ASL

in

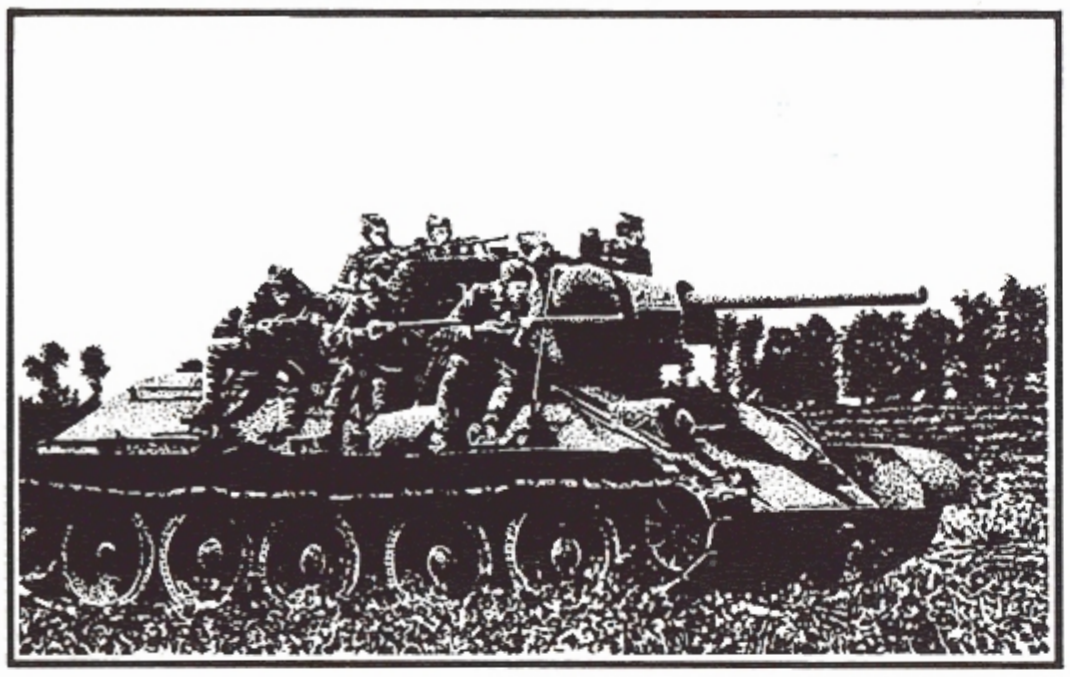
GENERAL

★AVALON HILL

WORLD'S PREMIERE MAGAZINE DEALING EXCLUSIVELY WITH AVALON HILL/VICTORY GAMES

ASSAULT ON ROUND TOP

SCENARIO 3000



North of RIGA, 31 September 1944: It is a little known fact of geography that to the west of Leningrad lies a small area that duplicates the terrain near the Pennslyvania town of Gettysburg in exact detail [*thus supporting the Theory of Parallel Topography currently popular among certain wargamers*]. Although bypassed in the initial invasion and fighting of 1941, the Soviet offensive of mid-1944 in the region brought the hill to the fore in the plans of the generals of both sides. Given the order to seize the crest, Cpt. Dukovski was permitted to select the officers to whom would go the honor of liberating this bit of Mother Russia. He was also offered armor support, indicating the desire of STAVKA that he seize the symbolically and strategically important *Emaelijenkai Kaerugeli Vejerxaujaka* without delay. Dukovski gave orders that the attack be launched at dawn on 31 September without artillery preparation to achieve maximum surprise.

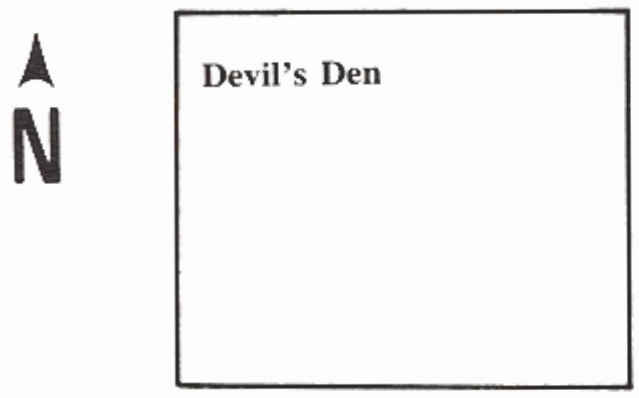
Meanwhile, at dusk the day before, reinforcements for the weary platoon of Lt. Steinheim—currently encamped on the lower slopes—had been dispatched from the panzer division reserves. Picking their way through the fallen timber in the dark, the reinforcements became split into two uneven forces. Worse, some of the equipment was lost through misadventures of various sorts. But their officers drove them on toward where Steinheim's men had taken positions that dominated the field called "Slaughter Pen" (for the annual wrestling matches held there by the nearby villages).

Steinheim, unaware of all this, was enjoying a morning cup of ersatz coffee and a danish with his troops. Huddled around their campfires (the nights were already growing colder than was comfortable), the odd mixture of veteran survivors and teen-aged conscripts hoped the day would be as peaceful as the previous week had been. Conversation was sparse, light-hearted and low. Steinheim did not feel much like chatting himself; he'd spend the week scouting the woods behind his positions for routes of retreat. He knew that if the Russkies came in force, his small but well-fed band could not hope to halt them. In contravention to standing orders, he'd retreat all the way to Berlin if need be to save this handful of men.

As the sun rose, so did the Russians that had crept near. As the enemy troops ran shouting toward the dubious shelter of a series of rail fences, Steinheim and his men leaped to their guns and poured a furious fire into them. The assault on "Round Top" had begun.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

Note that Scenario 3000 uses the mapboard from DEVIL'S DEN (see chart for adaptations of terrain features). Compass points are as shown on the mapboard.



BALANCE:

★ Add one 4-4-7 to each Russian infantry group.

✙ Reduce Game Length to 18 Turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Russian player must have more unbroken squads (or their Equivalent in HS) on Little Round Top (elevation 640+) hexes than the German player has on that level at the conclusion of play.

Terrain Chart

DD Term	Fence	Wall	Crest	Rocky	Rocky Woods	Rough	Rough Woods	Woods	Stream
ASL Term	**Fence**	**Stone Wall**	**Hedge**	**Rocky**	**Rocky-Woods**	**Rough**	**Woods**	**Woods**	**Stream**
LOS Obst/Hind	Half-Level Hindrance*	treat exactly as ASL Wall (B9.)	treat exactly as ASL Hedge (B9.)	■Level 1	■Level 1	■Hindrance	treat exactly as ASL Woods (B13.)	treat exactly as ASL Woods (B13.)	—
TEM/Indirect	+1/0[C]			+2/+1	+2/0	+1/−1			
MF Entry Cost				**MF Entry Cost**					**MF Entry Cost**
Infantry	1+COT			3	3	2			1+COT
Cavalry	1+COT			1/2 C	1/2 C	2			1+COT
Horse-drawn	NA			NA	NA	4			3+COT BB
MP Entry Cost				**MP Entry Cost**					**MP Entry Cost**
Cycle	NA			NA	NA	6			3+COT X
Armored Car	3+COT			NA	NA	2			3+COT BB
Fully-Tracked	1+COT			NA	NA	2			1+COT BB
Bren/Halftrack	2+COT			NA	NA	3			2+COT BB
Truck	4+COT			NA	NA	6B			5+COT BB
Fortifiable	—			no	no	yes			—

Key: COT, BB, X, ■, etc.—see *ASL* Terrain Chart

*Unless the firing unit can claim Wall Advantage along that hexside.

TURN RECORD CHART

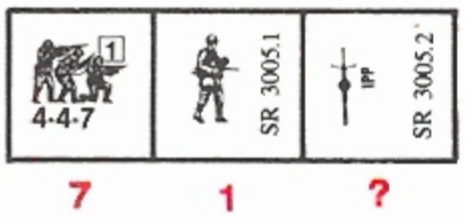
★ Russian Sets Up First	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
★ Russian Moves First	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

Players may find it easier to maintain the turn Record on the Track found on the DEVIL'S DEN mapboard.



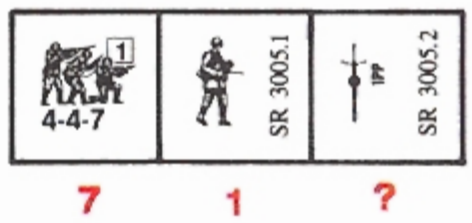
Elements of 112794th Rifle Regiment [ELR:3] set up as per Special Rule 3006: {SAN:2}

Group A



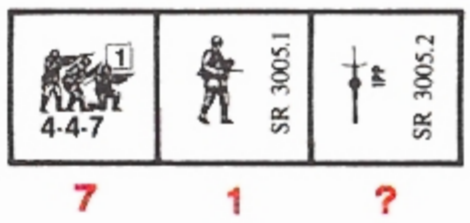
7 1 ?

Group B



7 1 ?

Group C

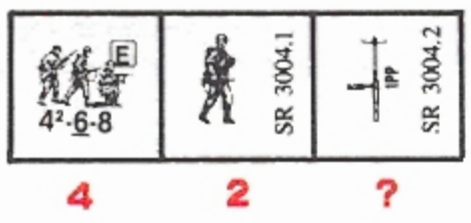


7 1 ?



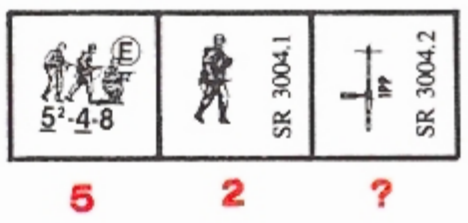
Elements of "Der Scherz" Panzer Division [ELR:3] set up as per Special Rule 3007: {SAN:2}

Group I



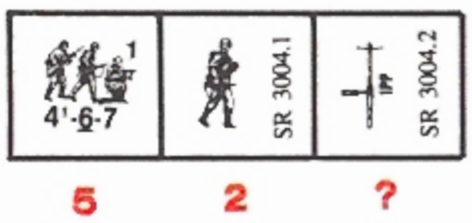
4 2 ?

Group II



5 2 ?

Group III



5 2 ?

SPECIAL RULES:

3001. All rules for *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* are in effect. Optional rules are in effect only if all players agree to such.

3002. To represent the fictional terrain, players must utilize the mapboard from *DEVIL'S DEN*. Compass directions are as shown on the compass symbol found on that map. Terrain equivalents, in *ASL* terms, are found in the "Terrain Chart" on the facing page.

3002.1 Place vehicular Trailbreak counters in hexes 0108, 0208, 0309, 0409 and 0410 so that a continuous "trail" extends from offboard to hex 0411. Place vehicular Trailbreak counters in hexes 1204, 1205, 1206, 1207, 1208 and 1209 so that a continuous trail extends from hex 1203 to hex 1210. All Trailbreak rules are in effect except that vehicular movement is only ¼ MP.

3003. Environmental Conditions are Moderate with no wind at scenario start.

3004. Prior to placement, the German player must determine the leadership and support weapons for each of the three infantry groups shown in his OB. This is by means of random DR. All dice rolls are made in secret, recorded and revealed to the opposing player upon conclusion of play.

3004.1 Roll *twice* for each infantry group, and apply the results to the chart below. Add the specified leaders to each group:

Leader:

DR	Type
2	10-3
3	10-2
4	9-2
5	9-1
6	8-1
7	8-1
8	8-0
9	8-0
10	7-0
11	7-0
12	6+1

3004.2 Roll *twice* for each infantry group, and apply the results to the chart below. Add the specified support weapons to each group:

Support Weapon:

DR	Type
2	FT and 8-3-8 sapper
3	HMG
4	81mm MTR and 2-2-8 crew
5	50mm MTR
6	LMG
7	LMG
8	LMG
9	MMG
10	PSK
11	50mm MTR
12	no weapon

3005. Prior to placement, the Russian player must determine the leadership and support weapons for each of the three infantry groups shown in his OB. This is by means of random DR. All dice rolls are made in secret, recorded and revealed to the opposing player upon conclusion of play.

3005.1 Roll *once* for each infantry group, and apply the results to the chart below. Add the specified leader to each group:

Leader:

DR	Type
2	10-2*
3	10-2
4	9-2
5	9-1
6	8-1
7	8-0
8	8-0
9	8-0
10	7-0
11	7-0
12	6+1

* If a "2" is rolled, roll a single die. If this results in a "1" or "2", the Russian player receives a 10-3 leader instead of the 10-2 specified.

3005.2 Roll *twice* for each infantry group, and apply the results to the chart below. Add the specified support weapons to each group:

Support Weapon:

DR	Type
2	HMG 50cal ("8") and 2-2-8 crew
3	82mm MTR and 2-2-8 crew
4	HMG ("6") and 2-2-8 crew
5	no weapon
6	LMG
7	no weapon
8	50mm MTR and 2-2-8 crew
9	MMG
10	82mm MTR and 2-2-8 crew
11	76* INF Gun and 2-2-8 crew
12	FT and 6-2-8 sapper

3005.3 If a Gun is received, it (and its crew) may *not* use HIP.

3006. The Russian player begins the scenario with all three infantry groups on the mapboard. The three Russian "jump-off" hexes are 0230, 1636 and 3038. At each of these points one group (Russian player's choice) will be set up, maximum of one MMC counter per hex, in a series of connected hexes that includes the "jump-off hex". No Russian unit may be placed east of the fence-line running 0130-2337-3139-2942. Leaders and support weapons must be stacked with a MMC.

3007. The German player begins the scenario with only one infantry group on the mapboard. Roll a die to determine which group will be placed: 1-2, place Group I; 3-4, Group II; 5-6, Group III. The units of the on-board group may be placed in any hex within three hexes of hex 2228. A maximum of one MMC may be placed per hex. Leaders and support weapons must be stacked with a MMC.

3007.1 The remaining two German infantry groups enter play on Turn 1. One group (determined by dr) will enter at hex 0108. The other enters at one of three points, again determined by a dr: 1-2, enter at hex 1202; 3-4, at 2502; 5-6, at 3312.

3008. No HIP (A12.34) is allowed to either side.

3009. *Reinforcements.* During the course of play, each side will receive randomly determined armor reinforcements. These reinforcements must enter upon a DR *less than* the current game turn. Each player makes his DR at the beginning of his own Player Turn Rally Phase.

3009.1 The Russian player must make two such Reinforcement DR—first one for a Tank group, and then one for an Assault Gun group. Should one be received, he will continue to roll as per SSR 3009 until the other arrives.

3009.11 Upon arrival of each armor group, the Russian player makes one dr to determine the point of entry. If a "1-3" is rolled, the vehicles may only enter on any of the hexes numbered **1** on the mapboard (southwest corner); if a "4-6",the vehicles may only enter on any of the hexes numbered **2**.

3009.12 The composition of the Tank group is determined by a random DR (again kept secret and recorded), with the results applied to the following table:

Tank Group:

DR	Type
2	three IS-2m
3	four T-43
4	five T-34/85
5	four T-34/85
6	five T-34 M43
7	four T-34 M43
8	five T-34 M43
9	five KV-1S
10	five T-34/85
11	three IS-2
12	four IS-2

3009.13 The composition of the Assault Gun group is determined by a random DR (kept secret and recorded), with the results applied to the following table:

Assault Guns:

DR	Type
2	one ISU-152 and two SU-85
3	two ISU-122
4	three SU-85
5	two SU-85
6	three SU-76M
7	two SU-76M
8	three SU-76M
9	three SU-76i(g)
10	two SU-85
11	two SU-122
12	two SU-152

3009.2 The German player must make one Reinforcement DR (as per SSR 3009) until the arrival of his Tank Destroyers.

3009.21 Upon arrival of the German armor group, it will enter play directly upon hex 0108—as per standard offboard set up and movement (A2.51)—as though it occupied continuous offboard portions of the Trailbreak. The German player may, however, chose to enter his armor reinforcements on hex 1202 by delaying their entry for one turn.

3009.22 The composition of the Tank Destroyer group is determined by a random DR (kept secret and recorded), with the results applied to the following table:

Tank Destroyers:

DR	Type
2	three JgdPz V
3	three JgdPz IV/70
4	two JgdPz V
5	two JgdPz IV
6	two Hetzer and one Marder II
7	two StuG IIIG and one Marder III(t)M
8	three StuG IIIG
9	three Hetzer
10	three StuG IIIG(L)
11	three JgdPz IV(L)
12	three JgdPz V

3009.23 Upon determining the actual composition of the armor reinforcements, it is necessary that the presence of any German armor leader must be established. The German player makes a single DR on the "leader" table above (see Rule 3005.1). The armor leader indicated is the type received (although a roll of "8+" indicates that *no* armor leader is present with the reinforcements). Note that a "2" DR results in the presence of a 10-2 armor leader (since no 10-3 exists). This leader is entered with the armor in any of the AFV.

3010. The streams on the mapboard are shallow and easily crossed. AFVs must roll for BOG (B20.46) immediately upon crossing a stream hexside. If the vehicle bogs, it is immobilized in the hex it was attempting to enter. See accompanying Terrain Chart for movement costs.

3011. Fires may not be deliberately set.

3012. Concealment may be grown (per A12.12) in the following new terrain types, as well as any currently allowed by the ASL rules: Rocky, Rough, and Rocky-Woods.

AFTERMATH: Among the first to fall was Cpt. Dukovski, whose body was bypassed by the Soviet soldiers now scrambling for cover. But, within moments of Dukovski's death, Lt. Steinheim also fell—picked off by a sniper as he bent to lift a wounded man. Meanwhile, in the confusion of the developing firefight, the German breakfast was forgotten and assaulted by various denizens of the woods in a well-timed rush led by a maddened squirrel reportedly a "Pennsylvania provacateur".

With his commander dead, with the screams of frantic wildlife, with enemy troops rushing across open ground to the north and a sporadic fusilade coming from the Russians hiding behind the fences, an experienced NCO seized the initiative and ordered the surviving Germans to begin a fighting withdrawal through the woods. With the enemy fire from their right flank now stopped, the Russians raced for the foot of the slope that led to "Round Top". Harried by the continuing pressure—Russian soldiers had plunged into the woods behind them—and the trackless woods, the German squads became dispersed and a series of small bitter firefights broke out on the wooded slopes to the south. But one squad managed to slip in among some rocks bordering the open field in the valley to the south.

The first chatter of automatic fire from these Germans broke the impetus of the Russian rush, as men tumbled into the high grass—some dead, and some hugging the ground for their lives. At the same moment, one of the German reinforcing columns appeared on the slope above and proceeded to take up positions at the crest. Even as Russian soldiers coming up through the woods behind the position overwhelmed Steinheim's men among the rocks, the Germans on the crest opened fire. Now indeed the hilltop looked impregnable. One of those inexplicable moments of peace fell upon the battlefield, broken only by the occasional nervous shot.

The impasse lasted only a few minutes, for the arrival of Russian armor again changed the balance. Smashing down fences and rumbling across the rocky ground, the behemoths took up firing positions in the open and proceeded to shell the hilltop with impunity. Meanwhile, the Russians who had pursued the fleeing German platoon arrived at the tree line near the 600-foot level of "Round Top". Signalling the armor to cease their barrage and advance in support, the Soviets burst from cover to strike the flank of the German position along the crest.

Suddenly, the other contingent of Germans dispatched the night before also charged—into the flank of the charging Russians! A swirling melee developed on the southern end of the hilltop. Machine pistols and knives were the order of the day among the boulders and scree. The Russian armor, with the surviving infantry from the "Valley of Death", pressed up to the large boulders at the northern end. And straight into the furious fighting on the hilltop drove several German AFVs dispatched when reports of the attack reached divisional HQ.

The progress of events much beyond this point remains unclear even yet. Only a dozen wounded survivors (on both sides) struggled back to friendly lines. It appears that annihilation was nearly total. Among the unconfirmed reports of the stunned soldiers that came back: the last panzer and last Soviet tank firing at each other point blank; a German NCO with a captured Soviet LMG shooting into a struggling knot of German and Russian soldiers; a Russian tank commander standing on his blazing tank, screaming as the flames reached him and firing his pistol at German wounded on the ground around; a Russian private killed trying to drag a bleeding German to shelter; a Russian gun crew abandoning their artillery piece and struggling to reach their commander, dying one by one; stragglers from both sides plunging into the bloodbath as they reached the crest; a maddened squirrel leaping into an empty machinegun nest and carrying away bullets. Whatever the series of events, it seems that both sides were virtually wiped out.

The next day, German reinforcements reached the scene. Awed by the carnage, much of it hidden by a blanket of new-fallen snow, they were ordered into positions to once again defend the hill—if need be, to the last man. Three days later, due to Soviet advances to the north, the hill was abandoned in the general retreat. After the war, modern farming methods in the Soviet Union transformed the hill slope, which now bears no resemblance to its appearance that bloody day. Nothing today remains to show the bitterest fighting of the war (although reports of a ghostly squirrel ambushing lone Soviet policemen in the woods persisted for years afterward).

☆

DESIGN ANALYSIS



ASL NOTES

By Don Greenwood

Some common questions on the format and intent of ASL have been voiced in letters to our offices recently. While not questions on the game system, we felt that the readers might be interested in the answers Don Greenwood has been giving to these inquiries. Should you have any questions of a like nature, we can't promise a personal answer but we'd enjoy hearing them.

Q. Where is the divider for the Armory section?
A. There is none—nor will there be one for the Training Manual chapter until such time as those chapters are completed. At that point we will issue a more useful divider for the completed chapters, one which will contain updated information for the complete system (perhaps with updated Playing Aids).

Q. Can I purchase extra binders? Mine is not big enough!
A. Yes. The latest Parts List will carry *ASL* binders for separate sale. However, they should not be necessary unless you have glued ring supports to both sides of every page—which triples the width of each page. Actually, I've found that ring supports are necessary only on the exterior pages—and certainly not on both sides.

Q. Where is the registration coupon referred to on Page *i* of the Introduction?
A. The "Registration" coupon is actually the Errata coupon printed on Page B31.

Q. Can I send in a photocopy of the Errata coupon? I don't want to cut up my rulebook.
A. No, you must send the coupon itself—no photocopies will be honored. The coupons have been placed outside of a blank page for just this purpose and eventually Page B31 will be re-issued as Errata without the coupons and any need to "cut up" your rulebook.

Q. How come my dividers don't include the "Table of Contents" referred to on Page *ii* of the Introduction?
A. The separate Table of Contents for the chapters was moved to the first page of each chapter instead. The Introduction is erroneous in listing them as being on the dividers.

Q. Do I have to order chapters E-M separately or will I get them free with my Errata coupons?
A. The remaining chapters must be purchased either separately by mail or as part of the future modules that will contain them. It is important to realize, however, that the *ASL Rulebook* is functionally complete as far as playing the game is concerned. The remaining chapters include only optional rules, information about specific theaters and nationalities, and other assorted extras. It is doubtful, for example, whether some people will want to play the "Campaign Game" or whether experienced players will be very interested in the "Training Manual". That being the case, it would not have been very wise to delay publication of *ASL* further while awaiting the completion of those chapters and increasing the price still further to players who don't even want them. This way, players can pick and choose how many extras they want for their system.

Q. What about all my old scenarios? Will you revise them for *ASL*?
A. No—we certainly cannot afford to re-issue them for free, and if you have to pay for them the vast majority of players would rather have new scenarios. We will be revising some of the old scenarios for *ASL*, but these will appear in The *GENERAL* (see the insert of this issue for example). Besides, they are still perfectly usable for the game you bought them with; and once you've gained some experience with *ASL* you can easily convert them for use yourself. The only real problem in such conversion is the effect on play balance—and we have found that this varies greatly depending on the styles of the different players.

Q. Will there be errata available before the 1987 Errata coupons are honored?
A. Only what you read in these pages. While *ASL* is hardly perfect, we have not found any major problems to date. Some 95% of the questions we've received have either been answered in the rules or are logical extensions of existing rules. Most of the questions we've received fall into a category of such bizarre happenstance that it is doubtful whether they would ever occur to 99% of the players in an average game. Answering such questions in the body of the rules would cause more harm than help for the extra verbiage involved would only add to the problems of learning the system by invoking the "can't see the forest for the trees" syndrome. Consequently, the first errata issued will consist mainly of clarifications in the form of "Q&As" to append to each chapter rather than actual errata. Only the most serious errors will be corrected with the issuance of revised rules pages at first. In the meantime, we will be constantly using the information from the questions we receive to revise the rules in such a way which will clarify those rules not really needing changes so that when we do re-issue a page—not only the errata will be incorporated but any other rewording of material on that page which will improve comprehension or answer even the rarest of questions. Naturally, the longer we wait before we re-issue those pages, the more comprehensive the house-cleaning can be. It is a quest for the perfect game system using a technique never seen before in this hobby. We hope its adherents find it as exciting as we do.

Q. Why should I spend all that money to buy *ASL* when it amounts to buying *SL* and its gamettes all over again?
A. If you have to ask that question, then I doubt whether my answer will change your mind. The best advice I can give you is to seek out someone who has bought it and ask him whether he thought he made a good purchase. I am obviously biased, but I will say this—counter for counter, board for board, art for art, and rule for rule, I think *ASL/BEYOND VALOR* is a better buy on a dollar per component basis than any game I've seen. *ASL* is not for the casual player—it demands too much of a player's

time to gain mastery of the system. But for those who play a lot of *SL* (and most *SL* players I've met play it almost exclusively), it represents a tremendous value. On a per-hour-of-enjoyment basis, the game is exceedingly cheap entertainment because it is not just a game but an endless series of games using a tremendously detailed system. If you are someone who plays a game a few times before retiring it to the shelf—don't buy *ASL* (although it will certainly look at least as impressive as the other games on your shelf). If you enjoy your *SL* and gamettes, then by all means keep playing it. No one is saying you *have* to buy *ASL*.

But then, if you are still enjoying *SL et al*, it seems to me you've already got your money's worth out of that purchase. How many other games have you bought that you enjoyed more? Does the availablility of *ASL* mean you enjoy *SL* any less? Let me impose an analogy here. I bought one of the first video recorders available, which was obsolete within a year. I then found myself envious of my neighbors who were buying better models—but I still had the enjoyment provided by my machine, and earlier than they had theirs. I had bought a product and enjoyed it. The availability of a better system did not make my recorder any less functional. Instead of complaining to the dealer/manufacturer who surely knew that improved models were in the offing, I accepted it as the normal way of progress. I have since moved up in class and purchased a new video recorder with all the wonderful new options they include today. I don't hold it against *Panasonic* that they sold me an outdated machine; instead I applaud them for continuing to improve the product to the point where they enticed me to buy another one. Anybody who is foolish enough to hold a grudge against a company for bringing out an improved product is just plain silly. Try to tell *Firestone* that they should give you a new radial tire to replace the old model you bought years ago. *SL* is unique in the wargame hobby for the maintained following it has attracted. Any game that commands that kind of devotion deserves the deluxe treatment we've given it in *ASL*. While I've heard from many who say they won't buy *ASL* because of its price, I've yet to hear from anyone who has bought it that hasn't praised it. If you like *SL*, the odds are that you'll love *ASL*. The choice is yours.

Q. Will I have to buy all the *ASL* modules as was the case with the *SL* gamettes?

A. No. The only mandatory purchases to enjoy the system will be the *ASL Rulebook* and *BEYOND VALOR*, which includes the complete German OB and all the systems counters. If you want to play with the Americans and not the British, you can skip the latter module (or vice versa). And to help you make up your mind, we are even putting out an introductory module called *PARATROOPER* which will include one new board (#24) and just enough counters to allow you to play the eight scenarios therein. You won't even have to purchase *BV*, although you will need the four basic mapboards found in *SL*. The idea is to give you just enough components to play the small scenarios included and let you decide for yourself whether you like *ASL* before you sink $40.00 into *BEYOND VALOR*. The counters will be designed in such a way as to supplement—rather than duplicate—the counters in *BV* (which can run a little short of certain types of markers in large scenarios). This module will also be the release vehicle for Chapter K—the "ASL Training Manual" which should help new *SL* players by presenting basic rules in more common language. It is *not* a replacement for the "legalese" of *ASL*, only an interpretation, Learning to play *SQUAD LEADER* is still the best way to learn *ASL*.





FIRST IMPRESSIONS

ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER: Infantry Training

An Introduction to ~~SQUAD LEADER Plus Four~~

By Robert Medrow

The first part of the catchy (?) title of this article is supposed to inform you that this article is yet another part of The *GENERAL*'s traditional coverage of the *SL* game and gamettes series. However, this portion of the title has been crossed out. Why? Because this article, like *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* (ASL) itself, is, in many ways, a new beginning. True the gamettes which followed *SL* always seemed to back up a little (or a lot) and change some of the old, as well as introducing something new. With *ASL*, while the evidence of its *SL* heritage is obviously there, we have something significantly different—and just so you'll know where I stand, something significantly better.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Each of the previous "First Impressions" articles, like the ones which are to follow, had as its goal to increase the pleasure which you, the player, can derive from the premiere tactical game of our hobby. Before we get to the meat of the article, there is some groundwork that needs to be laid.

Games can be complex in either or both of two ways. If the rules are elaborate, then merely determining the scope of what is possible in the game can be a major task. But, even if the rules are simple, play need not be; chess, with rules that fit on a single sheet of paper, is perhaps the classic example. If you know anything at all about *ASL*, you know that it is complex in both of these ways. As one of the primary *SL* playtesters, the reality of the complexity of play was clear in connection with Scenario 1, which needs but six pages of rules to play.

Consider the question of what to do at the very beginning of that scenario with those dozen 6-2-8s and their superlative 10-2 leader. One of the earliest pieces of tactical wisdom a person learns (usually long before he or she discovers wargames) is that it's generally best to really bash something, rather than to merely poke it. Unfortunately, for those who like things simple, in *ASL* as in *SL*, that piece of combat lore is hampered by—if nothing else—the movement restrictions placed upon units which fire in their owner's portion of the game turn. Like it or not, we are confronted with the idea of what military theorists call "Economy of Force". While it is often profitable to hit the other party with everything you have, if doing so utilizes resources to little probable gain, which could have been used elsewhere with greater probability of success, you are playing against the odds. Being militarily efficient certainly sounds like a good idea, and it is. The problem is to determine what one has to do in order to get there.

In this example, the problem has two aspects. The Russian assets in this locality consist of those squads and the leader. Of those units, how many, given a particular German setup, should fire and how many should move? With regard to firing, if the enemy is visibility from two adjacent hexes in the Russian building and within normal range, should Russian units in both hexes fire as a single fire group or take a pair of attacks? A look at the IFT does not provide an answer in the same way that, for example, a look at the *STALINGRAD* CRT does. Within normal range, it's one attack of 36 FPs versus two at 16 FP. While it's clear enough that one attack of 36 FP is a lot better than one at 16, a second attack at 16 might be one made upon an already broken enemy. But, if he's broken, maybe the second attack wouldn't be necessary, thereby freeing the second stack for either an alternative attack or movement. And, while we're at it, what does the leader do? That −2 modifier looks awfully good in an attack against a stone building, but he can only help a stack, not a fire group. Of course, used that way means that he's not available to aid movement. Come to think of it, if he's where he has an LOS to an enemy (since these things work both ways), a bad roll just might result in some nasty return fire. Then, while leaders like that are a real help to a squad trying to pass a Morale Check, there is the problem that the leader, going first, might break, leaving everyone in that hex with an additional Morale Check. On a less immediate level, in light of the common Russian leader shortage, does the fire/movement advantage offered by such a leader justify whatever risk there is in losing him because of that activity?

This brief discussion serves to demonstrate the sort of thing involved when one seeks to use the available forces efficiently. Something similar arises whenever we have to consider exposing our forces to danger. A reading of the rules lets us know that moving a tank down a village street past a building in which an enemy squad lurks can only be done at some risk. How much risk depends upon how well that squad is supplied with such things as leaders, demolition charges, flamethrowers, etc. The operative question for the player is the extent of that risk in comparison to the benefit to be derived from the movement.

If you want to become a better player than you now are, you will have to improve upon your ability to make reasonably good decisions in connection

with just these types of questions. Make no mistake about it; scenario designers are not interested in giving you situations in which you can expect to win without making intelligent choices and taking calculated risks.

That last statement is hardly a profound one, since such an objective is dear to the hearts of all good game designers. In general, the serious player copes with this challenge with some combination of study and play experience. Unfortunately for the *ASL* system player, obtaining a high level of skill largely from experience is extremely hard to do. The weapons systems used, the time at which the scenario takes place, the characters of the opponents, the nature of the terrain and the weather are all variables, and are likely to change significantly from scenario to scenario. After all, it is this very variety which is central to much of the appeal the game has for many of us. In addition, the ranges of possible outcomes are sometimes quite large. What that means is that a particular situation might arise a dozen times with outcomes, by chance, confined to only a portion of that which is possible.

Even in the—comparatively—simple *SL* days, all this became painfully clear to me. To the best of my ability, I have dealt with these kinds of things with a two-part process. The first consisted of exploring the mathematical probabilities associated with the different types of die- and dice-rolling routines to be found throughout the system, modifying the calculations as the evolving system changed things. The second part consisted of using this information to establish doctrines. These embody a collection of rules-of-thumb covering use of the forces and weapons systems represented.

In the world of real soldiers and real weapons, this is what an army attempts to do in preparing soldiers to command companies and battalions during times of peace. A recent book, *First Clash: Combat Close-Up in World War Three* by Kenneth Macksey, is a fictitious account of the first few hours in action of a Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group. Written, originally, as an official manual intended to provide a feel for how things might go in actual combat, it provides a number of examples drawn from both sides of the front of the application of these doctrines. True, the weapons systems are more modern than those found among our pieces of cardboard; but the precept of use of what is available, based upon both what it can be expected to do and how vulnerable it is in the terrain at hand, comes through most clearly. I felt particular sympathy for one Russian commander whose superior placed upon him demands of the same sort which I've often felt scenario designers had placed upon me.

My first article, way back in Vol. 14, No. 5 of The *GENERAL*, explored the mechanics of the *SL* "Infantry Fire Table" (IFT) and sought to apply some of this information to the play of the first few scenarios. As the gamettes appeared, so too did the articles: *COI* in Vol. 15, No. 6; *COD* in Vol. 17, No. 2; and *GI* in Vol. 20, No. 1. Each article attempted to give more insight into how the system, at whatever level it then existed, worked. In order to help those who, like myself, had already gained some familiarity with what had gone before, the later articles also offered comparisons between how things used to work and how they then worked.

Apparently a lot of you readers found these articles of value, and that response is one of the reasons why you're reading this one.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

This article, like the ones to follow in the "Training" series, is directed toward an audience ranging from (I hope) those who just think that they might be interested in a tactical game set in WWII to the hardcore *G.I.: ANVIL OF VICTORY* vets. How the basic systems really work will be the major component of these articles. As appropriate, the old (*SL*) and the not-so-old (*GI*) versions of things will be compared with what *ASL* has to offer.

Why is all this stuff going to appear? To be honest, ego plays a part. A number of kind folks—in letters, at conventions and in phone calls—have said nice things to me. That's certainly a source of motivation. However, doing this is hard work, seeing my name in print is not a novel thing, and many other activities pull at me just as they do at you. The ultimate reason has to do with *ASL* itself. The *ASL* system is one which I expect to play for the rest of my life. It is a dynamic thing of enormous scope and vitality. As I'm finishing this article, *STREETS OF FIRE* has just been published and the playtest of *PARATROOPER* is concluding. By the time you read this, *PARATROOPER* should be out and I expect to be well into the work on Chapter E for *ASL*. In part then, I'm doing this for myself. But it's also done in the hopes that you, the reader, will be encouraged to work toward mastery of this fascinating and unique gaming situation. Few games would justify this level of effort; *ASL*, by virtue of what it is, does. Finally, I hope that some of this information will prove useful to scenario designers. The more they know about how the system really works, the better off we'll all be.

