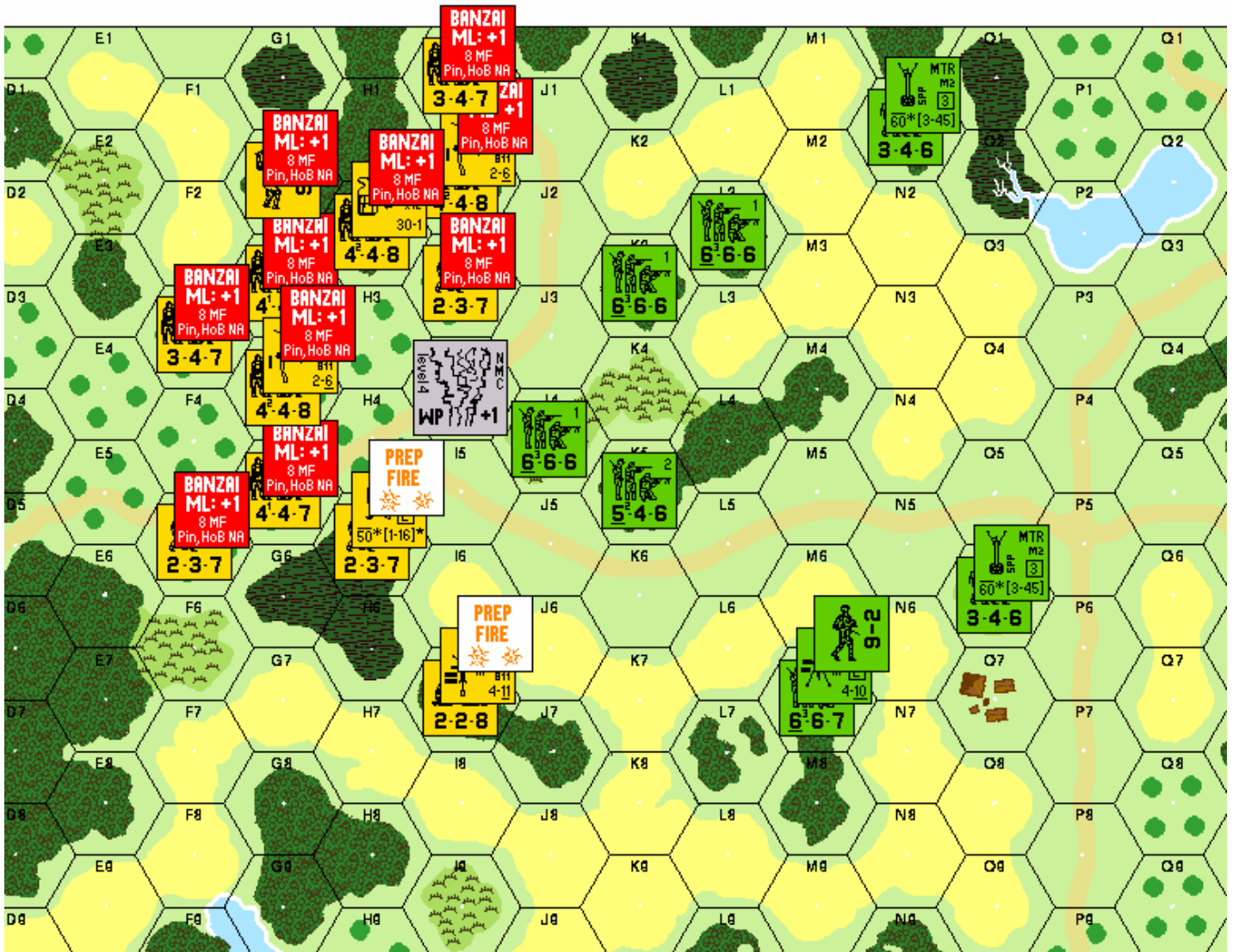


Banzai!!



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Commissar's Corner:



Matt Shostak

The State of the Club. It has been a while since I have written about the state of our club, so it seems like now is as good a time as any for a review of where we are. There is a lot of good news to report. Texas ASL is very strong. Our tournament was well attended last year, and will hit its 15th year milestone this June, with Rick Reinesch now taking the reins completely after his apprenticeship under Mike Seningen. The Houston group will be running their annual tournament at OwlCon in February. We currently have 50 players listed as "active" on our ladder. Many are in Austin, but we also have many in Houston and the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. Moreover, San Antonio ASL appears to be gaining steam, with newcomer Scott Bell stepping up to a leadership role and hosting regular game days the 3rd Saturday of every month. There is some hint that he's already picking up recruits to our south.

Recently we've had several new arrivals on the Austin scene: Gary Krockover, Grady Neely, and Mike Ingalls. Unfortunately Mike was only able to hang with us for a short while before real life intervened and forced him to move away. Let's all welcome Gary and Grady to our group. Mike, we hardly got to know you and we hope to see you again sometime, perhaps at our tourney some day? Stalwart Jeff "T-bone" Taylor also moved away over the last year or so, and now the latest news is that club MVP, yeoman, and all around great guy Sam Tyson will be moving as well. Sam's contributions to our club have been huge, from helping put together this newsletter, to running the club website, to hosting regular game days, and a gaggle of other things. Although Sam will certainly be missed, the good news is that he plans to continue most of his duties from afar, only dropping the game days from his list. Meanwhile, Brian Roundhill and Mike Seningen have stepped into the rotation for game day hosting, taking over

for Mike Denson and Sam, and keeping a nice balance of northern and southern locations. Thanks guys.

Whenever I take a step back and look at turnover like this, I am reminded how important recruiting and retention is. We should all be thinking of ways to help in this area, but even without novel plans and new ideas, we can do a lot simply by participating actively in the club and by playing a wide variety of opponents. Doing so creates camaraderie and a positive feedback loop, building momentum. Well attended game days create a great energy, so take advantage of that. Beyond playing, you can write something for this newsletter and submit it to me. I can always use more material and fresh ideas. You can also contact Rick to see how you can help him with the tournament. For those of us in Austin, we have a great opportunity to interact with the San Antonio guys, since it is so much closer for us than Houston or Dallas. Having Austinites show up frequently for San Antonio game days is sure to be a morale booster for both sides as we expand our list of opponents and friends.

