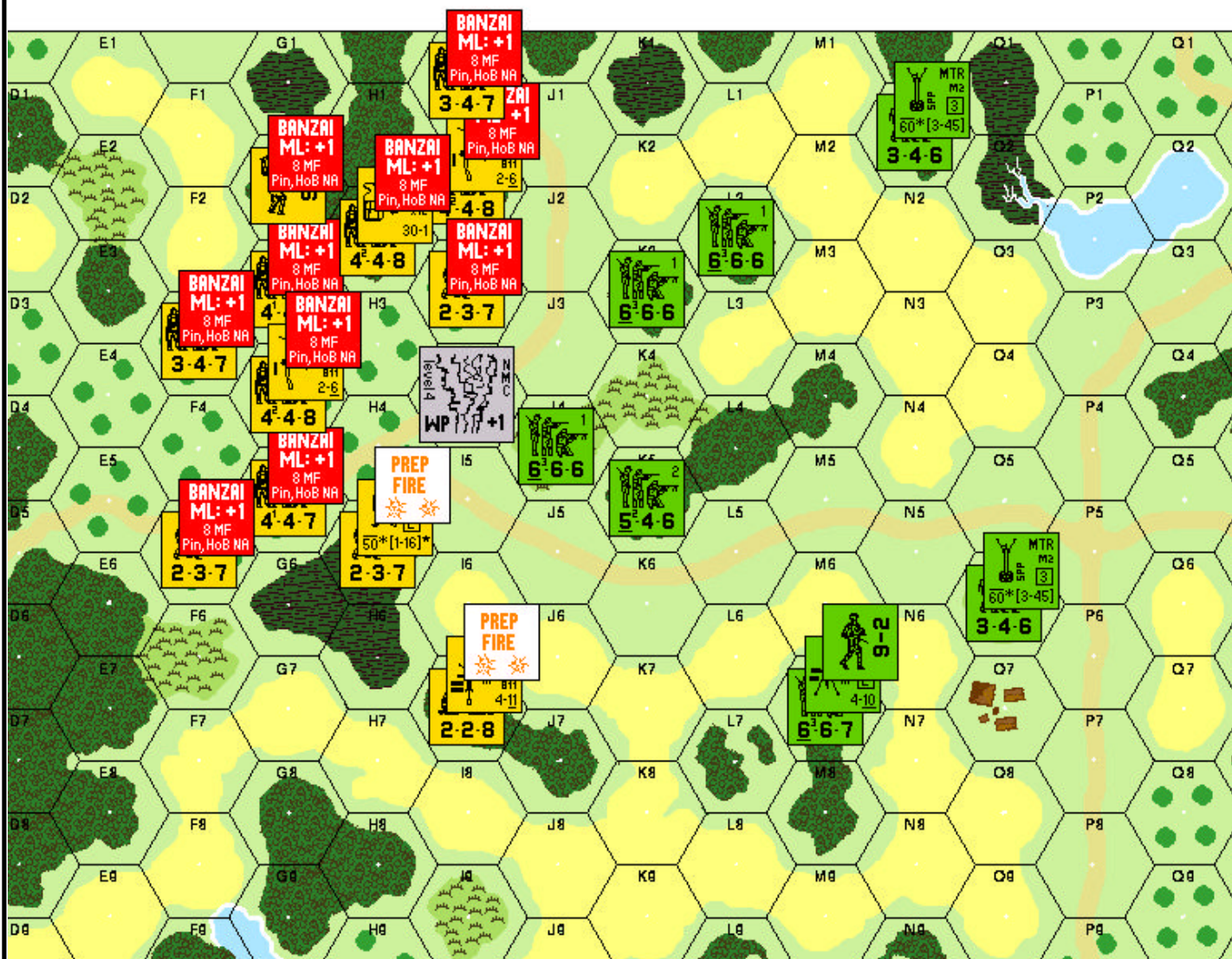


Banzai!!!



The Newsletter of the Austin ASL Club

July, 1999 Volume 4, Number 2

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Editor's Corner

Matt Shostak



A lot has happened in our club since the last newsletter. We held our 7th Annual Austin ASL Team Tournament with 18 guys competing over the weekend. Mike Seningen deserves many thanks from the entire club for running this event and doing a great job with it. In an exciting new development, we have also recently made contact with a group of players in Houston. A couple of months ago Mike Seningen and I responded to a request from Walter Eardley about how to run a club event. Walter told us afterwards that they had 10 guys show up for their first meeting! About that time two Houston players, Bret Smith and Jeff Toney, scouted us by showing up for one of our regular club meetings and knocking heads with us. Then two weeks before our tourney, Bret Smith had an informal gathering at his place in Houston, and four of us made the drive to meet more of the Houston guys. It was a lot of fun. Four of them then made the trek to Austin for our tourney in late June. It appears that we may be starting a new chapter in our club's history, as we transition from *Central Texas ASL* to simply *Texas ASL*. Those Houston guys that we have met have joined our ladder, and seem willing and even eager to do joint ASL gatherings every once in a while. I think this is a great thing and will allow us all to make some new friends, not to mention make us all better players. Although Dallas seems much more remote to us than Houston does, we could potentially do the same sort of thing there as well. Glen Gray and Russell Mueller, our intrepid ASL warriors from big D, have supported our club, and particularly our tournament, since the very beginning 7 years ago. It was great to see them at our tourney yet again. Not to be outdone, San Antonio seems to be gaining momentum as an ASL hotbed as well. In the last few months several players from that area have made it to our Austin club meetings to challenge us. I encourage all of us to take advantage of our opportunities for interaction, not only within Austin itself but also with Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas. At the same time, I would ask that we not forget the many players in Austin either. We have many members who are *lurkers* – they are on our club roster but don't play very much. Don't be afraid to call someone new for a match. And remember - we all get out of ASL what we put into it.

Tactical Analysis

DASL 7 - With Flame and Shell

Matt Shostak



A few issues ago I reviewed the deluxe scenario *Preparing the Way*. Writing that article made me realize how much I enjoyed those Eastern Front slugfests on deluxe boards. So, I thought, why not continue where I left off and write about another excellent deluxe scenario from the gripping *Streets of Fire* module? Like most of the scenarios from that module, one of the main attractions is playing on those incredible deluxe boards. It's not just that the deluxe boards are nice to look at. They certainly are, but more importantly, they allow the elbowroom for those high-density, heavy-hitting, toe-to-toe, brutal urban cauldrons that we all enjoy so much. *With Flame and Shell* is just such a scenario. Both sides have excellent orders of battle (OBs). The Germans boast three flamethrowing tanks and three assault guns to support their infantry attack, while the Russian defenders are bolstered by three antitank guns and three formidable artillery pieces being used here in a direct fire role. The setting, Kursk, is an ever-popular one among many gamers. The scenario has such a cool name too.

Russian Strengths: Close Combat, Guns, Sniper Russian Weaknesses: Leadership

Over half of the Russian force is elite, and those elite squads are considered assault engineers for CCV purposes, so they have a decent chance of killing German tanks in Close Combat. They have six guns, all of which are capable of destroying the German armor frontally, although it's not a sure thing, and the 45LLs will need a little help from the dice. Still, they all have pretty good rate of fire, and one might hope that eventually a gun will be rewarded with a kill if it is able to take a succession of shots. The kill numbers of the 45LLs and the 76Ls are, respectively, 11 and 13. That number can be increased by one at very short ranges (0-2 hexes for the 45LLs and 0-1 hexes for the 76Ls). Both guns have APCR 5, and if they are fortunate enough to have some available, their base kill numbers become 13 for the 45LLs and 14 for the 76Ls. Close range will again result in an increase of those kill numbers (+3 at 0-1, +2 at 2, and +1 at 3-6). Since most shots will probably occur at ranges of 6 hexes and under, the Russian player can count on getting this bonus most of the time. Because the frontal armor of all the German tanks is 8, achieving kills against them, while not impossible, is not a given either. Still, one can expect the German player to be somewhat cautious of losing his tanks to these guns. The guns can be used very effectively against infantry as well. With its high rate of fire, a 45LL can whittle down a stack of Wehrmacht aggressors pretty quickly when the dice are falling the right way (the wrong way if you're the German player). Naturally the 76L guns command a lot of respect as anti-infantry weapons also, since they will attack on the 12 column, and their rate of fire is a very respectable 2. If the going gets rough, the 76Ls can even fire smoke (s8). The Russian SAN of 6 is very high indeed, and ought to cause the German player to think twice about, and even turn down many, low-odds shots. It is vitally important for the Russian player to watch every roll with an eagle eye on the lookout for possible sniper activation. Each one missed is a missed opportunity to kill a German leader or break a squad, and that can add up over the course of a long game. As always, it shows class for each player to call out each sniper activation as they happen. A sniper is part of the game, and is *supposed* to occur. ASL is not a contest about remembering every dice roll, and taking advantage of a guy who misses his SAN. As usual, the paucity of Russian leaders will cause problems for the Russian player. With only 4 leaders (with only -2 total modifiers) to lead 25 squads, there never seem to be enough of them to go around. If the 9-1 and 8-1 are busy directing fire, then only two leaders are left to anchor rally havens for broken squads.