This first installment will cover some of the basic probability itself as it relates to the sorts of things to be found in *ASL*. Subsequent pieces will take a look at, among other things, how the armor system works, the intriguing topic of combat interaction between armor and infantry, and the mechanics and usefulness of off-board artillery. Stripped of the material-making comparisons with older versions and, quite possibly modified, the things you will see here will ultimately bacome the "Analysis Chapter" in the rulebook. In being given the opportunity to go back over some things, I'll have the chance to insert the results of my own expanded experience with the system into these articles. In addition to what I've already gained from some of you out there, I expect to have help from many more of you who share, or will share, my enthusiasm. As you read these articles, if you have ideas for extensions, additions, corrections, or anything else relevant to this sort of approach, please let me know. [*Mr. Medrow's address is 1322 Highland Drive, Rolla, MO 65401—and he expects to hear from you.*]

As a result of both my trade as an engineer and my many years in the wargaming hobby, numbers of all sorts, including those associated with probabilities, have been a large part of my life. If you wish to be any good at playing *ASL*, you're going to have to be comfortable with certain facts concerning probability. Fortunately, since *ASL* gives us enough to do without any added headaches, the amount of material required is manageable. If you look ahead at the following pages, you'll note a lot of tables with hordes of numbers in them. What makes the material manageable is that, much of the

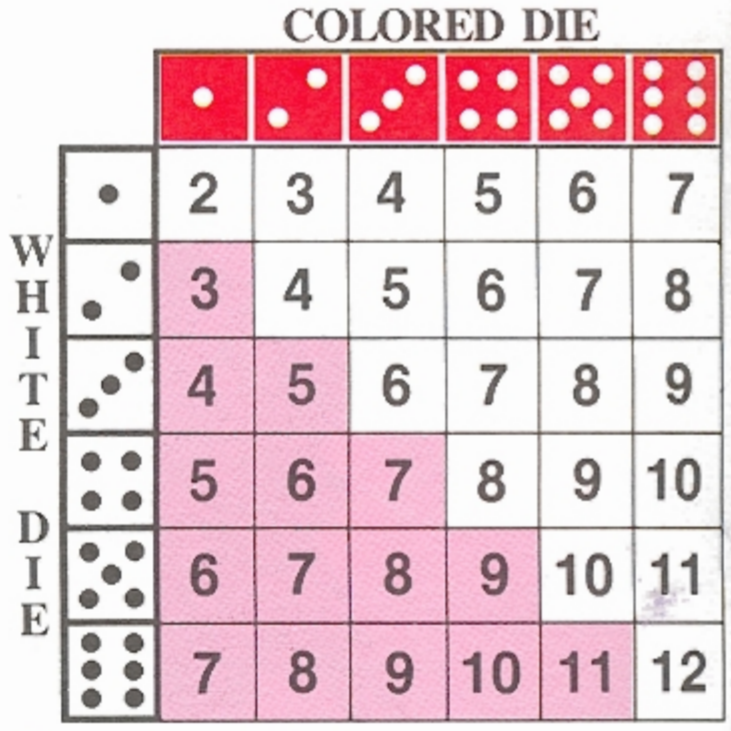


Figure 1—Results possible from two dice

time, only a few of these values are needed. Why then include all the others? It's not just to fill up space. This way, if you wish, you can explore further on your own,—which is certainly one good reason. However, the best one is that it will help readers understand from where came these observations about *ASL* and the suggestions for what I think of as good play. Certain less general uses of the material will be mentioned as is appropriate.

PROBABILITY

Most of the rolls made in the *ASL* system are made with two dice. Because the numbers used in the system are the sums of the spots showing, the probabilities of the various outcomes are sometimes hard to recognize. Figure 1 shows the 36 possible results associated with the roll of two dice. The numbers in the boxes represent the total number of spots showing. For example, if the white die ends up with three spots showing, the colored die can show any value from one to six. Thus, reading across the values in the row after the "3", we see possible totals of "4" through "9". Those boxes for which the value on the colored die is less than that on the white one have been shaded. This has been done because there are some very important cases in which what, if anything, happens depends upon not just the total number of spots showing, but also upon the colored die value in relationship to that of the white one.

Since there are six possible outcomes for each die, there are 6 times 6 (or 36) possible outcomes when two dice are rolled. If, for the moment, we only worry about the total showing by both dice, the entries in Figure 1 show that only eleven different, of distinct, outcomes are possible; the totals can only vary from "2" through "12". In addition, we see that some totals appear more often than do others. While "2" is to be found only once, "6" appears five times. Thus, the chances of rolling a "2" is

Sum of spots	Ways to get this sum	Probability of each sum	Total of ways	Cumulative probability	Times CD < WD	Total of ways	Cumulative probability
2	1	2.8	1	2.8	0	0	0.0
3	2	5.6	3	8.3	1	1	2.8
4	3	8.3	6	16.7	1	2	5.6
5	4	11.1	10	27.8	2	4	11.1
6	5	13.9	15	41.7	2	6	16.7
7	6	16.7	21	58.3	3	9	25.0
8	5	13.9	26	72.2	2	11	30.6
9	4	11.1	30	83.3	2	13	36.1
10	3	8.3	33	91.7	1	14	38.9
11	2	5.6	35	97.2	1	15	41.7
12	1	2.8	36	100.0	0	15	41.7

Table 1—Tabulated two-dice results

one in 36 attempts, while that of rolling a "6" is five in 36. Before going on, let me stress one very important fact: this does not mean that a pair of honest dice will yield "2" just once and "6" just fives times in 36 casts. The dice do not remember. If you've just rolled three straight "2's", you can still have one chance in 36 of doing it again the next time you throw the dice.

The probability of something is equal to the ratio of the number of ways this something has of appearing to the total number of outcomes. Thus, the probability of rolling a "6" is equal to the ratio of 5-to-36. To three decimal places, the value of this ratio is 0.139. Alternatively, probabilities can be expressed as percentages, so that this last probability could also be said to be 13.9%. This latter form is used in most of the tabulated results.

Table 1 summarizes the basic information needed about the roll of two dice. The first column shows the possible sums, while the second contains the number of ways in which each particular total can be obtained. Values in this second column are equal to the number of times each of the totals appears in the boxes in Figure 1. Found by the type of calculation just done, the third column values give the percentage probabilities of each spot total.

In many cases, we'll be interested in the probability of rolling at or below a particular value. Probably the most common such case is when we must roll a "Morale Check" (MC). Rolling at or below a particular value is then required in order that the unit remain fully functional. If, for example, the value is "6", we are concerned with the probability of rolling any total from "2" through "6", inclusive. From the information in the first two columns of Table 1, 15 of the 36 possible rolls will yield a total of "6" or less. These cumulative totals are shown in the fourth column; their associated probabilities appear in the fifth column. Since, to illustrate, a value of "6" or less can be obtained 15 different ways, the probability of such a roll is $(15/36)\times100\%$, or 41.7%.

The remaining three columns provide information needed whenever the value of the colored die versus that of the white one is important. One common example of such a case is in connection with the determination of hit location on an AFV. If the dice total is low enough so that a hit has been obtained, the shell lands on the turret or upper body of the vehicle if the colored die roll is lower than that of the white one. Since the armor values of the upper body may well be considerably different from those of the lower body, which die roll is higher may determine the question of survival. Staying with the case of a roll of "6" or less, the information in Figure 1 shows us that just two of the five possible ways of rolling a "6" involve colored die rolls lower than the white ones, and "2" is the value to be found in the "6" row in the sixth column. Practically, it is the totals given in column seven which will concern us the most. From Figure 1, if we have to roll a "6" or less with two dice, we can see that there are six situations in which the colored die is less than the white one. Thus, the probability of rolling "6" or less with the colored die showing a value less than the white one, is $(6/36)\times100\%$. Results of such calculations are shown in the last column.

These values can also be used to demonstrate one of the important facts about probabilities. Many of the game's mechanics require more than one dice roll. For example, there are the separate TO HIT and TO KILL rolls involved when onboard ordnance fires at an AFV. The probability of making both the required values is then equal to the product of the probabilities (expressed as fractions) of each of the outcomes. To show that this is so, let's look again at the probability of rolling "6" or less, with the colored die having the lower value. As already discussed, the fractional probability of rolling "6" or less, without regard to the values on either die, is 15/36. From Figure 1, the probability of having the colored die show a smaller value when the total is six or less is 6/15. The product of these two probabilties is the value which we've already found directly.

Lest anyone suppose that this means that probabilities are always multiplied together, we'll close this section on probability by looking at the question of rolling a "6" or less without regard to the color of the dice. The probability of doing so can be thought of as the sum of the probabilities of rolling "2", "3" "4" "5" or "6". Thus, all of the numbers in column five could have been found by adding the appropriate values in column three.

Many of the situations encountered in ASL lend themselves to direct probability calculations. An example of such a situation is the previously-mentioned TO HIT/TO KILL pair of dice rolls. Where practical, all probability values have have been obtained exactly using computer programs written for such purposes. However, there are quite a few situations in which the things of interest are dependent upon a large number of events. Probably the best example of this type of situation is presented by the artillery mechanics. The real measure of the usefulness of offboard artillery is involved with such things as the average number of shots you can expect to get off, and how quickly you can expect to drop those first rounds on target given the various dice rolls and chit picks involved. In cases such as these, the calculations required in order to determine probabilities precisely would be more trouble than they would ever be worth. Rather, the (comparatively) simple thing to do is to write a program which, in effect "plays" the situation through a few thousand times, all the while keeping track of how many times each of the possible outcomes appears.

THE INFANTRY GAME

One of the new pieces of ground broken by *SL* in the area of WWII gaming at the tactical level had to do with its emphasis on the infantry. It's safe to say that, prior to *SL*, this aspect of wargaming was dominated by the miniatures players and, whatever the rule books might have contained, their games involved a heavy emphasis on armor. After all, model tanks just look neater to many people than little model soldiers. For those who like to think that things move in cycles, it is to be noted that GHQ is now marketing collections of minatures for use with the large-hex module of *ASL—STREETS OF FIRE*. *ASL* continues in the *SL* tradition in this respect, but a study of how the infantry aspects of the game played before and how they now play shows a number of changes—some of great significance in connection with how the how the game plays.

The Cast of Characters

In the beginning we had but three types of infantry units: leaders, squads and crews. Representing just a single individual, the leader was, in *SL*, the sole example of what we now call SMCs, the single man counters. Each of the gamettes added one to this category of unit. Snipers made their appearance in *COI*, while Scouts showed up in *COD*; heroes made it to the scene in *GI*. The total has, in *ASL*, fallen back to three, even with the addition of a new one. Scouts were disposed of for the very good reason that they were misused in play, and the volume of rules required in order to keep them in line far exceeded their contribution to the game. Then too, most of their useful functions could be assumed by half-squads without any great burden of rules.

Snipers are still around, but they function more now as random events, as opposed to being units under the control of a player. Currently, during certain phases of the game, whenever one player rolls the other's "Sniper Activation Number" (SAN), there is a one-third chance that the Sniper counter will bound randomly across the board and inflict some type of damage upon one or more enemy units. having one of them deliver a fatal wound to your only 9-2 leader is a truly nasty bolt from the blue. Rarely, however, will you as a player have much influence over their activity.

This change will, I suspect, not sit well with some players. A bit more of the system has slipped from their control. While the mechanics are noticeably simpler than they were in the past, most of us want to be in charge of our games. The design intent, going all the way back to *SL*, has always been to limit the extent of a player's control. To do anything else would be grossly ahistorical, since tactical combat is filled with a vast range of events over which no one has any control. But that which is historically correct is not always agreeable. My advice for such individuals is to ignore this small loss and concentrate upon improving your grasp of the larger realities. And, while you're at it, don't leave your tank commanders out in the open when there's no good reason for so doing; you never know where the other guy's sniper will strike next.

The new guy on the block is the Commissar. The rules allow the Russian player to trade in an 8-0 leader for a 9-0 Commissar, or an 8-1 leader for a 10-0 Commissar. Persuasive fellow that he is, he automatically raises the morale of any non-berserk units in his hex by one. More importantly, he grants broken units immunity to the normal effects of Desperation Morale. Unfortunately, if a unit enjoying the benefits of frontline political action fails to rally, it is reduced in quality. A number of years ago I heard John Hill, *SL*'s designer, propose a Commissar rule which would have a squad eliminated if it failed to rally. This one's for you, John.

Turning now to the multi-man counters, the MMCs, nothing has changed, except that crews now come in two flavors thereby making a distinction between weapon crews and vehicular crews. Squads can still, in some cases, voluntarily break down into into a pair of half-squads, an idea first introduced in *COD* where they could break down into crews. Squads now come in considerably more than the original pair of types seen in *SL* . How they enter and leave play is one of the major changes in *ASL*, and will be considered in detail later.

The Infantry Fire Table

Figure 2 shows both the *GI* IFT and the *ASL* IFT. Players who haven't gone beyond *SL* will see that very little has changed in this area until *ASL* appeared. What happened then is that warfare got less decisive in the short term. Since the net result of the changes in the IFT and what happens as a result of certain other changes forms the core of a considerably-revised infantry system, we need to look carefully at a number of points.

Where before we had only the simple KIA (as a result of which everything in the hex died), we now have the #KIA. The number eliminated is equal to the "#"; anything left over is broken. The K/# result is a new thing, replacing what used to be the highest dice roll KIA. When this one turns up, one unit in the hex undergoes "Casualty Reduction". If it's a squad, it becomes a half-squad; a half-squad or crew is eliminated; and a SMC is wounded, perhaps fatally. Everyone left then takes a MC of the severity indicated by "#". MCs remain as they have gradually become. The Gounding and Pinning results introduced in *COD* have been combined into a single rule, such that a unit passing a MC with the highest possible roll is "Pinned". This halts any movement underway and prevents any additional movement during that Player Turn; any fire attacks made during the rest of that Player Turn by such a unit are halved, as is its strength in Close Com-

Figure 2—The old and the new Infantry Fire Tables

(a) The GI: ANVIL OF VICTORY Infantry Fire Table

INFANTRY FIRE TABLE 10.3

DICE	1/20	2/30	4/40	6/50	8/60	12/70	16/85	20/100	24/120	30/150	AT Mines (136.76) Hidden Demolition 36 + /200 +
1	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA
2	1	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA
3	1	1	2	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA
4	M	1	1	2	2	3	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA	KIA
5	—	M	1	1	2	2	3	4	KIA	KIA	KIA
6	—	—	M	1	1	2	2	3	4	KIA	KIA
7	—	—	—	M	1	1	2	2	3	4	KIA
8	—	—	—	—	M	1	1	2	2	3	4
9	—	—	—	—	—	M	1	1	2	2	3
10	—	—	—	—	—	—	M	1	1	2	2
11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	M	1	1	2
12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	M	1	1
13	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	M	1
14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	M
15 +	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

FIREPOWER FACTOR MODIFIERS:

POINT BLANK FIRE: into adjacent hex unless 2 levels higher 2X
LONG RANGE FIRE: up to double normal range . . . . . ½X
MOVING FIRER: moved & fired in same player turn . . . . . ½X
AREA FIRE: target is concealed, hidden, or suspected (154.4) . . . . ½X
Charging Cavalry (92.87) . . . . . 2X & -2
HE fire vs fording infantry (126.58) . . . . . ½X
Captured SWs (90.13; EXC: DCs & FTs) . . . . . ½X
Fording infantry (126.57) . . . . . ½X
Overruns vs soft vehicles (in motion: -3) . . . . . -5
Firer is pinned (142.6) . . . . . ½X
Infantry fire from boat (128.7) . . ½X
Infantry fire from marsh (75.4) . . ½X
HE fire into marsh (75.5) . . . . . ½X
Guarding Units (89.62) CC also . ½X
Mounted Firer (92.6) CC also . . . ½X

(b) The ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER Infantry Fire Table

DR/FP	Backblast dr ATR 1/20	2/30	MOL 4/37	[A-P Minefields 6/50	8/60	] 12/70	sN 16/80	20/100	24/120	DC 30/150	A-T Mine Set DC 36+/200+
★ Vehicle	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
≤ 0	1KIA	2KIA	2KIA	3KIA	3KIA	3KIA	4KIA	4KIA	5KIA	6KIA	7KIA
1	K/1	1KIA	1KIA	2KIA	2KIA	2KIA	3KIA	3KIA	4KIA	5KIA	6KIA
2	1MC	•K/1	•K/2	•*• 1KIA	•*• 1KIA	•••• 1KIA	•*•• 2KIA	•*•• 2KIA	•*•• 3KIA	••*•• 4KIA	••*•• 5KIA•
3	1MC	1MC	2MC	•K/2	•K/2	*• K/3	••*• 1KIA	••*• 1KIA	•*•• 2KIA	••*•• 3KIA	••*•• 4KIA•
4	NMC	1MC	1MC	2MC	2MC	3MC	*• K/3	*• K/4	••*• 1K1A	••*•• 2KIA	••*•• 3KIA•
5	PTC	NMC	1MC	1MC	2MC	2MC	3MC	4MC	*• K/4	••••*• 1KIA	••*•• 2KIA•
6	—	PTC	NMC	1MC	1MC	2MC	2MC	3MC	4MC	*• K/4	••••*• 1KIA•
7	—	—	PTC	NMC	1MC	1MC	2MC	2MC	3MC	4MC	*• K/4*
8	—	—	—	PTC	NMC	1MC	1MC	2MC	2MC	3MC	4MC*
9	—	—	—	—	PTC	NMC	1MC	1MC	2MC	2MC	3MC*
10	—	—	—	—	—	PTC	NMC	1MC	1MC	2MC	2MC*
11	—	—	—	—	—	—	PTC	NMC	1MC	1MC	2MC*
12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	PTC	NMC	1MC	1MC*
13	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	PTC	NMC	1MC*
14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	PTC	NMC*
≥ 15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	PTC*

• Original FT DR causes P. Flame creation (B25.12); DR + EC ≥ Kindling # = Flame.
* Original HE/HEAT Effects DR causes P. Flame creation (B25.13); DR + EC ≥ Kindling # = Flame.
• Original HE Effects DR ≥ 70mm causes P. wooden rubble creation (B24.11); dr ≤ Original KIA #.
* Original HE Effects DR ≥ 70mm causes P. rubble creation (B24.11); dr [+1 if stone] ≤ Original KIA #.
• Original Concentrated HE FFE/Aerial Bomb Effects DR removes A-P/A-T minefield (B28.62) and/or Wire (B26.52).
* Original Concentrated HE FFE/Aerial Bomb Effects DR reduces minefield strength (B28.62) by one column (A-P) or one factor (A-T).
• Original Concentrated HE FFE/Aerial Bomb Effects DR creates shellhole in OG, orchard, brush, grain (B2.1).
• A-T Mine Attack DR eliminates AFV* or burns ★ vehicle† (B28.52)
* A-T Mine Attack DR immobilizes AFV*, or eliminates ★ vehicle† (B28.52)

[*Aerial AF of lowest hull AF is + DRM
[†AFV with any 0 hull AF is ★ vehicle

FP or DR MODIFIERS:

By overstacked unit; per vehicle/squad (A5.12) . . . . . +1
vs overstacked units; per squad (A5.131) . . . . . -1
PBF vs adjacent hex ≤ 1 level higher (A7.21) ×2†
Heavy Payload (C.7) per 50mm or 8 FP excess -1
Area Fire (concealed target; A7.23) . . . . . ×½
Motion (D2.42)/Bounding (First) Fire (D3.31) . . . . . ×½†
From IN Deep or Shallow Stream (B20.6) . . . . . ×½
HE vs Fording Infantry or Marsh (C3.53) . . . . . ×½
Cowering (A7.9) [Inexperienced: 2] . . one column to left
Set DC (A23.71) . . . . . -3
From Encirclement (A7.7) . . . . . +1
TPBF vs same Location (A7.21) . . . . . ×3†
By Fording Infantry (B21.42) . . . . . ×½
By unit on Wire (B26.31) . . . . . +1
OVR vs Motion vehicle (D7.12) . . . . . +2
By CX unit (A4.51) . . . . . +1
Mounted Fire [EXC: ht & Charge] (D6.22, 6.72) . . . ×½
Critical Hit (C3.71) . . . . . ×2
vs Personnel unit with FT (A22.4) . . . . . -1
Defender's TEM†/LOS Hindrance . . . . . +x
Firer is pinned (A7.8) . . . . . ×½
FFMO/FFNAM (A4.6) each . . . . . -1
From marsh (B16.32) . . . . . ×½
vs Cavalry (A13.5) . . . . . -2
vs Motorcyclist (D15.5) . . . . . -1
AFPh Fire (A7.24) . . . . . ×½†
OVR vs Infantry in OG (D7.15) . . . . . -1
Hazardous Movement (A4.62) . . . . . -2
Long Range Fire (A7.22) . . . . . ×½

† EXC: FT NA

FIREPOWER

DRM	1	2	4	6	8	12	16	20	24	30	36
−4	17/11/44/11	28/14/42/ 8	28/14/50/ 6	42/17/39/ 3	42/17/42/ 0	42/17/42/ 0	58/14/28/ 0	58/14/28/ 0	72/11/17/ 0	83/ 8/ 8/ 0	92/ 6/ 3/ 0
−3	8/ 8/42/14	17/11/44/11	17/11/56/ 8	28/14/50/ 6	28/14/56/ 3	28/14/58/ 0	42/17/42/ 0	42/17/42/ 0	58/14/28/ 0	72/11/17/ 0	83/ 8/ 8/ 0
−2	3/ 6/33/17	8/ 8/42/14	8/ 8/56/11	17/11/56/ 8	17/11/64/ 6	17/11/69/ 3	28/14/58/ 0	28/14/58/ 0	42/17/42/ 0	58/14/28/ 0	72/11/17/ 0
−1	0/ 3/25/14	3/ 6/33/17	3/ 6/50/17	8/ 8/56/11	8/ 8/67/ 8	8/ 8/75/ 6	17/11/69/ 3	17/11/72/ 0	28/14/58/ 0	42/17/42/ 0	58/14/28/ 0
+0	0/ 0/17/11	0/ 3/25/14	0/ 3/39/17	3/ 6/50/14	3/ 6/64/11	3/ 6/75/ 8	8/ 8/75/ 6	8/ 8/81/ 3	17/11/72/ 0	28/14/58/ 0	42/17/42/ 0
+1	0/ 0/ 8/ 8	0/ 0/17/11	0/ 0/28/14	0/ 3/39/17	0/ 3/56/14	0/ 3/69/11	3/ 6/75/ 8	3/ 6/83/ 6	8/ 8/81/ 3	17/11/72/ 0	28/14/58/ 0
+2	0/ 0/ 3/ 6	0/ 0/ 8/ 8	0/ 0/17/11	0/ 0/28/14	0/ 0/42/17	0/ 0/58/14	0/ 3/69/11	0/ 3/81/ 8	3/ 6/83/ 6	8/ 8/81/ 3	17/11/72/ 0
+3	0/ 0/ 0/ 3	0/ 0/ 3/ 6	0/ 0/ 8/ 8	0/ 0/17/11	0/ 0/28/14	0/ 0/42/17	0/ 0/58/14	0/ 0/72/11	0/ 3/81/ 8	3/ 6/83/ 6	8/ 8/81/ 3
+4	0/ 0/ 0/ 0	0/ 0/ 0/ 3	0/ 0/ 3/ 6	0/ 0/ 8/ 8	0/ 0/17/11	0/ 0/28/14	0/ 0/42/17	0/ 0/58/14	0/ 0/72/11	0/ 3/81/ 8	3/ 6/83/ 8
+5	0/ 0/ 0/ 0	0/ 0/ 0/ 0	0/ 0/ 0/ 3	0/ 0/ 3/ 6	0/ 0/ 8/ 8	0/ 0/17/11	0/ 0/28/14	0/ 0/42/17	0/ 0/58/14	0/ 0/72/11	0/ 3/81/17

Table 2—Probabilities of the various types of results on the ASL IFT

bat. The PTC result means a "Pin Task Check". It works like a normal MC, except that failure merely results in a Pin.

The probabilities of these four different types of results are tabulated in Table 2 as a function of firepower and the net DRM. For each combination of attack strength and DRM the four values are, respectively: the #KIA, the K/#, the #MC, and the PTC probabilities. Thus, for a 16 FP attack with a DRM of −1, there is a 17% probability of some sort of #KIA, an 11% chance of a K/# result, a 69% probability of some sort of MC result and a 3% probability of a PTC result.

As soon as the type of result to be inflicted is not the same for all units in the hex, it becomes necessary to determine which unit or units will be afflicted with the more severe damage. Both the #KIA and the K/# results produce such situations whenever the target stack contains more than one unit. A specific Random Selection procedure is used for such cases. Suppose that the result is a "K/2" and that there are three units in the hex. A single die is rolled for each unit (best accomplished by rolling, at the same time, three dice of different colors, where the colors have some predetermined connection to position in the stack). High roll gets the "K". Of course, the dice could come up "4", "4" and "2", meaning a tie for high die. In such a case, there would then be *two* unhappy winners. If you can get two dice the same, you can get three—which would mean a "K" for everyone.

Because of the equivalences among units, it is now possible to place quite a few more than four units in the same hex if you wish to do so. Table 3 shows the probabilities of more than one unit being affected when a K/# (or a 1KIA, for that matter) result is rolled for a hex containing anything up to six units. For the three units in the example above, such a result will inflict maximum damage upon just one unit 76.4% of the time. Worded differently, on the average, one should expect that such a result will claim an extra victim just about one time in four, with just a 2.8% probability that all three will be unlucky. As you can see, the chances of picking up more than one extra unit are fairly small. Practically, more than four units is uncommon, for which strength the total probability of either three or four units being afflicted is only one-fifth that of the two-unit probability.

Turning to Table 4, for two units in a hex and one to be selected, the average loss is 1.17 units, a value which increases by just about 0.1 for each additional unit in the hex. The remaining values in the Table show the average number lost for various numbers of units and various values of "#" (as in #KIA). As you can see from reading across any of the rows, the likelihood of an extra loss goes down as the number to be selected goes up. The reason for this can be seen by looking at the case of a 2KIA result. Supposing that there are four units in the hex, four dice are rolled. If the numbers rolled are "2", "2", "5" and "6", only the unit associated with the "6" is affected; Random Selection only takes the high number (or ties for high numbers) even if that does not yield enough victims. Here, the dice (three this time) must be rolled for those who survived the first round. However, it is possible that two pieces would have tied for high roll on the first toss, so that no second throw would have been needed. In general, whenever more than one unit must be selected, there is the possibility that the total required will be selected in less than "#" throws. On the other hand, when only one is to be chosen, that one throw has to be made.

The information on Table 2 does not, of course, tell us directly the outcome of an attack involving some particular combination of firepower and DRM. The amount of damage a particular combination of these is likely to do depends upon the Morale Level(s) of the unit(s) in the hex, the number of units in that hex and, if there is a leader present, his leadership modifier and his Morale Level versus that of the units stacked with him. The possible number of combinations of factors is staggering. Computers, however, are not bothered by that sort of thing. One of the things they do very well indeed is to generate huge masses of numbers. Because of this, part of the art of using computers intelligently is to limit the amount of output to a level at which a poor human being can cope.

With that by way of introduction, Table 5 contains a massive collection of numbers. For each attack strength and DRM, two numbers are given. The first is the probability that a unit, in a hex by itself, will survive that attack without being either Broken or Pinned in the process. After this, in parentheses, is the probability that the unit will survive without breaking, but will end up pinned. The sum of these two values is then the probability that that particular attack, by itself, will produce no effect from which the unit cannot automatically recover. For example, if a unit with a Morale Level of "8" is attacked by eight firepower factors (FPFs) with a DRM of 0, there is a 51% probability that the unit will be fully-functional and a 13% probability that the worst damage suffered is a "Pin". As you can see, considering only firepower, DRM and morale leads to a great many numbers. However, this collection of values plays an important part in defining just how things really work in connection with the IFT, and various of them will be used throughout much of this article.

From the look of the IFT it's clear that a column shift of one to the right would lead to just about the same collection of IFT entries as would an additional DRM of −1 to the actual attack. The size of "just about" can be readily determined from the results in Table 5. Why such information is of value is a consequence of the possibility of forming fire groups using stacks of adjacent units. If all units in a particular elevation within some hex are going to fire at a single target, they are required to do so as in a single attack. Adjacent units, however, may, at their option, join the first group, or if so desired, attack on their own. We shall consider two aspects of this option because intelligent use of this part of the rules is essential to effective play.

While, other things being equal, a stronger attack is superior to a weaker one—other things are rarely equal. The most common "other thing" which enters in has to do with the DRM of the final attack. If the first stack has an 8-1 leader in it, he will contribute a −1 DRM to whatever other modifiers are involved. If the adjacent stack is without at least as good a leader, this −1 will be lost in a combined, fire group attack. One of the simplest rules of good play to be extracted from the numbers in this article is that one should never add strength to an attack

Number in hex	Number suffering Casualty Reduction due to a K/# result: 1	2	3	4	5	6
1	100.0	0	0	0	0	0
2	83.3	16.7	0	0	0	0
3	76.4	20.8	2.8	0	0	0
4	69.4	25.5	4.6	0.5	0	0
5	63.0	28.9	7.1	1.0	0.1	0
6	56.9	31.5	9.6	1.8	0.2	0

Table 3—Probabilities of various numbers of units being affected by a K/# result

Number in hex	Number in #KIA: 1	2	3	4	5	6
1						
2	1.17	ALL				
3	1.26	2.16				
4	1.36	2.24	3.15			
5	1.46	2.32	3.24	4.15		
6	1.57	2.40	3.32	4.24	5.15	

Table 4—Average number lost due to a #KIA result

FIREPOWER

DRM	1	2	4	6	8	12	16	20	24	30	36
−4	30(12)	20(10)	13(9)	7(6)	5(4)	3(3)	2(2)	1(1)	0(1)	0(0)	0(0)
−3	42(13)	30(12)	21(11)	13(9)	8(7)	6(5)	3(3)	2(2)	1(1)	0(1)	0(0)
−2	56(14)	42(13)	31(13)	21(11)	14(10)	9(8)	6(5)	3(4)	2(2)	1(1)	0(1)
−1	70(11)	56(14)	43(14)	31(13)	22(12)	14(10)	9(8)	6(5)	3(4)	2(2)	1(1)
+0	81(9)	70(11)	56(14)	43(14)	32(13)	22(12)	14(10)	9(8)	6(5)	3(4)	2(2)
+1	89(6)	81(9)	70(11)	56(14)	44(14)	32(14)	22(12)	14(11)	9(8)	6(5)	3(4)
+2	95(4)	89(6)	81(9)	70(11)	56(15)	44(15)	32(14)	22(13)	14(11)	9(8)	6(5)
+3	98(2)	95(4)	89(6)	81(9)	70(11)	56(15)	44(15)	32(14)	22(13)	14(11)	9(8)
+4	100(0)	98(2)	95(4)	89(6)	81(9)	70(11)	56(15)	44(15)	32(14)	22(13)	14(11)
+5	100(0)	100(0)	98(2)	95(4)	89(6)	81(9)	70(11)	56(15)	44(15)	32(14)	22(13)

(a) Morale level 6

FIREPOWER

DRM	1	2	4	6	8	12	16	20	24	30	36
−4	37(11)	26(10)	19(9)	12(6)	9(5)	7(4)	4(3)	2(2)	1(1)	0(1)	0(0)
−3	50(12)	37(11)	29(11)	19(9)	14(8)	11(7)	7(4)	4(4)	2(2)	1(1)	0(1)
−2	63(12)	50(12)	39(12)	29(11)	22(11)	16(9)	11(7)	7(5)	4(4)	2(2)	1(1)
−1	75(10)	63(12)	51(13)	39(12)	30(12)	22(11)	16(9)	11(7)	7(5)	4(4)	2(2)
+0	84(7)	75(10)	64(13)	51(13)	41(13)	31(13)	22(11)	16(10)	11(7)	7(5)	4(4)
+1	91(5)	84(7)	75(10)	64(13)	52(14)	41(14)	31(13)	23(12)	16(10)	11(7)	7(5)
+2	96(3)	91(5)	84(7)	75(10)	64(13)	52(14)	41(14)	31(13)	23(12)	16(10)	11(7)
+3	99(1)	96(3)	91(5)	84(7)	75(10)	64(13)	52(14)	41(14)	31(13)	23(12)	16(10)
+4	100(0)	99(1)	96(3)	91(5)	84(7)	75(10)	64(13)	52(14)	41(14)	31(13)	23(12)
+5	100(0)	100(0)	99(1)	96(3)	91(5)	84(7)	75(10)	64(13)	52(14)	41(14)	31(13)

(b) Morale level 7

FIREPOWER

DRM	1	2	4	6	8	12	16	20	24	30	36
−4	46(10)	34(9)	27(9)	17(7)	14(6)	11(6)	7(4)	5(3)	2(2)	1(1)	0(0)
−3	58(10)	46(10)	37(11)	27(9)	22(9)	17(8)	11(6)	8(5)	5(3)	2(2)	1(1)
−2	70(10)	58(10)	49(12)	37(11)	31(11)	24(11)	17(8)	13(7)	8(5)	5(3)	2(2)
−1	81(8)	70(10)	60(11)	49(12)	41(12)	32(12)	24(11)	18(9)	13(7)	8(5)	5(3)
+0	89(6)	81(8)	71(11)	60(11)	51(13)	42(13)	32(12)	25(11)	18(9)	13(7)	8(5)
+1	94(4)	89(6)	81(8)	71(11)	62(12)	52(13)	42(13)	33(13)	25(11)	18(9)	13(7)
+2	97(2)	94(4)	89(6)	81(8)	72(11)	62(13)	52(13)	42(14)	33(13)	25(11)	18(9)
+3	99(1)	97(2)	94(4)	89(6)	81(8)	72(11)	62(13)	52(14)	42(14)	33(13)	25(11)
+4	100(0)	99(1)	97(2)	94(4)	89(6)	81(8)	72(11)	62(13)	52(14)	42(14)	33(13)
+5	100(0)	100(0)	99(1)	97(2)	94(4)	89(6)	81(8)	72(11)	62(13)	52(14)	52(14)

(c) Morale level 8

FIREPOWER

DRM	1	2	4	6	8	12	16	20	24	30	36
−4	54(8)	41(7)	35(8)	23(6)	21(6)	17(6)	10(4)	8(4)	4(2)	2(1)	0(1)
−3	66(8)	54(8)	47(9)	35(8)	30(9)	25(9)	17(6)	13(6)	8(4)	4(2)	2(1)
−2	77(7)	66(8)	58(9)	47(9)	41(10)	34(11)	25(9)	20(8)	13(6)	8(4)	4(2)
−1	86(5)	77(7)	69(9)	58(9)	52(11)	44(12)	34(11)	27(10)	20(8)	13(6)	8(4)
+0	92(4)	86(5)	79(8)	69(9)	62(11)	54(12)	44(12)	36(12)	27(10)	20(8)	13(6)
+1	96(2)	92(4)	87(6)	79(8)	72(10)	63(12)	54(12)	45(13)	36(12)	27(10)	20(8)
+2	98(1)	96(2)	92(4)	87(6)	80(8)	73(10)	63(12)	55(13)	45(13)	36(12)	27(10)
+3	100(0)	98(1)	96(2)	92(4)	87(6)	80(8)	73(10)	64(12)	55(13)	45(13)	36(12)
+4	100(0)	100(0)	98(1)	96(2)	92(4)	87(6)	80(8)	73(10)	64(12)	55(13)	45(13)
+5	100(0)	100(0)	100(2)	98(1)	96(2)	92(4)	87(6)	80(8)	73(10)	64(12)	55(13)

(d) Morale level 9

FIREPOWER

DRM	1	2	4	6	8	12	16	20	24	30	36
−4	60(5)	47(5)	43(6)	29(5)	27(5)	23(6)	15(4)	11(4)	6(2)	3(1)	1(0)
−3	72(5)	60(5)	55(7)	43(6)	39(7)	34(8)	23(6)	19(6)	11(4)	6(2)	3(1)
−2	83(5)	72(5)	67(7)	55(7)	51(8)	45(9)	34(8)	28(8)	19(6)	11(4)	6(2)
−1	90(4)	83(5)	77(6)	67(7)	62(8)	55(10)	45(9)	38(10)	28(8)	19(6)	11(4)
+0	95(3)	90(4)	86(5)	77(6)	72(8)	65(10)	55(10)	48(11)	38(10)	28(8)	19(6)
+1	98(1)	95(3)	92(4)	86(5)	81(7)	74(9)	65(10)	58(11)	48(11)	38(10)	28(8)
+2	99(1)	98(1)	95(3)	92(4)	87(6)	82(8)	74(9)	67(11)	58(11)	48(11)	38(10)
+3	100(0)	99(1)	98(1)	95(3)	92(4)	87(6)	82(8)	75(9)	67(11)	58(11)	48(11)
+4	100(0)	100(0)	99(1)	98(1)	95(3)	92(4)	87(6)	82(8)	75(9)	67(11)	58(11)
+5	100(0)	100(0)	100(0)	99(1)	98(1)	95(3)	92(4)	87(6)	82(8)	75(9)	67(11)

(e) Morale level 10

Table 5—Probability that a single unit will survive and attack either unharmed and unpinned or (unharmed and pinned)

unless the number of column shifts to the right due to this addition is, at a minimum, at least one greater than the total of the favorable DRMs lost. For example, if an enemy unit with a morale of "6" occupies a wooden building, a stack of three 4-6-7s stacked with an 8-1 leader would attack with a firepower of 12 and a net DRM of +1. If the adjacent hex contained another 4-6-7, adding its strength would produce a 16 FPF attack at +2. From section (a) of Table 5, the probability that the target will survive the first attack unharmed in any way (52%) is the same as the probability associated with the second attack. The Pin probabilities are also the same. Thus, in this case, adding an additional squad offers no advantage.