One of the best things about ASL in Texas is the way so many players have really stepped up to take on leadership roles. I don't think any one person would have the energy to organize everything we do. Just look at last issue's recap of the 2006 tournament to see such a large number of guys helping out with that event. We also have multiple people hosting game days, running a tourney in Houston, writing articles, running our website, participating in the ladder, fighting for the virtual ten-gallon hat, writing after action reports for our blog, bantering on our email lists, and of course simply playing lots of scenarios. It's very exciting and gratifying to be a part of Texas ASL. We've come a long way since our humble beginnings a decade and a half ago. Let's keep all the positive waves going.

Tactical Tip

Beware of flamethrowers vs. your AFVs. A flamethrower does not make a To Hit roll, but instead attacks an AFV directly on the HE and Flame To Kill Table. It has a basic kill number of 8, which is halved for long range. No armor factors apply. The only other modifiers are that the kill number is increased by 1 for a CE AFV, and by 2 for an open-topped vehicle (these are cumulative), and is further increased by 1 if hit through the rear facing (C7.21). It doesn't matter if the AFV is in motion, if there is smoke (or some other hindrance) in the way, etc. For a vehicular flamethrower, it doesn't matter if the vehicle has to change covered arc to fire. Simply make a roll on the kill table, subject to those few modifiers just listed. This makes the flamethrower a very powerful antitank weapon indeed, provided you can get one close enough to use it. For determining whether you are hitting the AFV in the rear when presented with multiple target facings, use the To Kill DR to determine whether the hull or turret is hit (this is per a Perry Sez because it is not clearly spelled out).

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Scenario Analysis: J50 - The Cactus Farm



Zeb Doyle

It's often stated as gospel that the ASL system's greatest strengths are its versatility and its vast array of scenarios. I can't disagree at all, although I would argue that the corollary to that statement is that ASL also comes with so many fair to middling scenarios that the great ones are often overlooked. In an effort to help correct these minor flaws, I'd like to discuss *J50 The Cactus Farm*. This is a very fun scenario that deserves more than its current 26 playings on ROAR. Perhaps the upcoming reprint of board 43 can expose it to a wider audience and ignite the interest this overlooked gem deserves.

The main attraction of *The Cactus Farm* is how much action it packs into two half-boards and seven turns. A small but elite force of Germans, backed by artillery and two of the rarely seen squeeze-bore guns, must hold a farm and a hill against a large but unwieldy force of British infantry, armor, and aircraft. It's a classic matchup of quality vs. quantity in a combined arms attack, and the addition of some unusual terrain in the form of cactus patches and hedges helps to really spice things up.

German Advantages: Elite Force, Artillery, Terrain

German Disadvantages: Split and Static Defense, Lack of anti-tank weapons

The defending Germans are the side with the quality here, and it certainly shows with nine 5-4-8 squads, a hero, and a 9-2. The ELR of 5 means these troopers should retain their elite status throughout the course of the game. They have a good mix of weapons as well, with the MMGs and the two squeeze-bore anti-tank guns of primary importance. The *piece de resistance* though is the 100mm OBA. Although it doesn't come into play until turn 4, and artillery is notoriously fickle in ASL, the module is handled by an Offboard Observer (C1.63) and has plentiful ammunition and is therefore as reliable as it gets. This powerful weapon should play a key role in the scenario, with the 20FP attacks sufficient to shatter concentrations of attackers. Using the OBA as Harassing Fire (C1.72) may be an even better choice, however, denying the British infantry easy progress forward.

Making the artillery even more powerful is the open terrain of the battlefield. In most cases, the Germans will be in stone buildings or entrenched on hill-tops while the lower-morale British will be forced to deal with open ground or, at best, woods. An offensive across such open terrain is

usually costly for the attacker but at least has the advantage of speed. Here, though, the cactus hedges and patches leave the British in the position of being both exposed and slow. Both types of terrain are only a half-level high with a TEM of +1 (F13.3 and F13.4), offering minimal protection and cover, but are major impediments to maneuver. The patches cost 3 MF to enter, while the hedges require a Minimum Move (A4.134) or Advance vs. Difficult Terrain (A4.72), forcing attacking infantry to spend almost an entire turn to move a single hex. A single look at the map will show the key farm compound is almost completely surrounded by these cactus hedges, which will undoubtedly prove to be a major thorn in the side of the British.

Despite these advantages, the Germans still have a tough game ahead of them. It's likely that they'll defend both the farm compound and the hill, requiring them to split an already small force. This challenge is exacerbated by the fact that there are only two leaders in the entire German OB. With only one leader in each sector, a lucky sniper hit or some other bit of bad luck could leave half the defense unable to rally. This split defense is made even more complicated when considering the farm and the hill are separated by several hexes of open ground. These areas will quickly become covered by British fire and make defensive redeployment from one sector to another impossible.

The final challenge the defense faces is the large British tank force, and here the German defense can do very little. At first glance, given the large AT minefield, the ATMMs, and the two squeeze-bore guns, this may not seem to be the case but killing the tanks will prove to be very difficult. The AT minefield will certainly serve to slow and channel the tanks, but is Known (F.7) and thus cannot be expected to actually stop any of them. The ATMMs (C13.7) are a nice edge in close combat, especially in conjunction with the hero or 9-2, but rely on the British being obliging enough to drive the tanks on top of the Germans.

This leaves the OBA and the two squeeze-bore guns to stop the AFV onslaught. The OBA is certainly capable of hitting multiple tanks and at any range, but the strong armor of the Churchills requires an IFT roll of 4 to result in any damage (C1.55) and therefore the artillery cannot be counted on. The only real hope the German has of long-range tank kills is with the two guns, and even that will take a little luck. Since the guns only fire APCR, their TK numbers improve dramatically at close range, varying from the 17 TK at 0-1 hexes down to the base TK of 14 at 7-12 hexes and dropping to the 12 TK or worse at ranges of 13+ hexes (C7.32). When we compare this to the 11 and 8 AF of the Churchills, it's readily apparent that the squeeze-bores are dangerous at point-blank range but are only a minor threat farther out. Barring a close-in ambush on multiple Churchills, the British armor can maneuver largely unopposed to cut rout paths and create opportunities for Encircling Fire (A7.7).

British Advantages: Smoke, Quantity, Aircraft

British Disadvantages: Time, Coordinated Attack

The British side has several advantages, but none loom larger than those unopposed Churchills. Although they can influence the battle in many ways, nothing is more important than the vast amounts of smoke they can pump out. The Churchill Is have an infinite amount of smoke ammo and all nine British tanks have excellent smoke mortars (D13.32). It's true the tanks are slow, have B11 main armaments, and limited HE, but having so many non-depletable smoke sources outweighs those disadvantages. If each Churchill checks its sM8 at the start of its MPh, the British player should average an impressive five smoke counters on board every turn, and that doesn't even count the two s7 51mm mortars. With so many pieces capable of placing smoke, a good portion of the British force should be able to maneuver under cover every turn.