German Strengths: Flamethrowing tanks, assault guns, Smoke, Leadership

German Weaknesses: Close terrain for AFVs, Numbers

The Germans bring a very impressive force to the battlefield this time around, highlighted by three flamethrowing tanks. These are very powerful weapons indeed, and can quickly turn a Russian strongpoint into ashes if given the chance. The flammpanzers make it easy to overlook the other AFVs, but the three StuH 42 assault guns are nothing to sneeze at either. Any Russians unlucky enough to catch one of their shells will be treated to an attack on the 20 column. Together the flammpanzers and assault guns provide the flame and shell from the scenario title. The Germans have plenty of smoke making capability. All their AFVs have smoke dispensers, the assault guns have s9, and all their infantry squads have smoke exponents, over half of which are a 2 or higher. Thus they should be able to cover their advance adequately. The Germans enjoy a leader for every 3.25 squads, and have combined leadership modifiers of -5, including a 9-2. Therefore they should be able to rally their broken troops quickly, and of course, accurately direct several firegroups. Working against the Germans, however, is the closeness of the terrain. The city is not exactly tank country, and the German player is likely to find that overly bold vehicles do not survive very long around here. Moreover, the Russians have plenty of men in uniform, as usual. It will be difficult to overwhelm them, because these deluxe boards represent such a small area that it is not easy to concentrate most of one's forces against a certain point. It's a very narrow front.

Firepower Comparison

Scenario analyst extraordinaire Mark Nixon has a formula for comparing firepower that he likes to apply when discussing a particular game (see *The General*, Vol. 28 No. 2, p.18). His system accounts for rate of fire, but does not include one-shot weapons such as demo charges, nor does it factor in such things as MOL, SAN, etc. It is a rough sketch of raw firepower available, and he claims that in a well-balanced scenario the attacker should have about 62% of the available firepower. Deviation from that number should be compensated for by other elements of the scenario that don't fit into the calculation, such as smoke making ability. Using his formula (the actual computation is left as an exercise for the reader), we find that the Germans have 61.2% of the firepower here, which is pretty much right on the money for "Nixonian balance." That's encouraging, but don't read too much into it. It's just another bit of data that I thought I'd mention for your benefit in considering the merits of this encounter.

Victory Conditions

Before going right into the setup and attack, let's pause to consider the victory conditions. The Germans need to earn 50 points to win. They can earn points by exiting units off the far end and by killing or capturing Russian units. The Germans essentially lose points, however, for casualties that they suffer. What does this imply for this scenario? To exit, the attackers need only go 19 hexes forward, and they have 10 turns to do it. They've got plenty of time. Each AFV exited is worth 6 points, so if the entire at-start German OB succeeded in exiting, it would net 101 points. The Russian at-start OB totals 80 points. So if the German player manages to destroy half of the Russian forces (40 points) and exits two assault guns (12 points), he'll have 52 total and a win. However, it's hard to imagine doing this without losing something in the process. A mere squad and a half killed would bring the German back under his victory margin, so you can get an idea how each German loss in a sense hurts him twice: he obviously can't exit it, and the points also count against him. Okay, now that that's clear, let's move on to the nitty-gritty.

Defender Setup

Our look at the victory conditions suggests that the defense will want to achieve a balance between staying alive, and hence depriving the Germans of victory points, and inflicting harm, which "ups the ante" and forces the Germans to gain even more points to make up for those lost. Therefore it seems that a bit of skulking and a bit of "in your face" firepower is called for. Just what measure of each is necessary to win is a tough call, and is why the game is so great. Each player probably has a

different opinion and style. Here I'll present one possible setup, along with a discussion of what one might try to do with it. I have no delusions about this being the best setup and game plan possible. I'm just putting together one possibility for your consideration.

First, some general points. It is easy for the Germans to set up massive stacks directed by good leaders to shred any Russians that show themselves. So we will try to keep as many units out of potential German line of sight on turn 1 as possible. Those units that are put on the front line will be given concealment to give them a chance against the initial assault. The idea is that I don't want the German to be able to hit my main line of resistance (MLR) right away. It's better if he has to get through a picket line first. That way, when he does reach the MLR he will be less organized, perhaps even a bit disorganized, and therefore less able to have just the right units in just the right places when he wants them. Note that there are 13 support weapons and 13 elite Russian squads. I see no good reason to give a support weapon to a first line squad when elite guys are available to do the job. In general, I'd rather have the important stuff manned by troops with better morale.

When setting up, I find it easier to place the key pieces first and then build the supporting units around them. This approach may not work for you, but it allows me to see things in a more organized way. Usually it's not too hard to determine what the key pieces are. In this scenario I think the key pieces for the Russians are the leaders, the guns, and the heavy and medium machineguns. To a lesser extent are the DCs and ATRs. Not so much a key piece but an important capability is the HIP units. Once those are in position, I can go ahead and fill in the rest of the defense with the supporting units, which here will usually be rifle squads. Three locations stand out to me as excellent places for the 76Ls. Note that an SSR allows these guns to be set up in a building if the location is fortified. Normally they could not set up in a building (B23.423). Hexes dG2, bF3, and bI1 all command good views with open ground in front of them. Hex dG2 is especially hard to flank because of the cliff-gully. Although bF3 has a building right in front of it, it can see a good long way down the road toward the German setup area. Hexes bB4 and bC5 cannot be seen from the German jump-off points, and moreover they are centrally located and cover some important ground. Thus they are ideal for our big machinegun groups and leaders. They are, however, relatively close to the front line and in danger of being hit early in the game. Those machineguns are too heavy to rout with, so if the squads break they will likely be left behind to the Germans. It therefore seems prudent to consider how these units will eventually use the terrain to fall toward the rear.

Several different philosophies could be used for the HIP units, depending on your style. Some players might prefer a "kill stack" of big machineguns directed by a good leader to maximize casualties. The advantages are that it keeps them away from fire for a while and can really intimidate an opponent if the trap works well. The disadvantage is that it may be some while before the trap is sprung, and during that time those excellent weapons are not being used. Moreover, if too far forward the units might not be able to save themselves once they have sprung the trap and angry landers seek to seal off their escape. Other players might prefer tank traps of 458s with DCs and/or ATRs in devious places, hoping to get a side or rear shot at a passing tank. With this narrow front, however, it may be very difficult to arrange a flank or rear shot. Still others like HIP units to act as a delaying force. They don't have to be very powerful, they just have to occupy space so that they can "bump" German infantry and thus stop their movement short, and they also can hurt the enemy even without large amounts of firepower if they can get a negative modifier shot. Whichever idea you choose, it is best if it fits in with your overall scheme of defense. Since here we are constructing a limited fallback defense, we'll opt for a compromise of the above concepts. We'll put two squads with LMGs and a 7-0 in bB1. This stack has enough firepower to seriously harm any Germans unlucky enough to get caught by them, and they also don't have any heavy weapons to drag so they can more easily escape to the rear later on. The leader is there to prevent cowering and to give them extra movement to escape.

The 45LLs will go in positions that support the MLR. Thus our critical units are set up like so:

dG2: 76L CA 2 (HIP, fortified)
bF3: 76L CA 5 (HIP, fortified)



bI1: 76L CA 5 (HIP, fortified)

dF2: 45LL CA 2 (HIP)

dL5: 45LL CA 2

(HIP, protects the kill stacks from rampaging flampanzers)

bC4: 45LL CA 5

(HIP, protects the kill stacks from rampaging flampanzers)

bb4: 9-1, .50cal, 458, HMG, 458

(should gain ?, good LOS to cB4 woods, add a tunnel to bE4 for escape purposes)

bC5: 8-1, MMG, 458, MMG, 458

(should gain ?, good LOS to aC3 building)

bb1: 7-0, LMG, 458, LMG, 458 (HIP)

Now the rest of the units can fill in the gaps. While we don't want to put a lot on the very front for the fascist aggressors to pulverize, we also don't want to let them pass unmolested. A few 447s and a few dummy stacks go up front to make the Germans work a little on the first turn or two. The bulk of the rest of the forces shore up the defense near the

critical weapons, making them harder to approach and hit. Nearly all of the following unconcealed units should be able to gain concealment after setup.

aA1: ?,447

aC3: ?,?

bA2: ?,?

bD1: DC,458

bD4: 447,ATR,458

cB1: 447

cB4: ?,447

cC4: ?,?

dJ4: 447

dL1: 447

dL2: 447,8-0

dM5: LMG,458

dN4: ?,DC,458

aB4: ?,447

aC5: ?,?

bC1: 447

bD2: ATR,458

bE1: ?,?

cB3: ?,447

cC2: ?,?