Before going on, let me point out that, most of the time, I will present results as if the only thing of importance is whether or not a unit is untouched. Now, we might expect (and, sometimes, be correct) that, in general, what is here a 35% probability of some harmful result would contain a varying mix of Broken and KIA results. My experience suggests that the "no permanent harm" probabilities are the *most* useful ones, so that's what we can expect to see most of the time.

To continue, the general validity of this simple rule can be seen by reading diagonally downward through the values in any of the five parts of Table 5. For example, for a morale of "7", attacks at 12 (DRM of −4), 16 (DRM of −3), 20 (DRM of −2), 24 (DRM of −1), 30 (DRM of 0), and 36 (DRM of +1) show either "7(4)" or "7(5)" as the survival probabilities. This rule is not influenced by the morale of the unit being attacked. There is a change to be noted as higher and higher Morale Levels are considered, but the effect merely strengthens the rule. For the same attacks just listed, the survival probabilities rise from "23(6)" to "28(8)" for a target with a morale level of "10". All this means that a one column shift to the right, if it's accompanied by an increase of one in the net DRM, leads to a less harmful attack.

One of the general observations drawn from this type of material back when *SL* was first published was that units with a Morale Level of "7" were closer in survival performance to those with a morale of "6" than they were to those with a morale of "8". With the revised IFT this is still more true than false, but the differences are too small to be of concern. Averaged out over the typical DRM ranges, the increase in outright survival percentages, for a particular attack, will increase by about the same amount between morale "6" and morale "7" units as they will between morale "9" and morale "10" units.

On the other hand, another early conclusion has made it through the transition to *ASL*. Table 6 illustrates the second simple rule: an improvement of one in the Morale Level is equivalent to getting a +1 DRM on all attacks made against the unit. Unfortunately, morale usually falls, meaning a DRM of −1. All of the survival probabilities in this table are taken directly from Table 5. They are merely re-arranged in order to demonstrate the rule. In the center column (i.e., the one for a morale of "8"), the percentages, 11 through 89, are exactly the ones to be found in Part (c) of Table 5 for an attack strength of 12. Note that the positive and negative numbers on the left of the table are not just DRMs. Rather, they are DRMs to which has been added the difference between the unit's morale and "8". Thus, the eight values given for a morale of "6" correspond to those to be found in Table 5(a) for DRMs of −2 through +5.

Reading horizontally across any of the rows of values in Table 6 reveals the extent to which an increase of one in the morale level is capable of offsetting a change in the net DRM. To illustrate, the +2 row shows that a morale level "6" unit attacked with a DRM of +4 will surivive 70% of the time, while a morale "7" unit makes it 64% of the time

when the DRM is +3, a value very little different from the 62% rate for a morale level "8" unit attacked at +2. The remaining values of 63% and 65% are, respectively, those for a morale level "9" unit attacked at a DRM of +1 and a morale level "10" unit attacked at a DRM of zero.

While I don't know the extent to which this information will be of value to you, I have found this connection between morale and DRM to be of benefit to me in organizing my play experience. Practically, most of the squads we need to make use of are at a level of "7". With regard to those happy occasions when there are "8's" at hand, I have found it helps to think of them as "7's" with an extra +1 protection factor. Those unfortunate "6's", however, are burdened with a permanent −1. Attempting to organize my experience around the "7" level unit has made it easier for me to shift among these three difference squad morales.

Size Versus Number

One of the early difficulties I had with determining what the "smart move" was has already been mentioned in connection with the very first *SL* scenario. However, let's first explore one of the most useful types of information to be obtained from Table 5 using a more recent example. In developing the first simple rule, I referred to a case in which three 4-6-7 squads, plus an 8-1 leader, were stacked next to other friendly unit(s). Suppose now that the adjacent hex contains a pair of 4-6-7s. From Table 5 we can see that an attack with 20 FPFs and a DRM of +2 is a decided improvement over one at 12 and a +1. The practical question, of course, is should we combine the 12 FPF and the 8 FPF attacks into one attack, or use them separately in two attacks? While the answer to this question cannot be found directly in the table, a simple calculation will do the job. Recalling that the fractional probability of two sequential events taking place is equal to the product of the fractional probabilities of each of the events is the key.

The fractional probability that the target unit will survive a 12 FPF attack at +1 is 0.52. The probability that it will survive one at 8 FPF and +2 is 0.72. The product of these two, equal to 0.37, or 37% is the probability that the pair of attacks will inflict no harm. The corresponding value for a single attack at 20 FPFs and +2 is 42%. Thus, the combined attack is more likely to inflict harm. Because of the nature of the system, whenever the probablities are essentially the same for single and for multiple attacks with the same total firepower, the multiple attack route is the one to follow. If the first attack is successful, the second stack has at least two options: it can fire at an alternative target; or, if the first target is merely broken, it can be used against the original target in the hope of inflicting more permanent damage.

It's also possible to determine the probability that, while otherwise unharmed, the target will be Pinned. To do this we have to consider the number of ways in which the target could end up Pinned. There are three: it could be Pinned by the first attack, with nothing happening as a result of the second; the reverse situation, in which only the second attack results in a Pin; and the Pinning of the unit by both attacks. The probability of a Pin is then equal to the sum of these three different sequential events, or

$$0.13\times0.72 + 0.52\times0.08 + 0.13\times0.08$$

which has a value of 0.15. Thus, the two-attack procedure is also more likely to result in a Pin.

Both you and I would end up playing an awful lot of games solitaire if we had to look up these sorts of numbers and do these sorts of calculations before we could make up our minds about how to proceed with our Prep Fire. The purpose of this exercise is to, whenever possible, produce relatively simple doctrines which will, by and large, work well for us. *He who would win must remember to play the odds. Yet, he who looks up the odds before each dice roll plays alone.*

This particular example suggests a very simple rule: never throw away a favorable modifier or inflict an unfavorable one upon an attack merely for the sake of making a single, stronger fire group attack. The neat thing about this rule is that it works

		Morale Level				
		6	7	8	9	10
DRM + (Morale—8)	−4	9	11	11		
	−3	14	16	17	17	
	−2	22	22	24	25	23
	−1	32	31	32	34	34
	0	44	41	42	44	45
	+1	56	52	52	54	55
	+2	70	64	62	63	65
	+3	81	75	72	73	74
	+4		84	81	80	82
	+5			89	87	87

Table 6—Survival probabilities for a 12 FPF attack

Table 7—A comparison of individual versus combined firepower attacks

(c) Morale level 8

Total firepower	8		12		16			24				
No. of attacks	1	2	1	2	1	2	4	1	2	3	4	6
DRM −4	14	7	11	3	7	2	1	2	1	0	0	0
DRM −3	22	14	17	7	11	5	2	5	3	1	1	0
DRM −2	31	24	24	14	17	9	6	8	6	3	2	1
DRM −1	41	36	32	24	24	16	13	13	11	7	6	5
DRM +0	51	51	42	36	32	26	26	18	18	13	13	13
DRM +1	62	66	52	51	42	38	44	25	27	24	26	29
DRM +2	72	78	62	66	52	52	62	33	39	38	44	48
DRM +3	81	88	72	78	62	66	77	42	52	54	62	68
DRM +4	89	95	81	88	72	78	90	52	66	70	77	85
DRM +5	94	98	89	95	81	88	97	62	78	82	90	95

Total firepower	8		12		16			24				
No. of attacks	1	2	1	2	1	2	4	1	2	3	4	6
DRM −4	5	2	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DRM −3	8	4	6	2	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
DRM −2	14	10	9	4	6	2	1	2	1	0	0	0
DRM −1	22	19	14	10	9	5	3	3	2	1	1	1
DRM +0	32	32	22	19	14	10	10	6	5	3	3	3
DRM +1	44	49	32	32	22	19	24	9	10	8	10	12
DRM +2	56	65	44	49	32	32	42	14	19	18	24	27
DRM +3	70	79	56	65	44	49	62	22	32	34	42	49
DRM +4	81	90	70	79	56	65	81	32	49	52	62	72
DRM +5	89	97	81	90	70	79	94	44	65	70	81	91

(a) Morale level 6

Total firepower	8		12		16			24				
No. of attacks	1	2	1	2	1	2	4	1	2	3	4	6
DRM −4	21	12	17	6	10	4	1	4	3	1	0	0
DRM −3	30	22	25	12	17	9	5	8	6	3	1	1
DRM −2	41	34	34	22	25	17	12	13	12	7	5	4
DRM −1	52	48	44	34	34	27	23	20	19	14	12	11
DRM +0	62	63	54	48	44	38	39	27	29	24	23	25
DRM +1	72	76	63	63	54	51	58	36	40	37	39	44
DRM +2	80	85	73	76	63	65	73	45	53	52	58	62
DRM +3	87	92	80	85	73	76	85	55	65	66	73	78
DRM +4	92	97	87	92	80	85	93	64	76	79	85	90
DRM +5	96	99	92	97	87	92	98	73	85	88	93	97

(d) Morale level 9

Total firepower	8		12		16			24				
No. of attacks	1	2	1	2	1	2	4	1	2	3	4	6
DRM −4	9	4	7	1	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
DRM −3	14	8	11	4	7	2	1	2	1	0	0	0
DRM −2	22	15	16	8	11	5	2	4	2	1	1	0
DRM −1	30	26	22	15	16	9	7	7	5	3	2	2
DRM +0	41	40	31	26	22	17	16	11	10	7	7	7
DRM +1	52	57	41	40	31	27	32	16	17	14	16	18
DRM +2	64	71	52	57	41	41	51	23	27	26	32	36
DRM +3	75	83	64	71	52	57	69	31	41	43	51	58
DRM +4	84	92	75	83	64	71	85	41	57	60	69	79
DRM +5	91	98	84	92	75	83	95	52	71	76	85	93

(b) Morale level 7

Total firepower	8		12		16			24				
No. of attacks	1	2	1	2	1	2	4	1	2	3	4	6
DRM −4	27	18	23	9	15	7	3	6	5	2	1	1
DRM −3	39	31	34	18	23	15	9	11	11	6	3	3
DRM −2	51	45	45	31	34	26	20	19	20	13	9	9
DRM −1	62	60	55	45	45	38	36	28	31	24	20	21
DRM +0	72	74	65	60	55	52	54	38	43	37	36	40
DRM +1	81	85	74	74	65	65	72	48	55	52	54	61
DRM +2	87	91	82	85	74	76	83	58	67	67	72	75
DRM +3	92	95	87	91	82	85	91	67	76	78	83	86
DRM +4	95	98	92	95	87	91	96	75	85	87	91	95
DRM +5	98	100	95	98	92	95	99	82	91	93	96	99

(e) Morale level 10

DRM	Firepower factors 4	8	16	24
−4	3 (9)	3(11)	3 (8)	6 (8)
−3	9(12)	8(11)	11(11)	8 (8)
−2	3(10)	3(11)	6(11)	6(11)
−1	8(15)	9(12)	14(14)	11(11)
0	5(14)	3(13)	6(11)	8(14)
+1	20(20)	12(15)	15(15)	14(14)
+2	10(20)	5(14)	7(13)	9(14)
+3	33(33)	20(20)	15(15)	15(15)
+4	33(33)	10(20)	5(14)	7(13)

Table 8—Percentage of otherwise successful attacks reduced in severity by cowering

so much of the time that trying to find a better one is pretty much a waste of effort that could be more wisely spent upon other things. However, for the advanced student, there is one general area in which this rule doesn't work quite as well.

Going back to that first scenario example of *SL*, an attack with the 10-2 leader and three 6-2-8 squads, followed by a second attack with just three 6-2-8 squads means a pair of attacks on the 16 FPF column, one with a DRM of +1, and one with a DRM of +3. The probability that a target with a morale of "7" will survive both of these is 0.31×0.52, or 0.16. Expressed as a percent, this is the same as the value found in the 36 FPF column for a +3 DRM attack, so the rule works. However, if the leader could only provide a −1, the probability of survival rises to 21% for two attacks. In general, the situations to be wary of are the ones in which the number of columns between the individual attacks and the combined attack is large, as it is in this case, and the defender is in good cover. Both aspects of this observation will again appear in the next item to be considered.

Table 7 sheds more light on the problem posed by the possibility of attacking a target more than once. This time it is supposed that there will be no change in net DRM. Four different total firepowers are considered. Looking in the row below these four firepower values we find the numbers of attacks to be made. For example, for 16 FPFs, results are shown for one, two or four attacks. Since only 16 FPFs are available, if two attacks are to be made, then each is at the level of 8 FPFs. Similarly, if four attacks are to be made, only 4 FPFs are available for each one. Because of the way in which the IFT is constructed one can at least envision 24 FPFs being divided into one attack at 24, two attacks at 12, three attacks at 8, four attacks at 6, or six attacks at 4. While such a thing is hardly practical, the results do serve to demonstrate some interesting things.

The first thing to do in each of the sections of the table is to, for each of the total firepowers available, determine the "break even" point—the DRM at which the target's chance of survival is the same for either one attack or two. For a target with a morale of "6", this point occurs at a DRM of zero if the attack strength is 8 FPF. For attacks of 12 and 16 the corresponding DRMs are, respectively, +1 and +2. Thus, if 16 FPFs are available for an attack, and the strengths and positions of the units are such that two separate attacks can be made, making two attacks is the better choice if the DRM is +1, zero, or any negative value.

If you look at the first two columns under a total attack strength of 24 FPFs, you'll find that the trend established for the first three attack strengths doesn't continue; the break even point is around a DRM of zero or +1. The "why" of this particular result can be determined without much trouble. The source is the number of columns between "12" and "24". Two columns lie between these two values. If we look at the IFT for the other cases considered, we see that only one column lies between either the "4" and the "8" columns, or the "6" and the "12" columns, or the "8" and the "16" columns.

So much for the bad news. The good news is that all of the things said for a target with a morale of "6" could just as easily be said for any of the other values. Thus, any rules formulated about when to divide fires in this type of situation will not have to consider the factor of morale. My rule is quite simple: if the net DRM is zero or negative, divide your fire; otherwise, combine. This rule doesn't alter the earlier one concerning the use of favorable DRMs.

If you're going to divide fires, there will sometimes be the possibility of dividing them into more than two. It is for this reason that the additional situations have been included for attack strength into more than two parts doesn't seem to be particularly worthwhile.

Taken together, this pair of rules will not always give you the very best attack odds. However, they will work most of the time and have the great virtue of simplicity. For those of you who wish to try fine tuning this sort of thing, you should have enough in the way of numbers to work with. If you come across something clever, especially if it's also simple, don't keep it to yourself, let me know so that we can get it into the Analysis Chapter for everyone.

Cowering

This particular effect was introduced into the system in *COD*, and has made it into *ASL*. The rule requires that, whenever infantry fires on the IFT, a roll of "doubles" will cause a one-column shift to the left on the IFT unless the units are stacked with some kind of a leader. In the case of really poor infantry, there's a two-column shift. Such things are certainly not good. But, a lot of things in the game present undesireable choices; it is for the players to decide which ones they will attempt to do something about.

Table 8 was my first look at this facet of the game, in that, for various attacks and net DRMs, it shows the percentage of otherwise successful attacks which will be reduced in severity as a result of this rule. The first value is associated with a one-column shift; the one in parentheses goes with a two-column shift. When I first looked at these numbers, I couldn't make up my mind whether or not the threat of Cowering should be a factor in determining leader usage. To find out, I wrote another program which took Cowering into account and ran it out.

Because of the nature of the results obtained, only those for a morale of "7" are shown in Table 9. Beneath each firepower the first number is the same as that which is to be found in the corresponding column in Table 5(b): the probability that a unit will survive, unbroken and unpinned, the attack at the DRM specified. In Table 9, the second number is the *increase* in this survival probability if the Cowering rule is used and there will be a one-column shift whenever doubles are rolled. The third, and last, number in each entry is the increase in the basic survival probability if Cowering produces a two column shift. Once you get past attacks of either one or two FPFs, the largest increase due to Cowering of either variety is 3%. Given the many uses to which leaders can be put, this effect is too small to be worth considering.

Experience Level Rating

Well folks, it didn't go away, even after so many of you got upset about the way (mostly) American squads and half-squads could break-to-green if they failed a MC by an amount greater than their ELR, a value specific in each *GI* scenario. The rule was never intended for application solely to US forces, although most of the *GI* scenario would encourage this belief.

While the concept did survive, it has done so in a much-altered form. Seeing how this part of the *ASL* system interacts with the rest is essential both to an understanding of how *ASL* differs from the system through *GI* and to intelligent play.

The *GI* rule required that, for any Elite, First Line or Second Line MMC subject to the rule (crews were, and are, exempt), failing a MC by an amount in excess of its ELR would cause its immediate replacement by a broke "Green" squad, the lowest category of MMC available to the US player. Inexperienced Infantry were to be used for other nationalities when their forces were subject to this rule. While Green units did not share all of the weaknesses of Inexperienced Infantry, they had most of them, so that the replacment of an Elite squad with a Broken Green one was always a traumatic experience.

In a modified form, the concept of reduction in quality is, in my opinion, at the heart of *ASL* infantry changes. Figure 3 illustrates, for both the Germans and the Russians, one of their squad (and associated half-squad) sequences. While each also has a second sequence, these will suffice to illustrate the key points. Any given scenario will supply the initial quality or qualities of each side's forces, along with their ELRs. Once play begins, any MMC *or* leader failing a MC by more than that force's ELR is immediately replaced by a broken unit of the next lowest quality. Thus, for the German player, a 4-6-7 failing a MC by too much would be replaced by a broken 4-4-7. Applying this same sort of thing to leader is straight-forward; an 8-1 failing a MC by more than its ELR would be replaced by a broken 8-0. If the unit is already at the bottom of its particular scale (e.g., a Conscript half-squad), an ELR failure results in its being "Disrupted". This is a status akin to, and somewhat worse than, that of being "Broken". Particularly troublesome is the fact that, generally, the unit cannot Rout . . . which means it is seldom long for the battlefield.

FIREPOWER

DRM	1	2	4	6	8	12	16	20	24	30	36
−4	37 9 9	26 2 11	19 0 3	12 2 2	9 0 2	7 1 1	4 0 1	2 1 1	1 0 1	0 0 0	0 0 0
−3	50 9 9	37 0 9	29 2 2	19 1 3	14 2 3	11 0 2	7 1 1	4 0 1	2 1 1	1 0 1	0 0 0
−2	63 6 6	50 2 9	39 0 3	29 2 2	22 0 2	16 2 3	11 1 3	7 1 2	4 0 1	2 1 1	1 0 1
−1	75 6 6	63 0 6	51 2 2	39 1 3	30 2 3	22 0 2	16 2 3	11 1 3	7 1 2	4 0 1	2 1 1
+0	84 4 4	75 2 6	64 0 3	51 2 2	41 0 2	31 2 3	22 1 3	16 2 3	11 1 3	7 1 2	4 0 1
+1	91 3 3	84 0 4	75 2 2	64 1 3	52 2 3	41 0 2	31 2 3	23 1 3	16 2 3	11 1 3	7 1 2
+2	96 2 2	91 2 3	84 0 2	75 2 2	64 0 2	52 2 3	41 1 3	31 2 3	23 1 3	16 2 3	11 1 3
+3	99 1 1	96 0 2	91 2 2	84 0 2	75 2 2	64 0 2	52 2 3	41 1 3	31 2 3	23 1 3	16 2 3
+4	100 0 0	99 1 1	96 0 2	91 2 2	84 0 2	75 2 2	64 0 2	52 2 3	41 1 3	31 2 3	23 1 3
+5	100 0 0	100 0 0	99 1 1	96 0 2	91 2 2	84 0 2	75 2 2	64 0 2	52 2 3	41 1 3	31 −0 0

Table 9—Effect of Cowering on the probability that a single unit with a Morale Level of 7 will survive an attack unharmed and unpinned

FP	DRM	Probability that squad breaks	Percentage of broken results leading to replacement by poorer quality unit: ELR 1	2	3	4	5
4	−2	46	81	60	41	25	13
	0	29	80	58	38	23	12
	+2	11	77	53	34	19	9
8	−2	60	84	64	45	29	16
	0	51	82	61	42	26	14
	+2	29	80	58	38	23	12
16	−2	60	87	71	54	37	23
	0	66	85	67	49	32	19
	+2	54	83	63	44	28	16
24	−2	53	91	80	66	50	34
	0	72	89	75	59	43	28
	+2	72	86	70	52	36	23

(a) Morale = 6

FP	DRM	Probability that squad breaks	Percentage of broken results leading to replacement by poorer quality unit: ELR 1	2	3	4	5
4	−2	38	74	50	31	16	7
	0	23	73	48	29	15	5
	+2	8	69	44	25	11	3
8	−2	48	77	53	34	19	9
	0	42	75	51	32	17	7
	+2	23	73	48	29	15	5
16	−2	53	82	62	42	26	14
	0	56	79	58	38	23	12
	+2	45	76	53	34	19	9
24	−2	49	87	72	55	38	24
	0	64	84	66	48	32	19
	+2	62	81	61	42	26	14

(b) Morale = 7

FP	DRM	Probability that squad breaks	Percentage of broken results leading to replacement by poorer quality unit: ELR 1	2	3	4	5
4	−2	28	68	42	22	9	2
	0	17	67	40	20	7	1
	+2	6	64	36	16	4	0
8	−2	37	69	44	25	11	3
	0	31	68	42	23	9	2
	+2	17	67	40	20	7	1
16	−2	43	75	51	32	18	8
	0	45	73	48	29	15	6
	+2	34	70	45	25	11	4
24	−2	43	82	63	43	27	15
	0	54	79	57	38	23	12
	+2	50	75	52	32	18	8

(c) Morale = 8

FP	DRM	Probability that squad breaks	Percentage of broken results leading to replacement by poorer quality unit: ELR 1	2	3	4	5
4	−2	19	62	33	13	3	0
	0	11	60	30	11	2	0
	+2	4	56	25	6	0	0
8	−2	26	64	36	16	4	0
	0	21	62	33	14	3	0
	+2	11	60	30	11	2	0
16	−2	33	68	43	23	10	2
	0	32	66	40	20	8	2
	+2	24	64	36	16	5	1
24	−2	35	76	52	33	18	8
	0	43	73	48	29	15	6
	+2	38	69	43	24	11	4

(d) Morale = 9

FP	DRM	Probability that squad breaks	Percentage of broken results leading to replacement by poorer quality unit: ELR 1	2	3	4	5
4	−2	12	53	21	5	0	0
	0	7	51	18	3	0	0
	+2	2	44	11	0	0	0
8	−2	16	56	25	7	0	0
	0	13	54	22	5	0	0
	+2	7	51	18	3	0	0
16	−2	22	62	34	15	4	0
	0	21	60	30	12	3	0
	+2	15	56	26	8	2	0
24	−2	27	69	43	24	11	3
	0	31	66	39	20	8	2
	+2	26	62	34	16	6	1

(e) Morale = 10

Table 10—Probabilities that a unit will break and relative probabilities that breaking will cause a reduction in unit quality

As Figure 3 shows, the lengths of the MMC sequences are not the same for all nationalities. Thus, in light of this new rule, a Germany 4-6-8 is a less fragile thing than is a Russian 4-5-8. Experience indicates that this factor is rather more important than the one-hex difference in range. It is by such choices that the *ASL* designers have shaped the characters of the forces we are to command. This has also been accomplished in a second way. Certain units, such as the American 7-4-7s, have their Morale Level value, in this example a "7", underscored. Such units have an ELR of 5 (the maximum possible), and will not be replaced, when this value is exceeded, by a squad of lesser quality. Instead, such units are replaced with a pair of Broken half-squads. There is a vulnerability in being a half-squad which does not exist for a squad. However, the more important observation is that with such units one can, if the half-squads survive, reverse the effects of this rule by Rallying and recombining. For other units, barring the low probability of a certain type of Battlefield Hardening result, these effects cannot be reversed.

When we combine these observations with the new IFT, we can see that the net effect is to make some units less vulnerable in the short term and more vulnerable in the long term. The gradual reduction in quality has a snowball effect which is not likely to be apparent in the first few turns of a scenario. As a result it's quite likely that there will be many times when a player will abandon a scenario when, in fact, his long-term prospects were not all that bad. As a player, you need to be cautious about quick judgements concerning scenario play balance.

Before taking a look at how likely all of these bad things are, there is one more long-term effect to be considered. "Battlefield Integrity", first introduced in *COI*, is not an idea loved by all because it does require a certain amount of record keeping. The placement of the appropriate values on the backs of individual counters has eliminated a portion of this problem, however. Conceptually, the idea of Battlefield Integrity as it now stands is a simple one: as the value of a force shrinks due to elimination or capture of its MMCs, there will ultimately come a time when that side's forces will have to face the possibility of a general reduction in its ELR. Without having to look at any new numbers, it should be clear that such a loss would only accelerate further declines in quality, which could, once again, trigger the provisions of the Battlefield Integrity rule, which could . . . well you get the picture.

The results in Table 10 are much the same as the ones in the *GI* article. However, because leaders are no longer exempt, Morale Levels of "9" and "10" have also been considered. For each of the firepowers, DRMs and Morale Levels, the number immediately following the DRM is the probability that, for this particular combination of firepower, DRM and morale, the unit will break. The five subsequent values, for ELRs of 1 through 5, are the probabilities that a unit which breaks will do so



Figure 3—Squad sequences, German and Russian

badly enough so as to exceed the ELR limit. For example, for a 16 FPF attack at +2 on a unit with a morale of "8", there is a 24% chance that the unit will break. If it Breaks, and the ELR is "1", 70% of those MCs will have been failed by enough so that the unit will undergo a reduction in quality. If, on the other hand, the unit's ELR is "4", it will become a poorer unit only 11% of the time. Since ELRs of "3" are common, a look in that column for each of three basic infantry MMC Morale Levels suggests that the effects of this area of the rules will be felt quite often.

If you kind of squint your eyes and look at the numbers quickly, it isn't too difficult to suppose that, for given morale and ELR values, the number of FPFs and the DRMs don't make all that much difference. It is this notion that gave rise to the approximate values given in Table 11. I have two hopes for this material. One is that players will recognize the extent to which the process being considered can be expected to erode the quality of their troops. For a morale level of "7" and an ELR of "3", both quite common for squads, something around one-third (35% in the Table) of the Broken results will lead to a reduction in quality. Suppose that a Russian 4-4-7 has now become a 4-2-6. For any given attack the probability that the unit will break has now increased because of the morale reduction. For the same reason, the probability that the unit will once again fail a MC by too much has also gone up. From Table 11 the relative probability of the latter event has gone up by 10%. To pick a particular example, an 8 FPF attack, with a DRM of 0, on a unit with a morale of "7" and an ELR of "3", would see that unit fail some sort of MC by too much 0.45. ×0.32×100%, or 13%, of the time. With everything the same except that the Morale Level is "6", the numbers are 0.51×0.42×100, or 21%. Now, let's suppose that the cumulative effect of losses has finally led to a reduction in the ELR level from "3" to "2". In that case, the numbers are now 0.51×0.61×100, or 31%. Since the 4-2-6 is at the end of the line, that amounts to a 31% probability of Disruption, added to (from Table 2) a 9% chance of something nasty in the way of either a KIA or K result.

My second hope is that scenario designers will weight carefully the probable impact of quality reduction, particularly with regard to the expected performance of units in longer scenarios. As the numbers in Table 13 suggest, a change of one in an ELR level can be most significant.

Leaders and Followers

One last table remains to be considered, and it exemplifies much of what makes this such an interesting system. Throughout play, *ASL* continuously offers us situations in which we must balance risk against gain. Time after time we find that a potentially useful activity carries with it some increased risk. I think that this is nowhere more evident than in connection with the use of leaders.

To be stacked with a leader is to enjoy, at a minimum, greater movement capacity and an increased opportunity to Rally if broken. With negative leadership modifiers, offensive capacity can be significantly increased. But there is a risk. No matter how powerful it is, any attack can come up empty, leaving the miraculously-spared enemy in a nasty mood. Then that leader can be a threat to the health and well-being of those stacked with it. The extent of this threat has, in one way, been reduced in *ASL*, since the loss or breaking of a leader in a Location with other units will not automatically subject them to a MC. Now a leader will cause another unit in its Location to take a MC only if the leader is slain and has a Morale Level *higher* than that of the other unit. Mere breaking of the leader produces only a Pin Check. Thus, the 7-0 and the 6+1 are no longer the hazards they once were. On the other hand, if the morales of the units in question are such as to require some sort of check, what would otherwise be a favorable leadership DRM is now reversed. If, terrible thought, that 9-2 leader should die, any units in the hex with it having Morale Levels of eight or less will take a 2MC.

In Table 11 we find, for all leaders and a number of different attacks, the probabilities that single

Morale	ELR value 1	2	3	4	5
6	80	65	45	30	15
7	75	55	35	20	20
8	70	45	25	10	5
9	65	35	15	5	0
10	55	25	5	0	0

Table 11—The approximate probabilities that any fire attack will cause a breaking unit to undergo a reduction in quality

units stacked with them will survive, unharmed and unpinned. Unlike those in all of the other tables, the entries in this one were not calculated directly. Instead, they were determined by the second method mentioned earlier, the one whereby a computer rolls and rolls those dice, keeping track all the while of how things turned out. Each entry here is the result of 30,000 trials. For those who are interested in such things, that many trials takes about 15 seconds on an IBM PC using a compiled program. Getting all those numbers did take awhile, but the program written did all of the cases, one after the other, while I was out mowing the lawn. From direct calculation it is easy to find the survival probabilities when no leader is involved. Those values agree to within 1% with the results given here.

To illustrate how the rules make things work, let's look at the results of a 16 FPF attack made, with a +2 DRM, against a hex containing a squad having a Morale Level of "8". With no leader present, the survival probability is 52%. Placement of a 6+1 leader into the hex reduces this value to 50% as a result of those situations in which the leader survives that attack unhampered in any way and, as a result, applies its +1 leadership modifier to any squad MCs. In those cases in which damage to the leader results in an application of the negative of the leadership modifier, this leader is now helpful!

The 7-0 causes the value to rise back to 52%. In truth, the squad is actually a tiny bit safer with this leader, as it is with the 8-0, because of the K/#- result. With two targets, 15 times out of 36 it's the leader alone who gets the 'K'. However, accounting for the differences in the 7-0 and the 8-0 values, a wounded leader who does not break will now have a leadership modifier of +1. Things improve, to 57%, with the 8-1 leader, who offers a favorable leadership modifier, but, because of the Morale Levels, offers no threat should it die or break. It is precisely because the 9-1 leader does pose such

Continued on Page 16, Column 3

LEADER		NONE	6+1	7−0	8−0	8−1	9−1	9−2	10−2	10−3
	DRM	-2 0 +2	-2 0 +2	-2 0 +2	-2 0 +2	-2 0 +2	-2 0 +2	-2 0 +2	-2 0 +2	-2 0 +2
FP	Squad Morale									
4	6	31 56 81	30 54 80	28 54 80	29 55 80	33 59 82	35 60 83	41 66 86	44 68 87	51 74 90
	7	39 63 84	38 61 83	39 63 85	37 61 84	41 65 86	43 68 87	49 72 89	53 75 91	59 80 93
	8	49 71 89	48 70 87	48 72 89	50 72 88	54 75 91	53 75 91	57 79 92	61 81 93	65 85 95
8	6	14 32 56	13 30 55	12 29 54	12 30 55	15 34 59	17 36 60	22 41 66	25 45 68	32 53 78
	7	22 41 64	21 39 62	22 41 64	19 38 62	22 41 66	24 45 68	30 50 73	33 55 75	40 61 81
	8	31 50 72	30 50 70	32 51 73	32 52 72	36 56 76	34 55 75	39 60 79	42 64 83	48 69 86
16	6	6 15 32	6 14 30	4 11 29	4 12 29	5 15 34	7 17 35	10 22 42	12 26 45	17 32 53
	7	11 22 41	11 22 39	11 22 41	9 20 38	10 22 42	12 25 45	15 30 50	18 35 54	23 42 63
	8	17 32 52	17 32 50	18 33 52	18 33 53	21 38 57	19 35 56	22 40 60	26 44 65	30 50 71
24	6	2 6 14	2 5 13	1 3 11	1 4 12	2 5 15	2 7 17	4 9 22	4 12 26	7 17 33
	7	4 11 23	4 11 21	5 11 23	3 9 19	4 10 22	4 12 25	6 15 30	7 18 35	10 23 42
	8	8 18 33	9 18 32	9 19 33	9 19 34	9 21 38	9 19 35	10 22 40	12 26 45	14 30 51

Table 12—The probabilities that a single squad will survive unharmed and unpinned when attacked while stacked with various leaders

a threat that the survival probability dips back to 56% with such a leader. For the remaining three leaders, with either a higher leadership modifier, or that and a higher morale, the trend is steadily upward through values of 60%, 65% and 71%.