The British also have the luxury of a large force to push forward behind their smoke screen. Along with the nine tanks, they have four leaders and sixteen squads, enough to outnumber the defense almost two to one in infantry. Although the British mix of first and second line squads don't measure up to their German opponents on a man-to-man basis, there's enough of the Tommies to get the job done and the fluke loss of a leader won't spell disaster as it would for the defenders. In fact, while the German player will be sweating over every MC his 9-2 takes, the only key but unique piece the British have is the Fighter-Bomber.

Despite the potential fragility of the Fighter-Bomber, it's still an important British tool. Like the German artillery, it doesn't enter play until turn 4 but should have a large impact on the game once it's arrived. Given the open nature of the terrain, there's nowhere the Germans can go to avoid it, and the FB should be able to shut down any defensive movement, attack key rally points to keep broken troops under DM, and (most important) help clear the hilltop of pesky defenders. There's not much the Germans can do to stop these damaging attacks. Their only weapon against the plane is the 20L AA gun, which requires a roll of 2 or 3 to shoot it down, a 4 to damage it, or a 5 to make it break off its attack for a turn (E7.5-E7.512). This situation is quite similar to the Churchill vs. squeeze-bore matchup; although the German odds aren't horrible, the Fighter-Bomber should be able to roam largely unopposed.

Even with superior numbers, plentiful smoke, and air support, the British have no easy road to victory. Their biggest challenge is time, with only seven turns to traverse approximately 14 hexes. Although two hexes per turn isn't all that speedy for most ASL scenarios, the open terrain coupled with the cactus and German OBA will make for a very difficult obstacle course indeed. Add in the stone buildings stocked with elite defenders in the victory area, and it is clear that time will be of the essence for the attacking British. The time pressure becomes even greater

considering that the attack requires a very high degree of coordination. The interaction between the tanks and infantry is vital as having units even a few hexes out of position will result in smoke being placed uselessly. The German artillery and machine guns will further complicate things here, working to strip the infantry away from the tanks and the vital smoke mortars. If the two arms of the British force do become meaningfully separated, time will run out before they can regroup for a second attack.

German Defensive Setup

Now that we've examined the two forces, let's look at the defense. The Victory Conditions give the Germans a wide range of choices, including possibilities like guarding one objective to the exclusion of the other or an aggressive up-front setup allowing the squeeze-bore guns to target the Churchills as they navigate the minefield. With so many options, this article will focus on one possible defense for consideration, covering both the hill and the farm compound. The goal will be to play a conservative game and make it as challenging as possible for the British to coordinate their attack so that they'll run out of time.

To achieve this goal, the 9-2 and both MMGs will go on the hill, where the good lines of sight should allow him to harass the British infantry starting on turn one. He'll be backed by a platoon of 5-4-8s, the hero, both DCs, the AA gun, and one of the squeeze-bores. The leadership, machine guns and DCs will prove a major challenge for unassisted British infantry, while the placement of the squeeze-bore on the back side of the hill allows it to engage marauding tanks at the optimal range of one or two hexes. This combination, as well as the inability of the British to bring fire onto 11Z5, should prove a tough nut to crack, and will likely attract the attention of the Fighter-Bomber. This is the reason for the presence of the 20L AA gun, in the hope that a weak defense is better than none at all. Not coincidentally, the total German force adds up to 17 VP, forcing the British to attack the hill with more than a pinning force.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the German troops will be placed in and around the farm compound. Several 5-4-8s with LMGs will go in the 43H10 area to place Fire Lanes (A9.22) early on, but will quickly fall back to join their comrades for a final stand. As on the hill, the squeeze-bore gun will be placed in the rear, hoping to pick off any British tanks that try to surround the compound. It's likely the OBA will be used here as well, perhaps as Harassing Fire on the 43K10 woods mass to break up potential rally points. As a final barrier, the cactus hedge will be very useful in slowing any late game rush of British infantry.

Here is a detailed list of the German Defensive setup:

43D1: 3 AT Mines	43D3: 3 AT Mines
43D4: 3 AT Mines	43D0: 3 AT Mines
43D6: 3 AT Mines	43D8: 3 AT Mines

43D9: 3 AT Mines
43D10: 3 AT Mines
43D7: Partial Trail break, 3 AT Mines
43D2: Partial Trail break, 3 AT Mines
43H9: LMG/5-4-8
43H7: LMG/5-4-8
43O8: 40LL AT ca6/2-2-8
43O7: 8-1, 2-3-8
43M7: 5-4-8
43M9: 5-4-8, Building Level 1
43M8: 2-3-8

11T1: 3 AT Mines
11T2: 3 AT Mines
11T3: Partial Trail break, 3 AT Mines
11T4: 3 AT Mines
11AA6: 40LL AT ca5/2-2-8
11Y5: 9-2, MMG/2-3-8, MMG/2-3-8
11Z5: Trench, DC, Hero
11Y6: DC, 5-4-8
11Z4: 5-4-8
11Z6: Trench, 20L AA ca3/2-2-8
11AA6/BB5: Trench
11AA5: Trench

British Attack

Moving now to ‘the other side of the hill,’ the British attack depends in large part on the German setup. Even so, it’s possible to mention a few general points here without knowing the specifics of the defense. The victory conditions require the British to actually capture the farm compound, while clearing the hill of Good Order Germans is good enough to triumph in that sector. This distinction may seem subtle but it means that, regardless of the defense, most of the British infantry needs to head for the farm. The buildings there require time and MMCs to take. At least in theory, the hill could be cleared on the last turn by unsupported tanks locking the Germans into CC, and so that sector will likely be an auxiliary attack. Other important points include trying to take advantage of the fragility of the German force by attacking their leaders whenever the opportunity arises. Killing or even simply breaking either SMC will pay major dividends. Likewise, attacking rally points with tanks or the Fighter-Bomber will help to keep the pressure on an already outnumbered German force.

As you can see in the graphic below, the assault on the farm complex will be intense. The TK of the 40LL AT is shown (in red) so that you can see how its effectiveness increases as the range to its target decreases. The British could use their numeric AFV advantage to help clear the farm, then turn the attack to the hill.