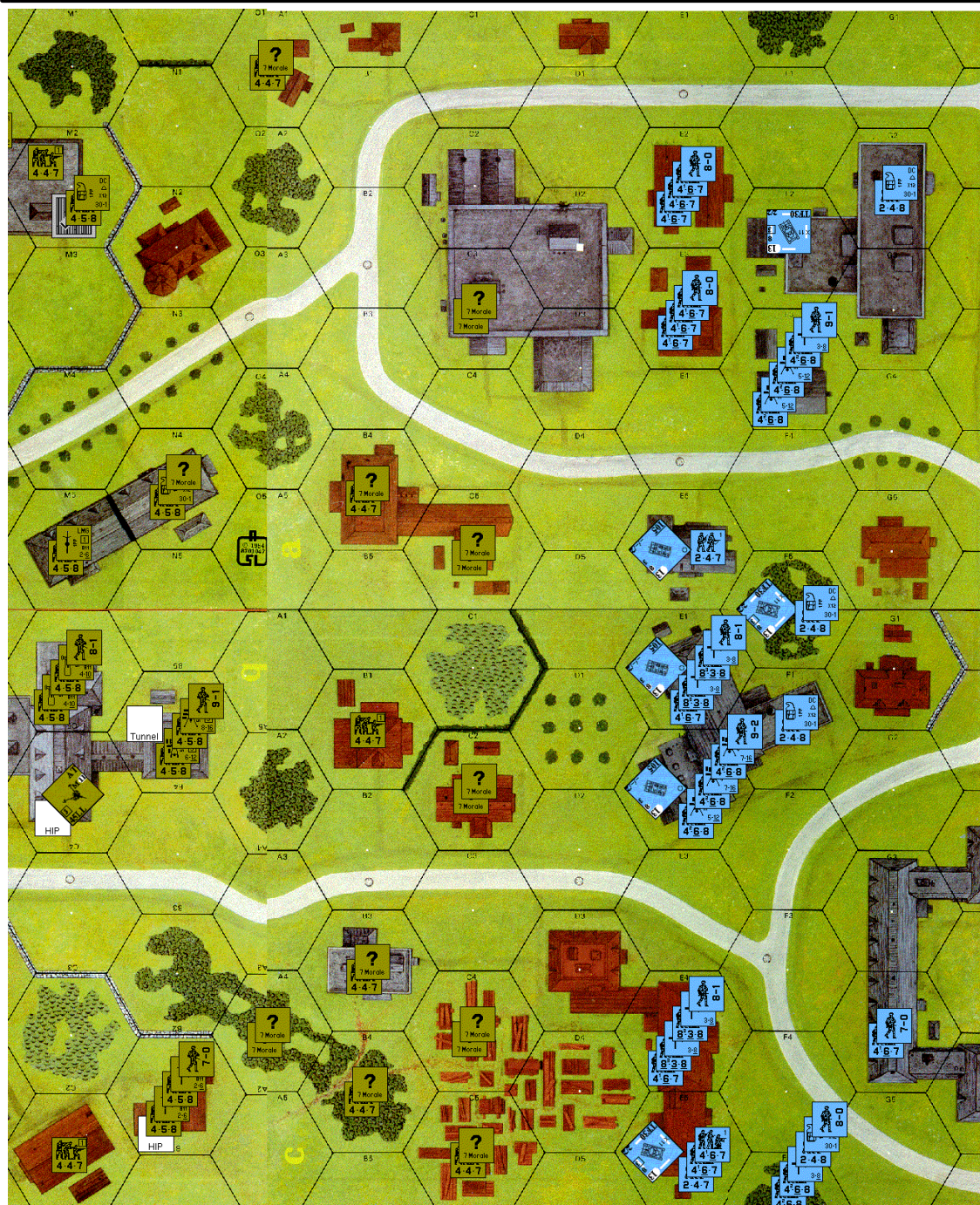
cC5: ?,447

dK5: ?,?

dL11: ATR,458

dM2: 447

dM21: DC,458



The general idea is to avoid enemy contact (skulking), while shooting only at worthwhile targets for the first turn or two, all the while falling back to the MLR which is roughly speaking just in front of the guns. There the defense will stiffen and fight back, hoping to cause as many German casualties as possible, thus giving them a higher and higher victory point hill to climb. A couple of things are worth noting. Since prisoners count as double CVP, it is a good idea not to let any units get captured. This is especially true of the guns, since they are so immobile. I wouldn't worry too much about intensive firing the guns if it appeared that they would soon be captured. In fact, it may prove necessary to spike your own guns at some point to avoid having them fall into the enemy's hands. After fighting at the MLR for a while, it will probably be necessary to fall back again. After all, the Germans are expected to exit *some* units. The rest of the game should see some combination of falling back, delaying and skulking, yet standing up and fighting on occasion. Being opportunistic in causing enemy casualties should pay off. For example, the ATRs could be used to shoot at the rear of the flammpanzers. Sure, your opponent will not want to give you a rear shot,

but he may not have a choice when the vehicle is under Recall. That's your opportunity for a kill and some CVP, which is better than simply letting the tank escape.

Attacker Considerations

Before working on a setup and the first German turn, it is probably worthwhile to go over the basic game plan. In this action the Germans have plenty of time to accomplish their task. Unlike in *Preparing the Way*, here the attackers can win by destroying the enemy as well as by exiting units, so you can be somewhat flexible in your approach. This seems like a classic combined arms situation. Each combat arm supports the other. The tanks are the best weapon for dealing with Russian machinegun strongpoints. Indeed, the flammpanzers can make their destruction seem trivial at times. However, the armor is vulnerable to infantry assault in this urban setting, and moreover there are plenty of

antitank guns out there capable of killing them. It is the infantry's job to help clear these guns out for the tanks. The vehicles can also support the infantry assault with lots of smoke. Since every lost German unit increases their needed victory points, it is essential to minimize casualties.

Losing AFVs is especially costly at 6 points apiece. Ideally, I think the German player would like to employ powerful firegroups against the Russian infantry, but to avoid exposure of these important firegroups to the Russian kill stacks, because you never know who will get the drop on whom in those faceoffs. Rather, it is better to let the tanks handle the Russian kill stacks. Meanwhile, the rest of the German infantry can probe to find and destroy the enemy guns. It all sounds so easy sometimes, but in reality risks will have to be taken. Bringing up a tank to deal with a machinegun nest might very well expose it to a hidden antitank gun, or an assault engineer with a DC hoping to kill it in street fighting. If the game were easy, it wouldn't be as much fun, would it? There really aren't a heck of a lot of places to set up, what with only 3 hexrows available. Given the above Russian setup, let's put together a German plan to deal with it. Again, I have no delusions of grandeur about the quality of this attack plan. It is merely a guideline for discussion.

aE2: 8-0, 3x467

aE3: 8-0, 3x467

aF2: flammpanzer CA->6

aF3: 9-1, LMG, 468, 2xMMG, 2x468

aG2: DC, 248

aE5: StuH42 CA->5, 247

aF5: flammpanzer CA->5, DC, 248

cE1: StuH42 CA->5, 8-1, 2xLMG, 2x838, 467

cE2: StuH42 CA->5, 9-2, 2xHMG, 2x468, MMG, 468

cF1: DC, 248

cE4: 8-1, 2xLMG, 2x838, 467

cE5: flammpanzer CA->5, 2x467, 247

cF5: 8-0, DC, 248, LMG, 468, 468

cG4: 7-0, 467

Here again you see my philosophy of giving the support weapons to the units with the highest morale. I also deploy the maximum number of squads at start, using the 248s for the DCs. I'd rather use them because I don't want to break down any of those powerful 838s if I don't have to. The tanks are all hiding somewhat in buildings and woods. Although they are not completely hidden, I am not too worried about Russian guns hitting them in their setup locations. For one thing, the buildings give them extra TEM, and for another it would be quite a bold setup indeed for the Russian to have his guns so far forward that they could hit these tanks. The risk to him probably isn't worth the reward. There are 9.5 squads for the east flank, 7.5 squads in the middle, and 9 on the west flank. There really isn't room here to mass most of my strength against one side, so it'll be fairly evenly distributed. The general idea is to start out the attack very deliberately, probing for weaknesses. When they are found they should be exploited, and it shouldn't be too terribly hard to shift the axis of attack somewhat since the distances are so deceptively short on these deluxe boards.