The most useful thing I've found from these numbers is that anything below a 9-2 value has very little effect upon the survival probabilities of other units. Such leaders are only, in combat, of use offensively. Position and use them accordingly.

SUMMARY

To summarize, we now have a system in which results are less immediate and in which flexibility in the area of how forces are modelled has been increased. While, as players, the amount of information with which we must work has been increased in some areas, in others concepts and mechanics have been streamlined without any significant loss.

Finally, remember that I expect to hear from you.





Squad Leader Clinic

"I MET MY OLD LOVER . . ."

By Jon Mishcon

I've been waiting years to write this article. Wanting to go back to those great old classic scenarios. Planning to bring them back into the mainstream of *SL* play so that we could re-live those golden games.

Perhaps the greatest advantage that *ASL* confers on its proud owners is that, given time, ALL the great old scenarios will be revivified. Our intent, as play-oriented testers, is to try to recreate the feel of those "oldies but goodies" while improving the play-balance. Let this article serve notice that we concentrated on retaining the original Victory Conditions and game length. That means that in most cases, you'll note substantial changes in the forces and/or set up. Nonetheless, we found that we could bring back much of that sensation of popping open the tops of those first edition purple boxes. What a feeling!

First, we'll review our perceptions of the first three original *SL* scenarios. Afterwards, how they played—unmodified—under *ASL* rules. Lastly, some thoughts about current play in the modified versions.

Now, let's "talk about some old times and drink ourselves some beer."

Scenario 1

We found the original Scenario 1 played under the original rules to be strongly pro-Russian in play-balance. The original "feel": for the Russians, lightly Prep Fire onto J4 and then sweep across from building G4 into buildings F5 and G6. If units in J4 and K4 broken, then push units from J2 into J3; otherwise, retreat into K2. gang the rear troops together in hexes M5 and N5. When building F5 falls and K5 is surrounded, keep the troops in I7 and L6 busy by fire while assaulting building K5 from any advantageous direction. Win by taking buildings F5 and K5. For the German player, build big firegroups and shoot like crazy; pray for KIAs.

Now, if Scenario 1 is played under *ASL* rules without modifications of any kind, play-balance is very strongly pro-German. The differences begin with the altered strength of German MGs. Suddenly the defenders, using two MGs together, were often a column stronger. This difference was compounded by the ability of the defending units to fire repeatedly. Finally, the changes in the building rules forced the German to defend above the stairwells. This left the Russians with the problem of attacking up the stairwell. You try to move through doubled First Fire in the ground floor, then Residual Fire, and lastly Final Fire. Any attempt to advance in just meant the German would shoot and then advance up another floor if they didn't break all the Russians below.

Suffice to say that the Germans began to think of how they could use their firepower advantages to take building J2 away from the Russians instead of just holding on to what they had.

So we altered the scenario. We rate our version mildly pro-Russian when played under *ASL* rules with the SSR. The reductions in the number of German MGs and putting units trapped in the upper floors of buildings under the onus of encirclement means that the Germans are once more tied to building big firegroups and praying for KIAs. It is still hard for the Russians to root the defenders of building F6 out of the upper floors as the German player tends to concentrate lots of fire on the ground floor of F6. However, building K5 has two stairwells for the Russian to advance up, and building I7 is very vulnerable to a Human Wave assault from the ground floor of hexes F6, G6 and H5.

Some random thoughts for both sides while playing:

German should consider using their ability to set up HS to put one HS in either F5 or G6 in order to draw some of the Prep Fire. I like putting some strength initially into hex M7 to try to force the Russian MMG group to pull back to J1. When the time comes to retreat or counterattack, don't forget that you have smoke, albeit the chances of getting it are small.

Russians should always use a Commissar in building N4. Try to keep your forces set up for Human Wave assaults, both in building N4/M4 and building G6 (when taken). The threat alone will force the German to reserve some shots he might otherwise take. Always take your sniper shots. The Germans can't afford to be TI.

Both players should be aware that our experience suggests that a majority of games will evoke significant unit changes. By this I mean berserk, battle-hardened, and hero units make frequent appearances—not to mention the expected crop of conscripts. We even had one game where the Russian leader became a 10-3. Plan for this kind of game drift.

Scenario 2

Scenario 2 is mildly pro-German when played under the original *SL* rules. The Russians use a "hammer and shield" defense of building X4. (The hammer is the big groups in X3 and X4, with the shield being a screen of concealed units along the

outer edge.) They must attack into and through building U3 as quickly as possible in order to reinforce the factory defenders.

Meanwhile, the Germans will smoke the street, burn the outer defenders and advance into the street. On Turn 2 they move into Y3-Y5 and throw Demo Charges. Figure to get lots of broken German units who can retreat across the street to a leader, hope to get lots of broken Russians in the center of the factory with no place to go. Once in, the Germans can hold onto a major chunk of the factory using Engineers to defend the gains.

We didn't even attempt to play Scenario 2 without modifications and with the *ASL* rules, for two reasons: there are not enough pieces in the counter mix to allow play, and our experience with the first scenario seemed to prove that the upgraded German MGs are just too potent.

Once we had altered the scenario, it remains mildly pro-German in feel. Very, very similar to the original. Flamethrowers are not as potent, but once the Germans are in the factory there is literally no place for the Russians to hide. The absence of an upper floor for the factory means that the stairwell defense won't work. (By the way, unless you change the occupation rules, an SSR for rooftops is meaningless.) Naturally, the Russian is likely to concentrate all of his relief forces in buildings R1 and Q3. Look for another Human Wave here very earlier on. Nonetheless, much of this scenario will turn upon the outcome of a few key die rolls. The presence of a few Russian 5-2-7s within the factory really boosts the chances for a Russian victory.

Comment should be made here on the use of Sewer Movement. Historically, there is no question that the Russians used it to great advantage. Players who use this rule should be aware that the ability it gives the properly guided Russian to quickly reinforce the factory can swing the game. Of course, getting lost can really be a major pain in the rump.

Scenario 3

Played under the original rules, it was most frequently a draw—rarely a Russian victory. But the feel of urban combat it evoked is still for many players their strongest memory of *SL*. Given the extra time, the Russians made mincemeat of the Germans defending in buildings K5 and F6. The German AFVs were just too vulnerable to close assault from the 6-2-8s to be able to stave off the fall of two buildings. Naturally, this meant the German AFV tended to support the factory attack, and on that flank the Russian AFVs were susceptible to the German Engineers and their SW. Thus, the game tended to devolve heavily into drawn games with the Russians winning when they moved first and got hot dice that allowed the T-34s to come in before a substantial proportion of the factory had fallen.

Despite our enthusiasm, for the same reasons noted above under Scenario 2, we didn't even try to play this one under *ASL* rules without modifications of any kind.

We didn't play the altered scenario with *ASL* rules and our own SSR enough to be sure, but it seems to be usually a draw, very rarely a German victory and occasionally a Russian victory. If played with SSR, it seems to be pro-German.

Russian set-up of the 295th Infantry will tend to decide the direction the game will take. If the Russian player makes a real commitment to buildings P5 and P8, then look for a pincer attack into buildings L6 and M9 and a probable tie game as the Russians win on one flank and the Germans win on the other. If the Russians put their Commissar into hex R1 and set up heavily in buildings R1 and Q3, then the Germans have a real chnace to win by drawing the factory and using their armor to support the defenders of building I7 and K5. Nonetheless, sigh, lots of drawn games.

If you decide to invoke SSR 7, then the pressure is really on the Russians. Don't plan on getting the 3:1 ratio. You'll have to be rather hot with the dice. If the Russian player is going to win, he'll have to force a victory in F6 and either I7 or K5 plus holding at least four hexes. Russian players should consider sacrificing one radioless T-34 by entering it into hex X3. It will surely die, but causes a major redirection of German attacks.

For those readers who have not already found them, our updated versions of the first scenarios are found on the insert of this issue. Overall, these three scenarios are probably not the best reflection of *ASL*. Yet who can resist replaying them at least once. "Still crazy after all these years."

☆

First Impressions . . . *Cont'd from Page 14*

a threat that the survival probability dips back to 56% with such a leader. For the remaining three leaders, with either a higher leadership modifier, or that and a higher morale, the trend is steadily upward through values of 60%, 65% and 71%.

The most useful thing I've found from these numbers is that anything below a 9-2 value has very little effect upon the survival probabilities of other units. Such leaders are only, in combat, of use offensively. Position and use them accordingly.

SUMMARY

To summarize, we now have a system in which results are less immediate and in which flexibility in the area of how forces are modelled has been increased. While, as players, the amount of information with which we must work has been increased in some areas, in others concepts and mechanics have been streamlined without any significant loss.

Finally, remember that I expect to hear from you.

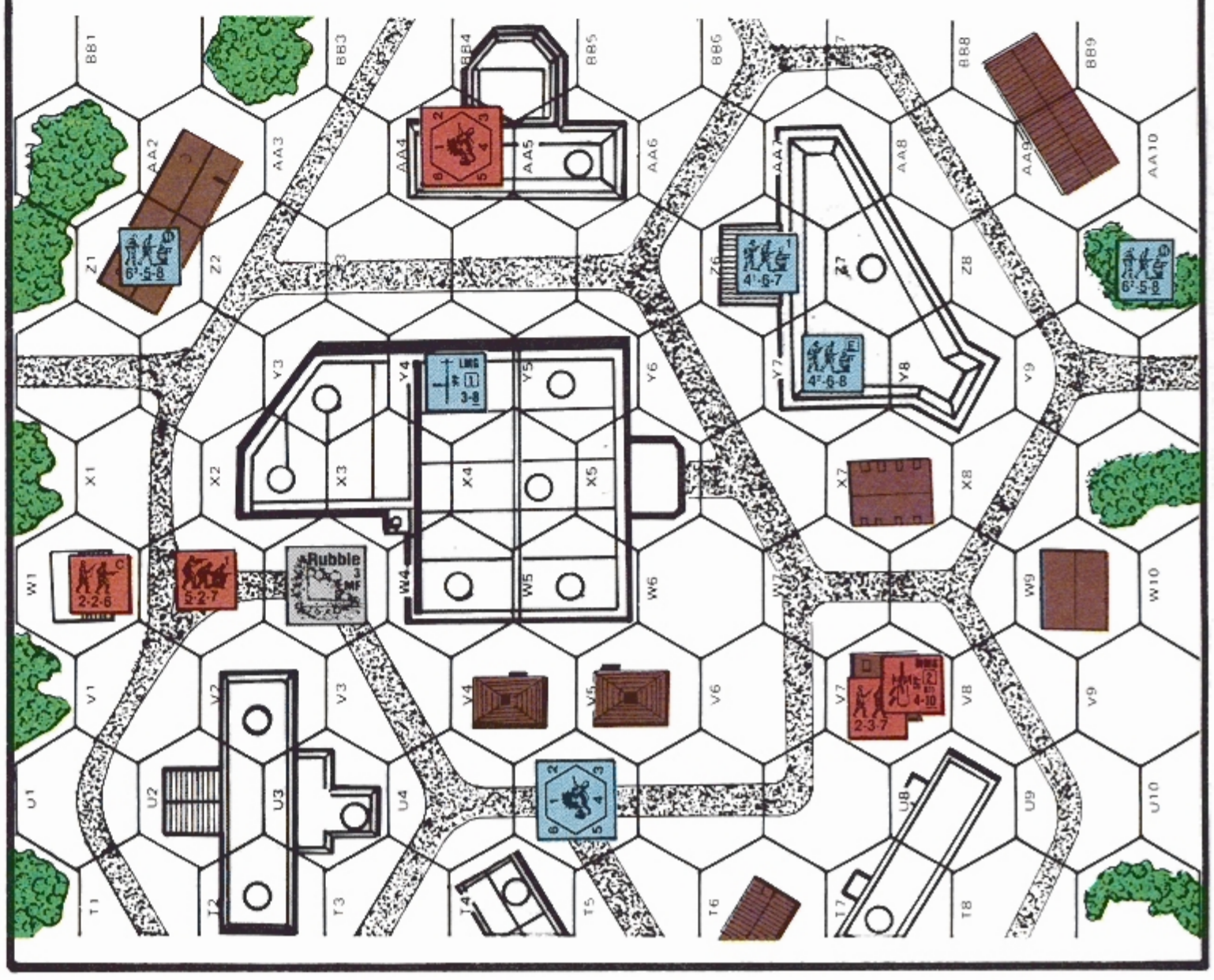
☆

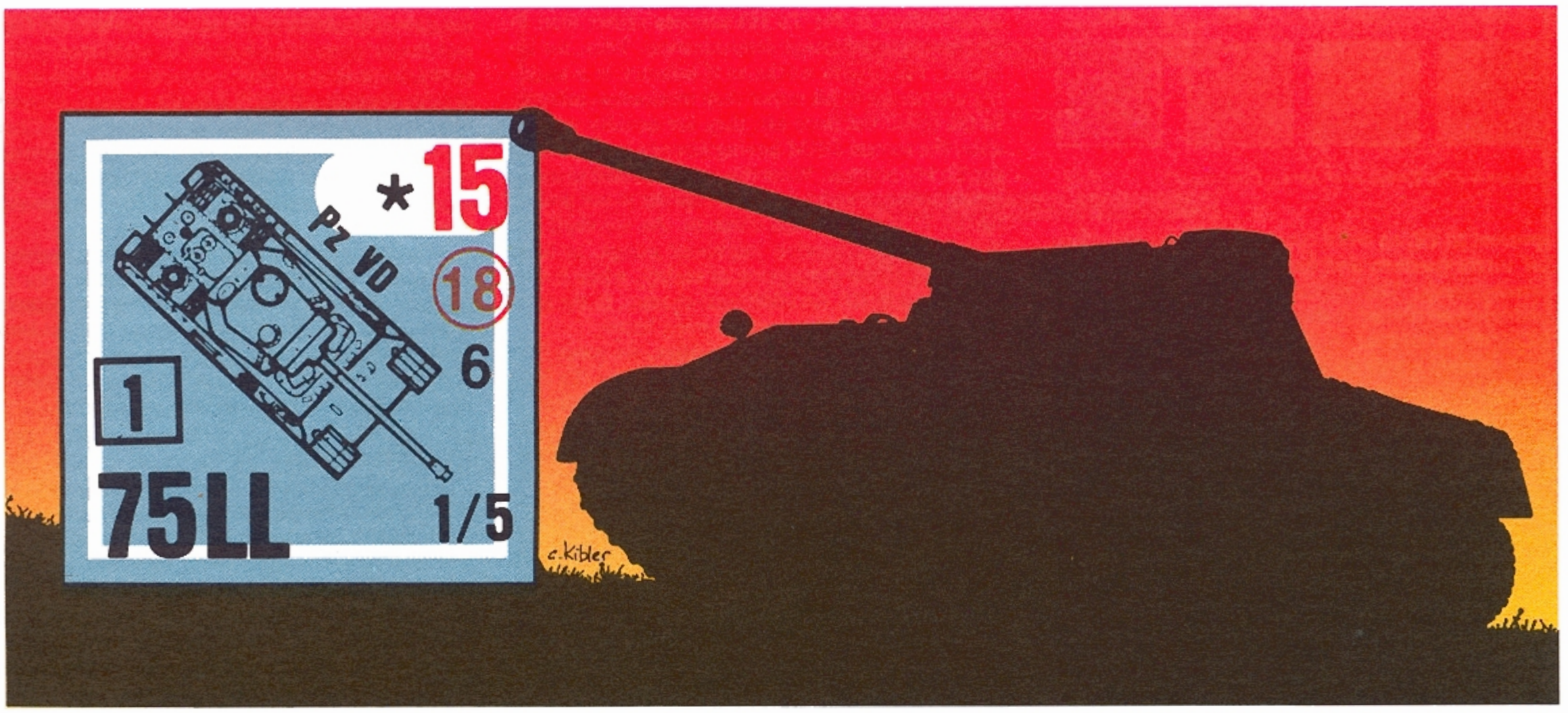
CONTEST #130

It is the last Player Turn (Russian) in an *ASL* DYO scenario in which the victor is the player that can exert the most hypothetical FP into intersection hexes 1Z5 and/or 1W7 at the end of the game. DRM and Multiple ROF are irrelevant in calculating this FP. Battlefield Integrity is *not* in effect and the units pictured are the only ones remaining. Stone rubble exists in hex 1W3. You are the Russian player.

Can you win? Can you guarantee a draw? Fill in the entry form for the actions taken by your three units (and fire for the machinegun) which consititute your *best* possible move (i.e., that which presents the opposing player with the *least* chance to win); indicate whether your move is most likely to result in a Russian win, a German win, or a draw. If you fire any of your units, indicate target. If you move units, record each Location entered and the MF expended in actions in that Location. If you move more than one units, indicate the order in which they will move (by placing a numeral 1, 2 or 3 as appropriate beside each unit).

The answer to this contest must be entered on the official entry form (or a facsimile) found on the insert of this issue. Ten winning entries will receive merchandise credits from The Avalon Hill Game Company. To be valid, an entry must include a numerical rating for this issue as a whole and a listing of the three best articles in the judgement of the contestant. The solution to Contest 130 will appear in Vol. 23, No. 1 and the list of ten winners in Vol. 23, No. 2 of The *GENERAL*.





FIRST IMPRESSIONS

An Introduction to ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER: Armor Training

By Robert Medrow

Varoom! Clankityclankityclank! Blam! Blam! Puckatapuckata! Is there a wargamer anywhere who is so serious about this sort of thing that he has never made noises like a tank? While wargames have been often referred to as "serious fun", we ought not to forget the second of those two words. Keep both in mind as you make your way through yet another collection of numbers.

INTRODUCTION

The general topic of this article is armor. As with all articles in this series we will concentrate on its special capabilities. The first article in the series (found in Vol. 22, No. 6) looked at the infantry game.

This series will include at least one more article, to be devoted largely to the functioning of off-board artillery. Ultimately, these articles, with the comparison material removed, other things added, errors corrected, etc., will be combined to become Chapter M of the rulebook. In order that this final version of things can be as useful as possible, I need your help. I would like to hear from you readers with regard to four main items. [*Mr. Medrow's address is 1322 Highland Drive, Rolla, MO 65401.*] First, if you encounter any errors in this series of articles or things which you feel just have to be wrong, I'd like to learn of them. Secondly, if there are any general aspects of the system's performance which you feel have not been dealt with adequately, for whatever reason, tell me. Thirdly, if there are any special situations which are so pivotal that they should be included, make your feelings known. Finally, if you come up with any general conclusions or clever ideas about how the game should be played, write. I have already received some important comments concerning material in the first article, and hope for more. I will try to respond to all your communications, but it may take me a while. As soon as this article goes into the mail, it will be time to start playtesting the scenarios to appear, along with Chapter E, in the main U.S. module.

THE EVOLUTION OF ARMOR

The cardboard AFV is not what it was when *SL* rolled out the door. I share your sorrow that things weren't perfect the first time around. However, as an engineer, I'm not surprised by this—just as I'm not surprised that Wilbur and Orville failed to build a Piper Cub. When, as I did many times in the preparation of this article, I went back into the earlier rulebooks, I was struck by how awkward and incomplete some of those treatments were. However, I also remember the enormous amount of effort it took so many of us to reach those points. Without that experience, something like *ASL* would not have been possible.

Figure 4 shows some samples of vehicles. The first of these is the PzKw IVF2 as it appeared in *SL*, followed by a StuG IIIG from *COI*, after which there's a pair of AFVs from *BEYOND VALOR*: the current version of a IVF2 and a Russian T-34 M41.

The major evolutionary step occurred between *SL* and *COI*. *SQUAD LEADER*'s AFVs were pretty much middle-of-the-line vehicles, which made it practical to build their characteristics into the mechanics of the rules. With the success of *SL* and the enthusiasm it generated, the scope of the subsequent gamettes was expanded. From the best to the worst, AFVs in WWII spanned an enormous range. Practically, however, it doesn't take much study to realize that a great many factors must be considered if the varied strengths and weaknesses inherent in armor are to be included. The goal became and remained that of creating a reasonably logical structure of rules and procedures into which these factors could go and in which they would interact in appropriate ways.

The thickness, slope and placement of a vehicle's armor certainly influences its survivability. Because of the generally similar nature of the vehicles of each type to be found in *SL*, variations in armor from front to side to rear were largely based upon the direction from which the shot came. When the vehicle range went up, this stopped working. The *COI* "fix" was to include a pair of modifiers, one for the front and one for the side/rear; in our example in Figure 4 those values, appearing below the Movement Point value, are 0 and −1. Thus, the StuG IIIG was considered to have normal frontal armor but weaker than normal side and rear armor. You'll note that the upper number has a box around it. This tells us that, in *COI*, when hit from the front while hull down, the effective armor value is one greater than normal. With the introduction of Hit Location in *COD*, this increased armor value applied to any upper body/turret hit.

These numbers also perform the task of indicating the size of the vehicle. Printed on white backgrounds, they indicated a reduction in the ease of hitting the vehicle due to its small size. One or two red numbers meant that the target was easier to hit because of its large size.

While, in *SL*, we could get away with lumping hull and turret mounted MGs into a single factor (although an external MG in an AA mount did have to be a separate number), the introduction of turret counters in *COI* meant that three MG values were required.

After *COI*, the armor rules evolved less dramatically within this framework, undergoing such minor changes as the aforementioned introduction of Hit Locations. *ASL* departed rather more noticeably from this tradition. Probably the change most quickly seen on the front of the counter is the representation of armor values. The so-called "Armor Factors" now represent, approximately, the effective armor thickness in centimeters with some allowance being given to such aspects as slope of armor plate. As we shall see in the next major section, this simplifies a number of things. Colors, as well as boxes and circles about these numbers have the same meanings as before. The same can be said for the Movement Allowance, Gun size and MG factor values.

Other information now shown on the front of the counter had already appeared within the system. Ground pressure values, and what effect they had with respect to the bogging of a vehicle, were

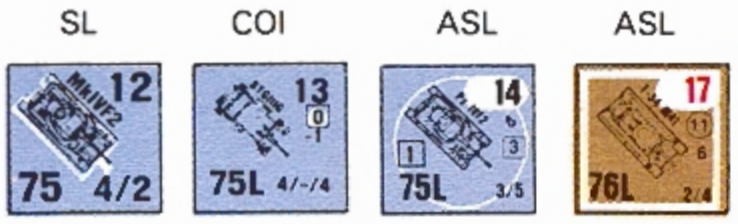


Figure 4—The Evolution of Armor Counters

present in *GI*, as were considerations of the speed of turret traverse and the size of the turret/crew arrangement. The difference is that, in *ASL*, a vehicle's attributes in these areas are shown on the front of the counter. A circle around the vehicle ID letter means a high ground pressure (continuing the tradition that a circle is "bad"), while a box means low ground pressure. In our example, the *ASL* German tank has a large, thin white circle on it while a white square having a greater line thickness appears on the Russian counter. The circle means the vehicle has a Fast Turret Traverse. The Russian tank, however, is burdened with a Restricted Slow Traverse; not only does it suffer a grater penalty if it must change the turret's covered arc, but neither the main armament nor the coaxial MG can be fired when the vehicle commander has his head out of the turret. A small star (★) by any particular value means that there is information of importance on the back of the counter. Finally, the shape of the white background the MP value provides instant information as to the type of vehicle.

These counters are now good examples of what is called "human factors engineering". When looked at, they provide strong symbolic and numerical information, thereby prompting us to use the vehicle as the rules intended it be used. As with so many things, it's all so simple in hindsight.

TO HIT AND TO KILL

For all the words about things that have changed along the way, I think it worth mentioning that the vast majority of them are changes made around the same basic skeleton. It is a testimony to both the original design and the original development that the skeleton has endured. One such set of old bones is the two-step resolution procedure for ordnance, in which one must first determine whether or not a target has been hit and then, if hit, whether or not it has been damaged.

Figure 5 shows the To Hit information for *SL*, *GI* and *ASL*. The obvious change is that the number of target types has fallen. What is not nearly so obvious is the amount of juggling of DRM, and the use made of them, in arriving at this point. When *GI* appeared, I felt that it was in connection with the To Hit portion of play that the changes it introduced had the greatest impact upon play of the game. For those of you who are not familiar with *GI*, the fundamental change was to use terrain DRM as modifiers to the To Hit process rather than to the subsequent damage determination. Thus, for instance, the system works as if infantry in a building are harder to hit rather than motionless infantry in the open; but once hit, they are equally vulnerable, the terrain DRM having already been used in the To Hit process. What this is interpreted to mean is that infantry under cover are harder to see and/or harder to place a round close to. As we shall see in a bit, this alteration improved things, at least according to my perception of reality, when it was introduced in *GI*. An additional change, in the area of Critical Hits, has made it even better.

Before getting into such specifics, we must first take a look at what has happened to the To Kill procedure. Since our focus is on armor, we will consider how the second part of the procedure works when the target is an armored one and, therefore, the ordnance will fire AP rounds. Figure 6 shows the three items which correspond to the three parts of Figure 5. In keeping with the revised method of representing armor, the *ASL* To Kill Table shows only a single number, called the "Basic TK Number", for each gun listed. With a little fudging for special cases, the number for each gun represents, in centimeters, the amount of vertical armor it could penetrate at 500 meters, plus a base of five. Because an AP round uses kinetic energy to do its damage, its effectiveness decreases with distance, as shown in C7.31. Range represents the most common factor that influences the Basic TK# and is the only one to be considered at the moment.

Once the Modified TK# has been found, the Final TK# is derived by subtracting that Modified value from the Armor Factor of the portion of the vehicle struck by the round. A dice roll below this number eliminates the vehicle, while if equal to it or greater than it by one may also cause permanent injury.

In use, the present arrangement—for all types of targets, not just armored ones—is superior to what we've seen before. Since my playing time is fairly limited, I am particularly appreciative of the fact that play is faster and cleaner.

GUNS AND THE AFV

Now that we've seen the tables as set forth in the rules, it's time to look at how things work out. The first situation to be considered is that of AP fire directed against an armored target. However, bear in mind that the results to be presented can be used in any situation in which some sort of To Hit/To Kill procedure is employed.

In the following discussion, it has been assumed that a result which leaves a vehicle Immobilized is close enough to being made as useful as an outright kill that no distinction between the two need be made. This conclusion is based upon my observations of play; more specifically: the ease with which a sitting duck is hit, the nature of victory conditions, the generally cluttered terrain over which we fight, and the extreme danger to an Immobilized vehicle posed by infantry. When the To Kill roll is one greater than the Final TK#, the vehicle becomes Shocked if it fails to pass a Normal Task Check (NTC). Because this is the only place in the resolution procedure at which the crew morale is used, a value of "8" has been assumed (which is generally the correct one).

As mentioned in the first article, some probabilities are directly calculated, while others are the result of having created a situation for the computer to play through a few thousand times while it keeps track of the outcomes. All of the values reported here are the result of exact calculations. As before, probabilities are expressed as percentages.

Vehicles in Full View

All the results you'll ever need are in the two parts of Table 13. However, it's worth our while to take a careful look at how we go about finding the correct numbers. To begin with, the table is divided into two parts because of the possibility that the upper and lower parts of an AFV may have different Armor Factors. For a vehicle in full view, then, we need to find one value from part (a) and add it to a value from (b).

From Figure 5 we know that the To Hit roll is subject to a number of DRM. In order to present the results compactly, I've chosen to treat the net To Hit DRM as a modifier of the To Hit value, rather than as a modifier of the dice roll. Thus, they are used as are the range and Gun Type modifiers of *ASL*'s Table C3.

To illustrate, suppose that, after considering Target Type, Gun Type and range, the To Hit value is "9". Suppose further that the target is in "Motion", meaning a Table C6 DRM of +2. Thus, the probability of a hit is the probability of rolling a "7" or less since, to any dice roll, we must add "2". However, "7" or less is also the value required if we consider a *net* To Hit value obtained by subtracting the DRM from the To Hit value found from Table C3. Thus, when using the tables in this article, first add up all the appropriate DRM. If that number is positive, subtract it from the C3 value. For the example above, we'd look for values in the "7" column. If the same target happened to be motionless in the Boresighted hex, the net DRM would be −2. The net To Hit value would then be 9−(−2)=11, so that we would look in the "11" column.

To complete our example, suppose that the Modified TK# is "16" and the Armor Factor is "8" for both the upper and lower portions of the target. From part (a), with a net To Hit of "7" and a Final To Kill of "8" (16−8=8), we have plotted the probability of a lethal hit on the upper portion of

TO KILL	TO HIT 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	.0	.0	.1	.2	.2	.4	.4	.5	.6	.6	.6
3	.0	.2	.3	.6	.9	1.4	1.7	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.3
4	.0	.3	.7	1.3	2.0	3.0	3.7	4.4	4.7	5.1	5.1
5	.0	.6	1.2	2.4	3.6	5.4	6.6	7.8	8.4	9.0	9.0
6	.0	.9	1.9	3.8	5.7	8.5	10.4	12.3	13.2	14.1	14.1
7	.0	1.3	2.7	5.4	8.1	12.1	14.8	17.5	18.9	20.2	20.2
8	.0	1.8	3.6	7.1	10.7	16.0	19.6	23.1	24.9	26.7	26.7
9	.0	2.1	4.3	8.5	12.8	19.2	23.4	27.7	29.8	32.0	32.0
10	.0	2.4	4.8	9.6	14.4	21.7	26.5	31.3	33.7	36.1	36.1
11	.0	2.6	5.2	10.4	15.6	23.4	28.6	33.8	36.4	39.0	39.0
12	.0	2.7	5.4	10.8	16.2	24.3	29.7	35.1	37.8	40.5	40.5

(a) Probability of destruction of an AFV by a turret hit

TO KILL	TO HIT 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	.4	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.9
3	.6	2.6	3.1	3.6	4.4	5.1	5.9	6.4	6.9	7.1	7.4
4	.8	3.1	4.0	5.0	6.5	8.0	9.4	10.4	11.4	11.9	12.4
5	1.1	3.5	5.1	6.7	9.2	11.6	14.0	15.6	17.2	18.0	18.8
6	1.5	3.9	6.3	8.7	12.3	15.9	19.5	21.9	24.3	25.5	26.7
7	1.8	4.4	7.7	11.0	15.9	20.9	25.9	29.2	32.5	34.2	35.8
8	2.1	4.7	8.8	12.9	19.0	25.1	31.2	35.3	39.3	41.4	43.4
9	2.4	5.0	9.7	14.4	21.4	28.4	35.4	40.1	44.8	47.1	49.4
10	2.6	5.3	10.4	15.5	23.2	30.9	38.5	43.7	48.8	51.4	53.9
11	2.7	5.4	10.8	16.2	24.3	32.4	40.5	45.9	51.3	54.0	56.7
12	2.7	5.4	10.8	16.2	24.3	32.4	40.5	45.9	51.3	54.0	56.7

(b) Probability of destruction/immobilization of an AFV by a hull hit for a Basic Kill Number of 6

Table 13—Non-hull down destruction/immobilization probabilities for a Basic Kill Number of 6

the vehicle to be 16.0%. For the same values, (b) yields 25.1%. Adding the two, we see that this shot has a 41.1% chance of being successful. However, if you're a careful reader, you'll note that the title for (b) refers to a Basic TK# of "6", which is certainly not possible if the modified value is "16". Does this mean that the table is silly or useful for only one Basic TK#? To answer that question we have to examine what part the Basic TK# plays in resolving the things in the To Kill procedure. Why we have to worry about the actual Basic TK# at all has to do with the way in which Critical Hits are handled. For a target in full view, a CH is obtained on the hull whenever the To Hit roll is a natural "2" (the only exception is if "2" is required to hit, in which case there is only a one-sixth chance of a CH). The attack is then resolved using the new Final TK# the sum of the old Final TK# (i.e., the Final TK# if there had not been a CH) and the weapon's Basic TK#. The reason for this is that a CH results in a doubling of the Basic TK#. However, the original modifiers still apply. Probably the easiest way to see how things work is with the aid of some equations:

old Final TK# = Basic TK# + modifiers
new Final TK# = Basic TK# ×2 + modifiers
= Basic TK# + Basic TK# + modifiers
= Basic TK# + old Basic TK#

Let's look at what would happen, in our example, if a CH were obtained. For a Basic TK# equal to "3", the new Final TK# would be "11". For any larger Basic TK#, the new Final TK# would be equal to or greater than "12". Since a roll of "12" is always a no effect dud, a new Final TK# of say "19" is more deadly than one of "11". Thus the value of 25.1 is correct, even though the "wrong" Basic TK# was used.

The only time the actual value of the Basic TK# affects the numbers in the table is when the sum of the old Final TK# and the Basic TK# is less than "11". The value of "6" was chosen because, using it, the values in part (b) are accurate to within +1% for all Basic TK#s. What, finally, all of this means is that Critical Hits really have only a limited impact on the play of the game; thus, they should play no part in your planning.

Hulldown Vehicles

To score a hit on the upper portion of a vehicle in full view requires that one roll at or below the net To Hit value, and that the colored die must be less than the white one. The requirement for hitting a hulldown vehicle is the same, except that a Critical Hit is still obtained on a natural "2". The numbers in Table 14 show the probability of a successful attack using the same Basic TK# employed in Table 13 (b). As with the values in Table 13, these are also correct within +1%.

	Front	Side	Rear
Upper	8	6	5
Lower	11	6	5

(a) Effective Russian armor values

	Front	Side	Rear
Upper	6	8	9
Lower	3	8	9

(b) Effective Modified TK#

Front	Side	Rear
11.	18.7	21.9

(c) Kill probabilities, hull down vehicle

Lower Orientation	*Upper Orientation* *Front*	*Side*	*Rear*
Front	8.5+5.1=**13.6**	16.0+5.1=**21.1**	19.2+5.1=**24.3**
Side	8.5+25.1=**33.6**	16.0+25.1=**41.1**	19.2+25.1=**44.3**
Rear	8.5+28.4=**36.9**	16.0+28.4=**44.4**	19.2+28.4=**47.6**

(d) Kill/immobilization probabilities calculations

Table 16—Determination of kill/immobilization probabilities by a German 7.5 cm PaK 97/38 firing, at a range of 7-12 hexes, at a moving Russian T34/M41

To stay with the previous example, suppose that everything is the same, except that the vehicle is now hulldown. Reading down the "7" column and along the "8" row, we get a value of 18.7%. The increase in this value over that found in Table 13 (a) is the result of the Critical Hit value. Quite obviously, the vehicle is a good deal safer when hulldown. One of the things about which I was curious was the general extent of this improvement in security. To explore that, I had my faithful computer calculate the percentages found in Table 15. These values do suppose that upper and lower armor factors are the same. My basic rule, from looking at these numbers, is that seeking the hulldown position becomes attractive whenever the Final TK# is greater than "3".

A Complete Example

Because the information in Tables 13 and 14 is likely to be among the most widely used to obtain key information about various specific situations, is seems wise to include a fairly comprehensive example. This example supposes that a German 7.5cm Pak 37/38 AT Gun (Basic TK# of 14) is firing at a moving T-34 M41 somewhere in the 7-12 hex range. The net To Hit value is then seven (9−2= 7). In Table 16, part (a), the various Armor Factors for the vehicle are listed. Looking back at Figure 4, we note that the "11" is circled, meaning that the frontal upper body/turret armor is a step poorer than the lower body metal. Since the Armor Factors used in *ASL* are "1", "2", "3", "4", "6", "8", "11", "14", "18" and "26", the step down drops the T-34's front turret Armor Factor from "11" to "8". The other Armor Factor on the counter is "6", which is the side value. I've chosen to use the rear facing Basic TK# modifier as a rear armor modifier, which is rather closer to what I feel it really represents. Note that this is always a decrease of "1", never of one step.

