmail.com</p>	Travis County Expo Center	<p>Austin, TX 78724</p>
January 31, 2021	CALMEX 35	<p>Robert Leishman swampclub@yahoo.com</p>	Lake Charles Civic Center	<p>900 Lakeshore Drive, Lake Charles, LA, 70601</p>
February 20, 2021	ModelFiesta 40	<p>Mark Verdi alamosquadron@gmail.com</p>	San Antonio Event Center	<p>8111 Meadowleaf Drive San Antonio, TX 78227</p>
March 20, 2021	<p>RiverCon X IPMS Region 6 Regional</p>	<p>Andrew Bloom 1952@gmail.com</p>	LSUS University Center	<p>One University Place Shreveport, LA 71111</p>



Club Announcements

Next Club Meeting

The monthly meeting scheduled for Thursday evening August 6 will be another virtual affair. Watch for an email announcement for specifics.



Newsletter Article Contributions



Alamo Squadrons' newsletter, "*The Navigator*", is published monthly by the IPMS/USA Alamo Squadron club of San Antonio Texas intended for the enjoyment of the members of Alamo Squadron and its friends around the world. Articles, product reviews, news items, and other hobby-related contributions are most welcome. Send written text files or photos and web site URLs as well as any overall comments/suggestions feedback to our editor, Sam Casas at scasas002@satx.rr.com.

Next Issue: September 2020

Target Release Date: Sun September 2

Article/Photo Submissions Are Due: Fri July 31

Website Biographies of Club Members

This is a way for members to learn a little bit of modeling-related information of their club mates to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and techniques in all modeling genres and various areas. In no way is this mandatory and only if you wish to share your info with other club members should you participate. Be aware whatever is posted on the Alamo Squadron website becomes open to the all the world...there are no security controls on our website. If you wish to have your bio published, please reach out to Keith at krule1148@gmail.com. Here is a link to the bios already on file for your review and for others to verify their information is correct: alamosquadron.com/members.html





Our Fearless Leaders

Executive Board 2019-2020

President



Keith Rule

Krule1148@gmail.com

Vice-President



Dana Mathes

huskercat@gmail.com

Treasurer



Chris Settle

Csettle99x@yahoo.com

About Alamo Squadron

IPMS/USA Alamo Squadron was founded on November 17th, 1977 in San Antonio, Texas, for the enjoyment of building scale models and the camaraderie of its members. It is a hobby-centered social organization which, at its core, is focused on scale modeling of all kinds. It is an excellent source of information for those who wish to enhance modeling skills and improve modeling techniques and is open and inviting to visitors/guests at all skill levels with a variety of modeling interests. Annual dues are \$12.00 a year paid to the Club Treasurer on September 1st of each year.



QR Code for the club website. Scan it with your cell phone's QR software to get to our web site!

www.alamosquadron.com



QR Code for the club Facebook Page. Scan it with your cell phone's QR software to get to our home on FB.

National Membership



IPMS/USA is an organization dedicated to the hobby of Scale Modeling. Yearly membership includes a hard copy of the outstanding IPMS Journal mailed out six times a year, which is full of stories of interest on modeling subjects such as aircraft, armor, automotive, ships and figures. There are full listings of IPMS contests and swap meets, hints and tips articles and kit reviews. Being a member also allows one to participate in IPMS/USA sanctioned Regional Contests and the world-famous National Convention held each summer. You'll also have access to the online Member's Forum where a wide variety of society and modeling topics are discussed. In addition, many hobby shops offer discounts to IPMS/USA members. Check out the www.ipmsusa.org website for more information.

Note the change to the IPMS postal mailing address:

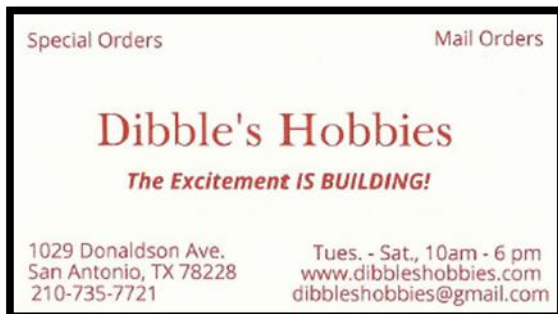
IPMS/USA MEMBERSHIP FORM			
IPMS No.:	Name: _____		
Address: _____	If Renewing	First	Middle
City: _____	State: _____	Zip: _____	
Phone: _____	E-mail: _____		
Signature (required by P.O.): _____			
Type of Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult, 1 Year: \$30 <input type="checkbox"/> Adult, 2 Years: \$58 <input type="checkbox"/> Adult, 3 Years: \$86		
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior (Under 18 years) \$17	<input type="checkbox"/> Family, 1 Year: \$35 (Adult + \$5, One Set Journals)		How Many Cards? _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada & Mexico: \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> Other / Foreign: \$38 (Surface) Checks must be drawn on a US bank or international money order		
Payment Method:	<input type="checkbox"/> Check <input type="checkbox"/> Money Order		
Chapter Affiliation, (if any): _____			
If Recommended by an IPMS Member, Please List His / Her Name and Member Number:			
Name: _____		IPMS No.: _____	
IPMS/USA		PO Box 1411	
Join or Renew Online at: www.ipmsusa.org		Riverview, FL 33568-1411	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

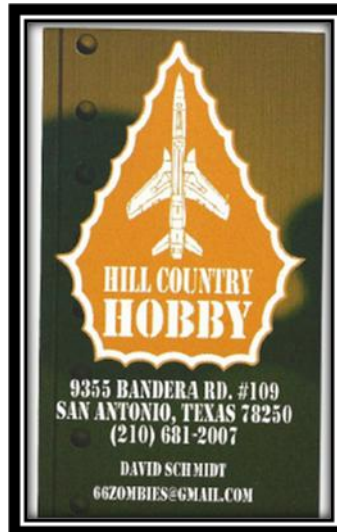
Support Our Local Hobby Shops...

...for models, paints, books, decals, tools and all your modeling needs!

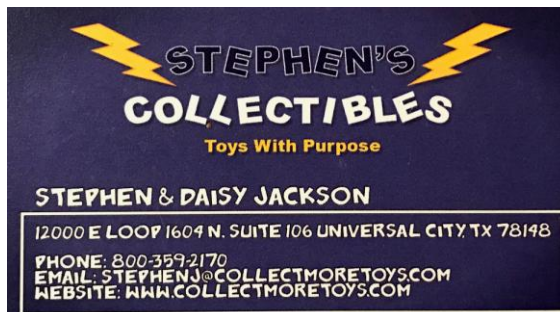
(Call ahead to verify their current store hours and shop visitation rules.)



JEFF, MIKE AND JOANNIE
DIBBLESHOBBIES@GMAIL.COM



David Schmidt
66zombies@gmail.com



stephenj@collectmoretoys.com

And our Meeting Site Sponsor:












ONE MORE THING...

What's All This Then?

I have been asked a few times what the images on the top banner of the first page of the newsletter represent. Here is a rundown for those interested in my general theme of "looking forward to the things that could come."

	<p>A sextant – Used by explorers to “navigate”. It's a real historic instrument that is still in use today. Even today big ships are all required to carry working sextants and the navigating officers have regular routines to keep themselves familiar with making it work. This is the legacy icon for our publication.</p>
	<p>A periscope – An instrument for observation over, around or through an object, obstacle or condition that prevents direct line-of-sight observation from an observer's current position. Generally associated with underwater submersible vehicles such as submarines.</p>
	<p>A ships' steering wheel – The wheel of a ship is the modern method of changing the angle of the rudder to change the direction of the boat or ship. It is also called the helm, together with the rest of the steering mechanism. The wheel is typically connected to a mechanical or hydraulic system.</p>
	<p>An auto dashboard – Also called dash, instrument panel is a control panel usually located directly ahead of a vehicle's driver, displaying instrumentation and controls for the vehicle's operation.</p>
	<p>A pair of binoculars – For seeing objects in the distance and honing in on their appearance and arrival.</p>
	<p>A tank portal/block which is interior to the vehicle. Used to sight objects in the distance. Can also gauge distance and estimate gunnery actions.</p>
	<p>A Spyglass – Used for navigating the oceans and seas of the world, making it easier to see outward and also for identifying other ships, land and used to prepare for being attacked by pirates. The spyglass contributed to the creation of the telescope, as they are very similar. Also used for land-based orientation.</p>