Each of the 8-1 leaders has a 467 stacked with him that he can attempt to deploy in the first rally phase to obtain extra scout half squads. Whether you do this or not depends on your play style, but in this case it could work well to have scouting half squads "bumping" Russian concealment while backed up by massive firegroups directed by skilled leaders. The StuH 42s are in position to put Smoke in a variety of places, including the front line just a couple of hexes in front of them. I'm not sure whether this is really worthwhile at this time, as it may be better to save that Smoke capability for the Russian guns when they are revealed, or the Russian machinegun nests. The big kill stacks led by the 9-2 and 9-1 could either fire at likely concealed targets in the first Prep Fire, or Opportunity Fire instead, hoping to use their full firepower against Russians that lose their concealment for whatever reason on the first turn. The latter approach may be better, since we suspect that many of the units on the front line are dummy stacks. Scouting half squads could run right through building aC5-aB4 for example, revealing targets for the 9-1. This building could be a very hot place since all the Russian big machineguns can hit it. Half squads could also run through the lumberyard on board c,

exposing targets for Mister 9-2 and his orchestra. The first line squads in aE2 and aE3 are poised to take control of the aD2 building. The flammpanzers are ready to exploit on each flank if the opportunity presents itself, using bypass to get at those pesky Russians. A third flammpanzer is on standby to move in and roast the Bolschy machinegun nests in the center once the area is declared tank-safe, or the need just becomes too great. One of the StuH42s could easily move to aD5 in order to start taking the big Russkie stacks under direct fire. Although this may expose a tank to some AT fire, it may still be worth it.

In general, there shouldn't be any need to be impatient. The philosophy of taking what's available while avoiding taking casualties as much as possible could pay off. As Russian units are forced to reveal themselves, they should be cut up and destroyed by the German kill stacks. It is probably a good idea to always try to keep a concealed German unit or two in each area of attack. This will help protect against ambush while also threatening ambush on the Russians. Moreover it will keep him guessing somewhat about your units. Do not be too impatient with the DCs. Keeping concealed DC units just behind the advance can be very worthwhile. When you really want to force your enemy to fire, there's nothing like a DC team coming straight at him to catch his attention. Often I move these teams up with no real intention of placing the DC, just to see if my opponent will fire at them and thereby open up some other avenue for some units that I *really* want to get to a particular spot.

As long as the German infantry stays in good terrain, they should be okay for the most part. If they break there will almost always be a leader not very far to the rear to rally them and get them back into the fight quickly. The same cannot be said for the Russians. The flammpanzers should be used wisely. Because their main armaments are X11 weapons, you can only realistically expect about a half dozen shots from them before they are recalled. You want to make their shots count, not waste them on a broken half squad. On the other hand, they really must be used at some point. They are simply the most effective weapons the Germans have. Consider that during its Movement Phase one of these monsters can stop and fire at an adjacent enemy on the 30 column, ignoring TEM. That's devastating. There's a really good chance of achieving a KIA outright. The Russian kill stacks should be considered the best target for these flames, although they will likely be well protected by antitank assets, so be careful. As the game goes on, however, be on the lookout for important Russian units that become exposed without proper antitank support. These units can then be summarily burned out.

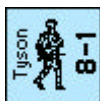
There isn't much you can do about the Russian sniper, but there are a couple of things you can try. First, you can put your own sniper between the enemy's and your 9-2, in lower TEM than your leader. This will make it somewhat more likely that your sniper will absorb a hit or two first. Second, you could detail a 247 to sniper duty, where he does essentially the same thing. As the game wears on, you can move your 9-2 away from the enemy sniper and put less valuable units in its way. In general, stacking leaders with squads should increase their chance of surviving a sniper attack due to the random selection process. If you get a chance to knock the enemy SAN down by a point, you may want to seriously consider taking it.

Conclusion

This scenario is relatively straightforward and brutal. Each side is simply trying to destroy the enemy while preserving its own strength, with an added goal for the attacker of penetrating enemy lines. Both sides have plenty of options, and the general mayhem that ensues ought to satisfy most ASL fanatics. The ROAR web-based record lists the balance of this scenario as 15-9 in favor of the Germans as of this writing, suggesting that they might have a slight edge. Perhaps that is due to the tremendous power of the flamethrowing tanks. Still I'd play either side. I hope this discussion has gotten you interested in this great scenario. I'd love to read your "After Action Reports" in Banzai!! if you play it.

After Action Report

DASL 7 - With Flame and Shell



Sam Tyson

Germans: Sam Tyson

Russians: Steve Withers

I was sent a copy of Matt Shostak's analysis of this scenario, and it really sounded like it would be a blast to play. Steve Withers and I have developed a regular gaming session using VASL, and I suggested that we play this scenario. He readily agreed after looking at the scenario card, and so we decided to play it. We diced for sides, and I came out with the Germans. This is a detailed report, including most of the highlights from each turn.

Russian Setup: Steve set up the Russian defense in two main areas. The main line of resistance (MLR) appeared to be across the forward edge of the two full boards, about 6 hexes away from my setup area. Eleven different locations contained Russians in this forward group, and they were all at level 0. The rear guard was close to the Exit edge, and again spread across both boards. It looked like it was going to be a slugfest early in the game, with the German infantry trying to disperse the defensive front and expose the six guns that were using HIP.

German Setup: The Germans have a narrow setup area, so the options were somewhat limited. I split my forces up into three groups, all roughly equal in size and strength. I set up the top group behind the aC2 building, planning for initial concealment and cover for the movement phase. The middle group was set up in the aE5 and cE1 buildings, ready to push down the middle of the boards. The lower group was set up behind the lumberyard, ready to use the buildings and woods as cover.

German Turn 1: I placed smoke in the bB4 hex with a StuH, and probed the board a and c hexes for hidden Russian troops. My infantry was able to advance to hexrow B on board c, and occupy all the building hexes on board a. One HS was sent all the way to aA4 woods, and did not encounter any enemy units up to that point. The biggest event of this player turn was a 76L in dM2 taking out a Flammpanzer in aC1 as it tried to move up and support the right flank. We used the wrong TK number, but did not realize until later in the game, and it was too late to reverse the error. The other significant action saw a second 76L malfunction on its first shot. I also broke two Russian 4-4-7 squads, one with an ATR, which were behind the wall in dM3. I was down 6 CVP after my first turn, but my troops were well positioned across the playing area for a strong advance.

Russian Turn 1: Steve skulked as much as he could, and left me with few shots. It was my turn to malf a gun, which I promptly did on a StuH. Steve advanced back into most of his original positions, and forward in a couple of other places.

German Turn 2: At this point things began to get intense, as the forces started to bump into each other. I aggressively used scouting half-squads to bump concealment in a few places, and suffered a few bruises in the process. But I needed to know what I was up against, and knew it would be worth it in the long run. Besides, ample German leadership was available to rally the units that were broken. Steve unveiled his HIP units in a big trap in bC2, consisting of a 4-5-8/HMG, 4-5-8/LMG, and a 8-1 leader. They fired on a stack of Germans that had made their way to bB2, ADJACENT to his cleverly placed trap. Two broken half-squads and a broken leader had to retreat, but at least I had discovered all of his potential HIP units. Steve reveals his last 76L in the DF phase, and tried to finish off the remaining units in bB2, but to no avail. Advancing fire broke the previously HIP units and wounded the 8-1 leader, and they all scurried back to bE2. Almost all of my forces were at or over the line between the boards, so the advance was moving along well after 2 turns. All three 76Ls were revealed, with only 1 AFV as a casualty.

Russian Turn 2: Steve again skulked, so not much happened this turn. His 76Ls had no effect on my infantry, and I did not get any decent shots in the DF phase.