Values in (b) are nothing but the differences between the AT Gun's Basic TK# of "14" and the corresponding values in (a). The numbers in Tables (c) and (d) represent, respectively, the hulldown and full view immobilization probabilities. Unless the Vehicular Covered Arc and the Turret Covered Arc are the same, it is possible that the aspect of the vehicle hit (front, side or rear) will depend upon whether the hit is scored upon the lower hull or the turret/upper body. For example, if a tank is moving across your front, but its turret is trained toward you, a hit scored on the lower portion of the AFV will strike the side armor, while a hit scored on the upper portion of the vehicle will strike the frontal armor. With regard to the terms used in Table 16 (d), such a vehicle would have a "Side" lower orientation and a "Front" upper orientation. For the vehicle and weapon of this example, the probability of a successful shot would be 33.6%. If you don't have any trouble getting these numbers your-

	TO HIT										
TO KILL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	.3	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4
3	.5	2.3	2.4	2.7	3.0	3.5	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.4
4	.7	2.7	3.1	3.8	4.4	5.4	6.1	6.8	7.1	7.5	7.5
5	.9	3.2	3.8	5.0	6.2	8.0	9.2	10.4	11.0	11.6	11.6
6	1.2	3.6	4.6	6.5	8.4	11.2	13.1	15.0	15.9	16.8	16.8
7	1.6	4.0	5.4	8.1	10.8	14.8	17.5	20.2	21.6	22.9	22.9
8	1.9	4.5	6.3	9.8	13.4	18.7	22.3	25.8	27.6	29.4	29.4
9	2.2	4.8	7.0	11.2	15.5	21.9	26.1	30.4	32.5	34.7	34.7
10	2.5	5.1	7.5	12.3	17.1	24.4	29.2	34.0	36.4	38.8	38.8
11	2.6	5.3	7.9	13.1	18.3	26.1	31.3	36.5	39.1	41.7	41.7
12	2.7	5.4	8.1	13.5	18.9	27.0	32.4	37.8	40.5	43.2	43.2

Table 14—Hull down destruction probabilities for a Basic Kill Number of 6

	TO HIT										
TO KILL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	79.1	83.6	77.5	72.9	66.9	62.7	58.9	57.1	55.0	54.3	53.2
3	79.8	83.0	71.4	64.9	57.5	53.8	50.2	48.9	47.0	46.6	45.4
4	81.4	80.8	65.3	58.9	52.0	49.4	46.5	45.8	44.2	44.0	42.8
5	83.2	77.9	60.1	54.7	48.6	47.1	44.7	44.4	43.0	42.9	41.7
6	85.2	75.2	56.0	51.9	46.5	45.9	43.8	43.8	42.4	42.5	41.2
7	85.9	71.0	52.1	49.4	44.9	44.9	43.0	43.3	42.0	42.1	40.9
8	90.0	68.8	50.6	49.1	45.1	45.5	43.9	44.2	43.0	43.2	41.9
9	92.8	67.4	49.8	49.0	45.3	46.0	44.4	44.8	43.6	43.8	42.6
10	95.0	66.6	49.4	49.1	45.6	46.4	44.9	45.3	44.1	44.4	43.1
11	96.8	66.2	49.4	49.2	45.8	46.7	45.3	45.8	44.6	44.8	43.5
12	100.0	66.7	50.0	50.0	46.7	47.6	46.2	46.7	45.5	45.7	44.4

Table 15—Hull down kill probability as a percentage of non-hull down kill or immobilization probabilities for a Basic Kill Number of 6

self, then you should be able to use these tables for their intended purpose.

When and Why?

We all, I expect, have a pretty good idea of what would happen to a player who, during the course of a scenario, asked his opponent to halt his vehicle movement every hex so that the player could use these tables to calculate the probability of a successful attack by his hidden AT Gun. Goodness knows that I'm a slow player, and I'd never do something like that. For what purpose, then, have these numbers been found?

Despite the name of the game, the part you are really playing is that of a company or battalion commander. One of the differences between you and your real-world counterpart is that he, hopefully, had to spend a fair amount of time getting to that rank. To the extent that at least some of that time was spent learning his trade, he should know rather more about what to expect from his various weapons systems, enemy weapon systems, men, etc. than would the average person who acquired his command by virtue of the purchase of the rules, components and scenarios. Without a considerable body of experience, or something such as these tables, a knowledge of rules and charts of the game will not provide you with such things as a clear picture of those risky certain activities are, of how secure a particular position is likely to be.

I have found this sort of material of considerable use in my preparations prior to the play of a particular scenario. As we shall see shortly, the superiority of one vehicle over another may well be a function of the range at which they engage. Should that be the case, I wish to know about it so that I can explore the prospects of engaging only where it is to my advantage to do so. According to the rules, AT Guns can be "Hidden". Facing enemy armor, I need to know what sort of a chance it has. Can it go in a forward position, or must it—like the German gun in the *COI* scenario "Paw of the Tiger"—be positioned in hope of getting a shot into a rear facing?

Some Comparisons

The information in Table 17 serves two purposes. One is to illustrate the uses to which these tables can be put; the second is to explore how the effects of the game's mechanics have altered as the system has developed. The situation postulated is that the German tank and the Russian one are sitting there, blazing away at each other. Both are BU.

The first column shows the German's probability of success (to the left) and the Russian's probability of success (to the right) as the vehicles first appeared in *SL*. Up to a range of six hexes, there's nothing different about the tanks. Beyond that, the necessity that the Russians use the red To Hit numbers gradually causes the Russian's likelihoood of success to decay more rapidly.

The next three columns refer to things as they stood at the time of *COI*. In that gamette, the T-34 was differentiated into three types reflecting the fact that the vehicle did, in fact, evolve by a considerable amount throughout the war. With regard to a duel with a single 76A, the results are the same as they were in the *SL* days in the 7-24 hex range; but look at what happens outside that range. The kill probabilities now rise much more sharply as the range is reduced below seven hexes, making the short-range battle much more lethal. On the other hand, the ability to do damage at long range falls off quite rapidly. In *COI*, the 76B had both a better gun and better armor. This, as the third column shows, was enough to more than compensate for the poorer To Hit numbers. The fourth column shows the extent to which such an advantage is dependent upon position. Superiority is reversed when the German vehicle is hulldown. Sadly, for the Russians, the *COI* rules didn't do much for the Soviet armor when the positions were reversed. The Russian armor gains the height advantage modifier, but was ruled ineligible for hulldown status because of the generally poor gun depression capabilities of Russian armor.

Having carried out these calculations when *COI* was new, I was naturally curious to see how things had changed by this time. Among the immediately noticeable was that the height advantage was no more and that the gaining of hulldown status on a hill, while now open to the Russians, was no longer automatic for anyone. From the calculations we see that, between the changes in armor and gun effects, the F2 is now superior to both the earlier makes of T-34. However, my favorite results are those in the last two columns. As before, the hulldown German vehicle enjoys a considerable advantage over the more exposed Russian AFV. Reversing the position puts the Russian in the superior position, but only out to 24 hexes, after which the edge, slight though it is apt to be, goes to the German. The explanation for this is to be found in the difference between the black and red To Hit numbers—but I wonder how many of us would have ever discovered this piece of information without these types of calculations.

Having compared the numbers as a function of which version of *SL* we're considering, let's now consider how the numbers change with range. I should start by telling you that I have no idea as to the proper sizes of these numbers at close ranges. My knowledge is totally inadequate with regard to such things as whether those German AP rounds should go through that Russian armor as if it wasn't there . . . or whether they should all bounce harmlessly away. What isn't quite clear to me, however, is that the *SL* values show far too few little variation with range. All of the other results seem to fol-

Figure 5—The old and the new To Hit Tables

TO HIT TABLE 33.3 △

Target Type/Range	1 - 6	7-12	13-24	25+
Infantry in bldg., shellholes, entrenchments	8 8	7 6	6 5	5 2
Infantry in woods	8 8	6 6	5 4	4 2
Infantry in other	9 9	8 7	7 6	6 3
Vehicle is hull down	7 6	5 4	4 3	3 2
Vehicle in woods/bldg.	9 9	8 7	7 6	6 3
Vehicle in other	10 10	9 8	8 7	7 4
AT Gun	6 5	5 4	4 3	2

HIT DETERMINATION DICE ROLL MODIFIERS 33.31

A. Firing during Defensive Fire Phase vs Moving target ..... +2
B. * gun firing at target over 6 hexes away ..... +2
C. * gun firing at target over 12 hexes away ..... +4
D. Tank firing outside Covered Arc ..... +2
E. Tank firing during Advancing Fire Phase after pivoting within hex during Movement Phase ..... +1
F. Tank firing during Advancing Fire Phase after moving to a new hex ..... +5
G. SP Gun AT Gun firing during Advancing Fire Phase after pivoting *within* hex during Movement Phase ..... +3
H. Target is concealed ..... +2
I. SP Gun AT Gun firing during Defensive Fire Phase after pivoting *within* hex during Defensive Fire Phase ..... +4
J. Target is in adjacent hex ..... -2

(a) The SQUAD LEADER To Hit Table

HD: Colored Die ≥ White Die (145.2)

TO HIT TABLE 145.1

Target Type/Range	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	55 +
Vehicle	10 10	9 8	8 7	7 6	6 5	6 4	5 3	4 2	3 1	2 0
Infantry, Aircraft	8 8	7 6	6 5	5 4	4 3	3 2	2 1	1 0	0 -1	-1 -2
Building, Smoke	12 12	11 10	10 9	9 8	8 7	8 6	7 5	6 4	5 3	4 2

RED Numbers: Russian, Minor, French, US pre-7/43, captured ordnance
Long Range Hit Possibility: unmodified DR 2 + dr < 6 [+1 drm/# <2 TH#] (33.32)
Turret/Upper Body Hit: Colored Die > White Die (130.1)

Multiple Hits: (≤40mm): DR ≤ ½ TO HIT Number (130.5)
AP CH: DR 2 + dr (1 or < ½ TH#) (68.1) [unmodified]
HE CH: TH# 8 + : 2; TH# ≤ 7 or building target: 2 + dr (1 or ≤ ½ TH#) (145.6) [modified]

GUN & AMMO TYPE MODIFICATIONS

Range/Type	*	L	LL	APDS APCR	Smoke
7-12 hexes	0	0	0	0	+1
13-24 hexes	+1	-1	-1	+1	+1
25-36 hexes	+1	-1	-2	+2	+1
37+ hexes	+1	-1	-2	+3	+1

FIRER HIT DETERMINATION DRM's:

A. Firing outside CA per hexside change (144.41) . . [T: +1 +1 +1] . . [ST: +2 +1 +1] . . [NT: +3 +1 +1]
B. Firing in AFPh after changing CA in MPh (144.42) ..... T:0 ..... ST: +1 ..... NT: +3
C. T/ST firing in AFPh after move to new hex/motion (135.41) vehicle DF (144.43) ..... (G: +3) ..... +5
D. Firer is pinned (144.44) ..... +2
E. Firing within own hex at moving target (144.45) ..... +2
F. Intensive Fire (70.2) ..... +2
G. *Deliberate Immobilization (66.2) side/belly target facing ..... (rear . . . +5) ..... +3
H. *Captured Ordnance (90.13) [B# -2; uses red TH#'s] ..... +2
I. Buttoned Up (64.47) ..... +1
* Applicable to SCW's with separate TO HIT Tables (PF, PIAT, Baz, Psk)
† Applicable to aerial attack using TO HIT Table vs ground targets

TARGET HIT DETERMINATION DRM's:

J. *Moving vehicle (DF or Motion target; 135.3) ..... +2
J.[1] *† Moving infantry not using Assault Movement (145.1) ..... -1
J.[2] *† Moving infantry in open ..... (hazardous movement . . . -2) ..... -1
K. *† Concealed (rain, snow 6 + hex range; 111.44 & .53) [Area Fire] ..... +2
L. Adjacent hex ..... (target two hexes away . . . -1) ..... -2
M. Bore-sighted hex (78.4) ..... -2
N. Acquired (69.1) [per fire phase, maximum of -2] ..... -1
O. *Using 1 or less MP's or MF's in firer's LOS ..... +1
P. *Using 3 or less MP's in firer's LOS ..... +1
Q. *†Target size (64.6) ..... per vehicular target counter
R. *† Terrain in target hex (145.1) ..... per TEM
S. *†Target (Gun) is emplaced (145.3) ..... +2

(b) The GI: ANVIL OF VICTORY To Hit Table

C3 TO HIT TABLE

TARGET TYPE/RANGE	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	> 54
Vehicle •	10 10	9 8	8 7	7 6	6 5	6 4	5 3	4 2	3 1	2 0
Infantry (Other)	8 8	7 6	6 5	5 4	4 3	3 2	2 1	1 0	0 −1	−1 −2
Area (Mortar, SMOKE)	7	7	8	8	7	7	6	6	5	5
C4 GUN & AMMO BASIC TO HIT NUMBER MODIFICATIONS:										
* Gun	0	0	−1	−1	−1	−1	−1	−1	−1	−1
L Gun	0	0	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
LL Gun	0	0	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
APDS/APCR	0	0	−1	−1	−2	−2	−3	−3	−4	−4
SMOKE	+2	+2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
≤ 57mm	0	0	−1	−1	−2	−2	−3	−3	−4	−4
≤ 40mm	0	0	−1	−1	−1	−1	−1	−1	−1	−1

C5 FIRER-BASED HIT DETERMINATION DRM:

A. Firer outside CA per hexspine changed: .....[T: +1/+1/+1] [ST: +2/+1/+1] [NT: +3/+1/+1]
NA to Bounding First Fire (×2 if firer is in woods/building/rubble)

B. Fire in AFPh without entering a hex in that Player Turn (C5.2): .....+2

C. Bounding Firer (C5.3) .....Case B plus [Stabilized Gun: +1] [T/ST: +2] [NT: +3]

† **C¹** Bounding First Firer, Restricted Aim (2.5−3 MP in LOS of target) .....Case C +1

† **C²** Bounding First Firer, Limited Aim (≤ 2 MP in LOS of target) .....Case C +2

†L **C³** Firing LATW in AFPh/Backblast weapon from rubble/ground level building (each) .....+2

† **C⁴** Motion/Non-Stopped Firer .....[Stabilized Gun: C/C¹/C² +1] [Other: C/C¹/C² & lower dr ×2]

L **D.** Pinned Firer/Spotter (Multiple ROF/Case F are NA) (C5.4) .....+2

† **E.** Fire within hex (×2 if in woods/building/rubble; Cases J³, J⁴, L, & M are NA) .....+2

F. Intensive Fire (B# −2; Case B, D, AFPh, stunned, pinned firer are NA) (C5.6) .....+2

†L **G.** Deliberate Immobilization (Range: ≤ 6 hexes; Case N is NA) (C5.7) .....+5 HH

L **H.** Captured/Non-qualified Infantry (B# −2; red TH#) (C5.8) .....(+4 if both apply) .....+2

I. Buttoned Up AFV (MA only; RST/1MT must be BU to fire MA) (C5.9) .....+1

Other:

L Overstacked: +1 per vehicle/squad overstack (A5.12)

L Encircled: +1 (A7.7)

L CX: +1 (A4.51)

Stun: +1 (D5.34)

Spotted Fire: +2 (C9.31)

Bypass TCA Change to/through side Target Facing: +1 (D2.321)

Bypass TCA equals side Target Facing: +TH Case A, unless Case N applies (D2.321)

C6 TARGET-BASED HIT DETERMINATION DRM: △

@L **J.** Moving/Motion Vehicle or Dashing Infantry (C6.1) .....+2

L **J¹** Defensive First Fire vs Moving Vehicle (≤ 3 MP in Firer's LOS) .....Case J +1

L **J²** Defensive First Fire vs Moving Vehicle (≤ 1 MP in Firer's LOS) [J¹ NA] .....Case J +2

@L **J³** FFNAM (Case J is NA) (C6.13) .....−1

@L **J⁴** FFMO (Case J is NA) (C6.14) .....−1

@L **K.** vs Concealed Target (or Area Fire; C.4) (C6.2) .....+2

† **L.** Point Blank Range (Non-Stopped/Motion target NA) (C6.3) . . . [2 Hex Range: −1] .....−2

M. Bore Sighted Location (Case N, E is NA) (C6.4) .....−2

N. Acquired Target (NA to Case G) (C6.5) ..... as per Acquisition Counter

@L **O.** Target using Hazardous Movement (all Case J are NA) (C6.6) .....−2

@L **P.** Target Size Modifier (−2 to +2) (C6.7) ..... per Vehicle/Gun Target Counter

†@L **Q.** TEM (C6.8) ..... Per TEM

@L **R.** LOS Hindrance (C6.9) ..... Per LOS Hindrance

Other:

@L vs Overstacked Personnel: −1 per overstacked squad (A5.131)

@L vs Motorcyclist −1 (D15.5)

@L vs Cavalry −2 (A13.5)

(c) The ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER To Hit Table

low a physically plausible variation with range.

Supposing that calculations like those in the last four columns had been carried out prior to the play of a scenario in which these vehicles were the major armored assets of each side, what conclusion could one draw? To answer that, one would have to specify the terrain. If it were close, of the sort typically found in the *BEYOND VALOR* scenarios, the M40s would not be able to go one-on-one against the F2s, whereas the M41s could. If the situation were one in which one force faced the other across a good-sized piece of open terrain, the German player would like the idea of a long-range gun duel, whereas the Russian player would not. Knowing these kinds of things hardly guarantees victory; but not knowing them surely won't help.

Rate of Fire

Ordnance with the capacity to get off more than one shot in a given Fire Phase has been around for a long time. With *ASL*, it became a conditional thing. The bad news, for those who like to shoot, is that you only get that second, or subsequent, shot if the colored die of the To Hit roll is no greater than the *Rate of Fire* value (which is to be found in a box above the Gun Caliber size listing on any ordnance-bearing counter). The good news is that the multiple shot capability is at least potentially available to many more weapons. Making multiple shots conditional is, quite clearly, another step t(vard reducing the players' control of the details o the game. If realism is your aim, you must, however, accept the fact that a battlefield (particularly at this level) is a place in which just an awful lot of weird things take place.

All of the results we've considered up to this point have been for single shots. I found it natural to wonder how this ROF business increased the chances of the destruction of a single target in a given Fire Phase. One of the things which tends to broaden the possible range of outcomes over an entire paper battlefield is that the better you shoot, the better will be your chances of getting off yet another shot. When you miss, there's a good chance that your first shot will be your last shot by that weapon in that phase. However, the same AT Gun that misses its first shot in a phase might, in the next phase, destroy three enemy vehicles.

In order to maximize the possible effects of ROF, I considered the case of a hulldown target. The reasoning was that, because an upper body hit is required against a hulldown target, there will be more missed shots which have a low enough colored die roll to generate a second shot than would otherwise be the case. Again in order to look for the maximum effect, the largest ROF (three) was used.

Table 18 shows, as a function of the Final To Hit and To Kill values, the probabilities that a subsequent shot will be possible after the first has been missed. If we don't consider the nature of the outcome of the first shot, there will be a 50% chance of getting another since the colored die will have a value of three or less half the time. As one moves towards the upper left-hand corner of the table, this is the value approached . . . as would be expected. What I did not expect to find was the large number of unsuccessful shots which would still leave one with at least 25% chance of another shot.

In Table 19 we have results comparable to those found in Table 14. The results of Table 19 suppose that one continues firing at the same target until it's hurt, one can no longer fire, or five shots in a row have come up empty. My conclusion from looking at the two sets of numbers is that, assuming that the weapon works on a single hulldown target, a ROF of "3" is just about as good as an increase of three in the Final TK#. A look at comparable numbers for ROF of "2" and "1" says that a ROF of "2" is worth about +1 to the TK#, while a "1" isn't worth worrying about. Because of the possibility of differing Armor Factors, it is hard to be even this precise concerning full view targets. My best numbers at the moment are a +1 for a ROF of "3" and forget it for the other ROF.

Deliberate Immobilization

As the rules tell us, one of the things you can try to do when your AT Guns are badly mismatched (not, by the way, an uncommon situation in WWII) by the enemy armor is to forget about a kill and try to blow away enough of their running gear that they become immobilized. One of those interesting situations so common in *ASL* then arises: when is my Gun outmatched? My answer is to be found on Table 20, which contains only entries of "Y" and "N". A "Y" means that the Deliberate Immobilization option is your best bet. I have found this table of particular interest in connection with a scenario currently receiving some heavy attention hereabouts because the Gun/Armor combination is right on the boundary. (For the record, I don't particularly like the Deliberate Immobilization rules as they now stand. The *COI* ones, which made a distinction with respect to facing of the hull, were, I thought, a better representation of reality.)

ARMOR VERSUS INFANTRY

The typical AFV has three possible modes of attack against an infantry unit. Since such a vehicle commonly has both MGs and some sort of main armament, it may attack with either of these. Vehicular MG attacks are resolved as are any MG attacks; thus they utilize the IFT, with results to be found in Tables 5 and 10. For this reason, they will not be considered here. Ordnance fire against infantry targets will be considered, as will a form of attack which has shown considerable variety over the years—the Overrun.

Overrun

The overrun attack first appeared in wargames at a much higher organizational level. Many of the

Range	T34(SL)	T34/76A	T34/76B	German height, hull down advantage T34/76B	T34/M40	T34/M41	German hull down advantage T34/M41	Russian hull down advantage T34/M41
1	42/42	83/83	72/92	—	72/56	72/75	—	—
2	38/38	66/66	53/76	66/35	58/40	58/54	58/23	35/54
3-6	38/38	53/53	38/66	53/30	54/38	54/51	54/22	32/51
7-12	35/30	35/30	23/42	35/10	50/30	50/41	50/18	30/41
13-18	30/24	30/24	20/42	30/10	50/24	50/41	50/18	30/41
19-24	30/24	30/24	20/42	30/10	34/13	34/24	34/11	22/24
25-30	24/7	16/5	10/12	10/1	28/9	28/18	28/8	19/18
31-36	24/7	16/5	10/12	10/1	20/5	20/9	20/5	15/9
37-39	24/7	16/5	10/12	10/1	15/3	15/6	15/4	11/6
40-42	24/7	5/0	2/2	2/1	15/3	15/6	15/4	11/6
43-48	24/7	5/0	2/2	2/1	7/1	7/3	7/3	6/3

Table 17—Kill, immobilization probabilities, German PzKW IVF2 versus the Russian tanks indicated; the German success probability is to the left of the "/".

TO KILL	TO HIT 7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
2	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
4	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
5	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
6	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
7	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
8	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
9	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
10	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
11	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
12	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

Table 20—When Deliberate Immobilization is a better bet

TO KILL	TO HIT 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	49.7	48.2	48.1	48.1	48.0	47.9	47.8	47.7	47.7	47.7	47.7
3	49.5	47.7	47.6	47.3	47.0	46.5	46.2	46.1	46.1	46.1	46.1
4	49.3	47.3	46.9	46.2	45.6	44.6	43.9	43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5
5	49.1	46.8	46.2	45.0	43.8	42.0	40.8	40.2	40.2	40.2	40.2
6	48.8	46.4	45.4	43.5	41.6	38.8	36.9	36.0	36.0	36.0	36.0
7	48.4	46.0	44.6	41.9	39.2	35.2	32.5	31.1	31.1	31.1	31.1
8	48.1	45.5	43.7	40.2	36.6	31.3	27.7	26.0	26.0	26.0	26.0
9	47.8	45.2	43.0	38.8	34.5	28.1	23.9	21.7	21.7	21.7	21.7
10	47.5	44.9	42.5	37.7	32.9	25.6	20.8	18.4	18.4	18.4	18.4
11	47.4	44.7	42.1	36.9	31.7	23.9	18.7	16.1	16.1	16.1	16.1
12	47.3	44.6	41.9	36.5	31.1	23.0	17.6	14.9	14.9	14.9	14.9

Table 18—The probability that, having missed with the first shot against a hull down AFV, a second shot will be possible (ROF=3)

TO KILL	TO HIT 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	2.0	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.2	3.9
3	2.6	4.5	4.9	5.5	6.0	6.7	7.2	7.6	7.8	7.6	7.1
4	3.2	5.6	6.4	7.7	8.9	10.3	11.3	12.2	12.7	12.6	11.8
5	4.0	6.8	8.2	10.3	12.4	14.7	16.3	17.8	18.6	18.8	17.8
6	4.7	8.0	10.2	13.2	16.2	19.5	21.7	23.9	25.2	25.8	24.9
7	5.5	9.2	12.1	16.2	20.1	24.2	27.2	30.1	31.8	33.0	32.4
8	6.3	10.4	14.1	19.1	23.7	28.6	32.1	35.6	37.8	39.6	39.5
9	7.0	11.3	15.6	21.2	26.3	31.8	35.5	39.5	42.1	44.3	44.7
10	7.5	12.1	16.7	22.8	28.2	34.0	37.9	42.3	45.1	47.7	48.3
11	7.8	12.5	17.4	23.8	29.5	35.5	39.5	44.1	47.1	49.8	50.6
12	8.0	12.8	17.8	24.3	30.1	36.2	40.3	45.0	48.1	50.9	51.8

Table 19—Hull down destruction probabilities for a Basic Kill Number of 6 and a ROF of 3

Figure 6—The old and the new To Kill Tables

AFV KILL TABLE 33.4 △

Target	AP AMMUNITION MMG/HMG	50cal/20mm	37	50	75/76	HE AMMUNITION 37	50	75/76	105	120	150	H6	SPECIAL WEAPONS			
AFV Front	–3	–3	2	3	6	1	0	2	4	6	8	8	7	3	3	9
AFV Side	–3	–2	3	6	8	1	2	3	6	7	10	10	8	4	4	10
AFV Rear	–2	–1	4	8	10	2	3	4	8	9	12	11	10	6	6	11
Truck, Jeep	NA	NA	8	10	10	10	11	12	12	12	12	11	10	10	10	12

NA . . . see 51.4

AFV KILL NUMBER MODIFIERS 33.41

Halftracks	–5
Priest	–2
M-10	–1
M4A4, T34, MkIV	0
M4M52, SU122, STG III	+1
SU152, Brumbar	+2

(a) The SQUAD LEADER To Kill Table

AFV KILL TABLE △

AP AMMUNITION / TARGET	†MMG / †HMG	'39-41 fighter	'42-43 fighter ATR	'44+ fighter	20LL	37LL	40L	45LL	37H	47H	75V	75LL	76LL	105L	95*H	105H	105*H
	†MMG	12.7	20	20L	37L	25LL	40	45I	50	50L	57L	75*	75H	75	76	75L	76L	150	88LL	100H	128L	150*
	†HMG	15	37*	37	47*	28LL	47	47L	57	57H	57LL	76*	76H	88*	122*	77L	85L	90L	152	100L	122L	155L	150L	152*
AFV Front	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	3	4	4	5	6	4	6	6	8	9	10	12	11	13	7
AFV Side	–1	0	1	2	3	3	4	5	6	6	6	6	8	7	9	10	11	13	13	14	9
AFV Rear	0	1	2	3	4	4	5	6	7	7	8	7	9	8	10	11	12	14	14	15	10
Unarmored	NA ■	3	7	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	9	10	10	10	10	10	11	11	11	11	11

†must be within normal range & not Area Fire 12.7 = .50 cal MG ■see 51.4 Shock MC: DR = Final TK# +1 (131.1) V: All German Vehicular 75's only Russian 76L only

(b) The GI: ANVIL OF VICTORY To Kill Table

C7.31 AP TO KILL TABLE △

ARMORED TARGET

GUN SIZE:	39F @MG	42F 12.7 ATR	44F ATR 20L	20LL 25LL 37*	37 47* 70*	37L 57 65* 76*	40L 45L 75*	37LL 45LL 47L 50 88*	76 84*	50L 75 76L 88	75 105	57L 57LL	76LL	75L 76L 85L 152*	77L	90L 105L 150 88L	152 155	75LL 76LL	122L	88LL 100L	150L 155L	128L 170L
BASIC TK#:	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	19	20	21	23	25	27	28	33

NOTES: @ Must be within Normal Range and not halved FP Russian, Finnish, Japanese, Italian Russian British 88 (25 pdr) Italian
Grant Gun F: Fighter MG armament by year Australian 88* (Baby 25 pdr) 12.7: .50 Cal MG

MODIFICATION/RANGE	0-1	2	3-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	55-60	61-66	67-72	73-78	79+
Case D TK# CHANGE:																
≤ 25mm:	+2	+1	+1	0	0	–1	–2	–3	–4	–5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
37-57mm:	+1	+1	0	0	0	–1	–2	–2	–3	–4	–4	–5	NA	NA	NA	NA
≥ 65mm:	+1	0	0	0	0	–1	–1	–2	–2	–3	–3	–4	–4	–5	–5	NA

UNARMORED TARGET: FINAL TK#: IFE/MG-15mm: ★ Vehicle line on IFT ATR-28mm: 7 37-57mm: 8 65-77mm: 9 85-95mm: 10 100+mm: 11

(c) The ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER To Kill Table

early boardgames were characterized by tactics that involved the sequential placement of small, sacrificial units in the path of huge stacks. Forced to stop and combat these midgets, progress would be slow so long as there were more tiny ones to offer up. One of the breakthroughs in game design was the introduction of the "overrun", whereby a sufficiently large force could, at little or no cost, rumble over a small one as a part of movement and continue on.

Here, of course, we aren't dealing with armies or even divisions, and there seems to have been some uncertainty as to just what an "overrun" represents. In terms of other aspects of *ASL*, it is probably simplest to think of it as a form of Close Combat practiced by AFV during their Movement Phase. A recurring problem has been that of establishing the basis for the strength of the attack. In the beginning, the *SL* tanks all attacked with 16 firepower factors on the IFT, with normal terrain modifiers. In *COI*, this was changed to reflect the wide range of armor introduced in that gamette.The strength was then equal to a base value of four, plus the Infantry Firepower Equivalent of the main gun, plus the MG factors used. For the *COI* IVF2, this comes out to be "16" (4+8+6=18). There things stayed until *ASL*. At this point the main armament stopped being a factor of importance. The base of four remained for a vehicle with functioning main armament, but that is the sole contribution of the big guns. MG factors became worth 1.5 times their values, based upon a halving for movement and a tripling for in-hex point-blank fire. With the current model of the IVF2, the result is still "16" (4 +8×½= 16). For most Russian tanks, the value will be "12". In everything I've looked at concerning overruns by tanks, I've assumed that they will always be buttoned up, even if the vehicle has an AAMG. The downside risk of exposing the tank commander to close-range small arms fire is much too high for my tastes.

As before, TEM apply. However, *ASL* rules that infantry being overrun in the open is subject to a +1 modifier because of the anticipated movement of troops so beset. Thus, the best overrun is likely to be in the neighborhood of "16" with a +1 modifier. According to Table 5, such an attack, against a unit with a morale of seven, will leave the unit untouched 16% of the time; pinned but otherwise unharmed 9% of the time; and dead or broken the rest of the time. That's not a bad attack, and that's about the only one that a person should normally make.

Let's place that infantry unit in a woods hex and see what happens. With normal ground pressure, the IVF2 must roll "7" or less to avoid bogging. Thus, 42% of the time it will bog, the immediate result of which will be a reduction by half of the overrun strength. Thus, the attack will go in at "16" (+1) 58% of the time and at "8" (+1) the rest of the time. The quantities which were 16, 9 and 75% are now 44, 13 and 43%. That infantry unit would have to be of great value before I'd risk that attack. We could do a lot more calculations, but I think the message is clear—Overruns in any terrain in which a vehicle can become bogged are bad ideas. As we shall see, even when "empty handed", a German squad out in the open just might be more than you'd want to take on with your tank in a late-war scenario. Then too, before you go charging over someone's infantry unit, make sure you know what he might have lurking nearby with which to take a shot at your vehicle.