Final Thoughts

In large part, ASL is a game of analysis and so I hope this article has deepened your appreciation of this very intriguing matchup. Both forces have distinct strengths and weaknesses, with the coordinated British attack bumping up against the individually superior German troops, and a good deal more ink could be spilled discussing the nuances of the various matchups and the subtleties of the victory conditions. Ultimately though, ASL is about fun, and *The Cactus Farm* delivers here as well. Both sides have some fun toys, the terrain is interesting but not rules-heavy, and there's a ton of action without the scenario being too big. So, get your copy of board 43 and give it a try. Late in the game, as the Fighter-Bomber duels the 20mm AA gun and the Churchills lay smoke for one last desperate push into the farm compound, your only regret will be that you didn't play this one sooner!



Banzai!!

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Player Profile: Zeb Doyle



Banzai: Tell us a little bit about your gaming background. How long have you been gaming? What was your first game? Are there any particular games that stood out over the years?

Zeb Doyle: My interest in gaming started about twenty years ago, when someone gave me a copy of *Dungeons & Dragons* for my birthday. I was hooked from day one and ended up crossing over to war gaming and dropping the role playing. Lots of good memories got created along the way, including marathon sessions of *Advanced Third Reich* in college. Some of my favorite games include *Star Fleet Battles*, *Advanced Civilization*, and *A3R*. More recently designed games, like *OCS* and *Paths of Glory*, also seem fun but I haven't done more than dabble with those.

Banzai: When and how did you discover ASL?

ZD: I was introduced to ASL through reading Avalon Hill's General magazine. I've always enjoyed more complex games with lots of chrome and trying to puzzle through some of Mark Nixon's articles was fascinating to me. I went out, got the ASL rulebook and most of the modules, and found I still couldn't understand most of what Nixon was talking about. Luckily, I was living in Colorado and was able to find the enigmatic Doctor Marty Snow via the internet. He proved to be the perfect ASL mentor, taught me how to play, and really hooked me on ASL.

Banzai: What nationality do you enjoy playing the most?

ZD: My favorites are the Japanese and the Americans. They both have a very distinct feel to them and have lots of interesting strengths and weaknesses. Some of the other nationalities can blur together a bit, but when you're dealing with the step reducing banzai-launching Japanese or the 'egg-shell armed with sledge hammer' Americans, it's usually very memorable.

Banzai: Describe your favorite kind of scenario.

ZD: I really enjoy scenarios that feel as if you are facing the same challenges and choices as the historical commanders. Some ASL experiences are very entertaining but offer as much insight into WWII as chess does into the warfare of ancient India. I have fun with those, but it's the scenarios that leave me thinking "so that's why they did that" that really get my blood racing.

Banzai: What would you say are your ASL strengths and weaknesses?

ZD: My strength in ASL is my rules knowledge and experience. I am fairly familiar with every chapter and have played everything from basic infantry to campaigns to seaborne assaults against caves, so there's not a lot that catches me by surprise. My greatest weakness is the pacing of my attack. The better players in our club awe me with

their ability to never take serious risks and still arrive at the objective with sufficient time to secure it. I always find myself pushing too hard and often play the endgame with a battered and rag-tag force.

Banzai: What is the best part of ASL? The worst?

ZD: The best thing about ASL is the camaraderie. I've played scores of different people, from Boeing 747 pilots to tuna fishermen, and almost without exception they've all been fantastic and generous people. When you play ASL, you're almost part of a secret society, able to find friends all over the world with a single email. Given how great that is, the worst part of ASL has to be the disappointment when you encounter the isolated bad apples that don't live up to the high standards everyone else goes by. I've never met anyone truly terrible through ASL, but there are those few people out there that take the game far too seriously and become bad sports and even cheat. Thankfully, those unpleasant encounters are extremely rare and are drowned out by the overall ASL camaraderie.

Banzai: What are you most looking forward to with regard to ASL?

ZD: Right now, I'm most excited by *Valor of the Guards*. I've had so many great experiences with *Red Barricades*, and getting some fresh maps of Stalingrad should be awesome.

Banzai: You're attacking in 1944. Would you rather have four T-34/85s, or two JS-IIIs?

ZD: I'd take the four T-34/85s. Lots more versatility and flexibility and losing one won't hurt as much as the loss of a JS-II.

Banzai: What was your most enjoyable ASL moment? Your worst? Funniest?

ZD: Tough question...I've had so many great ASL experiences. I'd say my funniest moment was playing Allen King in *Red Barricades*. I was the Germans and had planned a huge assault with tons of assault engineers. Allen got to move first and put down a pre-registered Rocket AR right in the middle of my force. With complete carnage about to ensue, he red carded the attack. During my DFPh, I came back with not one but two pre-registered rockets of my own. They both came in and scattered perfectly, ripping the heart out of the Russian defense and burying Allen's observer under a pile of rubble. In the span of three dice rolls, I went from total disaster to complete victory. I'll always think of that as 'Russian roulette with really big bullets.' Worst moments in ASL would be when I lose a scenario and then think it over afterwards and realize I would have won if I hadn't done something boneheaded. Those moments keep me up at night...and it happens far too often!

Banzai: What area of your play would you like to improve on most over the next year?

ZD: I have a lot of minor things I want to work on, like the aforementioned attack pacing and being more consistent in my play. My number one current objective, though, is to become a person that is really fun to play against.

Banzai: What advice would you give to players who are just starting out, and what advice would you give to ASL clubs in trying to attract and retain new players?

ZD: There's lots of great advice out there for new players, but I think the keys to rapid improvement in ASL are to play a lot of it, have fun doing it, and learn something new every time you play. If you can add a new rule and a new tactic to your arsenal after each game, you'll be doing great. The most common mistake I see new players make is to sabotage the learning process by blaming their losses on poor luck. The element of chance is greatly exaggerated in ASL and victory almost always goes to the side that makes the fewest mistakes. Despite this, I see many new (and not so new) players avoiding the mental pain of examining their blunders by instead cursing their dice after each scenario. This process is certainly easier on the ego but makes improvement vastly more difficult and often dooms the complainer to a lifetime of 'bad luck.'

Sadly, I don't have any innovative advice for ASL clubs. I think CTASL is a great model to follow for retaining veteran players, with lots of communication on the mailing list, regularly scheduled meetings, and so forth. Newer players present more of a challenge. To attract and keep them interested, I think that more experienced players should make a special effort to play the fresh blood and make the game interesting and informative rather than competitive. I know my interest in ASL really took off when I was able to game frequently with an experienced player who could answer all my rules questions and was more interested in helping me improve than winning. This is certainly an area I think CTASL as a whole could improve in, although I'm probably the worst offender in this area.