German Turn 3: A big turn for me. Lots of infantry smoke, good movement, ineffective defensive fire, and strong advancing fire all played a part in a very successful German turn. One 76L crew and accompanying squad were broken and forced to rout upstairs in a building, where they quickly became prisoners. The Russians in the center of the map retreated under the pressure of the German advance, and the other 76L malfunctioned, then became locked up in melee. Steve did take out a second vehicle that had gotten ahead of the infantry. I had tried to cut the rout path of a unit, and paid the price. The tank was hull down and beyond an orchard, but Steve made the rolls count when he needed them and got a turret hit followed by a kill. I also lost a HS this turn, but Steve lost six HS units and a 8-0 leader. All 3 Russian 76L guns had been taken care of, but not without some cost.

Russian Turn 3: See Russian turns 1 and 2. Steve again skulked and retreated, and the German FP punished a few units left as targets.

German Turn 4: This was the highlight turn of the game for Steve. The German onrush continued, but two big events had to give Steve some small satisfaction for a change. I again got careless with a StuH, and tried to use the sD in front of my troops. I moved it and stopped next to a hidden 45LL, which promptly flamed my overaggressive vehicle. The first 45LL also had its moment in the spotlight, with a ROF spree from hell. First it pinned two units, then immobilized a Flammpanzer in dN3, changed its CA, and finally toasted a stack of adjacent units, leaving two broken half-squads remaining from a stack of three full squads. But advancing fire cast a shadow over these two strongpoints, and the guns were both abandoned by the end of the turn. So after 3.5 turns, 5 of the 6 Russian guns were out of action, but I was down two only two mobile vehicles, and only one had a functioning MA. I had captured two crews and two half-squads so far, and wiped out everything in my path up to the dJ/bE hexrow. Approximate VP count at this point was 33 for the Germans to 20 for the Russians, with three AT guns waiting to be captured for another 12 CVP.

Russian Turn 4: At this point I had broken through the main line of resistance. Steve moved most of his units back to set up a second defensive line, to make it hard for me to achieve any Exit VP.

German Turn 5: Now cautious of the final AT gun, I pushed forward only using infantry. I managed to cut off and capture four more units, and established a front across both boards just behind the road that runs across the map, all without incurring any more casualties on my side.

Russian Turn 5: Steve and I exchanged shots across the road, but I had the manpower to risk a few breaks here and there. Every time Steve dropped concealment to shoot he was doing me a favor. There were five turns left to go at this point, so I was happy to trade shots and chip away at the Russian troops.

German Turn 6: The highlight for this turn came from a well-placed DC. Steve had a stack in the woods in bJ0, consisting of two concealed squads and a wounded leader. A HS moved into I1 and placed the DC into J0. Steve tried to break or pin the HS, but could not get it done. When the DC went off, the 3mc it generated left all of his units broken, and they all surrendered in the rout phase to the units in I1 and J1 for a 10 VP gain. Prep-fire had killed another squad in M2 on a 1 KIA. I pushed forward with my troops, getting some units across the road for the final assault.

Russian Turn 6: Steve anchored his defense around the .50 cal, and tried to hang on. Two squads held the flank in bL0, and a few units held tough on the north edge in the B1 building.

German Turn 7: Again, I was happy to trade shots, and gain ground in the advance phase. I stayed away from the .50 cal, since I did not need to risk the exposure. Not much happened this turn, but the end was near. After 6.5 turns, the VP count stood at 70 to 22.

Russian Turn 7: The Russians again skulked and repositioned, trying to survive long enough to earn a few more CVP.

German Turn 8: I gambled a bit here, moving a large stack, and successfully got Steve to reveal his last 45LL gun. He got a CH on my stack, and broke the leader and two squads, but I learned where his gun

was located. That allowed me to drive my last StuH off the board, narrowly avoiding a street-fighting nightmare as Steve boxed a PAATC attempt for a squad guarding the road on board b.

Russian Turn 8: The Russians initiated a small counterattack, in an attempt to at least go down fighting. Steve placed a couple of DCs and broke a few of my units, but did not have enough manpower to do much damage elsewhere. Steve conceded at this point, and the game was over.

Aftermath: The German firepower was dominant from early on in the scenario. Steve had a strong forward line of resistance, but when it crumbled, the Russians had trouble trying to avoid taking additional casualties. Any units that were bold enough to attack the Germans usually were dealt a bigger return blow in return. The Germans were able to push the Russians back, and had little difficulty in achieving victory. The dice were not kind to Steve either, as he counted 16 boxcars against only 5 snake-eyes among the Russian dice results.

Player Profile: Jeff Toreki



As a result of growing up in a family that had members serving in the military, particularly my grandfather, I've always had an interest in the history of things military and technology related. I've also always had a fascination for games of skill of all kinds, including sports, pool, and strategy board/computer games. So



naturally, I was interested when I saw my first wargame. I saw *Panzer Leader* (PL) in a mall game store when I was about 11 and absolutely had to have it, but had to wait a couple of months until I had saved enough money (sixteen bucks was a lot of money for an 11 year old at that time!!) and could convince my mom to go back to that particular mall. When I finally got it I was not disappointed, as I read and reread the rules and the scenarios. Unfortunately, I could not find an opponent, so I played all the scenarios solitaire. I tried to get my best friend to play, but he did not have the patience or the interest in the history. I also tried to get my grandfather to play, but I don't think he understood that it was just a game that one could use as a tool to learn a bit of history. I remember him saying something like "We beat those G#\$%&*@ Krauts once, why the hell do we need to do it again?" [NOTE – no offense intended here, he was a pilot in the RAF and hard feelings sometimes understandably linger. I was just trying to make clear how frustrating it is when your usual game opponent/grandfather yells at you for suggesting something to play.] Needless to say, I didn't make any more attempts to get him to play PL. We just stuck to Draughts, chess, and cribbage. Once I had solitaire-d-out on PL, I moved on to other wargames during Middle and High School. Some of these included *Panzerblitz*, *B-17*, *Ambush* and its add-ons, *Bismarck*, and a few non-AH wargames. I noticed an ad for ASL (*Beyond Valor*, actually) in 1985 in an issue of *The General* and was keenly interested, but alas, I gave up hope after reading details of the game – it just looked too hard to learn on one's own and too difficult to solitaire. When I went to college in 1987, I met a guy named Mark Sanchez at the UT Gaming society meeting. He and another fellow were playing a game of *Squad Leader* (*Block Busting in Bobruisk*, I believe it was.) I started watching and was hooked immediately. I found a copy of SL at a Michael's store, and we managed to play a couple of SL scenarios before I got caught up in school and we lost touch. So for a few more years I had no opponents, but I managed to solitaire most of the SL and a few of the *Cross of Iron* scenarios. In about 1989, I managed to convince a good friend who is a WWII history buff to play a few games of SL with the intention of moving on to ASL, but he did not have the patience for The Game. During this time, I acquired the ASLRB, BV, RB, and *Yanks* with intentions of actually using them. After my friend lost interest, I still could not find opponents and my ASL stuff languished unused in a closet. I had given up hope on ever finding opponents for board wargames and moved to solitaire specific and computer games and other hobbies such as model railroading. Since I had gotten into model railroading, I visited

King's Hobby on a frequent basis for supplies and would occasionally peruse the wargames, wistfully wishing I knew someone else who was interested.

In 1996, I happened to notice an early edition of *Banzai!!* next to the ASL stuff at King's. What was this?!? You mean there are actually people in this town who play this game?!? People, as in more than one, as in a club??? I was blown away and my life hasn't been the same since. I called Matt Shostak soon after seeing this and promptly scheduled a game with him. He proceeded to kick my ass soundly, but I'd never had more fun losing a game. For the next year or so, getting my ass kicked by everyone was the accepted norm, but I was having a blast and I was learning from some of the top players.

Some advice for the newbies out there: I'm still new enough to this game to remember this, but patience is most certainly a virtue, if not a requirement for ASL. I think I got creamed in my first ten or so scenarios. It can certainly be frustrating when you feel like you're never going to win a game. However, one has to understand that there is a rather large learning curve to this game and you cannot expect to beat experienced players early in your career. In my opinion, it takes playing approximately 25 scenarios to just master the basic rules of the system and get a feel for how things work out in the framework of a scenario. From that point, you can begin to fine tune things like playing style and strategies. For the first 25 games, I suggest playing a wide variety of opponents to get some exposure to various playing styles. Playing experienced guys can certainly teach you a lot, but playing other beginners can give you some end-game experience and maybe a win or two to keep your confidence up.