HE Fire

HE fire is resolved in a two-part process, as is AP fire. The difference with HE is that when a hit is obtained, the effect of that hit is found on the IFT. As mentioned earlier, TEM are used to modify the To Hit procedure. The probability of success in an

	GUN CALIBER										
DRM	20	30	37	50	60	70	80	100	120	150	200+
−2	85(5)	79(7)	71(8)	64(8)	58(7)	53(6)	49(5)	46(4)	45(3)	43(2)	43(1)
−1	91(4)	87(5)	81(6)	75(6)	71(5)	67(5)	64(4)	62(3)	61(2)	60(2)	59(1)
+0	94(2)	91(3)	87(4)	84(4)	81(4)	78(3)	76(3)	74(2)	74(1)	73(1)	73(1)
+1	96(2)	95(2)	92(2)	90(2)	88(2)	87(2)	85(2)	84(1)	84(1)	83(1)	83(0)
+2	98(1)	97(1)	96(1)	95(1)	94(1)	93(1)	93(1)	92(1)	92(0)	92(0)	92(0)
+3	99(0)	99(0)	99(0)	99(0)	98(0)	98(0)	98(0)	98(0)	97(0)	97(0)	97(0)

Basic TO HIT value=5

−2	83(7)	75(8)	65(10)	56(10)	49(9)	42(8)	37(7)	33(5)	31(3)	30(2)	29(2)
−1	87(5)	80(7)	72(8)	64(8)	58(7)	53(6)	49(5)	46(4)	45(3)	43(2)	43(1)
+0	92(4)	87(5)	81(6)	76(6)	71(6)	67(5)	64(4)	62(3)	61(2)	60(2)	59(1)
+1	94(3)	91(3)	87(4)	83(4)	80(4)	78(3)	76(3)	74(2)	74(1)	73(1)	73(1)
+2	96(2)	94(2)	92(2)	90(2)	88(2)	87(2)	85(2)	84(1)	84(1)	83(1)	83(0)
+3	98(1)	97(1)	96(1)	95(1)	94(1)	93(1)	93(1)	92(1)	92(0)	92(0)	92(0)

Basic TO HIT value=6

−2	77(8)	68(10)	56(11)	47(11)	39(10)	32(9)	26(7)	23(6)	20(4)	19(3)	18(2)
−1	84(7)	76(8)	66(10)	56(10)	49(9)	42(8)	37(7)	34(5)	31(4)	30(3)	29(2)
+0	88(5)	81(7)	72(8)	65(8)	59(8)	53(7)	49(5)	46(4)	45(3)	44(2)	43(1)
+1	91(4)	87(5)	81(6)	75(6)	71(5)	67(5)	64(4)	62(3)	61(2)	60(2)	59(1)
+2	94(3)	90(3)	87(4)	83(4)	80(3)	78(3)	76(3)	74(2)	74(1)	73(1)	73(1)
+3	96(1)	94(2)	92(2)	90(2)	88(2)	86(2)	85(2)	84(1)	84(1)	83(1)	83(0)

Basic TO HIT value=7

−2	76(9)	66(11)	53(12)	42(12)	33(11)	25(10)	19(8)	15(6)	13(4)	11(3)	10(2)
−1	80(8)	70(10)	58(11)	48(11)	39(10)	32(9)	27(7)	23(6)	21(4)	19(3)	18(2)
+0	85(6)	77(8)	66(10)	57(10)	49(9)	42(8)	37(7)	34(5)	32(4)	30(3)	29(2)
+1	87(5)	80(7)	72(8)	64(8)	58(7)	53(6)	49(5)	46(4)	45(3)	43(2)	43(1)
+2	91(4)	86(5)	81(6)	75(6)	71(5)	67(5)	64(4)	62(3)	61(2)	60(1)	59(1)
+3	93(2)	90(3)	87(4)	83(4)	80(3)	78(3)	76(3)	74(2)	74(1)	73(1)	73(1)

Basic TO HIT value=8

(a) Morale level 6

	GUN CALIBER										
DRM	20	30	37	50	60	70	80	100	120	150	200+
−2	88(5)	82(6)	75(7)	79(7)	63(7)	58(7)	53(6)	50(5)	47(4)	45(3)	44(2)
−1	93(3)	89(4)	84(5)	79(5)	75(5)	71(5)	67(5)	65(4)	63(3)	61(2)	60(1)
+0	95(2)	93(3)	89(4)	86(4)	83(4)	80(3)	78(3)	76(3)	75(2)	74(1)	73(1)
+1	97(1)	95(2)	93(2)	91(2)	90(2)	88(2)	87(2)	85(2)	85(1)	84(1)	84(1)
+2	99(1)	98(1)	97(1)	96(1)	95(1)	94(1)	93(1)	93(1)	93(1)	92(0)	92(0)
+3	99(0)	99(0)	99(0)	98(0)	98(0)	98(0)	98(0)	98(0)	97(0)	97(0)	97(0)

Basic TO HIT value=5

−2	86(6)	79(7)	70(9)	62(9)	55(9)	48(9)	42(8)	38(6)	35(5)	32(4)	31(2)
−1	89(5)	83(6)	76(7)	69(7)	63(7)	58(7)	53(6)	50(5)	47(4)	45(3)	44(2)
+0	93(3)	89(4)	84(5)	79(5)	75(6)	71(5)	67(5)	65(4)	63(3)	61(2)	60(2)
+1	95(2)	92(3)	89(3)	86(4)	83(4)	80(3)	78(3)	76(3)	75(2)	74(1)	73(1)
+2	97(1)	95(2)	93(2)	91(2)	90(2)	88(2)	87(2)	85(2)	85(1)	84(1)	84(1)
+3	98(1)	98(1)	97(1)	96(1)	95(1)	94(1)	93(1)	93(1)	93(1)	92(0)	92(0)

Basic TO HIT value=6

−2	81(7)	73(8)	63(10)	53(10)	46(10)	38(9)	32(8)	27(7)	24(5)	22(4)	20(3)
−1	87(6)	80(7)	71(9)	62(9)	55(9)	48(9)	42(8)	38(7)	35(5)	33(4)	31(3)
+0	90(4)	84(6)	77(7)	70(8)	64(8)	58(7)	53(6)	50(5)	48(4)	46(3)	44(2)
+1	93(3)	89(4)	84(5)	79(5)	75(5)	71(5)	67(5)	65(4)	63(3)	61(2)	60(1)
+2	95(2)	92(3)	89(3)	85(4)	83(4)	80(3)	78(3)	76(3)	75(2)	74(1)	73(1)
+3	97(1)	95(2)	93(2)	91(2)	90(2)	88(2)	87(2)	85(2)	85(1)	84(1)	84(1)

Basic TO HIT value=7

−2	80(7)	71(9)	60(11)	49(11)	41(11)	32(10)	26(9)	20(8)	17(6)	14(4)	12(3)
−1	83(7)	75(9)	64(10)	55(11)	46(10)	39(10)	32(8)	28(7)	24(5)	22(4)	20(3)
+0	88(5)	81(7)	72(9)	63(9)	56(9)	49(9)	43(8)	38(7)	35(5)	33(4)	31(3)
+1	89(5)	83(6)	76(7)	69(7)	63(7)	58(7)	53(6)	50(5)	47(4)	45(3)	44(2)
+2	93(3)	89(4)	84(5)	79(5)	74(5)	71(5)	67(5)	65(4)	63(3)	61(2)	60(1)
+3	94(2)	92(3)	88(3)	85(3)	83(3)	80(3)	78(3)	76(3)	75(2)	74(1)	73(1)

Basic TO HIT value=8

(b) Morale level 7

Table 21—Probability that a single unit will survive the HE ordnance attacks shown either unharmed and unpinned or (unharmed and pinned)

	GUN CALIBER										
DRM	20	30	37	50	60	70	80	100	120	150	200 +
−2	91(4)	86(5)	80(6)	74(7)	69(7)	63(7)	58(6)	54(6)	51(5)	48(4)	46(3)
−1	95(2)	91(3)	87(4)	83(5)	79(5)	75(5)	71(5)	68(5)	66(4)	63(3)	62(2)
+0	97(2)	94(2)	89(3)	88(3)	86(4)	83(4)	81(3)	79(3)	77(2)	76(2)	74(1)
+1	98(1)	96(1)	95(2)	93(2)	91(2)	90(2)	88(2)	87(2)	86(2)	85(1)	84(1)
+2	99(0)	98(1)	97(1)	97(1)	96(1)	95(1)	94(1)	94(1)	93(1)	93(1)	92(0)
+3	99(0)	99(0)	99(0)	99(0)	98(0)	98(0)	98(0)	98(0)	98(0)	98(0)	97(0)
Basic TO HIT value = 5											
−2	89(4)	83(6)	76(8)	68(8)	62(9)	55(9)	49(8)	44(7)	40(6)	36(5)	36(3)
−1	92(4)	87(5)	81(6)	74(7)	69(7)	64(7)	59(7)	55(6)	51(5)	48(4)	46(3)
+0	95(2)	92(3)	88(4)	83(5)	79(5)	75(5)	71(5)	68(5)	66(4)	63(3)	62(2)
+1	96(2)	94(2)	91(3)	88(3)	86(3)	83(4)	81(3)	79(3)	77(2)	75(2)	74(1)
+2	98(1)	96(1)	95(2)	93(2)	91(2)	90(2)	88(2)	87(2)	86(2)	85(1)	84(1)
+3	99(0)	98(1)	97(1)	96(1)	96(1)	95(1)	94(1)	94(1)	93(1)	93(1)	92(0)
Basic TO HIT value = 6											
−2	85(5)	79(7)	69(9)	61(9)	53(10)	46(10)	39(9)	34(8)	29(6)	25(5)	22(3)
−1	90(4)	84(6)	77(8)	69(8)	62(9)	56(9)	49(8)	44(8)	40(6)	36(5)	33(3)
+0	93(3)	88(5)	82(6)	75(7)	70(7)	64(7)	59(7)	55(6)	51(5)	49(4)	46(3)
+1	95(2)	91(3)	87(4)	83(5)	79(5)	75(5)	71(5)	68(5)	66(4)	63(3)	62(2)
+2	96(2)	94(2)	91(3)	88(3)	85(3)	83(3)	80(3)	79(3)	77(2)	75(2)	74(1)
+3	98(1)	96(1)	95(2)	93(2)	91(2)	90(2)	88(2)	87(2)	86(1)	85(1)	84(1)
Basic TO HIT value = 7											
−2	84(6)	77(8)	67(10)	58(10)	49(11)	41(11)	33(10)	28(9)	22(7)	18(6)	15(4)
−1	87(5)	80(7)	71(9)	62(10)	55(10)	47(10)	40(9)	34(8)	30(7)	26(5)	23(4)
+0	91(4)	85(6)	78(8)	70(8)	63(9)	56(9)	50(8)	44(8)	40(6)	36(5)	34(3)
+1	92(4)	87(5)	81(6)	74(7)	69(7)	64(7)	59(7)	55(6)	51(5)	48(4)	46(3)
+2	94(2)	91(3)	87(4)	82(5)	79(5)	75(5)	71(5)	68(5)	66(4)	63(3)	62(2)
+3	96(2)	93(2)	91(3)	88(3)	85(3)	83(3)	80(3)	79(3)	77(2)	75(2)	74(1)
Basic TO HIT value = 8											

(c) Morale level 8

Table 21 continued

attack is then equal to the product of the probability of a hit times the probability of damage on the IFT. Critical hits are handled by reversing any favorable TEM (e.g., due to the target being in a building), retaining any unfavorable ones (e.g., due to the target moving in the open), and doubling the equivalent firepower.

Table 21 runs on at some length. To illustrate its use, let's consider an attack by an 85mm tank gun on a squad with a morale of six in a wooden building. The tank is motionless, buttoned up and six hexes away. What is referred to as the *Basic* To Hit value in Table 21 is equal to the original To Hit value modified by everything *except* TEM. (DRM are used to modify the To Hit values as described earlier.) From *ASL*'s C3 and C5, the original To Hit of "8" for an infantry target is modified to a "7" by virtue of the fact that the vehicle is buttoned up. To determine the effects of this attack we look in section (a) of Table 21 for the sub-table corresponding to a Basic To Hit value of "7". The results are then found in the "80" column for a TEM DRM of +2: 76% of the time the target will be untouched; it will be Pinned 3% of the time. By comparison, an infantry firepower attack of "6" against a +2 TEM DRM target does rather better. The moral—you have to be patient if you want to use the big guns on infantry in adequate cover.

Values drawn from Table 21 using the Basic To Hit sub-table of "8" were used to create the *ASL* column values found in Tables 22 and 23. As did the values in Table 17, the numbers within these two tables tell us something about the performance of on-board HE fire in two rather common situations as things are now, and as they were in the past.

In general, the entries in Table 22 confirm the results of our particular example. One obvious conclusion is that the fall-off in effectiveness with range is such as to encourage an engagement range in the three-to-six hex span. Results now are essentially the same as they were in *GI*. Compared to the original *SL*, the most striking difference is the lessened effect of large caliber HE.

If you happen to have the tanks, the results in Table 23 are much more satisfying. However, it is the comparision between the two tables which I find most interesting. As the mechanics now work, range attenuation is much more important in Table 22 than it is in Table 23. If we consider that the To Hit use of TEM reflects, among other things, a greater degree of difficulty in locating a target, this is as it should be. Such was not the case in *SL*. I also find myself much happier with the variation with gun size.

INFANTRY VERSUS ARMOR

Infantry has many ways to annoy armor. Ordnance has already been considered in connection with the effects of AP fire against AFVs. Infantry also have available various support weapons, such as bazookas, with which to do some harm. Results from these weapons can be found quite easily with the information already presented. This section will consider the inherent anti-armor capabilities of infantry, those which it possesses when stripped of ordnance and support weapons. This sort of thing is different because it is intrinsic. However, any such treatment must be divided into two parts because German units develop some special capabilities as the war progresses.

Close Combat Versus AFVs

From *SL* through *GI* infantry often had a shot at armor moving adjacent to them, which worked very much as did Close Combat against AFVs. Successful Defensive Fire Phase attacks of this sort would result in an immobilized vehicle. Such attacks are no more, except when a vehicle is in a building or on a road between building hexes. This form of attack has been retained, in a more deadly form, to reflect the particular vulnerability of armor in city streets. Infantry surviving an overrun are now capable of a Close Combat type of counterattack. My overall view is that these changes are for the good and serve to bring the inherent anti-armor capabilities of infantry into sharper focus.

As before, infantry wishing to engage in Close Combat with an AFV will normally have to move into the vehicle's hex during the Advance Phase. Such movement is possible for MMC only if the units in question have first passed a "Pre-AFV

Gun Size	40			70			100			150		
Range	SL	GI	ASL	SL	GI	ASL	SL	GI	ASL	SL	GI	ASL
3-6	8	13	13	21	28	28	39	35	35	60	39	39
7-12	6	9	9	17	18	19	32	23	24	48	26	26
13-18	5	5	6	12	11	11	22	14	15	35	16	16
Unit morale of 6												
3-6	6	11	11	17	24	24	32	31	31	53	37	37
7-12	5	7	8	13	16	17	26	21	21	43	24	25
13-18	3	4	5	10	10	10	19	13	13	31	15	15
Unit morale of 7												
3-6	4	8	9	12	19	20	25	27	27	46	34	34
7-12	3	5	6	10	13	14	20	18	18	37	22	23
13-18	2	3	3	7	8	8	15	11	11	26	14	14
Unit morale of 8												

Table 22—The probability that a unit of the morale shown will, when in a wooden building, be destroyed or broken by the on board HE fire indicated

Gun Size	40			70			100			150		
Range	SL	GI	ASL	SL	GI	ASL	SL	GI	ASL	SL	GI	ASL
3-6	33	27	35	44	60	65	52	76	79	57	85	86
7-12	23	25	33	32	54	59	37	69	71	41	77	78
13-18	16	21	25	21	47	50	25	60	62	27	67	68
Unit morale of 6												
3-6	28	22	29	40	51	58	48	68	72	55	80	82
7-12	20	20	27	28	46	53	35	62	66	40	73	74
13-18	13	17	21	19	40	43	23	54	56	26	63	64
Unit morale of 7												
3-6	23	16	23	34	41	48	44	54	63	54	74	76
7-12	17	15	22	24	37	44	31	53	58	38	67	70
13-18	11	13	16	16	32	36	21	46	49	26	58	59
Unit morale of 8												

Table 23—The probability that a unit of the morale shown will, when moving in the open, be destroyed or broken by the on board HE fire indicated

Squad Morale	6			7			8		
Number of Squads	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
—	30	51	66	42	67	81	52	77	89
0	35	57	72	49	73	85	60	83	93
−1	53	78	89	66	88	95	76	93	98
−2	70	91	97	81	96	99	89	98	100
−3	81	96	99	89	98	100	95	99	100
No vehicular MG									
—	24	42	56	34	56	71	42	66	80
0	30	50	64	42	65	78	52	75	86
−1	49	72	84	60	82	91	69	87	94
−2	66	87	94	76	92	97	84	95	98
−3	81	96	99	89	98	99	95	99	99
2FPF MG									
—	24	42	55	34	55	69	42	64	77
0	30	50	63	42	64	77	52	73	84
−1	49	71	83	60	81	90	69	86	93
−2	66	87	94	76	92	96	84	94	97
−3	81	95	98	89	98	99	95	98	99
5FPF MG									

(a) Open-top/partially armored, motionless AFV

Squad Morale	6			7			8		
Number of Squads	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
—	17	32	44	24	43	57	30	51	66
0	24	41	54	34	54	67	42	63	75
−1	42	64	76	52	73	83	60	78	87
−2	60	81	89	69	86	92	76	89	93
−3	76	92	96	84	94	97	89	95	97
No vehicular MG									
—	12	22	30	16	29	40	20	35	48
0	17	30	40	24	40	50	30	46	58
−1	34	52	63	42	59	69	49	64	73
−2	52	70	79	60	75	82	66	78	84
−3	69	84	89	76	86	90	81	87	91
2FPF MG									
—	12	21	29	16	28	38	20	34	45
0	17	30	39	24	39	49	30	45	56
−1	34	51	61	42	58	68	49	63	71
−2	52	70	78	60	74	81	66	77	83
−3	69	83	88	76	86	90	81	87	90
5FPF MG									

(b) Closed-top, motionless AFV

Squad Morale	6			7			8		
Number of Squads	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
—	7	13	19	10	18	26	12	23	32
0	12	20	28	16	27	35	20	32	41
−1	24	38	46	30	44	52	35	47	55
−2	42	57	65	49	62	68	53	64	70
−3	60	73	78	66	76	80	70	77	80
No vehicular MG									
—	3	7	10	5	9	14	6	12	17
0	7	12	16	10	16	21	12	19	24
−1	16	25	31	20	29	34	23	31	36
−2	30	41	46	35	44	48	38	45	50
−3	49	59	63	53	61	64	57	61	65
2FPF MG									
—	3	7	10	5	9	13	6	11	16
0	7	12	16	10	16	20	12	18	24
−1	16	25	30	20	28	33	23	31	36
−2	30	41	46	35	43	48	38	45	49
−3	49	59	63	53	60	64	57	61	64
5FPF MG									

(c) Closed-top, in motion AFV

Table 24—Probability of a successful Close Combat attack against an unaccompanied AFV

Squad Morale	6			7			8		
Number of Squads	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
—	1.14	1.11	1.09	1.14	1.10	1.07	1.14	1.08	1.05
0	1.06	1.05	1.04	1.06	1.05	1.03	1.06	1.04	1.03
−1	1.02	1.01	1.01	1.02	1.01	1.01	1.02	1.01	1.01
−2	.99	1.00	1.00	.99	1.00	1.00	.99	1.00	1.00
−3	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
No vehicular MG									
—	1.24	1.20	1.17	1.24	1.18	1.13	1.24	1.16	1.11
0	1.14	1.12	1.10	1.14	1.11	1.09	1.14	1.10	1.07
−1	1.06	1.05	1.04	1.06	1.05	1.04	1.06	1.05	1.03
−2	1.02	1.02	1.01	1.02	1.02	1.01	1.02	1.02	1.01
−3	.99	1.00	1.00	.99	1.00	1.00	.99	1.00	1.00
2FPF MG									
—	1.24	1.21	1.18	1.24	1.19	1.15	1.24	1.18	1.12
0	1.14	1.13	1.11	1.14	1.12	1.09	1.14	1.11	1.08
−1	1.06	1.05	1.05	1.06	1.05	1.04	1.06	1.05	1.03
−2	1.02	1.02	1.01	1.02	1.02	1.01	1.02	1.02	1.01
−3	.99	1.00	1.00	.99	1.00	1.00	.99	1.00	1.00
5FPF MG									

(a) Open-top/partially armored, motionless AFV

Squad Morale	6			7			8		
Number of Squads	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
—	1.44	1.38	1.33	1.44	1.36	1.28	1.44	1.33	1.24
0	1.24	1.22	1.20	1.24	1.21	1.18	1.24	1.20	1.16
−1	1.14	1.13	1.11	1.14	1.12	1.10	1.14	1.12	1.09
−2	1.06	1.06	1.05	1.06	1.06	1.05	1.06	1.06	1.04
−3	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02
No vehicular MG									
—	1.73	1.66	1.59	1.73	1.63	1.53	1.73	1.60	1.49
0	1.44	1.42	1.40	1.44	1.41	1.37	1.44	1.40	1.35
−1	1.24	1.23	1.22	1.24	1.23	1.21	1.24	1.23	1.20
−2	1.14	1.14	1.13	1.14	1.14	1.12	1.14	1.14	1.12
−3	1.06	1.07	1.06	1.06	1.07	1.06	1.06	1.07	1.06
2FPF MG									
—	1.73	1.67	1.61	1.73	1.65	1.56	1.73	1.62	1.51
0	1.44	1.43	1.40	1.44	1.42	1.38	1.44	1.41	1.36
−1	1.24	1.23	1.22	1.24	1.23	1.21	1.24	1.23	1.21
−2	1.14	1.14	1.13	1.14	1.14	1.13	1.14	1.14	1.12
−3	1.06	1.07	1.06	1.06	1.07	1.06	1.06	1.07	1.06
5FPF MG									

(b) Closed-top, motionless AFV

Squad Morale	6			7			8		
Number of Squads	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
—	2.17	2.08	1.99	2.17	2.04	1.92	2.17	2.00	1.87
0	1.73	1.72	1.69	1.73	1.71	1.66	1.73	1.70	1.64
−1	1.44	1.45	1.44	1.44	1.45	1.43	1.44	1.45	1.42
−2	1.24	1.25	1.25	1.24	1.25	1.25	1.24	1.26	1.25
−3	1.14	1.15	1.15	1.14	1.15	1.15	1.14	1.15	1.15
No vehicular MG									
—	2.89	2.80	2.71	2.89	2.76	2.63	2.89	2.72	2.57
0	2.17	2.17	2.17	2.17	2.17	2.16	2.17	2.18	2.15
−1	1.73	1.76	1.77	1.73	1.77	1.78	1.73	1.78	1.78
−2	1.44	1.48	1.50	1.44	1.48	1.50	1.44	1.49	1.51
−3	1.24	1.27	1.28	1.24	1.27	1.29	1.24	1.27	1.29
2FPF MG									
—	2.89	2.81	2.72	2.89	2.77	2.65	2.89	2.74	2.59
0	2.17	2.17	2.17	2.17	2.18	2.16	2.17	2.18	2.15
−1	1.73	1.76	1.77	1.73	1.77	1.78	1.73	1.78	1.78
−2	1.44	1.47	1.49	1.44	1.48	1.50	1.44	1.49	1.51
−3	1.24	1.26	1.28	1.24	1.27	1.29	1.24	1.27	1.29
5FPF MG									

(c) Closed-top, in motion AFV

Table 25—The ratio of success in a Closs Combat with ATMM attempts to success in a Close Combat without ATMM attempts

Attack Task Check''. SMC, now, do not have to pass any such test in order to advance, nor does a leader have to pass a PAATC before he can apply his leadership modifier to units stacked with him who wish to make the effort. As I read the rules, they give the leader the opportunity to see how many of his followers will jump into the hex with metal monster before he commits himself. Note that a unit becomes pinned if it fails to pass the PAATC.

Once all the units that can make it are in the hex, attacks are made sequentially, with one infantry unit going first. Enemy infantry units present in the hex, or the vehicle itself (if it has some applicable MGs) will then be able to make one attack; after which the attacker has another turn if he has another, unused unit. Attacks are made by rolling against the attacker's CCV (''Close Combat Value'': five for a squad, four for a crew, three for a half-squad and two for a SMC going in by himself).

In all of its forms, this area of the rules has always had great appeal for me. Among other things, it is probably the single area of greatest impact by a leader. To see this, and other things, let's now look at Table 24. The results presented deal quite comprehensively with three basic situations: an attack on an open-topped, partially-armored, motionless AFV; an attack on a closed-top, motionless AFV; and an attack on a closed-top AFV in Motion. All vehicles are unaccompanied by friendly infantry; and it is supposed that all attacks are attempted by full squads. The ''Number of Squads'' refers to the number of squads that attempt to pass their PAATC and not to the number which actually attack. Five leader situations are considered. Since the leader's morale is not important, only three useful modifiers, and that due to either a 7-0 or an 8-0, are included. While the latter leaders provide no useful modifier, they (and the other leaders) do increase the CCV of the unit with which they attack by one. The ''—'' entry is the one for an attempt with no leader present. Only two AFV MG values have been considered. To see why, you need only examine the limited differences between the 2FP and the 5FP cases. Since these weapons (except for BMG) counterattack against an infantry unit's CCV, the strength of the squads is not particularly effective; having any applicable MG armament spares the vehicle an unfavorable modifier to the attacker's CCV.

If you look at the 5FP entry in part (c), you'll see what I mean about the effects of a leader. A single, morale level six squad stacked with an 8-1 leader has as much chance of passing a PAATC, moving in, and injuring an AFV (16%) as does a stack of three morale level eight squads that have no leader. I know of no other situation in which a leader has this much impact.

In summary, Table 24 demonstrates that being motionless in the vicinity of enemy infantry, unless you have infantry of our own, is a most dangerous undertaking.

German Options

As the war goes along, German infantry units develop certain inherent anti-armor capabilities of some significance. After September 1943, any such unit just might happen to have one or more panzerfausts; after December 1943, they also might have some anti-tank magnetic mines lying around. The presence of these capabilities is not a reflection of the German soldier as some sort of superman. They are, rather, the result of the deteriorating situation in which Germany found itself as its enemies increased their production of AFVs. Necessity, based on what was ultimately shown to be the well-founded notion that infantry could attack armor, led to the widespread distribution and use of such weaponry.

The ATMM has been around as a support weapon since *COI* (available now only to German infantry, not to Russian as then). Now, however, it can be used in an attempt to increase the effectiveness of a Close Combat attack. A die roll is made for each such unit after it has entered the AFV's location. If the unit is a squad, on a roll of 1-3 the CCV values of the squad is increased by three; on a roll of 4-5, there is no effect; on a 6, the squad is pinned, meaning that its CCV will be *reduced* by one.

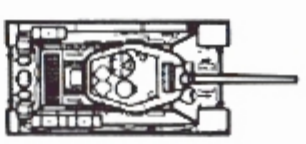
All of the cases considered in Table 24 are reconsidered in Table 25, now assuming that all squads passing their PAATC will try for an ATMM placement. The results are expressed as the ratio of the success probability found versus that which exists when there is no ATMM capability. To illustrate, three six level morale squads stacked with a 7-0 leader have, in the situation considered in part (a), a 64% chance of success. German squads, from Table 25 (a) will do 1.10 times as well, for a success rate of 70.4%. Ther presence of a few 0.99s in Table 25 does demonstrate that ATMM attempt is not always a winner, but there's no reason to let those few exceptions cause one concern. Since we can assume that few vehicles are going to halt, unaccompanied, in the vicinity of enemy infantry, it is the results to be found in part (c) which interest me the most, particularly those without a leader involved. Whereas a single non-German squad with a morale level of eight has a 12% chance of success against an AFV lacking appropriate MGs, a German squad's chance is 26%.

	TO HIT									
drm	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**
+2	0	1	3	5	7	9	12	14	15	16
+1	1	2	5	9	14	19	23	27	30	32
0	1	3	8	14	20	28	35	41	45	47
−1	2	4	11	18	27	38	47	54	59	63

Table 26—The probability of a successful Panzer faust attack

As a counter, the panzerfaust goes all the way back to *SL*. Now, any German unit wishing to try for one of these makes a die roll. Rolls of 1-3 are successful, but they are subject to various modifiers. When obtained, these weapons have a Basic To Hit value of 10, which is reduced by two for each hex of range to the target; maximum range increases as the war draws to a close. For all practical purposes, if one of these things hits an AFV, its Basic TK# of 31 is a sure winner against all but (so far) two Russian vehicles. For this reason, To Kill rolls are necessary in most cases only to check for duds (DR 12) or burning wrecks. Table 26 reflects the danger posed by such weapons. Compared with the previous, onboard version of things, they are, individually, less dangerous. They are, on the other hand, much more common, thereby creating a greater hazard. Because attempting to obtain one of these weapons does pose some risk to the unit, given the results in the last table, I rarely make the effort when the range will be greater than one hex.

As a matter of interest, I returned to the case of a squad standing in the open and considered what would happen if the squad were German and the vehicle attempting the overrun were a Russian one with an attack of ''12''. Taking everything into consideration, including the counterattack by the squad if it survives, the tank has about a 65% chance of killing or breaking the squad. On the other hand, if the squad survives it has about a 30% chance of taking out the tank. That should be enough to make any ''treadhead'' think twice.







SERIES REPLAY

BEYOND VALOR, Scenario 8

German Player—Don Chappell
Russian Player—Jim Blick
Neutral Commentator—Charles Kibler



Don Chappell has been involved in the playtesting of the SQUAD LEADER system since its inception, and headed the ASL playtest effort for the Camp Pendleton Simulations Club. Jim Blick, familiarly known as Sgt. Blick (8-1), has been a wargamer for some 14 years and was involved in playtesting COI and GI; like Don a former Marine Corps captain and combat veteran, he can claim considerable pedigree since he placed second overall in the 1984 SQUAD LEADER Open. Charlie Kibler needs no introduction to this readership, being more involved in the artwork and playtesting of ASL than any other. Added to that, he is a fierce and unforgiving opponent when playing. And, he designed this scenario. With such a cast, this replay serves as the best introduction to ASL I can imagine.

OPENING COMMENTS

German: I selected this scenario because I find appealing the historical commentary and situation. For a decade the city of Berlin has been the center of world attention, and—for five of the past six years—the capital city of arguably the most powerful Army ever raised by one people. Now, in the morning twilight of a *Gotterdammerung* of their own making, the once vaunted Wehrmacht is streaming to the west.

Actually, the main defense of the doomed city took place about 60 kilometers to the east along the Oder River. Short of everything except courage, the Germans there held up the massive assault of two entire Soviet Fronts for over 48 hours. Then, stretched to the limit, the defense shattered. The Battle for Berlin became a three-way race!

By design of Stalin himself, the two Soviet Fronts were staging a gigantic recreation of the Patton-Montgomery race to Messina. The remnants of the German defensive forces were overrun trying to reach Berlin as Zhukov's First Belorussian Front raced Koniev's First Ukrainian Front to the city limits. The American generals pleaded to be released by Eisenhower for thier own drive to take the Nazi capital. Eisenhower, with regard to prior political agreements, turned the American forces to the south in his most criticized "decision" of the war.

The once proud German Army, mainly abandoned now by the political troops wearing SS and SA uniforms, had trouble collecting even a corporal's guard [*pun intended*] for the city's final defense. Hitler, throwing yet another tantrum and promising (he was long past threats) to hang generals, was able to "will" in existence a medium-sized *kampfgruppe*. He honored this rag-tag collection of recent hospital patients, teenagers, aged postmen and air raid wardens with the grandiose title "Muencheburg Division". This in reference to a fortress once held against tremendous odds by the soldiers of Frederick the Great—obviously intended to inspire the defenders. Now we find the "Master Race" fighting like cornered rats just to get out of town by noon. I love it.

On first glance, the Victory Conditions seem laughably simple. We (the Germans) only need to escape with half our force. We out-number the Russians. We have plenty of time to cross the area of the mapboards. Initially there is poor visibility for the defenders, and the Russians even have some mobility constraints.

But, friends, this is misleading. The Russians have some distinct advantages. First of all, there is no requirement for the Russian player to have *any* units left at the end of the game. If each Russian takes someone with him . . . well, you readers can do arithmetic. The German's low morale and ELR mean that the Wehrmacht force will rapidly disintegrate. Those 4-3-6s are at immediate risk in event of an "ELR break", while the 4-4-7s are only slightly more resilent.

Although the twilight +1 DRM is a definite help, the terrain favors the Russians. Concealed or hidden in buildings and protected by the +3 DRMs, the Russians will be hard to root out of the key defensive positions that interdict our route. Finally, we are forced to cross the canal on a bridge. The potential crossing sites are widely separated. This means that once we tip our hand as to the selected site, the Russians will rush to mass his forces against us.

However, all is not hopeless. Both the Pz IVJ and the StuG III can kill the T-34, but the best weapon to use on the Soviet tank is the multitude of potential Panzerfausts we enjoy. After all, we don't need to save any for tomorrow.

My general scheme of maneuver is rather simple. All three groups will enter on hex 20I10, in this order: Group 3, Group 2, and Group 1. I plan to lead with the infantry in order to develop the Russian defense with minimum risk. We will not be overly penalized by our squads' low range factors during the house-to-house fighting, and the larger number of squads gives me more flexibility, both in maneuver and in the formation of fire groups. By using both the leadership modifiers and the CX (double time) options, we can move rapidly early in the game. The second group is chosen for its tank. The advantage of having turreted armor is more important to me than the higher quality squads and enhanced mobility enjoyed by Group 1. Group 1's mobility will also make it an effective reserve if we run into unexpected problems early.

In general, I will drive rapidly on the bridge at 23X3 and take every opportunity to make the Russian player believe we are seeking a *coup de main*. Jim should react rapidly to reinforce this crossing point and hopefully will strengthen his defenses in building 23Y7. On Turn 6, after we have most of the Russians defending the southern flank, I will move mobile units into the area around 23T3 and 23S4 to isolate the Russians from the real crossing site at 23P7.

I have decided to attempt this indirect approach for two reasons. First, Jim and I both believe that this scenario generally favors the Germans. During the playtest effort here, the successful German tactic was the *coup de main*—a strong thrust right down the road from 20Y10 to 23H4 and off the board. I believe Jim has probably come up with a strategem to deflect or delay this direct attack. His defense will probably favor his northern flank, so a strong attack toward the south may cause him to over-react. He would then be off balance for my final thrust.

In looking over this plan, I see one problem already. It is too complicated. "Simplicity" is one of the most critical "Principles of War". However, I am going to try it anyway. No matter what kind of plan you come up with, it is a *very* rare occasion when you should deviate from it. My chance to get a victory out of this plan is to stick to it, and concentrate on executing it as well as possible, so don't expect a change of objectives. I rate this scenario as favoring the Germans about 55-45.

Russian Initial Set-Up

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
1	Place Stone Rubble Counters on Board 20: C6, E7, H4, G3, I3 Place Wooden Rubble Counter—on Board 20: K2			
2	Attempt Additional Rubble C6 into D5		3	NE
3	Attempt Additional Rubble E7 into E6		1	NE
4	Attempt Additional Rubble H4 into G5		5	Rubble
5	Attempt Additional Rubble G3 into F2		5	Rubble
6	C.A. in 20Z4 (2nd) *represents* R.A. w/LMG			
7	C.B. in 20U5 *represents* R.B			
8	C.C. in 20O5 *represents* R.C.			
9	HIP R.D. w/MMG and Changar in 20M4			
10	C.D. in 2OE5 *represents* R.E.			
11	C.E. in 20DD2 *represents* a dummy stack			
12	C.F. in 20B4 *represents* a dummy stack			
13	R.F. in 23Y6			
14	R.G. in 23W6			
15	R.H. in 23Z6 (2nd)			
16	R.I. w/LMG in 23CC7			
17	R.J. in 23E3 (2nd)			
18	R.K. in 23H5			
19	R.L. w/HMG in 23F3 (2nd)			
20	Knezevich in 23E4 (2nd)			
21	Eastonov in 23Y7			
22	HIP 57LL ATG w/crew in 23Q9 with CA P8/Q8			
23	Russian Sniper placed in 20R4			
24	German Sniper placed in 23X6			

Following Set-up of German sniper, Russian player places Concealment counters: C.L. in 23Y7; C.N. in 23H5; C.Q. in 23CC7; C.R. in 23W6; C.S. in 23E3 (2nd); C.X. in 23F3 (2nd); C.Y. in 23E4 (2nd); C.Z. in 23Y6; and C.DD. in 23Z6 (2nd).

Russian: I feel the Russian player has two tasks to complete in order to accomplish his mission. He must use his Board 20 units as a screening force to delay the German advance and force an early commitment to one of the crossing sites. The second task falls mainly to the Board 23 forces, and that is to prevent a crossing of the canal in force. They

EVENT LISTING LEGEND

NE	No Effect
w/	with or possessing
(2nd)	Second Level
G.—.	German Squad
R.—.	Russian Squad
C.—.	Concealment Counter
g.—.	German HS
r.—.	Russian HS
malf	Malfunction

(All other abbreviations are ASL standard.)

(and the Turn 5 reinforcements) must form the *cordon sanitaire* to prevent the escape of the fascists.

To help canalize [*pun unintended*] the Germans, I will use the rubble counters allowed by SSR 7 to try to close some roads. In this case, we don't want any vehicles moving along the south edge road hexes, taking a little VBM to cross from 20D1 to 23EE2, and then jumping the canal at BB5. Hopefully, the whole effect will be to "encourage" him to try for the center two bridges.

As for troop deployment, I have to make some hard choices. This is one of the few scenarios where there aren't enough Russians to do the job. Well, that's not strictly true because we see evidence of a much more effective Soviet Army in this order of battle. The tactics used by this force are more akin to those usually employed by the Germans than the traditional horde tactics employed by the Russians.

My Board 20 deployment is spread evenly over the front so that no entering force can quickly sweep past without being engaged. As the German stops to fight, the other squads will join the battle. This piecemeal commitment will result in heavy Russian losses, but the delay should give us a chance to get the Turn 5 reinforcements to the threatened bridge.

Although the set-up allows two squads to be placed using HIP, I am using that option for only one unit. Follow my reasoning. It is very unlikely that Don would move in such a manner that I would be able to place two hidden units where he will have to move past both. Obviously I'll be required to move all of my Board 20 squads toward the German thrust for them to be effective; but if I move the HIP unit, it must be placed under a Concealment counter. In other words, as soon as it moves, it is accounted for and Don knows that all the remaining HIP sites are safe. By putting it under a Concealment counter at the start, it can move freely. Don will expect a third of the Concealment counters he sees to be dummies. As these units are committed and revealed, the probability that one of the remaining counters is fake goes up and Don may walk into a killing zone or even an ambush.