Banzai: What's your favorite AFV (or other game piece) in ASL and why?

ZD: For everyday use, it's hard to go wrong with the T-34. Fast, maneuverable, packs a punch, available all throughout the war and you usually get lots of them. For special occasions, I like any vehicle that has a bunch of different ammo types. It's lots of fun to sit there trying to decide if you want to use the WP or the HE or the HEAT or the...

Banzai: We'll get to your favorite ASL scenarios in another issue, so how about telling us what your other favorite games are?

ZD: Right now, I primarily play nothing but ASL. I tend to like big complex games that take a lot of time and space and since it's hard to set those up and keep them going, ASL is usually what fills my gaming time. Not that I'm complaining...

Banzai: What are your other interests outside of gaming?

ZD: I read a lot (569 books on librarything.com and the count is climbing weekly). I mostly read science fiction and history, which seems pretty typical for a wargamer. When I'm not reading or gaming, I'm usually mountain biking or hiking.

Banzai: Any final comments to wrap up?

ZD: Anyone interested in a *Valor of the Guards* campaign when it comes out? ☺

The Commissar's Play List

Matt Shostak



In this newsletter we typically have had a player interview in each issue, followed by that player's favorite scenarios in the following issue. As I look back now, I realize that a lot of time has elapsed since those first interviews, and therefore many new scenarios have been published and played since then. I was the first club player profiled in March 1998, nearly 9 years ago! Surely I've played some new things since then, and new scenarios have been published which caught my eye. So I thought it was time to revisit things, but I wanted a different angle than simply another, revised, list of favorites. Since I often leaf through my collection of scenarios looking for interesting actions to put on my play list, I surmised that it might be a good subject for an article. The list of scenarios that I'd like to play sometime could get as long as my arm or longer, so for the purposes of this article I'll restrict myself to just a few that pique my interest for some reason, often because they are a bit beyond the usual. So here are a few scenarios that have made my list and the reasons why.

DB031 The Third Column. What better way to go off the beaten path for scenarios than to find one where going off the beaten path looks to be dangerous? This clash in Tunisia takes place in a driving rainstorm, with soft ground in effect. A German column must eliminate a roadblock, and fight their way across two map boards in 6.5 turns through the French defenses. The French get some American support midway through the game in the form of a few tanks. The German forces feature a couple of Tigers and a few PzIIIs, with some halftracks and trucks to help carry 10 squads and various support weapons and leaders forward. Opposing them are 8.5 French squads with a roadblock and a couple of 47L antitank guns. They have a 70mm artillery module on call as well. This match intrigues me because of the severe constraints the terrain and weather look to place on the Germans. Going off road will require bog checks, which is always risky business, especially in a scenario where exiting units off the board is key. It's not often that scenarios are played in a Heavy

Rain, and in this case an SSR states that the rain intensity won't change. Despite taking place in Tunisia, desert rules are not in effect (although a few things from chapter F do apply). Boards 18 and 44 are used. At the time of this writing the Remote Online Automated Record (ROAR) shows 4 French wins to 0 German wins. Is the scenario unbalanced? It's too early to tell but it sure looks interesting. This might be a good one for the more experienced player to take the Germans.

DB035 A Hotly Contested Crossroads. This is a fairly straightforward action that seems to pack a lot into a small size, perfect for tournament play. In fact, I picked it as one of two scenarios for our Texas HEAT mini at the 2006 Austin ASL Tournament. It was very well received by the players, which is why it makes my list now. Played on half of board 46 with a few small overlays, this 5.5 turn scenario features a Russian attack in Silesia in 1945. The Soviets bring the lumber with 14 squads supported by three T-34/85s and three SU-85s, while the Germans defend with 8.5 squad equivalents, a few halftracks, a couple of Hetzers, and a PzIIF tin can acting as a forward observer for some 80mm mortars back at battalion. What sets this scenario apart are the OP tank, and that a couple of the German units are 1-2-7 crews representing special tank hunter units, setting up hidden to spring ambushes on the Soviet armor. With a lot of action confined to a small space in a short time, this scenario looks like a roundhouse kick to the face. And that's a good thing.

SP131 Pocket Panzers. This one has a lot going on. It's 1944, and the Germans must seize or destroy a pontoon bridge held by American paratroopers. The Americans are supported by some 100mm artillery and a few British tanks (a Challenger and several Cromwell VIIIs). The Germans have 6 Panthers and a typical assortment of support weapons, including 3 demo charges. Presumably they'll want to save at least one to blow up the pontoon bridge if need be. They have 7 turns to do the job. Both sides have a few units designated as assault engineers, there's some hidden initial placement, and the Germans even get to plant antitank mines in one hex. The action occurs on two boards, with a stream overlay and a canal in play. The chance to blow up a pontoon bridge and the 6 Panthers are what initially attracted me to this scenario, and once I looked at it more carefully my interest was piqued by all of the bells and whistles. I can't wait to play it now.

WCW10 Stand and Die. How often do you get to play Japanese vs. Chinese scenarios involving armor on both sides? One of the few scenarios on this list that I've already played, it makes the cut because it's a hip, happening shindig that I'd gladly play again. Unfortunately the excellent *Windy City Wargamers* scenario pack is probably difficult to find these days. Here both sides command fairly strong orders of battle, as they duke it out over two boards while trying to outscore each other on casualties and building control. The Chinese must make good use of their German- and Italian-made tin cans because they could be

easy fodder for the superior Japanese tanks. You heard me: *superior Japanese tanks*. There's plenty to keep your interest, such as demo charges and a flamethrower for the infantry. The terrain adds flavor, with a 2-board map depicting a village, a stream, and drained rice paddies.

ASLNews40 Rolling Thunder. I've been eyeballing this scenario for a while. It is a huge combined arms action between the French and Germans in 1940. The playing area is 4.5 boards in size, and it uses the Village-42 overlay (with an option to use board 10 if you don't have that overlay). The French get 18 squads, a few guns, 19 tanks, and some artillery, while the Germans counter with 24 squads and 33 tanks. Victory is measured in terms of casualties scored and stone building hexes controlled. There is a casualty cap on the Germans. This one just looks like a lot of fun, but probably requires a large amount of time to play.