Thanks to the experience of playing the guys in the central Texas area and attending a few tournaments, I now feel confident going into a scenario that I'll at least be able to make the outcome somewhat close against most players. I highly recommend attending a tournament if you haven't before. I've now been to three in Austin and two out of town tournaments, and they were all a blast. Tourneys are a great way to get some intensive gaming in and also meet lots of people with the same obsessions... – umm, hobby, as yourself. Some of the highlights of my ASL experience are winning the team trophy at the Austin tourney in 1997 with David Hailey, winning the States Trophy at the '98 WWF with Matt Shostak and Mike Seningen, and winning team (with Andy Milder) and 10-3 awards at this year's Austin Tourney.

While these things are certainly fun and nice to display on your shelf, the main attraction of this game to me is FUN. I have never had as much fun, win or lose, playing any other boardgame. There are just so many cool things that can happen during the course of a scenario, and the game is so well designed that it's even exciting if you're getting your ass kicked. No matter what, the dice always seem to swing back and forth, so usually if you're doing well early on, you can count on things turning against you, and vice-versa. I'm not really sure what kind of style of play I have, if any, but I like to socialize and talk about the events that are unfolding on the cardboard battlefield. I guess I try to adapt my style of play to match my opponents'. That's not to say that I leave the initiative with them, but that I try to figure out their playing styles and be flexible in adapting mine to best counter theirs. I guess most people would say I have a conservative style, but occasionally I try to do things to keep people on their toes. I think I especially keep people on their toes when they play at my house – I've got a Dalmatian named Deacon (A.K.A. The Hound of the Spaskervilles) that requires attention from all my opponents. I think he may even have more fun than I do when I play ASL, especially when Sam Tyson and Kirk Woller come over because he knows they'll play ball with him. I've tried to teach him the finer points of ASL, but he's still stuck on that whole "bypass movement/VBM freeze" reality thing, so we usually just stick to fetch. People say I have home dog advantage, but I've never noticed a statistically significant difference in my home and away records.



I'll talk about a few of my favorite scenarios in the next issue of Banzai!!, so I won't go into detail here, but I will talk here about my favorite kinds of scenarios. For one thing, there are only a couple of scenarios I've played that were not fun to play due to lameness of the scenario itself. Most all of the scenarios I've played so far (about 53 ladder games to date) have been fun to play, even if they were three legged doggies balance wise. Of the stuff that I've played so far, I'd have to say I enjoy the combined arms stuff the best. A good mix of infantry and armor usually gives enough options to make a scenario interesting and give it replay value. I enjoy playing scenarios from all theatres of the war and I like to try my hand at different nationalities also, but I'd have to say my favorite scenarios are usually Russian/German slugfests. The sheer scope and intensity of the Russian Front has always intrigued me, so I tend to be drawn to those scenarios more than others. However, I'm just now getting into the PTO in a big way, having played four scenarios in the past few months, so I'm gravitating toward those scenarios now. I've never played a Campaign Game other than the first day of the DTW module, so that's another facet of ASL I'm looking forward to exploring in the near future.

I'd like to extend thanks to Matt Shostak for all his hard work creating the club and the newsletter, for without it I might still not be aware of ASL in Austin. I also think I'm lucky to have a girlfriend, Tracey, that is very accepting (even if not understanding why we do it) and encouraging of my hobbies. I think the future of ASL is bright in Texas, as we have a strong and growing group of players. Here's to many more years of rolling the bones and pushing the pieces!!

Favorite Scenarios: Chas Smith

It was very difficult to narrow the list of scenarios I like to my top 10. I am listing ten scenarios that I have really enjoyed. I usually prefer combined arms scenarios with a lot of meat giving both sides numerous options. Note that I have discounted the possibility of including any scenarios I have designed. There are definitely a lot of good scenarios that I was not able to get on this list.



The Citadel: This scenario offers a lot to do for both sides. There isn't a lot of armor, but both sides have a large force with numerous options. Technically both sides are attacking, and this one probably will not play the same way twice.

With Flame and Shell: First, I like meaty deluxe scenarios. This scenario offers flame-spewing tanks, armor for both sides, and lots of infantry duking it out over a tight area. There is immediate action and much carnage in this one.

Preparing the Way: This is another tremendous deluxe scenario. It is hard to turn down commanding six Panthers, good infantry, and OBA. The Russians have a tough task in stopping the Germans, but possess the assets and numbers to win by attrition.

Acts of Defiance: I have already played this scenario twice getting both views. It is very fun and balanced. I like the challenges for both sides of defending and trying to cross the bridges. Both sides also have a nice mix of infantry and armor. Success or failure of the Russian OBA and the fight to get across the bridge are huge factors influencing the outcome.

No Farther: This is an excellent scenario, and possibly my favorite. I have played this one twice getting both views. I am really surprised it has seen little play and hasn't received much hype. Both sides have FTs, armor, heavy firepower, and HIP units. Best of all, they are duking it out in Stalingrad, and the fighting is bloody. I also think it is very balanced. It has a lot of replay because of the HIP units and minefields.

Sochazcew: This is the best scenario *Dispatches from the Bunker* has produced. Vic and company did a fine job with this one. The Germans have an awesome and powerful combined arms force. The Poles have some good stuff too, and have the assets to channel the Germans and set

up ambushes. It can also turn into a bloody city fight with buildings rubble by high caliber HE.

Baraque de Fraiture: I was lucky that Todd Hively convinced me to play this one, although it took a while. This scenario has just about everything except air. The flexibility in setup and numerous reinforcements makes for a lot of options and replay value. Both sides have good killer units which makes it very fun. I also think the entire scenario pack is good, but this scenario was worth the price.

Its About Time: Todd also convinced me to play this one. I liked it just as much as BdF. The Germans have some tough challenges with relatively low quality infantry and vulnerable armor. The Brits' key weapon is the Churchill in this one. It is invulnerable to almost all fire and provides the smoke necessary for the infantry. The Brits have a long way to go and a lot to do to win this one though. The scenario came right down to the wire with close combat in the building complex on the hill.

The Commissar's House: I consider this a classic. When I first bought BV, I really didn't have much ftf, and I learned the basics playing this one solitaire a few times. The German infantry force is a dream. Engineers with high firepower and morale, very well-equipped with FTs and DCs. The regular German infantry is also very good, and based on setup could be well-led and armed with MGs. Overall the German leadership is awesome. The Russians don't have the firepower or morale to stand toe to toe with the engineers. They have HIP, booby traps, and numbers to slowly wear down the attackers and hang on to win this. More than likely the Chemist's Shop will fall very early, but you can bet some CC in the Commissar's House will determine the winner.

He Who Hesitates: This scenario probably hasn't seen much play especially since it is in the desert and an all armor AT gun action. This is definitely a great desert battle though. The Brits must make some tough setup choices. Do they set up the Lee tanks to use the bow 75, or setup hull down and lose the 75? The Brits also get reinforcements that come on mid game that can turn this into a wild affair. The test for the Germans is where to set up firing lines and maximize their units. They must also decide what if any forces are going to be tasked with blocking the Brit reserves. The game will have wild swings, and just when you think you are getting whooped, you suddenly have the advantage. I have also played this one from both sides, and would gladly play it again. My best memory is when my Lee took a 75 shot that just got between some smoke and dust and pulverized Jeff Toreki's 88 towing half-track.

If you have not tried any of these scenarios you have missed out. I highly recommend them, as you will have a lot of fun. I would very willingly play any of them again as either side.

The Return of the Weakender (I'm out there on the weak end)

Greg Swantek



I'm gone from the hobby a few short months and Avalon Hill is forced onto the auction block . . . Coincidence? Ponder this: Aren't the good folks at Hasbro concerned mainly with sizing their products so as not to asphyxiate infants? The Wall Street implications of this are nothing short of world-shattering. The sidewalks below the penthouse offices of the big-money Wargames Futures speculators are littered with their impacted corpses. The Japanese, sensing the possible loss of the only WWII-era tactical board gaming system that honors appropriately their warrior tradition, are reluctant to fund any foreign ventures until this cultural slap in the face is rectified. Asia panics; the rest is history. What does all this have to do with me? Not a damn thing. But I did get back on the active list of the Austin ASL club. No longer could I stomach the distant scorn of my former peers; henceforth they must scorn me to my face. I took on Sam "Of Course I Have Chilled Steins" Tyson, a Philadelphia Flyers fan (I was suckered in by that old Flyers'-fan line: "Sure, I'll brush my teeth this week"). Sam lives out near the edge of civilization, more commonly known as Leander. This would be horribly inconvenient except for the fact that I live about a mile nearer the edge than he (it was the only place

on which I could find a bank injudicious enough to float me a mortgage). The scenario was "Ranger Stronghold," and we managed to knock it out in a couple of evenings. I played the Germans; my task was to eliminate completely the offensive (no pun possible) American presence. This I managed to do in fine style, as surely you will agree once you read this account. Furthermore, the mere fact that you are reading this tells me that you probably are on the toilet at this very moment and likely not going anywhere for a while. So here goes (no pun- please).