Additionally, when an HIP unit doesn't appear under a Concealment counter and start moving toward him, Don's only conclusion will be that the unit must be placed advantageously to the defense. This may (but, knowing him, probably won't) slow him down just a little as he advances cautiously. If the twilight rule were not in effect, you can be sure he'd move more slowly rather than accept those FFNAM and FFMO DRMs from a possible HIP unit. It remains to be seen if he'll risk it in this case.

The Board 23 deployment is more critical. We have only seven squads to guard four bridges. If you consider BB5 and X3 as one crossing site because of their close proximity to each other, you have enough forces to cover two crossing sites effectively. I have decided to cover the flank bridges. First, they can be crossed rapidly before SSR 6 allows any Russian Board 23 movement. Secondly, I can pinch both flanks toward the center more rapidly than I could shift the same number of units from one flank to the other.

Obviously, the HMG has to go up into the "church steeple" at 23F3. It has a normal FP attack and LOS against the nearer two bridges and a handy 2FP attack against the south flank bridges. With the FFNAM and FFMO DRMs against the approach hexes of these bridges, this HMG should concern the German enough to divert fire away from my units actually defending the crossing sites.

Siting the AT Gun is always a dilemma. Ideally, you'd like a place which can cover all of the bridges, but unfortunately the gun is too big and too heavy to place on the upper story of 23F3 (not to mention against the rules). I finally decided on 23Q9 because it covers the northern two bridges, and it can be manhandled quickly to cover the tree-lined

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMENTS

In the past, we have found some Series Replays to be difficult to follow. We decided to chronicle each player action as it took place in the exact order it takes place; you will find the Event List before player comments for each turn in the text. As you can see, movement was often interrupted by Defensive First Fire and then continued. Each and every die/dice roll is also recorded.

The tables below show all the non-bookkeeping counters that a reader will need to follow along with this Series Replay. He will need the full compliment of Prep Fire, First Fire, blaze, DM and Malfunction counters at hand. If the reader does try to follow along exactly, looking for mistakes (I am sure we have some left) or analyzing strategy, it may even be useful to set the dice up as they were. We believe you will find that your enjoyment of this replay is greatly enhanced if you take the time to sort through your countermix to duplicate the counters listed in Table 1.

The Event Listings that accompany each turn record each event sequentially, with continuing actions by units lettered with the same event number. For example: Event 1 is the initial movement of a squad, Event 2 is the First Fire attack of a HMG, Event 3 might be a morale check. If the squad continues its move, it would be listed not as Event 4, but as Event 1A; the HMG continuing to fire as 2A; any new morale check as 3A.

The first table below shows the set-up forces and their Event Listing designation. Units such as the T34 or PzKw IVJ which are the sole unit of their type do not have any special designation. Some of the leader counters are hold-overs from *SL* and *COI* (for many reasons; the only improvement on the latest is the art work). [*Commentator's Note: not true; ASL leaders have a boxed morale number on the broken side to indicate self-rally capability.*]

Table 2 shows the conventional abbreviations we adopted in recording the actions and events during play. There is no indicator for the condition of units while in play (broken, ELR reduced, malfunctioning, etc.) so readers will have to keep track with such status changes on your board as you follow the Event Listings.

Jim and I had a lot of fun playing this scenario for you, but it is not without errors—both tactical and rules violations. We left all these in. Obviously, tactical errors are what make any wargame what it is. And, *ASL* is a difficult game to master, and experienced players have an edge because of their mastery of the rules. We played this game some three weeks after the release of *ASL*. Whenever we made a mistake and caught it, we comment on it ourselves. In other words, we did not retroactively correct errors even though we would look stupid in print. No one (not even Don Greenwood) gets through a game of *ASL* without a rule boo-boo or two. It's no big thing, and arguably is part of the game. Remember A.2.

RUSSIAN UNITS

Board 20

Type Unit	Designation
4-4-7	R.A.
4-4-7	R.B.
4-4-7	R.C.
4-4-7	R.D.
4-4-7	R.E.
8-1 Leader	Changar
?	C.A.
?	C.B
?	C.C.
?	C.D.
?	C.E.
?	C.F.

Board 23

Type Unit	Designation
4-4-7	R.F.
4-4-7	R.G.
4-4-7	R.H.
4-4-7	R.I.
4-5-8	R.J.
4-5-8	R.K.
4-5-8	R.L
2-2-8	crew
8-0 Leader	Eastonov
7-0	Knezevich

After Set-Up

Type Unit	Designation
?	C.L.
?	C.N.
?	C.Q.
?	C.R.
?	C.S.
?	C.X
?	C.Y.
?	C.Z.
?	C.DD.

Turn 5 Reinforcements

Type Unit	Designation
6-2-8	R.M.
6-2-8	R.N.
6-2-8	R.P.
9-1 Leader	Chernova

GERMAN UNITS

Group One

Type Unit	Designation
4-6-7	G.N.
4-6-7	G.O.
4-6-7	G.P.
4-6-7	G.Q.
4-6-7	G.R.
8-1 Leader	Metzler
8-0 Leader	Oettl
SPW 251	SPW #DD
SPW 251	SPW #EE

Group Two

Type Unit	Designation
4-4-7	G.I.
4-4-7	G.J.
4-4-7	G.K.
4-4-7	G.L.
4-4-7	G.M.
9-1 Leader	Urban
8-0 Leader	Halle
Opel Blitz	Truck D
Opel Blitz	Truck E
Opel Blitz	Truck F

Group Three

Type Unit	Designation
4-3-6	G.A.
4-3-6	G.B
4-3-6	G.C.
4-3-6	G.D.
4-4-7	G.E
4-4-7	G.F.
4-4-7	G.G.
4-4-7	G.H
9-2 Leader	Peopl
8-1 Leader	Blick
8-0 Leader	Behr
7-0 Leader	Kindel

ADDITIONAL UNITS

Russian

Type Unit	Designation
1-4-9	Hero
2-3-7	r.Z.
4-5-8	R.Z.
(1)-0-6	prisoners

German

Type Unit	Designation
4-4-7	G.P.
4-4-7	G.R.
2-4-7	g.N.
2-3-7	g.F.
2-3-7	g.G.
2-3-7	g.I.
2-3-7	g.O.
2-3-7	g.P.
2-3-6	g.C.
2-3-6	g.D.
2-3-6	g.R.
(1)-0-6	prisoners

boulevard down to 23X4. Lastly, the apparently open area may encourage Don to try a crossing at 23P7. Remember that the ATG is the only Russian on-board unit capable of eliminating more than two points of German units at a time. As for Don, I predict that he will go for broke, come at me fast, force an early bridgehead, and end the game before my reinforcements can arrive.

I rate "The Fugitives" as 60% pro-German.

Neutral Commentator: *Everything seems "hunky-dory" so far. It will be very interesting to see how this carefully thought out German onslaught progresses. After all, "the best laid plans of mice and men . . ."*

As for the Russian defensive set up, the German will no doubt think that the Russian has played right into his hand. Just a couple of comments I'd like to make. Another (perhaps better) spot for the ATG would be 23N9 (CA: N8/O9). In this position the gun cannot only interdict 23P4, but 23X4 as well. Jim's logic in not utilizing one of the HIPs offered by SSR 5 is quite interesting, unique I think.

TURN 1

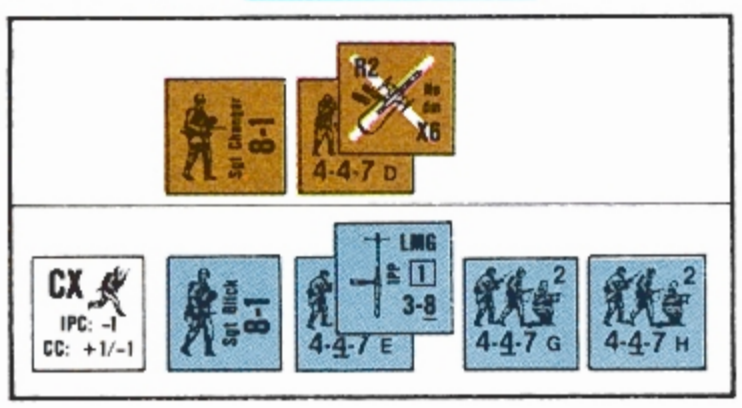
German Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
[*Place Board 22 with hex 22I1 adjacent to 20I10.*]				
Movement Phase				
25	PSW 222 (CE),G.E. w/LMG, G.F., Kindel use armored assault movement and CX movement from 22I1 to 20L4. PSW stops with VCA M4/M5.			
26	Blick, G.H., G.G. use CX movement from 22H1 (BPM J10) to 20M5			
27	Behr, G.A., G.B. use CX movement from 22H1 (BPM H10 and J7) to 20H5 (conscripts exceed MF, but not discovered until this report!)			
28	Peopl, G.C., G.D. use CX movement from 22I2 (BPM J7) to 20K6			
Defensive Fire Phase				
29	R.C. fires on Blick, G.H., G.G.—4 IFT	+1	10	NE
30	R.D. w/MMG, Changar fires on Kindel, G.E. w/LMG G.F. and PSW—16 IFT	+1,+2	11	NE MMG malf
Advancing Fire Phase				
31	PSW 222 fire on Changar, R.D.—11 IFT	+4	5	PTC
32	Changar—PTC		9	Pinned
33	R.D. w/MMG—PTC		4	Pass
Advance Phase				
34	Behr, G.A., G.B. into 20H4			
35	Peopl, G.C., G.D. into 20K5			
36	Blick, G.H., G.G. into 20M4			
37	G.E. w/LMG into 20M4			
Close Combat Phase				
38	Blick, G.E., G.H., G.G. vs. Changar, R.D.	+1	9	NE
39	Changar, R.D. vs. Blick, G.E., G.H., G.G.		4	NE

Russian Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
40	Wind Change Attempt		10	NE
Prep Fire Phase				
41	R.C. fires on Kindel, G.F. and PSW crew—4 IFT	+2,+3	11	NE
Movement Phase				
42	C.F. moves from 20B4 (BPM B3) to 20C2			
Defensive Fire Phase				
43	PSW fires on R.C.—11 IFT	+4	11	NE, Low Ammo
44	G.F., Kindel fire on R.C.—4 4 IFT	+4	8	NE
45	Peopl, G.C., G.D. fire on R.C.—4 IFT	+2	3	1MC
45A	R.C.—1MC		6	Pinned
45B	Russian Sniper Activation		5	NE
Advance Phase				
46	C.F. into 20D2			
Close Combat Phase				
47	Changar, R.D. vs. Blick G.E., G.H., G.G.	−1	12	See A11.22
48	Blick, G.E., G.H., G.G. withdraw to 20L3			

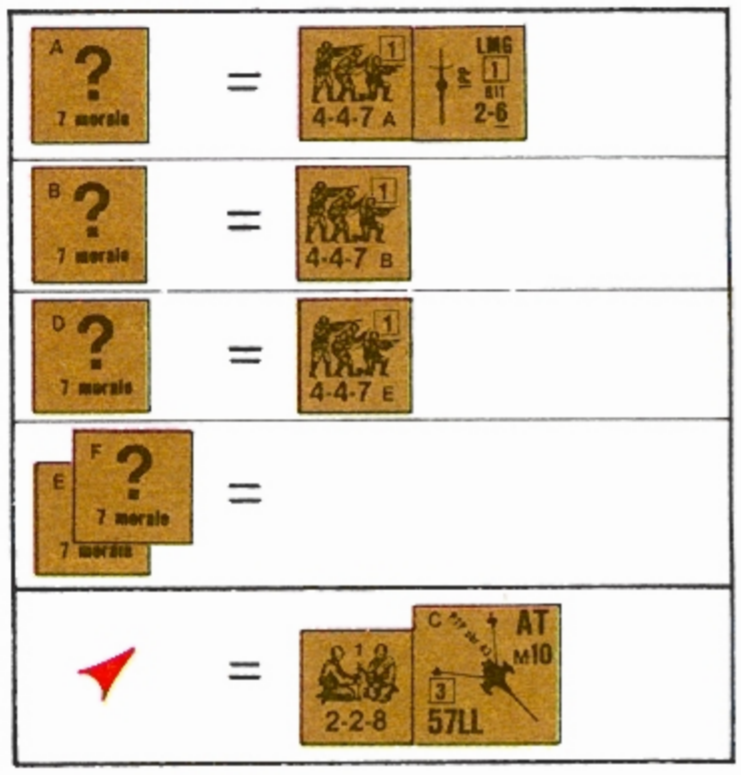




German: Well, I found half of Jim's hidden and concealed force and lived to tell about it. That would not have been the case if the sun were up, but then it isn't. Just taking advantage of the tactical situation and making sure Jim knows that I am coming right at him.

That is also half my reason for close assaulting the Russians in 20M4. The other half is that I want to eliminate these dangerous units quickly. Even if I don't win the melee right away, he'll be unable to Prep Fire and may not even Defensive Fire again. He just about bagged the whole bunch with that "4". I'll have to suffer with the CX penalty for

Figure 1: Positions at the end of Turn 1. Below is shown critical concealed and hidden Russian units. To the left are the participants in the first Close Combat of the game.



another turn, and he'll be getting Changar's services back. Let's hope Jim's luck won't be more spectacular next time.

It didn't. I get the next Prep Fire Phase, so I decided to withdraw now and try to "gun him down". It also clears the way for a little tank action and that should show Jim that I mean business. It might be 1945, but a Panzer is still a Panzer!

My other comment during my turn is to point out Behr's units, who are going to act as south flank security.

Russian: I blew my Defensive Fire Phase. I forgot that I could conduct First Fire on the Germans in 20L4 and still have a Final Fire attack. This essentially would have given me two fire attacks instead of one. My other option would have been to remain hidden and attempt an ambush on the units bound to enter in the Advance Phase. But I felt shooting a bunch of Germans down in the street would get Don's attention and take the edge off his rush.

Well, rolling a "12" in my Close Combat Phase allowed Don the option of withdrawing, and he took it. That confuses me . . . why did he close assault in the first place if he doesn't want to fight it out? If I can repair the MMG, maybe I can make him pay yet. Everyone else will sit tight and see where the second wave comes on; this bunch of inexperienced grunts may be a feint. Some readers may wonder about the advisability of these 1-4 CC attacks—it's just my way. I like to take as many with me as I can.

Neutral Commentator: *Why, oh why, are the Germans not using Concealed entry (A12.12)? This is a glaring mistake on the part of Don. The Germans were lucky to get off so easy. The German should have been mowed down when entering the L4-L5-M5 intersection. In Jim's shoes, I would have fired Changar's group as the first Germans entered the 20L5 chokepoint, thereby placing a residual of 2FP (or 4FP if the MMG sacrifices ROF); keep in mind that subsequent First Fire and Final Fire can still be utilized if the Germans opt to keep coming. Not a particularly auspicious debut for the Ivan.*

As pointed out, the German conscripts exceeded their MF allowance. Too, the initial Wind Change DR was not taken. No big deal, but these little mistakes do add up.

As for the German Advance, I would have kept G.E. w/LMG out of the Melee, as LMGs are no longer helpful in CC, and would have sent in G.F. instead.

I, too, was a bit miffed with the German withdrawal from CC. I thought they were in there to club it out to the bitter end. It will be interesting to see what transpires in the next PFPh.

TURN 2

German Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
49	Wind Change Attempt		7	NE
50	Repair Russian MMG		6	Eliminated
Prep Fire Phase				
51	Blick, G.E. w/LMG, G.G., G.H. fire on Changar, R.D.—30 IFT	+3	7	2MC
52	Changar—2MC		7	Breaks (DM)
53	R.D.—2MC		7	Breaks (DM)
54	G.F. fires on Changar, R.D.—8 IFT	+4	4	Cower, PTC, NE
Movement Phase				
55	Peopl, G.C., G.D. from 20K5 (BPM J4) to 20J2			
56	Behr, G.A., G.B. from 20H4 to 20G3			
57	Kindel assault moves to 20K4			
58	PSW starts			
59	R.C. fires on PSW—4 IFT	+3	9	NE, stops
60	PSW (CE) from 20L4 to 20I1, stops with VCA H0/Y1			
61	Pz IVJ (CE) from 22I1 to 20M5, stops with VCA N4/N5			
62	Urban, G.I. w/MMG (dm), G.J., G.K. use CX movement from 22I1 (BPM J7) to 20K5			
63	Halle, G.L. w/MMG, G.M. use CX movement from 22J1 (BPM J10) to 20N7			
64	Truck #D from 22I2 to 20G7, VCA H6/H7			
65	Truck #E from 22I3 to 20H7, VCA I7/I8			
66	Truck #F from 22I4 to 20I8, VCA J7/J8			
Rout Phase				
67	Changar, R.D. surrender to G.F.			
Advance Phase				
68	Behr, G.A., G.B. to 20F2			
69	Peopl, G.C., G.D. to 20J1			
70	Blick, G.E. w/LMG, G.H., G.G. to 20M3			
71	G.F. w/prisoners to 20M4			
72	Kindel to 20K3			
73	Urban, G.I. w/MMG (dm), G.J., G.K. to 20K4			
74	Halle, G.L. w/MMG, G.M. to 20O7			

Russian Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
75	Wind Change Attempt		3	NE
Movement Phase				
76	C.E. use CX movement from 20DD2 (BPM Z2) to 20Y3			
77	C.A. use CX movement from 20Z4 (2nd) to 20Z3			
78	C.B. from 20U5 to 20S6			
79	R.C. from 20O5 (BPM N5) to 20M6			
80	Urban, G.I., G.J., G.K. fire on R.C.—12 IFT	+2	7	NMC
81	R.C.—NMC			Breaks (DM)
82	C.F. from 20D2 assault move to 20C2			
83	C.D. from 20E5 assault move to 20F4			
Defensive Fire Phase				
84	G.I. assembles MMG			
85	Pz IVJ main gun fires on R.C. (TCA N5/MG)	+4	8	Miss
86	Pz IVJ CMG/AAMG fire on R.C. —14 IFT	+6	7	NE
87	PSW area fire on 23Y6—5 IFT	+5	5	NE
88	G.F. fires on R.C.—4 IFT	+5	7	NE
Rout Phase				
89	R.C. routs to 20L6			
Advance Phase				
90	C.E. into 20X3			
91	C.A. into 20Z2			
92	C.B. into 20R6			
93	C.D. into 20F3			
94	C.F. into 20C1			

German: Well, my Prep Fire Phase worked out well. Many may disagree with accepting the surrender feeling that this is no time to be slowed by prisoners. First of all, I don't commit even cardboard atrocities. Secondly, May 1945 is not a good time to upset the Russians . . . we might have need for someone to translate and convince our eventual captors that we should be "re-educated in Siberia for 10 to 15 years" rather than be "eliminated as a threat to the state."

Halle's group provides north flank security by establishing a field of fire along the road toward 20Y2. I believe that Jim did not react last turn because he wanted to see where the next German group entered; but now he knows that I will follow my usual practice of massing my units. So we should see the Russians reacting frantically.

As far as the trucks go, they are moved out of the way. Unlike many *game* players, I do not lead my attacks with trucks. It is not realistic. As a former battalion logistics officer, I can assure you that trucks are too valuable (even in today's forces) to be wasted. I'll hold these trucks back to pick up stragglers late in the game. Each truck uses enough movement points to be left under Motion counters for a little added protection.

Everything seems to be going according to plan. We will use this next turn to enter Board 23 and get the Russians to start reacting to our feint.

Russian: Prisoners!! Don did this just to embarrass me. Actually, both of us missed the one legal rout route open to these troops—that to the first level of 20M4. That would have delayed the inevitable by one turn; positions in row houses must be selected with great care or you could be trapped. I selected this position because of its field of fire and accepted the risk. So far, everything is going great . . . just great.

Well, Don didn't bring on the other group somewhere different, and that means we better get moving toward the center; looks to me like a push for bridge X3.

I sent squad C out to kill that Panzer and put an end to six victory points. Both of us are still trying to establish the "pace" of the game—each trying to be more aggressive than the other and to establish a "psychological" dominance. Hopefully, squad C's rout back to L6 will cause some unit to slow down to finish him off. The north flank units are trying to get into the German rear, while the south flank squad and the dummy are trying to get in front of his assault.

Neutral Commentator: *I've discovered another error in DRM calculation. I think that the players are not applying the +1 IFT DRM for CX fire (A4.51). This would have meant that Events 51 and 54 should have a +4 and +5 DRM, respectively, and thus that Changar would have been pinned instead of broken (though R.D. would still have broken) but could have gone to the 1st level of M3 and have had a chance to rally (on a DR less than or equal to "5") in the upcoming RPh. Perhaps a telling error.*

The German player continues to neglect the Concealment (surely not by design?) of his units. He has forgotten both to enter his units concealed (A12.12) and to conceal eligible units (A12.121) at the end of his player turn.

Overall, the Russian's bad luck with the dice continues to persist. I'm glad to see he's not yet too upset about it and doing nothing rash. He's probably thankful to get all his bad DR/dr out early, so he can be "making hay" later.

During the Russian Turn 2, again the +1 DRM for CX seems to have been forgotten—and this time it's resulted in the NMC on R.C. in M6 (who subsequently broke) instead of the PTC it should have been. So it goes . . . The Russian player is not doing his duty in keeping these landsers *honest.*

TURN 3

German Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
95	Wind Change Attempt		4	NE
96	Remove DM from R.C.			
Movement Phase				
97	Halle, G.L. w/MMG, G.M. from 20O7 assault move to 20P6			
98	Behr, G.A., G.B. from 20F2 (BPM F1 and AA1) to 23AA2			
99	PSW 222 from 20I1 to 23W3, stops with VCA V3/W4 (TCA X3/W4)			
100	Peopl, G.C., G.D. from 20J1 (BPMK1) 23W2			
101	Kindel from 20K3 to 23X0			
102	Blick, G.E. w/LMG, G.H., G.G from 20M3 (BPM K1) 23W1			
103	Urban, G.I. w/MMG, G.J., G.K from 20K4 (BPM J1) to 23X0			
104	G.F. w/prisoners from 20M4 (BPM M3) to 20M1			
105	SPW 251 #EE, G.Q. w/LMG, Metzler from 22I1 to 23Y1, stops with VCA Y2/Z1			
106	SPW 251 #DD, G.P. w/LMG from 22I2 to 20I1, stops with VCA H0/Y1			
107	StuG w/ G.O. (rider) from 22I3 to 20M2, VCA M1/N1			

108	Oettl, G.N., G.R. use CX movement from 22J1 (BPM J10 and J7) to 20K5			
109	Pz IVJ from 20M5 to 20R2, stops with VCA Q2/R1 (TCA S2/S3)			
110	Truck #F from 20I8 to 20P6, stops with VCA P5/Q6			
111	Truck #E from 20H7 to 20O7, stops with VCA O6/P6			
112	Truck #D from 20G7 to 20L2, VCA L1/M2			
Defensive Fire Phase				
113	R.B. fires on Halle, G.L. w/MMG, G.M.—4 IFT	+1	9	NE
114	R.L. w/HMG fires on Pz IVJ crew—8 IFT	+3	7	NE
115	HMG fires on Pz IVJ crew—6 IFT	+3	8	NE
Advancing Fire Phase				
116	PSW area fires on 23Y6—2 IFT	+5	9	NE
117	Halle, G.L., G.M. fires on R.B.—4 IFT	+3	8	NE
Advance Phase				
118	Behr, G.A., G.B. into 23Z2			
119	Peopl, G.C., G.D. into 23W2			
120	Blick, G.E. w/LMG, G.H., G.G. into 23W2			
121	Kindel into 23W1			
122	Urban, G.I. w/MMG, G.J., G.K. into 23X1			
123	G.F. w/prisoners into 23U1			
124	Oettl, G.N., G.R. into 20K4			

Russian Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
125	Wind Change Attempt		2	Possible
126	Wind Change Number		3	Shifts CCW
127	R.C. self-rally		6	Remove DM
Prep Fire Phase				
128	R.B. fires on Halle, G.L. w/MMG, G.M.—4 IFT	+1	9	NE
129	R.L. w/HMG fires on Pz IVJ crew—8 IFT	+3	4	1MC
130	Pz IVJ crew—1MC		6	Pass
129A	HMG fires on Pz IVJ crew—6 IFT	+3	4	Cowers, PTC
130A	Pz IVJ crew—PTC		3	Pass
129B	HMG fires on Pz IVJ crew—6 IFT	+3	10	NE
Movement Phase				
131	C.F. from 20C1 to 23EE2			
132	C.D. assault move from 20F3 to 20F3			
133	C.Z. assault move from 23Y6 to 23X6			
134	C.DD. from 23Z6 (2nd) to 23Y7			
135	C.L. assault move from 23Y7 to 23X7			
136	C.N. uses CX movement from 23H5 (BPM I7) to 23M9			
137	C.S uses CX movement from 23E3 (2nd) to 23D4			
138	C.A. from 20Z2 (BPM X3) to 20W4			
139	C.E. from 20X3 to 20V4			
140	57mm ATG manhandled to 23P8 by crew (CA P7/Q8)	+2	5	Success
140A	57mm ATG manhandled to 23P7 by crew	+2	12	Fails
Defensive Fire Phase				
141	Pz IVJ main gun fires on 23F3	+1	7	Miss
142	Pz IVJ CMG/AAMG fires on R.L. w/HMG—6 IFT	+4	8	NE
143	Halle, G.L. w/MMG, G.M. fire on R.B.—13 IFT	+3	7	PTC
144	R.B.—PTC		9	Pinned
143A	MMG fires on R.B.—5 IFT	+3	6	NE
145	PSW fires on ATG 57mm—11 IFT	+5	4	PTC
146	57mm crew—PTC		8	Pass
147	Peopl, G.C., G.D., Blick, G.E., w/LMG, G.H., G.G., Urban, G.I. w/MMG, G.J., G.K. area fire on 23W6—15 IFT	+4	11	NE
148	Random selection of SW affected by Ammo Shortage			LMG malf
149	Behr, G.A., G.B. area fire on 23W6—2 IFT	+3	7	NE
150	SPW #EE, Metzler, G.Q. w/LMG area fire on 23X6—5 IFT	+3	6	NE
Advancing Fire Phase				
151	R.E. fires on SPW #DD, G.P. w/LMG—2 IFT	+3	5	NE
Advance Phase				
152	R.E. into 20F1			
153	C.F. into 23DD2			
154	C.DD. into 23Y6			
155	R.K. into 23N9			
156	C.S. into 23D5			
157	C.Y. into 23D4 (2nd)			
158	C.E. into 20U5			
159	C.A. into 20V4			



Figure 2: Positions at the end of Turn 3.

German: Right at this instant, the cardboard German leaders are busy trying to determine where that 57mm ATG is. American reconnaissance style is to "snoop and poop" with infantry to find it. The *ASL* Germans and Russians use a more active style—they mark the presence of enemy positions with the burning hulks of their recon vehicles. I don't believe Jim has passed up any shots from building 23Y7. Consequently, the ATG must be guarding the bridge at P7—probably from 23Q9.

The infantry is giving a really good impression of planning to cross at 23X3 and is in position to quickly move toward 23P7. The Panzer couldn't really be of help at the the feint, so I moved it to influence the movement of the two far north enemy squads. I sent back two trucks (one more than absolutely necessary) so Halle's platoon could catch up faster after their little firefight. Now sit back and we'll see some serious Russian scrambling.

After the Russian turn, not much to say really. I do want to thank Jim for making me look brilliant by putting his ATG in hex 23Q9. I am surprised that he moved out of his hidden position so soon. Maybe we can get an easier kill on it while it is in the open.

Russian: Well, I was right. It's a fast, violent attack to seize the crossing at 23X3. Not much to do but hunker down behind our Concealment counters and get ready for the rush next turn. It's time to open up with the HMG and see if we can beat the Panzer on a cheap shot.

I decided to move the ATG to get it into the game. Until I can move it up to cover bridge X3, it can cover the bridge's exit hex because of the tree-lined boulevard rule (B14.6).

I did not Prep Fire my building 23Y7 defenders because Don has just too much of a fire group to retaliate with. Instead, I hold my fire (and Concealment) until I can see the whites of their eyes.

Although the north flank reinforcing squads can't reach the critical crossing site next turn, the Russians have to start moving as soon as possible or risk losing the game in the late turns. We have to rely on the comrades already at the crossing to make sure we don't lose in the early game. Sit tight brave com-

rades, the fascist pigs will be storming the bridge this turn!

Neutral Commentator: *I'm surprised that the PzIV remains CE. Them thar' tankers want to show they mean business! A good AFPh shot for the German would have been to acquire 23F3 (2nd) from the panzer. I guess the Ammunition Shortage threat is being heard from. Seems as if the German leaders have correctly surmised the position of the hidden ATG; now what are they going to do about it? Could this be the "very rare" occasion when deviation from the plan would bring victory—in other words, cross at 23X3 and BB5? The Germans are certainly in position to cross there, and with the evident absence of the ATG in 23Y7 building, why not?*

In the Russian turn, I too was surprised by the ATG's appearance, though it can now effectively cover hex 23X4 as noted by Jim. The Russian has certainly fallen for the German "feint" at the 23X3 bridge. The PzIV (apparently) failed to place an Area acquired marker in 23F3. A curious, perhaps costly, error. Hold on tightly to your seats folks, as the real battle's about to begin.

TURN 4

German Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
160	Wind Change Attempt		7	NE
161	Repair German LMG in 23W2		6	Eliminated
Prep Fire Phase				
162	Halle, G.L. w/MMG, G.M. fire on R.B.—13 IFT	+3	11	MMG malf
163	Mark all units in 23X1, 23W2 23V2 with Opportunity Fire			
Movement Phase				
164	G.A. assault move from 23Z2 to 23AA3			
165	G.B assault move from 23Z2 to 23AA3			
166	PSW from 23W3 to 23Z3, VCA AA3/AA4			
167	57mm ATG fires on PSW in 23Z3	+1	9	Miss
166A	PSW from 23Z3 reverses direction, ends move in 23O7, stops with VCA P7/O8			
168	R.K. fires on PSW crew—4 IFT	+3	10	NE
169	R.L. w/MMG fires on PSW crew —8 IFT	+3	7	NE
170	PSW conducts bounding fire on ATG—5 IFT	+1	10	NE
171	Pz IVJ from 20R2 to 23P4, stops with VCA Q5/P5			
172	Pz IVJ conducts bounding fire on ATG with main gun	+5	3	Hit
	75mm HE vs ATG crew	(+2)	6	1MC
173	ATG crew—1 MC		7	Pinned
174	Russian Sniper Activation		2	Fires
	Target Selection DR 3(SW)/4(Dist)			
	Move Sniper to 20M2			StuG is stunned, BU
175	G.O as Rider makes Sniper Check	−2	10	NE
176	Pz IVJ fires CMG on ATG crew —2 IFT	+3	9	NE
177	G.F. w/prisoners from 23U1 to 20K1			
178	Oettl, G.R., G.N. from 20K4 to 20O1			
179	SPW #EE, G.Q. w/LMG, Metzler from 23Y2 to 23T4, VCA U5/T5			
180	SPW #DD starts			
181	R.E. fires on SPW #DD crew and G.P. w/LMG—4 IFT	+3	4	PTC
181A	SPW crew—PTC		4	Pass
181B	G.P. w/LMG—PTC		7	Pass
180A	SPW #DD from 20I1 to 23U4, VCA V4/U5			
182	Truck #E from 20O7 to 20P5, stops with VCA O5/P4			
183	Truck #D from 20L2 to 20J2, stops with VCA J1/I2			
Defensive Fire Phase				
184	R.B. fires on Halle, G.L., G.M. —4 IFT	+1	9	NE
Advancing Fire Phase				
185	G.A., G.B. area fire on 23DD2 —2 IFT	+4	47	NE
186	Peopl, G.C., G.D., Blick, G.E., G.G., G.H., Urban, G.I. w/MMG, G.J., G.K. area fire on 23W6—13 IFT	+3	6	NMC

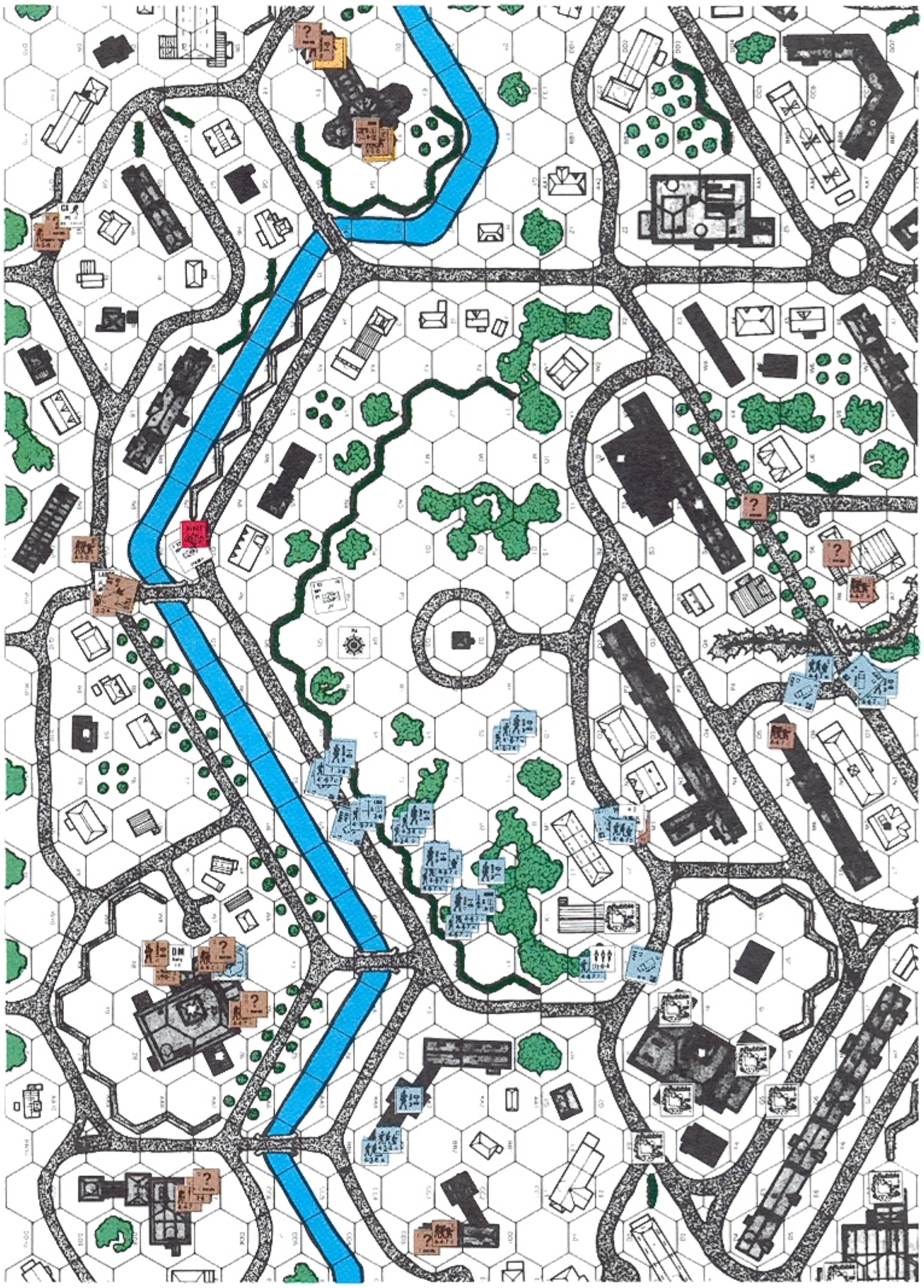


Figure 3: Positions at the end of Turn 4.