TAC53 Pyrrhic Victory. I've also played this one, although it was a long time ago. It depicts a fight between Germans and British in Greece in 1941. The Germans must seize the board 3 village by controlling all of its multihex buildings at game end, or they must exit at least 25 CVP off the far end of the map. A small British force defends the board while reinforcements trickle in for both sides over the course of the first five turns. The final 6 turns of this 8-turn affair are played in dusk conditions, simulated by a +1 low visibility hindrance to all fire. The Germans are supported by a single Stuka with bombs. Each side has a variety of early-war AFVs with which to do battle, and they are one of the main attractions for me. Since I play so many late-war slugfests, I don't often get to try out vehicles like the British get here: A9s and A10s, Mk VIBs, and 2pdr Portees. The early-war German tanks are a little more familiar, but the matchup is very interesting. All of these factors combine to make an intriguing scenario.

TOT36 Balkan Barbecue. Axis Minor troops supported by some French-made tanks, including a flamethrowing Char-B1, try to defeat some Yugoslavian partisans in the deep snow. Victory points are awarded for casualty points scored, building (hut) control, and partisan exit. Usually I'm not very excited by partisan scenarios, but this one seems to offer something a bit unusual.

CH71 Bottom of the Barrel. Perhaps this action at first glance doesn't fit my self-imposed theme of being off the beaten path, because it looks like a basic tournament sized match on the Eastern Front in 1945. But it hasn't gotten a lot of play, at least according to ROAR (1-1 as of this writing). Here seven German squads of mixed quality, with an 88L AA gun, a few mines, wire, and entrenchments, plus some flak wagons (including a Wirblewind) and armored cars defend against a Soviet combined arms group consisting of 12 squads and a few tanks, supported by a couple of fighter-bombers with bombs. With a 6-turn length, played on two boards with a few overlays, this one looks playable in a reasonable

amount of time, yet with enough action to hold one's interest. One feature that I like is that the setup includes several burning wrecks, two of which are presumably previous victims of the 88L, which must set up with line of sight to at least two of them.

(Addendum: since writing the above paragraph I have played this scenario, and I'm very pleased with it. That experience brought to light a few other features of the action that make it worthwhile. There is a possibility of a draw, which is interesting in and of itself, but which also has an influence on how each side will play the game. Committing too hard to stop the Russians from winning might, for example, make it harder for the Germans to achieve their own victory conditions, hence forcing a draw. The victory conditions for each side force the players to allocate resources carefully. The Soviets must exit some points from the middle of the far board edge, but they must also capture some buildings that are not exactly en route. The Germans must prevent the Russians from winning immediately, but they must also hold the board 43 compound at game end to win, which draws forces somewhat away from defending the exit zone. Also the Russians have very wide latitude as to where they may bring on their reinforcements, which adds to the replay value of the scenario. If this scenario has a weakness, it is that the importance of the 88L, the restrictions on its setup, and the large amount of ground to cover because of the liberal Russian entry conditions might all combine to put a bit of a guessing game element to the fight. To some extent that may be true of a lot of scenarios with a single important weapon, and I do not consider it much of a drawback. Overall I'm very impressed with this design, and I hope the many scenario authors out there in ASL land take notice of how this one is crafted and what makes it work.)

RPT4 Transylvania 6-5000. Alright, this one is on my list partly because of the title. I'll have to play my Glenn Miller CDs while we play. But really I wanted something involving Axis Minors that wasn't very big and yet had some combined arms and enough action to be interesting. In short, I wanted to have on my list a good scenario for tourney play and this one from the *Rally Point* looks like it fits the bill. It is played on two half boards over 5.5 turns, with a small Soviet force supported by two T-34s against a somewhat larger Hungarian group with four StuG IIIGs. I would have preferred an AFV matchup featuring more unusual vehicles. For that we'll have to look to my next choice. *(Since writing the above I've also had a chance to play this one. It seemed like a good, short, tournament style scenario which came right down to the end. I liked that the attacking Hungarians had to clear two different areas to win.)*

RPT3 Varosmajor Grange. Like the previous choice on my list, this scenario is a tourney-sized action between Russians and Hungarians on two half boards over 5.5 turns. However the tank matchup here is a bit more intriguing.

with a T-34 M43 and OT-34 for the Russian defenders, and two Zrinyi IIs and a Hetzer for the Hungarians. It has the added bonus that the Hungarian units have the almost Pythonesque names Royal Vannay Flying Squad Battalion and Europa Flying Squad Battalion. I don't know about you, but my hovercraft is full of eels and I want to play this one. *(See my After Action Report for this scenario at our blog: <http://banzaipipeline.blogspot.com/>.)*

SP130 The Tiger's Whiskers. Okay, it's yet another tiger anatomy title, and it's yet another SS vs. Russians at Kursk brouhaha. So maybe this one isn't all that unusual, but I like to have a solid Kursk fight on my list. It looks playable in a few hours, with only 5.5 turns and two boards to fight over. Dug-in Soviets with pillboxes, antitank guns, T-34s, and KVs try to fend off a bunch of SS, some on motorcycles, supported by Tigers, PzIVs, and halftracks. I'm really looking forward to playing this one.

RBF-37 The Fangs of Transylvania. Three fairly open boards provide the battleground for this large Romanian vs. Hungarian struggle. Both sides employ German-made armor here, with the Romanians adding several TACAM R-2(r)s, while the Hungarians add several Turans to their mix. The Romanian attackers try to rack up points for building control, causing casualties, and exiting off the far end while remaining below a casualty cap. This one promises lots of exciting action of the combined arms variety, which is why it is on my list.

I could go on and on, but I'll stop here and leave some scenarios for another article. If any of these sound good to you, contact me for a game. What's on your play list, and why?

Rules Tip

When bypassing a woods or building Location with residual FP in it, all non-hexside TEM and SMOKE/FFE-Hindrance DRM of that Location still apply. See the penultimate sentence of A8.2.

Tactical Tip

In Close Combat, if you have a concealed unit, you can choose to retain your concealment in lieu of making an attack. This halves the firepower of any CC attacks against the concealed unit, increasing its chances of surviving. If it does survive without suffering Casualty Reduction, it retains its concealment and is not held in Melee. This would give it the freedom to move out of the location during the next turn, or perhaps fire with TPBF. See A11.5 and A11.19. This tactic could be very useful on the last turn of a game, where all you need to do to win is to have a unit survive.