On the first turn I decided to attack with my tanks, and through brilliant play (blind luck) I managed to put the Americans in a hole early. Actually, it was several holes, but I digress. I did not have an easy time of it, however, as I had to persevere through much hardship (I rolled rate so many times my wrists cramped) and endure several bitter setbacks (I had to set back from the bitters I was drinking and remark upon my favorable dice). Sam was a good sport about it though, and he did keep his promise about the teeth brushing. With this favorable reintroduction to the wonderful world of ASL, I was looking forward to a bright gaming future. What I got was a miserable drive across two counties in the pissing rain only to be railroaded into play-testing a vehicle-rich scenario against another beginner, and between us we managed to complete exactly three-quarters of a game turn. Perhaps I doth whine too much; my opponent, Carl, drove in from Fredericksburg and had a much better attitude than I. Perhaps I should look upon it as a learning experience, and be grateful for the opportunity to interact with others in the hobby. Perhaps monkeys will fly out of my butt. The most perplexing thing, though, is why Chas would design a scenario the historical outcome of which resulted in such an utter defeat to his beloved Germans. I believe he is suffering from a wargamer's version of the painful jealousy of a jilted lover, known to psychiatric professionals as "Krautlash." The only cure is to helm the Germans in the ahistorical but nonetheless amusing scenario "To The Glue Factory- Jagdtigers vs. the Polish Cavalry." Our prayers are with you, Chas.

In keeping with the format of our newsletter, I offer this player profile of The Weakender: One could say that I've been wargaming all my life. As a child with an older sibling, I was forced to develop my defensive ability at an early age. Luckily, I had a younger sibling on which to develop my offensive capabilities. As I grew to be a normal young lad, I soon became obsessed with BB guns and building then blowing up models. This progressed, quite naturally, to an obsession with real guns, real vehicles, and real explosions. It didn't take long to realize that wargaming was a cheaper (and safer) way to indulge my passion for military history. Unfortunately, I am afflicted by a fascination for odd conflicts in remote places. I have nearly uncontrollable urges to design a grand tactical game of the entire Crimean campaign of 1854-5; I actually believe that there is a market for a strategic computer simulation of the French and Indian War. So why WWII? Four words: SS heavy tank battalion. The first "wargame" I purchased was SPI's *Agincourt*. It looked like a good way to spank a lot of French; but I was young and not yet had learned of the glories of the western European springtime, circa 1940. My favorite non-wargame: Hockey. My favorite wargame: Hockey. My favorite computer game: Pong. Thing I like most about ASL: It develops my tweezer skills. Thing I like least about ASL: Getting waxed (figuratively, you perverts) by Matt. Nationality most suited to my playing style: SS Auxiliaries (brutalizing helpless populations). Now for the merciful yet revelatory conclusion to this installment from the Weakender; the real reason our esteemed Mr. Shostak has passed the editorial torch has been to avoid the mental anguish he would suffer were he to be proven wrong, as surely he would, in continuing to argue his erroneous position vis-à-vis The Weakender on the raging "appurtenance-appertenance" controversy. That is all.

Club Notes

Club Meeting Recaps

Two weeks prior to our tournament Bret Smith hosted a club meeting at his place in Houston. It was a good chance to prepare for the upcoming tourney and meet some of the Houston guys. Mike Seningen, Jeff Toreki, Eric Gerstenberg, and Matt Shostak all made the trip to do cardboard battle with the Houstonites. Representing Houston were Bret Smith of

course, Doyle Motes, Tom Gillis, Jay Harms, Andy Blozinski, and RJ Mate. Doyle and Matt locked horns in a game of Swamp Cats from the new *Action Pack #2*, with Matt's Germans prevailing. Mike Seningen used his Pershing tank to great effect to defeat Jay Harms in Ace in the Hole, also from *Action Pack #2*. Two games of Cream of the Crop had opposite results. Toreki was able to captain the Russians to a win over his arch-rival Gerstenberg, while Seningen's Germans toppled Smith's Russians, despite apparently showing up to the battle with no ammo for the StuGs. Tom Gillis and RJ Mate journeyed to the Spanish Civil War for Italian Brothers, with RJ grabbing the honors. RJ also lost a tight game of The Puma Prowls to Toreki. Blozinski's Russians stopped Smith's Germans cold in Urban Guerrillas, and Seningen's Russians overwhelmed Shostak's Germans in a playtest for Chas Smith's next project.

Several other smaller gatherings took place since the last newsletter, and the results of those matchups can be found in the ladder standings section of this newsletter.

Biweekly Lunch Gathering!

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

Club Ladder

Our Humble Club Ladder (through Jun. 28, 1999)

Player	Points	Record	(Inactive players not listed)
Chas Smith	1640	56-13	
Mike Seningen	1620	53-18	
Matt Shostak	1605	75-22	
Jeff Toreki	1564	36-19	
Tom Lavan	1170	6-3	
Bob Purnell	1102	16-11	
Jay Harms	1093	4-2	
Andy Milder	1076	18-31	
David Hailey	1061	21-23	
Doyle Motes	1055	3-2	
Steve Desrosiers	1042	2-1	
Sam Tyson	1038	6-13	
Jeff Toney	1023	1-1	
Eric Gerstenberg	1021	29-45	
Greg Swantek	1018	7-8	
Kirk Woller	1005	34-52	
Walter Eardley	1001	2-3	
Ed Mott	994	1-5	
Mike Sosa	992	0-1	
Carl Kusch	987	8-15	
Steve Eckhart	972	2-4	
Neal Ague	971	1-2	
Duane Blocker	967	0-1	
James Rex	961	0-1	
Matt Scheffrahn	959	0-2	
Russell Mueller	946	0-3	
Glen Gray	943	1-3	
Matt Schwoebel	927	4-7	
Jack O'Quin	920	9-19	
Brian Roundhill	916	0-4	
Aaron Schwoebel	909	5-15	
Bret Smith	897	1-6	
Dave Morgenthaler	889	0-4	
Jim Knatcher	849	0-8	
Mike Austin	791	1-10	

Recent Results

(Send ladder reports to Matt Shostak at mbs@zycor.lgc.com)

Toreki (Brit) def Tyson (Germ) in Royal Marines
 K Woller (Russ) def Milder (Germ) in Guryev's Headquarters
 Smith (Germ) def Mott (Amer) in Canicatti
 Shostak (Chin) def Gerstenberg (Jap) in Slow and Steady
 Toreki (Russ) def K Woller (Germ) in Urban Guerillas
 Gerstenberg (Amer) def Kusch (Germ) in The T-Patchers
 Toney (Pol) def B Smith (Germ) in Bloody Harvest
 Seningen (Amer) def Purnell (Jap) in Mayhem in Manila
 Milder (Brit) def B Smith (Germ) in Going to Church
 Seningen (Germ) def Toney (Russ) in Desantniki
 O'Quin (Russ) def Roundhill (Germ) in Urban Guerillas
 Kusch (Germ) def Toreki (Amer) in Tabacchificio Fioche
 Seningen (Germ) def Roundhill (Russ) in Urban Guerillas
 Lavan (Germ) def Hailey (Brit) in Ring of Fire
 C Smith (Amer) def Mott (Germ) in From Bad to Wuerselen
 Toreki (Germ) def K Woller (Russ) in The Citadel
 Toreki (Germ) def Kusch (Amer) in Tabacchificio Fioche
 Kusch (Germ) def O'Quin (Amer) in Scouts Out
 Toreki (Amer) def Gerstenberg (Germ) in Rocket's Red Glare
 Eckhart (Brit) def Rex (Germ) in Turning the Tables
 Purnell (Amer) def K. Woller (Ital) in AP16, Danger Forward.
 Purnell (Amer) def K. Woller (Germ) in KE14, Another Day, Another Field.
 K Woller (Russ) def Gerstenberg (Germ) in Urban Guerillas
 Toreki (Russ) def Gerstenberg (Germ) in Cream of the Crop
 Seningen (Germ) def B Smith (Russ) in Cream of the Crop
 Seningen (Amer) def Harms (Germ) in Ace in the Hole
 A Schwoebel (Russ) def M Schwoebel (Germ) in RB CGII
 Toreki (Germ) def Eckhart (Russ) in Storm of Steel
 K Woller (Germ) def Purnell (Part) in Sylvan Death
 Hailey (Germ) def Gray (Brit) in A Desperate Affair
 Harms (Germ) def Motes (Amer) in Inhumaine
 Shostak (Russ) def Eardley (Germ) in Cream of the Crop
 Gray (Germ) def Harms (Poles) in An Uncommon Occurrence
 Tyson (Germ) def Milder (Russ) in Cream of the Crop
 Toreki (Germ) def Mueller (Amer) in The T-Patchers
 Seningen (Russ) def Gerstenberg (Germ) in Slaughter at Krutik
 B Smith (Amer) def Roundhill (Germ) in A Breezeless Day
 Motes (Russ) def Hailey (Germ) in Swamp Cats
 Motes (Ital) def Eardley (Brit) in A High Price to Pay
 Harms (Brit) def M Schwoebel (Ital) in A High Price to Pay
 Milder (Ital) def Hailey (Russ) in Bridge to Nowhere
 Seningen (Germ) def Mueller (Russ) in Before the Storm
 Shostak (Germ) def B Smith (Pol) in Round One
 Eardley (Brit) def Gray (Germ) in Franzen's Roadblock
 Tyson (Amer) def Gerstenberg (Germ) in Patton's Prayers
 A Schwoebel (Germ) def Kusch (Amer) in Patton's Prayers
 M Schwoebel (Fren) def Kusch (Germ) in Strangers in a Strange Land
 Harms (Germ) def A Schwoebel (Fren) in Strangers in a Strange Land
 Milder (Germ) def Gray (Amer) in Ace in the Hole
 Motes (Fren) def Tyson (Germ) in Strangers in a Strange Land
 Harms (Germ) def Motes (Amer) in The Attempt to Relieve Peiper
 Hailey (Brit) def Gerstenberg (Germ) in Bring up the Boys
 Seningen (Brit) def Shostak (Jap) in Broken Bamboo
 Toreki (Germ) def O'Quin (Russ) in Hill 253.5
 Tyson (Germ) def Hailey (Amer) in Probing the Villas
 Kusch (Amer) def B Smith (Germ) in Lash Out
 Eardley (Jap) def Mueller (Amer) in The Jungleers
 Seningen (Russ) def O'Quin (Germ) in The Puma Prowls
 Kusch (Germ) def Eardley (Russ) in Udamik Bridgehead
 Toreki (Germ) def Tyson (Amer) in Black Jack is Back
 Shostak (Both) def Milder (Both) in Over Open Sights
 Hailey (Jap) def B Smith (Amer) in Ninety Minute War
 Milder (Germ) def O'Quin (Russ) in The Puma Prowls
 Toreki (Rep) def Seningen (Nat) in Los Ejercitos Nuevos

This Happened to Me



Jeff Toreki

The Austin Tourney was a ton of fun this year, as tourneys always are. Kudos to TD Mike Seningen for all the hard work, and to his company for hosting the tourney. It was a great location and hopefully we'll all be allowed back next year. We had a good turnout with lots of guys from Austin, Houston, and Dallas showing up to do cardboard battle.

Sam Tyson and I started early with an unofficial warmup game Friday morning by playtesting a Norwegian vs. German Scenario that Chas Smith is developing. My Germans were able to overcome Sam's Norwegians and we then packed up and headed to the tourney site.

Officially started the Tourney Friday night with *The T-Patchers* against Russell Mueller (who won the tourney a few years ago) from Dallas and it was a pretty cool scenario with Russell's Texans attacking my Germans in good defensive terrain on board 41. It started ugly for me as Russell's killer stack with .50cal and a Sherman took out my concealed overwatch position with my HMG. I never could make use of my HMG the whole game, that thing was like a hot potato as every squad that tried to pick it up and put it to use was hammered (including a fanatic 468 - damn!). My other infantry fared much better and was able to slow most of his guys down. The StuGs did a good job as well KO'ing three of the Ami tanks. After the 3rd Sherman was knocked out, Russell conceded as he was only four CVP from reaching the cap and I still had a lot of guys in the way of the victory area. Coolest event: Russell got a 1MC on one of my 467s, I roll snakes for HOB, subsequent roll of a 12 to Disrupt. Since I had a leader adjacent that was going to advance in and try to rally him in the next turn, Russell decided to shoot at him again to reduce him. 2 check this time, I think, snakes for Heat again, this time he battle hardens and generates a Hero to boot! Bizarro. Fun little scenario, I highly recommend it if you haven't played it - it's got really good replay potential as there are numerous options for both sides. Got to sleep real late (4am) as we had sat around watching the other games and talking.

Saturday I played Jack O'Quin all day and part of the night in *Hill 253.9* or something like that I think. While it turned out to be much bigger than we had first thought it would be, it was a total blast of a scenario to play. Smashmouth ASL at its finest, with Russians and Germans playing 'King of the Hill' in a Kursk setting. Both sides have the proverbial kitchen sink to hurl at each other in this one. The Russkies get tons of mines and wire, HIP guns, and reinforcing armor and infantry. The Germans get some great troops with TWO -2 leaders, 2 Panthers, and an Elephant. Both sides get air support, OBA, FTs, and DCs. This was a brutal struggle as my Germans got hung up on Jack's Russian fortifications and AT guns in the early going. It was not looking too good for a while, as I had one immobilized Panther, an Elephant bogged on wire for about 3 turns, and a Panther stuck in an AT minefield for about 3 turns also. Jack's reinforcements were coming on, so I had to get the Panther in the mines up on the hill to fight the KVs. I drove a HT into the minefield the Panther was sitting in to try to hopefully learn something about the strength of the minefield (he'd rolled a 5 or 6 when the Panther had entered it) and he rolled a one to immob. the HT. Knowing nothing new, I decided I had to risk moving the Panther out if I was going to be able to oppose his armor. I started successfully and moved out - Jack rolled a 2 on the minefield roll and my heart was about to pound out of my chest until he said it was my lucky day and the strength was only a 1. Phew!!! I think that was the closest I've come to actual heart failure while playing this damn game, and there have been many close games in the past. This Panther and the German OBA carried the day as their one-two punch prevented the Russian tank and infantry reinforcements from successfully regaining the 2nd level hill. Coolest (of many) event from this one: My Stukas were able to shoot down a Russian FB in a swirling dogfight that lasted several CC Phases. Awesome scenario - I'd play it again any day and Jack is one of the nicest opponents I've ever played.

Sunday morning, I was really tired and burnt-out, but by the time I had showered and eaten some breakfast, I was feeling somewhat better, so I decided I'd play a short scenario. I got matched up with Sam Tyson, this time "officially", for a game from the SSII Pack called *Blackjack is Back*.

BTW, we found the errata for it and the boards that are depicted in the pictures are the ones to use. We didn't get very far into the game when my tanks went on a rampage and KO'd four of Sam's five American AFVs, so he conceded as he only had one Sherman with a short 75 left to oppose my StuG and two Panthers. His infantry had done really well up to that point, but the Panthers would probably have made it really difficult for them to continue. Cool event: A Panther took out a 76L Sherman in BFF, got rate, moved to a new position, and took out the other 76L Sherman with the next shot. First time I think I've ever gotten ROF in BFF-and KO'd two tanks as well. As we didn't get very far, I'd still like to try this one again sometime, I think it has good potential.

Well, at that point Mike Seningen said I would have to play him for the championship, since he and I were undefeated and there was still time to play. I was really shagged out and asked him (not too jokingly) if he'd just like to dice for it. I was not up for another game, especially against Mike, cause I knew he'd kick my ass, but everyone else convinced me to play and not wuss out. Matt helped us choose a short scenario called *Ejercitos Nuevos*, I think. It was definitely different, as it was a Spanish Civil War scenario with Nationalist partisan troops against Republican (Italian Black Shirt) troops fighting for a hill with no cover other than Foxholes (all woods were brush by SSR.) Same concept as *Hill 253.5*, but this time the troops were fighting with pillows instead of sledgehammers. I diced him pretty badly early in the game, but he did a great job to come back really strong and rush the hell out of the hill. It ended up being pretty close at the end, but somehow I held on and pulled off the win. Cool Event: One Partisan squid took out a Berserk and a GO Nationalist squad in a HTH melee that lasted about two turns-neither one of us could roll for crap for the first few CC phases of this one.

Wow, I had no thoughts of even competing for the championship at the beginning of the weekend, but somehow I did it. And to top that off, Andy Milder and I won the team championship as well, as he had just won a game while my game with Mike was going on. Way to go, Andy! We both had to win our last games for us to win the team trophy, so it was pretty satisfying when we both did. I'm still in shock!!

See ya next year...

Jeff

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