2007 ASL Team Tournament



Rick Reinesch

Our ASL tournament in Texas reaches a milestone this year with the hosting of the 15th Annual (Austin) ASL Team Tournament to be held from Thursday June 21st 9AM through Sunday June 24th, 8PM 2007 at the La Quinta Inn, Round Rock, Texas in the 'burbs just north of Austin.

We're still here and still kicking after all of these years. And with just a few months to go, start planning to make that trek to Austin!

As in previous years, Thursday's games will be informal gaming, with those games counting toward the Major Johnson award (see below). On Friday morning, we will launch the formal phase of the tournament where we'll track wins and losses over the weekend. Players are free to match themselves with anyone, and play any mutually agreeable scenario.

Our Team Tournament is really two tournaments in one!

The main tournament has two-person teams of all skill levels match wits and abilities to strive for the honor of seeing their name emblazoned on the Austin Memorial Cup and take home some great first place prizes. Teams will be randomly, but fairly assigned at the beginning of the tournament. Success of a team is based upon their tournament wins/losses relative to their comparable strengths. You must Pre-Register (postmarked by June 8th, 2007) to be eligible.

While we take great pride in our "Team" Tournament, we try to take the pressure off players and teammates by focusing on the most important aspects of ASL -- lots of dice rolling and tons of fun! Basically the tournament is a weekend-long excuse to play some ASL!

The tourney inside the tourney has players challenging for the coveted 10-3 Award. This honor is bestowed to the individual who perseveres throughout the weekend and bests all comers. Additional awards include the 9-2 Award given to the overall runner-up, and the Major Johnson Award, given to the player who plays the most ASL over the duration of the tournament as determined by a formula that takes into account the number of scenarios and scenario size and complexity. And there will be the dice-based awards as well. We'll be giving away the Audie Murphy award to the player with the greatest number of snakes and the Col. Klink award for the most boxcars over the course of the weekend starting on Thursday. We've had multiple winners in the past, so rock the grognards' weekend and take home as many as you can!

The expression "the most fun wins" holds true for the Major Johnson Award. As in previous years, we'll be counting

games from the minute the doors open on Thursday. Line up those scenarios and work on your sleep deprivation, it's going to take a colossal effort to be promoted to Major this year!

For those on a tight schedule there will be a Saturday-only "Texas Heat" mini-Tournament. It will start at 9AM sharp! As in previous years the registration fee for this Saturday-only play will be \$20.00.

Austin is a laid back city; our tourney reflects that attitude. Come join the Texas ASL Club in their annual battle royale.

The ASL Team Tournament will be returning to the La Quinta Inn Round Rock, 2004 North I-35 Round Rock, Texas, 512-255-6666. When reserving rooms for the Tournament, mention you are with the "Central Texas ASL Club" and you will receive a discounted rate. We have 60 room nights blocked for Wed-Sat. But don't wait, last year the hotel sold out and some players had to scrounge for rooms nearby that cost more!

Registration this year is \$35 for the Thursday-Sunday gaming. Your entrance fee also includes participation in any Mini-Tournaments should you desire to enter. Make sure to meet the June 8th registration deadline to avoid the \$10.00 surcharge for late registration.

We'll have a lot more information upcoming. Be sure to check out the club website at www.texas-asl.com and follow the links to the tournament web pages to stay abreast of the latest details.

Hope to see you there!

Favorite Scenarios



Brian Roundhill

Urban Guerillas - A great scenario even without the surprise Partisans. A strong group of Russians have a lot to do, but plenty to do it with. The Germans don't appear to have a lot, but when they use what they have, it is almost enough to win. Lots of tough decisions everywhere. How hard do the Germans defend the church, and how much do they put across the canal? How do the Germans delay the Russians and not generate Partisans everywhere? Where do the Russians attack? How fast can they afford to go? How much is needed to take the church, and how do you force your way across the canal?

Totsugeki - A simple scenario that forces good maneuver by both sides. Like many Japanese tournament sized scenarios, it usually comes down to the last CC phase. The Chinese have a lot of ground to defend, and it's always scary defending against the Japanese, but they have enough

tricks up their sleeve to make the Japanese bleed.

Rikusentai - A powerful American force must dig out fortified Japanese on Tarawa. I remember taking lots of high firepower attacks, only for the fanatic Japanese to shrug off the 2MCs. Eventually they were whittled down to very little, but a last turn counterattack won them a victory. I especially like that the defenders get purchase points to construct their defense so the Americans never know what they will be attacking.

Kampfgruppe at Karachev - I had a classic playing of this scenario against Mike Austin at the Austin Tournament a few years ago. He smashed into my defenses, only to be thrown back. But his flanking force survived multiple fire lanes and lots of residual to eek out a victory.

The Five Pound Prize - The Germans don't have enough to defend everywhere, but the terrain is open enough that the British have to be careful while they attack. Another scenario of subtle maneuver. Every piece matters, but finding the right location for them is tricky.

Acts of Defiance - Germans get some cool toys, and need every one of them to dig out the Russians.

Radio Wars - I think this is my favorite type of scenario. Both sides must attack and defend. Lithuanians defend the building while their German allies fight through the Russians to get into the building. Plus, it's deluxe. Russians have the trickier part of dividing their forces to achieve two goals, while the Lithuanians and Germans are pre-divided.

This Happened to Me

Matt Shostak

I finally had a plane shot down. Playing *Bottom of the Barrel* against Steve Desrosiers, I decided to use one of my fighter-bombers to attack his Wirblewind. I felt like I was ahead at the time and could afford to take the chance. With a two-hexspine covered arc change and a +3 DRM for the 1944 FB, he needed to roll about a 5 or less to harm my plane, or a 6 to force it to evade. Sure enough he kept rate and shot it down. D'oh! Perhaps I should have waited and let my T-34/85s dispatch the Wirblewind, because I could have used that extra fighter-bomber later. But where's the fun in that?

Style Points

I spun the turret of a PzII with grenadier rider in the hex of a PITA T-34 controlling a road intersection. The grenadier passed his bail out MC -- locked the T-34 in CC -- and the rest of the German armor raced past the T-34 in their

movement phase unmolested. Then the grenadier smoked the T-34 in Adv. Fire with an in-hex PF. Really hacked my opponent. – *Mike Seningen* (Note – *The PF shot is illegal since the rider would be marked with a Prep Fire or Final Fire as per D6.24. However the T-34 would still suffer from target selection limits as per A7.212.*)

I was forced to bail out of a tank with some nice shooting from my enemy during BFF. He surrounded me to pounce during his next DFire. I subsequently captured my abandoned vehicle in CC and then killed my attackers in my next prep. I rated and IF'd to kill all 3. He thought for sure since I bailed out that I would not be able to recrew until my movement phase, and he was situated to plaster my crew in the process. Sneaky Sneaky Sneaky. – *Mike Seningen*

I have had two style moments that seem to jump up, both from *Red Barricades*. The first was against my eternal RB nemesis Walter. Way back when, we were playing midway through the campaign and I forced a bailout of one of his MkIII tanks, which I subsequently crewed with a Russian half squad. If I remember, that tank then proceeded to offer battle and hold up his advance quite well (or at least until I broke literally every weapon on the vehicle). Good fun there, making him shoot up his own tank. The other moment was way way back when I was in Ohio, and during an assault to capture the last big factory, I was able to land a DC on a 6-2-8 squad on the building edge (backed up by half a company hidden in the middle). Due to phenomenal luck rolling the result, I ended up with the initial hex rubbled and falling rubble through two more interior hexes that squished half (6 or 7 squads total died) of his engineer company and the heart of the defense. The actual taking of the building was very anti climactic. – *Jay Harms*

As for style points I don't know if this qualifies but I once moved an 8-3-8 with flamethrower and leader into an open adjacent hex next to an American 6-6-6 with MMG and 9-1 leader, taking a 20 - 4 shot in KGP. My opponent promptly rolled 12 on his shot and I was able to burn them up (remember that Bob?). Style or stupidity? You be the judge. It just seemed like the thing to do at the time. – *Rob Burton*

Our club once played the Kursk action from the *Monster Pack* as two teams of four. Each player was supposed to construct his order of battle through the DYO process. The most imaginative plan was Kirk Woller's. He brought in a company of glider-borne fallschirmjaegers to land squarely on and behind the objective, obtaining brilliant tactical surprise which led to success for his side in his part of the battle. You can read about this club event in Banzai!! 1.2. – *Matt Shostak*

Club Notes

Biweekly Lunch Gathering

Don't forget to join us every other Friday at 1300 hours down at Pok-E-Jo's on Fifth Street. The club sends out email reminders, or you can call Matt for information on the next get-together.

Game Days

The Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas/Ft. Worth groups have remained active, hosting various gatherings for club members to get together and knock cardboard heads. If you missed any of these you missed a lot of fun. It's like a tournament atmosphere for a day. The Austin group now meets on the first Saturday of every month. To stay informed of upcoming club events, join our email group. You can post a message at central-texas-asl@yahoogroups.com or you can point your favorite browser to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/central-texas-asl> and take a look. For those still not connected, give Matt or Mike a call for club information.

The <i>Banzai!!</i> Staff	
Editor in Chief	Matt Shostak (512) 280-8414 mshostakster@gmail.com
Managing Editor and Keeper of the Ladder	Sam Tyson styson@gmail.com
Contributing Authors	Rob Burton, Zeb Doyle, Jay Harms, Brian Roundhill, Rick Reinesch, Mike Seningen, Matt Shostak, Sam Tyson
Publishing Schedule	Whenever we feel like it!
Club Information	Matt Shostak or Mike Seningen (512) 288-3778 mseningen@austin.rr.com
Club Web Site	www.texas-asl.com/

Next Issue

- More articles about ASL
- Player Profile
- Favorite Scenarios
- Club Meeting Recaps
- Club Ladder
- And much more!

Club Ladder Results

Recent Ladder Games
Jim Ferrell (Axis) def John Hyler (Russ) in Huns Of Steel
Walter Eardley (Amer) def Brian Roundhill (Germ) in Ace in the Hole
Eric Gerstenberg (Germ) def Gary Krockover (Russ) in Lenin's Sons
Sam Tyson (Russ) def Rob Burton (Germ) in Prelude to Spring
Matt Shostak (Germ) def Doyle Motes (Brit) in Frankforce
Matt Shostak (Russ) def Dan Preston (Germ) in Lenin's Sons
Jim Ferrell (Amer) def John Hyler (Germ) in Stopped Cold
Jeff Toreki (Jap) def Brian Roundhill (Russ) in Red Star, Red Sun
Jim Ferrell (Russ) def John Hyler (Germ) in Forest Fighting in Latvia
Matt Shostak (Germ) def Mike Ingalls (Russ) in Eye of the Tiger
Zeb Doyle (Russ) def Eric Gerstenberg (Germ) in Marders not Martyrs
Jeff Toreki (Jap) def Brian Roundhill (Russ) in Dig Them Out!
Zeb Doyle (Alli) def Gary Krockover (Germ) in The Last Roadblock
Doyle Motes (Russ) def Allen King (Germ) in The Last Tiger
Zeb Doyle (Russ) def Eric G. (Germ) in Send In The Fallschirmjagers
Jerry Simmons (Fren) def Russell Mueller (Germ) in Audacity!
Jerry Simmons (Russ) def Jim Ferrell (Germ) in The Yelnya Bridge
Matt Shostak (Hung*) def Eric Gerstenberg (Russ) in Transylvania 6-5000
Bryan Register (Russ) def Matt Shostak (Hung) in Kerepesi Cemetery
Matt Shostak (Russ) def Steve Desrosiers (Germ) in Bottom of the Barrel
Matt Shostak (Germ*) def Rick Reinesch (Amer) in Parker's Crossroads
Matt Shostak (Germ) def Grady Neely (Russ) in Flanking Flamethrowers
Brian Roundhill (Germ) def Rick Reinesch (Russ) in Lenin's Sons
Brian Roundhill (Russ) def Rick Reinesch (Germ) in Lenin's Sons
Bryan Register (Axis) def Gary Krockover (Alli) in Prelude to Dying
Mike Seningen (Amer) def Eric Gerstenberg (Germ) in Old Hickory's Path
Jim Ferrell (Amer) def Edward Beekman (Germ) in The Hornet of Cloville
Zeb Doyle (Russ) def Eric Gerstenberg (Hung) in The Bozsoki Relay
Zeb Doyle (Alli) def Eric Gerstenberg (Axis) in The Sixth Blow
Brian Roundhill (Germ) def Jeff Toreki (Russ) in Himmler's House
Matt Shostak (Hung) def Zeb Doyle (Russ) in Városmajor Grange
Zeb Doyle (Amer) def Clinton Howell (Germ) in Ace in the Hole

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