187	R.G.—NMC		3	Pass
188	SPW #EE, Metzler, R.Q. w/LMG fire on R.G.—5 IFT	+3	8	NE
189	SPW #DD, G.P. w/LMG fire on R.G.—5 IFT	+4	2	NMC
190	R.G —MNC		8	Breaks (DM)
Rout Phase				
191	R.G. routs to 23X7			
Advance Phase				
192	Peopl, G.C., G.D. into 23U3			
193	Blick, G.E., G.H , G.G. into 23V2			
194	Urban, G.I. w/MMG, G.J., G.K. into 23W2			
195	G.A., G.B. into 23BB3			
196	Behr into 23AA3			
197	Kindel into 23V1			
198	G.F. w/prisoners into 20J1			
199	Oettl, G.N., G.R. into 23S1			
200	G.M. into 20P5			

Russian Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
201	Wind Change Attempt		5	NE
202	R.C. self-rally	−1	4	Rally
203	R.G. (DM) with Eastonov	−1	4	Rally
204	Repair German MMG in 20P6		6	Eliminated
Prep Fire Phase				
205	R.K. fires on PSW crew—4 IFT	+3	10	NE
206	R.L. w/HMG fires on PSW crew —8 IFT	+3	6	PTC
207	PSW crew—PTC		6	Pass
208	57mm ATG fires on Pz IVJ, APCR	+2	9	Miss
208A	57mm ATG fires on Pz IVJ, AP	+1	5	Hit Turret
	To Kill armor class 6		5	Pz IVJ Elim
209	Pz IVJ crew survival		8	KIA
208B	57mm ATG fires on PSW 222, AP	+4	8	Miss
208C	57mm ATG intensive fires on PSW 222, AP	+2	6	Hit Hull
	To Kill armor class 2		5	PSW burns
210	R.B. fires on Halle, G.L.— 4 IFT	+1	10	NE
Movement Phase				
211	R.C. from 20L6 to 20N5			
212	G.M. fires on R.C.—4 IFT	+3	8	Cowers, NE
213	R.E. from 20F1 (BPM 20E1 and 23DD1) to 23EE2			
214	C.S. from 23D5 to 23G9			
215	C.E. from 20U5 to 20T6			

216	C.A. assault move from 20V4 to 20U5			
217	R.G. from 23X7 to 23W6			
218	Urban, G.I. w/MMG, G.J., G.K., Blick, G.E., G.G., G.H. fire on R.G.—29 IFT	+2	8	1MC
219	R.G.—1MC		10	Breaks (DM)
220	Peopl, G.C., G.D. fire on R.G. —4 IFT	+2	7	NE
Defensive Fire Phase				
221	Halle, G.L. fire on R.B.—4 IFT	+3	10	NE
222	G.A., G.B. area fire on 23DD2 —4 IFT	+4	5	NE
223	SPW #EE, Metzler, G.Q. w/LMG fire on ATG crew—10 IFT	+1	7	NMC
224	ATG crew—NMC		8	Pinned
225	SPW #DD, G.P. w/LMG fire on ATG crew—8 IFT	+2	6	NMC
226	ATG crew—NMC		4	Pass
Advancing Fire Phase				
227	R.C. fires on G.M.—2 IFT	+1	11	NE
Rout Phase				
228	R.G. routs to 23X7			
Advance Phase				
229	C.S. into 23H9			
230	R.E. into 23DD2			
231	C.E. into 20S6			
232	C.A. into 20T4			
233	R.C. into 20O5			
234	R.K. into 23O9			

German: If this turn looks a little confusing to you, think how it was to play! The ATG was the focus of this whole turn. It can kill anything that I've got, so it cannot be ignored. Unless I want to shift the attack to bridge BB5—which I don't—it cannot be bypassed.

I started out by moving the PSW 222 with its high mobility factor toward BB5 with the idea of blowing past the Russkies in CC7 and getting behind the ATG on the Y10-Q10 road. Once Jim took that low probability shot at the armored car, I changed my mind (which wasn't too keen on trying to get an exposed crew past those grunts in CC7 to start with). Anyway, the PSW 222 went back to hose down the ATG crew.

Now, I know that the best way to handle an ATG is to bring up the infantry and drive away the crew with small arms fire. (Actually, the *best* way is five turns of 155mm FFE, but we're a little short.) This is what "combined arms" is all about. The problem here is that we need to interdict the infantry coming from both flanks, but our troops are too slow to get there; so we need to use the five AFVs, and especially their MGs, to close down these lateral streets. This we cannot do with the ATG sitting square in the middle.

So, faced with that choice, I thought I'd try to overwhelm the ATG with the AFVs. Although this doesn't work very well or very often, if you do have to use AFVs, there is a way. Ideally, you want to capitalize on the ATG's main weakness—lack of tracking ability, that +3 DRM for changing CA. Not so coincidentally, this also gets your MGs past the gun shield's +2 DRM. Unless you are facing down a 20mm with a Tiger, however, you still need to respect the gun. I planned to engage the thing with the tank, the self-propelled gun, the armored car, the halftrack, and then another halftrack.

I paid for my Panzer's ineffective hit by activating a Sniper. Naturally, he picks the most valuable unit of mine yet to be moved. The halftracks moved up to try to suppress the ATG crew during the DFPh. The next sight you see will be gobs of APCR rounds heading for my wonderful Panzer.

While I am thinking about it, let me explain why I fired the MMG during my First Fire attack (Event 218). I wanted the leadership modifier for any subsequent ROF. I chanced it because I don't believe a single 5FP (probably halved) attack would be useful at all.

Well, the ATG crew must have eaten their Wheaties this morning because they are dominating this part of the game. Now his reinforcements

Continued on Page 43, Column 2

will be coming on right here, even if I can suppress the gun. Nonetheless, the vast majority of my force is in good shape and P7 is still the weakest point of the defense. Let's see what I can do.

Russian: Boy, Don really faked my jock off when he moved his armored car. After the first round ricocheted off the canal bank, my heart went up to my throat as it SLOWLY turned around! Imagine if you will, the gun captain beating the gunner with his own helmet and yelling, "What did you fire for?" I planned to save the ATG's intensive fire for the inevitable overrun, but was pinned before it could be used.

I wish I could find that sniper so I could pin a medal on him! Now that the StuG III is stunned, it will all be up to the ATG.

There is nothing like the threat of imminent death to sharpen one's senses and skills. The by-now well motivated AT gunner got hot and dispatched both vehicles with four shots. The only other thing I can do is try to get some people down to help cover bridge P7. I am puzzled about Don's delay in crossing and his shift to the north. I hear the distant bugle call of my "cavalry" coming to the rescue.

Neutral Commentator: *A very telling turn indeed—the sniper shot that the Russian missed previously (Event 130A) was made up for by stunning the StuG, thereby immobilizing it for the turn (Motion status removed). A few errors were committed this last turn:*

Event 168—Again, the +1 DRM for CX has been neglected, but no matter on this shot.

Event 172—Should be a +6 for the PzIV To Hit shot; evidently the +1 (small) size DRM was not used.

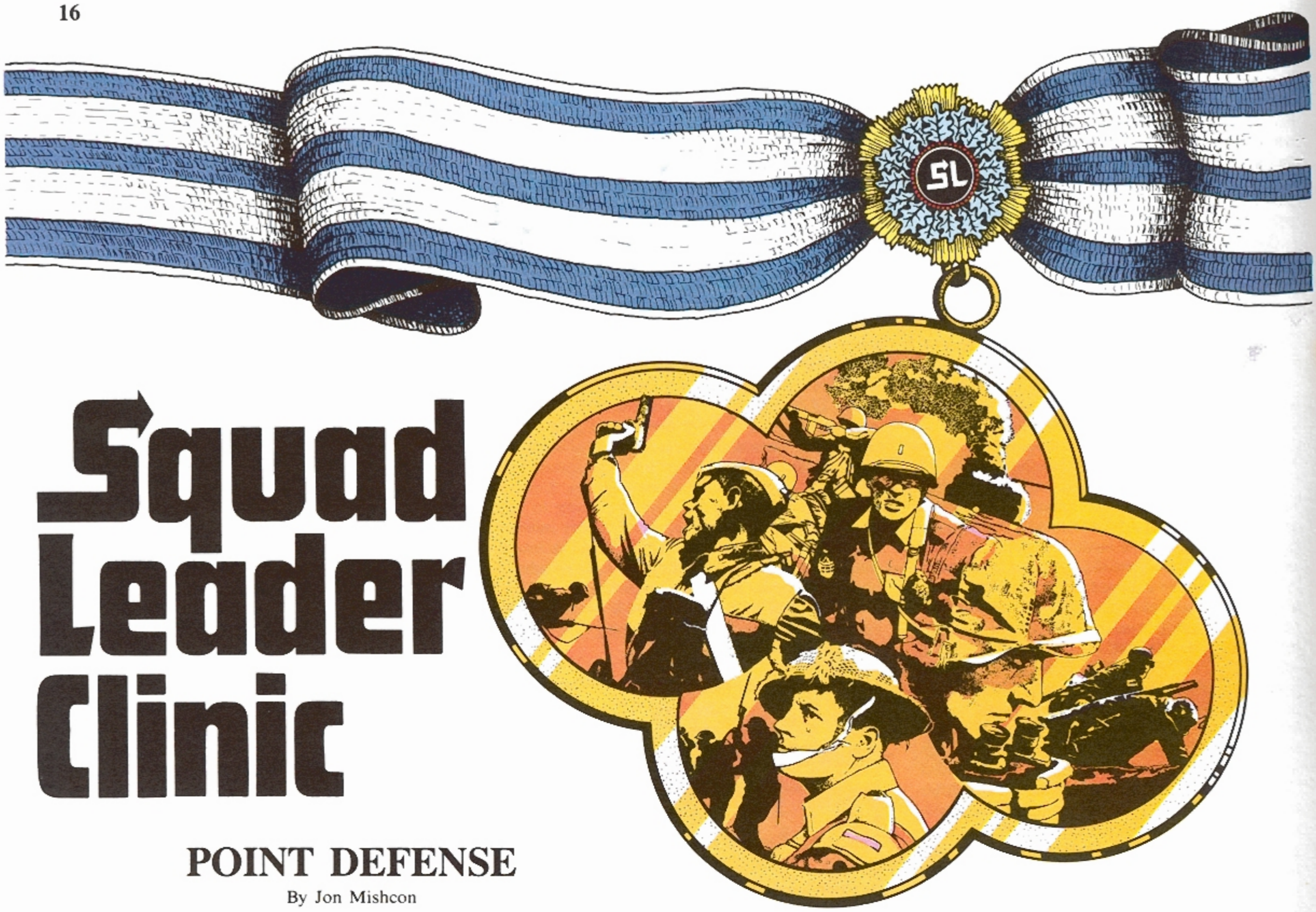
Event 185—The Conscripts' 8FP should be halved three times (to 1FP) for long range, concealed target, moving fire; but this also had no effect on play.

At long last, during the Russian turn, the German suffers his first reverses—and big ones at that. In my opinion he should have (and still should probably) shifted his attack to the southern two bridges. The Fritzes could still be well on their way to victory, however.

I'm wondering if, at this point, the Russian has realized that the German thrust is to the center of the board, or still thinks he's trying to cross at the southern end.

With the game at a critical point, we will take a break and complete this ASL Series Replay in the next issue (Vol. 22, No. 3). Mr. Chappell and Mr. Blick certainly deserve a breather.





Squad Leader Clinic

POINT DEFENSE

By Jon Mishcon

Our playbalancing of Scenario D — the original *SL* Scenario 4 — pleasantly lead us back over old territory. For all the changes engendered by the *ASL* rules, the basic approach to tactical problem solving remains the same. As Scenario D (refer to the insert for the updated scenarios mentioned in this Clinic) seems to force usage of the "point defense", I hope players will permit my use of it instead of my normal new scenario to illustrate some concepts.

What is the "point defense"? It is the tactic of holding onto a single terrain feature in order to win the scenario. Unlike the fallback defense (see the "Squad Leader Clinic" installment in Vol. 21, No. 6), this defense allows the defender less flexibility, less margin for error. The classic case of putting all one's eggs in one basket and then watching that basket. You and the attacker know he'll be knocking on the door; the plan is to turn him away until time runs out.

When should the point defense be used? To work, it requires that a given piece of terrain be the key to winning the scenario. Additionally, the terrain must be physically compact. Probably no wider than eight or ten congruent hexes. Desirable features of this terrain include, naturally, good lanes of fire, good defensive locations, and protected interior lines of communication. A rally focus in or immediately adjacent to the point is mandatory. Please note that this terrain need *not* be mentioned directly in the Victory Conditions. Occupation of some open field may lock your win, but the key to that occupation is almost surely some building or hilltop that commands that open field.

Even given the perfect terrain for executing the point defense, I still advise against its use unless the defender is forced to adopt it. Experienced *SL* players will have all their own tales of undeserved twelves laying low the best laid plans. What then forces a player over to the point defense?

Most common will be the case of dramatic numerical inferiority. If you're outnumbered three or four to one, the funneling effect (which will be discussed a little later) of the point defense allows the defender to achieve significant advantages in concentration of force. Essentially attempting to force the attacker to approach your positions in piecemeal fashion.

Additionally, the point defense can be valuable when you have poor quality troops and few leaders. If you know that your guys can't stand up to the enemy in anything like an even-up fight, then massing the troops will allow you to take advantage of whatever leadership you've got.

Finally, the point defense is often the only way to conduct a defense when you're encircled or the attacker is much more mobile than you. Trying to be everywhere along a perimeter ensures that the attacker will get concentration of strength advantages, penetrate your lines, and put the whole mess into very hot water.

OK, here you are. You're outnumbered 4-1. The attacker has superior firepower. Further, the attacker has at least four distinct avenues of approach. You have no available reinforcements. The only thing going for you is that you know the attacker has got to take every single stone building in order to win. (This is beginning to sound like a Traveler's Check commercial, ending with, "What will you do . . . "). What's the plan? Point Defense!

First and foremost, you do not, repeat *not*, pile everything into a stone building or trench and await the coming tidal wave. Even if you should repulse the initial assault, more than likely the attacker will have a chance to rally and smash you again. Further, you'll be subjected to perhaps encircling fire and to probes designed to draw sniper fire upon you. Remember that if even a handful of bad guys get through, they are really going to tie you up awhile.

Therefore, the major portion of your force should occupy the most dominating position on the map to influence the enemy advance while a lesser force screens. In the circumstances where the point being defended is not required as part of victory, then a very small force should actually be holding onto the victory terrain. As a very simplistic guideline, I recommend that players divide their forces in the following manner: two-thirds of troop strength plus all heavy weapons (i.e., greater than 3PP) plus the best leaders all go into the point; one-third of your troops and leaders, with half your light machine guns, become the screening forces. In those cases where you must additionally occupy other terrain for victory, I suggest either two HSs or one squad be actually hugging the ground there.

Before the storm of protest washes over the editor of The *GENERAL* with countless examples of 75/25 or even 90/10 defenses, let me again note that this is only a first simplistic manner to approach a general problem. Naturally, modification for specific circumstances is required.

All right, we've now divided our small force into two unequal groups. Where do we set up? Naturally the heavy force picks the positions that will command most of the approach routes. This is the "point" in the point defense. Frequently this will be fairly obvious. Witness building 3M2 in Scenario D. Stone building; second-level positions . . . hey,

no genius required here.

At least as important, and certainly more difficult, is where you'll set up your screening forces. My guess is that one of the marks of the superior *ASL* players is the amount of thought he gives to the placement of this lesser faction. The goal of your screening force is to delay and disrupt all or a sizeable portion of the attackers. The ability to retreat is nice, but not crucial. As a practical issue, probably the most you can hope from your screen is that the attacker will both turn away from the screen's most likely positions *plus* be tied down awhile when the screen is encountered. It's perfectly okay to stand in place as long as you can really tie the attacker up for a couple of more turns.

This is the funneling effect. The desired outcome has the attacker reaching your main defense along a relatively narrow axis with just a portion of his force. Perhaps a little later than optimum. The screen will have then "funneled" the attacker into our best line of defense for weapons with multiple rate of fire, best odds, and so forth.

While I have jotted down some specific thoughts for set up of Scenario D in my usual "After Action Report", let's take a quick peek at Scenario D in play. The usual Russian approaches to the town are along the road 2F1 through 2U7, through the fields of 4E10 looping along the board edge to reach 4U2, the offtackle plunge of 3FF10 through 3V7, and lastly the usual main-line approach of 3FF1 through 3Y1 to reach a concentration area around 4N1 for a Human Wave Attack on building 3M2. The plan is to try and have everybody in position for a final assault on or around Turn 4.

The defender has chosen to use two squads and two LMGs with an 8-1 leader in his screen. The principles of point defense dictate that the German try to blunt one or two lines of approach. In this case, the German players chooses to call in his OBA at the distant forces running across the far edge of Board 4 while the screen is set up astride the Board 3/Board 4 divide.

The two least portions of the Russian force arrive unscathed around hexes 3M7 and 3P4 as scheduled around Turn 6. However, the German has his MGs boresighted in this CA and has shifted his SR that direction. On Board 4, the Russian has gobbled up the screen but will be at least two more turns rallying and regrouping his broken troops. Even if the OBA wasn't used on Board 4, the very presence of its SR has forced the Russian troops to make optimum use of cover, slowing them considerably.

Now the dilemma belongs to the Russian player. He has time to make two assaults with the troops that arrived on time. However, this fraction has much less chance of gaining building entry than does the force as a whole. Waiting for the rest of the guys leaves the Russian only time for one bold stroke and the hope that he can enter and clear the building quickly. Frankly the best answer lies with how many troops are available to make an immediate assault and the condition of the delayed troops. We'll take our leave before he decides.

Still two of the most enjoyable scenarios, we've gone back to the well frequently for both Scenarios D and E. They have been provided in this issue's insert to allow players to experiment with the ideas on point defense contained herein.

After Action Report — The Guards Counterattack

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (Vol. 22, No. 6 in this case). The intent is to provide the *ASL* player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

GERMAN: 9-1 leader, two 4-6-7 squads, one 2-4-7 and the LMG on the first floor of F6. Note that these units will become concealed at the start of play. One 2-4-7 HS goes in building G6 at ground level. One 4-6-7 plus an LMG on the ground floor of J4; another squad and LMG on the first floor of J4. One 4-6-7 on first floor of K4. 8-0 leader on the first floor, J5. The setups in I7 and M9 are predetermined. All units in building M7 set up at ground level in L6.

RUSSIAN: The 10-2 leader in G4, and all 6-2-8s on the ground floor of building F3. The set up in J2, M2and N2 are all predetermined. Exchange that 8-0 leader for a 9-0 Commissar and place him in the ground floor of N4. Place two 4-4-7 squads on the first floor of M5 and two on the first floor of N5.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: Prep Fire on the ground floor of J4. Use the Dash to get units into F5. Congregate 4-4-7s in M5 and N5. Retreat the MMG to hex K2. Plan to use Human Wave assaults on L6 and I7! Leaving some troops in the street in G5 will hinder the retreat of enemy troops upstairs in F6.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: After initial Prep Fire, make sure that someone is on the first floor above every stairwell you defend. Concentrate your fire on any Russian unit that moves or advances into a stairwell hex. Move the heavy MG into M7 to both support hex L6 and bring more fire to bear on K2.

The Tractor Works

RUSSIAN: The 9-2, three 4-4-7s, HMG and MMG go in the ground floor of hex X3. Three more 4-4-7 squads, MMG and two LMGs in X4. Three 4-4-7s and LMG in X5. Cover each with enough concealment counters to become equal in height. The remaining three 4-4-7 squads and twelve "?" counters get mixed into five stacks randomly and placed in W5, Y5, Y3 and X2. If even you don't know (initially) who goes where, you won't develop predictable placements of your screen.

Fill the first and second floors of R1 and S1, with everyone else jammed into Q3 and Q4. I like to put a 5-2-7 squad with an LMG onto the second floor of Q3, but usually it is short-lived.

GERMAN: Deploy all of Stahler's men in building U3 concealed, with two stacks of three "?" in R7 and T4. Use Tienham's MMG and HMG with two 4-6-7s and the 10-2 leader on the second floor of Y8. The rest of Tienham's group sets up in Y7 and Z6. Assault Engineer Company sets up in AA4 and AA5 evenly divided.

TACTICS: For both sides the tactics are the same. Use Prep Fire to engage the nearest target and then advance into the street. The second turn use assault movement (or Human Wave for the Russians) to dive into the building. The Russian player should plan to rally in hex W4 and hex R1. The Germans look to regroup on the first floor of U3, and the ground floors of Y7 and AA5. Shoot for the leader stacks. They may be tougher to break, but both sides really need the edge of both leadership and no cowering.

The Streets of Stalingrad

Use the same set up and tactics described above. If the Russian player is going to play to win (I hate drawn games), then *all* the tanks are moved onto the factoryside of the board. Consider X3 (yes, in the building), W3 and W2 for your radioless T-34s and Z2 for the T-34 M43. These will provide both physical cover for your move into the factory and some fire support.

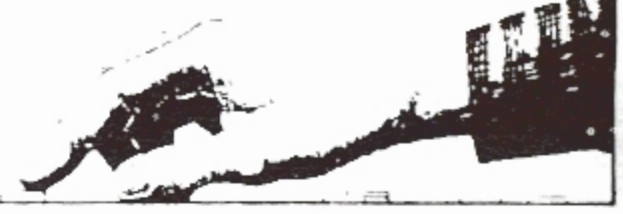
The Germans should consider using their StuG IIIBs in J6 and J7 to both give fire support to I7 and allow the guys in J5 a rout route. Use StuG IIIGs in X5, bypass of BB2 facing AA3/AA2 and Z5.



SERIES REPLAY

BEYOND VALOR, Scenario 8

German Player—Don Chappell
Russian Player—Jim Blick
Neutral Commentator—Charles Kibler



Don Chappell and James Blick, both ex-Marine officers and both long-time ASL playtesters, chose Scenario 8 to highlight the best tactical game system on the market. Charlie Kibler, our artist and expert ASL player, was drafted to look over their shoulders and provide neutral commentary. In the last issue, the first four turns saw the German plan to mount a feint toward one bridge and rush toward another slowly unfold. In an exciting fourth turn, the Russian ATG crew—heroes of the Union all—dispatched the German PzIVJ and PSW. But the Germans seem poised on the brink of victory nevertheless. We resume the commentary with the Turn 5 actions.

TURN 5

German Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
235	Wind Change Attempt		4	NE
236	R.G. (DM) rally with Eastonov	−1	8	Remove DM
Prep Fire Phase				
237	SPW #EE, Metzler, G.Q. w/LMG fire on ATG crew—10 IFT		7	1MC
238	ATG crew—NMC		11	Breaks (DM)
Movement Phase				
239	SPW #DD, G.P. w/LMG from 23U4 to 23P7			
240	R.K. fires on SPW #DD crew, G.P —4 IFT	+2	12	NE
239A	SPW #DD, G.P. w/LMG conducts overrun on ATG crew	−1	4	1KIA
241	SW random destruction (C11.6)		6	ATG remains
239B	SPW #DD remains in motion in 23P8, VCA P9/O9			
242	StuG, G.O from 20M2 to 23Q5, stops with VCA Q8/P5			
243	G.M. assault move from 20P5 to 20P4			
244	Halle, G.L. assault move from 20P5 to 20O6			
245	Truck #D from 20J2 to 23Y2, stops with VCA Y3/X2			
246	Blick, G.E., G.H., G.G. from 23V2 (BPM U3) to 23Q5			
247	Urban, G.I. w/MMG, G.J., G.K. from 23W2 (BPM V1 and T2) to 23S4			
248	Peopl, G.C., G.D. from 23U3 (BPM T2 and S3) to 23R4			
249	Oettl, G.R., G.N. use CX movement from 23S1 to 23P6			
250	Kindel from 23V1 (BPM T2 and S3) to 23P4			
251	Behr assault move from 23AA3 to 23Z2			
252	G.A. assault move from 23BB3 to 23AA3			
253	G.B. assault move from 23BB3 to 23AA3			
254	G.F. w/prisoners from 20J1 to 20L0			
Defensive Fire Phase				
255	R.B. fires on G.M.—4 IFT	+1	8	NE
256	R.C. fires on G.M.—8 IFT		2	G.M. KIA
257	German Sniper Activation		4	NE
258	R.E. fires on G.A., G.B. —4 IFT	+3	7	NE
259	R.K. fires on SPW #DD crew, G.P. w/LMG—4 IFT	+2	4	NMC
260	SPW crew—NMC		6	Pass
261	G.P. w/LMG—NMC		5	Pass
262	HMG fires on Peopl, G.C, G.D —6 IFT	+1	9	NE
262A	HMG fires on Peopl, G.C., G.D. —6 IFT	+1	11	NE
Advancing Fire Phase				
263	Peopl, G.C., G.D., Blick, G.E., G.H., G.G. fire on R.K.—5 IFT		11	NE
264	Urban, G.I., G.J., G.K. fire on R.G.—3 IFT	+3	11	NE (DM)
265	G.A., G.B. fire on R.E.—4 IFT	+3	7	NE
266	Halle, G.L. fire on R.C.—4 IFT	+3	8	NE
Advance Phase				
267	Oettl, G.R., G.N. into 23P7			
268	Halle, G.L. into 20O5			
269	G.F. w/prisoners into 23U1			
270	Behr into 23Z1			
271	G.A., G.B. into 23Z2			
272	G.G. into 23P5			
273	Blick, G.H. into 23Q6			
274	Peopl, G.C., G.D. into 23Q5			
275	G.K. into 23S5			
277	Urban, G.I. w/MMG, G.J. into 23R4			
278	Kindel into 23P5			
Close Combat Phase				
279	Halle, G.L. vs. R.C.		7	NE
280	R.C. vs. Halle, G.L.		7	NE

Russian Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
281	Wind Change Attempt		6	NE
282	R.G. (DM) rally with Eastonov	−1	12	Casualty Reduction
Replace R.G. with r Z.				
Prep Fire Phase				
283	R.L. w/HMG fires on SPW #DD crew, G.P.—8 IFT	+2	8	NE
284	R.K. fires on Oettl, G.N., G.R. —4 IFT	+1	8	Cowers, NE
[Place Board 22 with hex 22I10 adjacent to hex 23Y10.]				
Movement Phase				
285	T34 (BU) from 22R9 to 23P9, stops with VCA P8/Q9			
286	StuG fires main gun on T34	+4	7	Miss, G.O. dismount
287	G.N. makes PF check		6	Pinned
288	G.R. makes PF check		6	Pinned
289	Oettl makes PF check	+2	6	Pinned
286A	StuG intensive fires on T34	+5	10	Gun malf
290	T34 bounding fires main gun on SPW #DD	+7	7	Miss
291	T34 fires BMG/CMG on SPW #DD crew, G.P. w/LMG—6 IFT	+2	6	PTC
292	SPW #DD crew—PTC		4	Pass
293	G.P. w/LMG—PTC		7	Pass
294	R.B. from 20R6 (BPM R4 and R3) to 20Q3			
295	C.E. assault move from 20S6 to 20R6			
296	R.A. w/LMG use CX movement from 20T4 to 20U1			
Remove Concealment counters E and F as useless.				
297	R.E. from 23DD2 to 23BB3			
298	R.I. w/LMG use CX movement from 23CC7 to 23Y10			
299	R.O. assault move from 22S10 to 23O10			
300	R.N. from 22T9 to 23N9			
301	Chernova assault move from 22U10 to 23N10			
302	R.M. w/LMG from 22U10 to 23N9			
303	Blick, G.E., G.K., G.H. fire on R.M.—6 IFT	+3	2	1MC
304	R.M. w/LMG—1MC		7	Pinned
305	R.J. from 23H9 to 23K10			
306	C.Z. assault move from 23X6 to 23W6			
307	C.DD. assault move from 23Y6 to 23X6			
Defensive Fire Phase				
308	SPW #DD, G.P. w/LMG fire on R.K.—10 IFT		12	NE
309	Random selection of SW		10	both LMG and AAMG malf
G.P. reduced to 4-4-7 (A19.131).				
310	Urban, G.I w/MMG, G.J. fire on R.K —9 IFT	+1	3	2MC
311	R.K.—2MC		7	Breaks (DM)
312	Russian Sniper Activation		3	NE
310A	MMG fires on R.K —5 IFT	+1	4	1MC
313	R.K.—1MC		4	Pass
310B	MMG fires on R.K.—5 IFT	+1	8	NE
310C	MMG fires on R.K —5 IFT	+1	12	MMG eliminated
314	Kindel, G.G. fire on R.K. —4 IFT	+2	6	NE
315	G.A., G.B. area fire on 23W6 —2 IFT	+2	4	Cowers, NE
316	SPW #EE, Metzler, G.Q. w/LMG area fire on 23W6—5 IFT	+2	8	NE
Advancing Fire Phase				
317	R.M., R.O., R.N. fire on SPW #DD crew, G.P.—8 IFT	+2	8	NE
Rout Phase				
318	R.K. routs to 23O10			
Advance Phase				
319	R.J. into 23L9			
320	Chernova into 23O10			
321	R.I. w/LMG into 23X9			
322	C.Z. into 23V6			
323	C.DD into 23W6			
324	R.E. into 23BB4			
325	R.B. into 20P2			
326	R.A. into 23N0			
Close Combat Phase				
327	R.C. vs. Halle, G.L.		5	NE
328	Halle, G.L. vs. R.C.		6	NE

German: I also should explain the little firefight on Board 20 to all of you experts. This little tactic is called a "mistake". Unfortunately it is not a good example of Dickson's "Tactics of Mistake" (see *Three for Dorsai*). The truth is that after the first Prep Fire attack on the ATG, I got so excited about the possibility of overrunning the beast that after looking up all the appropriate rules and counting up factors, I simply forgot the rest of my Prep Fire Phase. So, when I remembered in the MPh, Jim quite properly laughed his head off. I advanced squad M to 20P4 to take away his opportunity to gain encircled fire. Turned out to make no difference. Going into melee may be a little desperate, but Halle's boys are beginning to feel left behind.

I finally decided on the overrun because even if unsuccessful, the ATG crew will have to rout away and anyone wanting to shoot the gun would first have to be successful in Close Combat. I reduce the

EVENT LISTING LEGEND

NE	No Effect
w/	with or possessing
(2nd)	Second Level
G.—.	German Squad
R —	Russian Squad
C.—.	Concealment Counter
g.—.	German HS
r.—.	Russian HS
malf	Malfunction

(All other abbreviations are ASL standard.)

Russian probability of success in CCPh by leaving the SPW 251 in Motion.

All the squads are deployed in extended order along the canal bank to make a large, dispersed fire group with good Panzerfaust opportunities. Bring on the T-34! We ain't afraid of no tanks!

It's really rather unusual for it to have so much effect, but this ammo shortage rules is killing me. I've lost five machine guns totaling 19FP (24 factors per turn if you consider ROF). Now a marginally effective StuG III has become useless.

Jim was startled when I started to shoot Panzerfausts at him. I volley fired the PFs and the StuG III to try and get a quick kill. (I am using the term "volley fire" because that is a technique used where everyone shoots at the same time, in this case at the same movement point; you lose a little in fire control but you gain in surprise.) It would be nice to get a kill to go with this tactic. I guess I'm lucky I don't have an immolated halftrack and squad to shoot around.

My plan has been to shoot up the T-34 before it really starts to hurt me, prevent Russian reinforcement of the crossing site, and start suppressing the Guard's fire so I can cross the bridge. No sweat!

Russian: Well, unfortunately the ATG crew couldn't hang in there. It is quite clear that Don has shifted his attack to bridge P7. Hopefully my Guards can stop this crossing. It is going to be close.

All right! ALL RIGHT!! Which one of you *ASL* second-guessers hasn't ever forgotten that just because there are no Panzerfaust counters doesn't mean there are no Panzerfausts? You may have noted that Don and I are playing with a +1 DRM to the PF availability check. Although not required by the rules, we felt a DRM was appropriate to reflect the ammo shortage.

A couple of other thoughts. I believe 23Q5 has a blocked LOS from my HMG. It takes a little getting use to, these varying size blind zones behind obstacles. With the woods in 23O4 and O5 more than five hexes away, they cast a two-hex "shadow"; we'll see when I can spare a shot.

He has lost one squad and I have lost two squads (equivalents). We both still have a heavy AFV. I have no doubt that he has the strength to force his way over the bridge; the question is how much of a toll can I make him pay. It would be nice to have a duel between the StuG III and my T34/85—but somehow I don't believe his Panzerfaust-toting teenagers are going to let that happen.

Neutral Commentator: *The Russian has finally realized the* schwerpunkt *of the attack—namely, the bridge at 23P7. It will certainly be interesting to see whether or not the reinforcements will be able to reduce the German bridgehead. Note that Event 256 (the one that KIA'd G.M.) should have been a Cower, reducing the column from 8FP to 6FP, but the result would have been the same. Another minor point overlooked by our players: the contestants in the new Melee once again forgot to roll for Ambush (A11.4).*

I was really surprised at the bravery of that T34/85 crew. You'd think that this late in the war, they'd want to live and would have learned some respect for the Panzerfaust. A better spot to park this '85 would've been 23P10, not out of PF range but a bit safer. Or perhaps at even 23K9—safe from all German fire but still able to easily interdict all Germans with guts enough to run for it. Nevertheless, it is beginning to look tough for the krauts, or will that T34 be 'fausted in PFPh? Also, I think I would have sent some of those Russian Guards to 23O10 (1st level) so to disperse them (the fire group would still be maintained).

In Event 286, the German rider squad O dismounted when the StuG fired. This is not required (or even allowed, for that matter; a Rider must Bail Out, however, if a AFV it's riding changes its TCA).

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMENTS

In the past, we have found some Series Replays to be difficult to follow. We decided to chronicle each player action as it took place in the exact order it takes place; you will find the Event List before player comments for each turn in the text. As you can see, movement was often interrupted by Defensive First Fire and then continued. Each and every die/dice roll is also recorded.

The tables below show all the non-bookkeeping counters that a reader will need to follow along with this Series Replay. He will need the full compliment of Prep Fire, First Fire, blaze, DM and Malfunction counters at hand. If the reader does try to follow along exactly, looking for mistakes (I am sure we have some left) or analyzing strategy, it may even be useful to set the dice up as they were. We believe you will find that your enjoyment of this replay is greatly enhanced if you take the time to sort through your countermix to duplicate the counters listed in Table 1.

The Event Listings that accompany each turn record each event sequentially, with continuing actions by units lettered with the same event number. For example: Event 1 is the initial movement of a squad, Event 2 is the First Fire attack of a HMG, Event 3 might be a morale check. If the squad continues its move, it would be listed not as Event 4, but as Event 1A; the HMG continuing to fire as 2A; any new morale check as 3A.

The first table below shows the set-up forces and their Event Listing designation. Units such as the T34 or PzKw IVJ which are the sole unit of their type do not have any special designation. Some of the leader counters are hold-overs from *SL* and *COI* (for many reasons; the only improvement on the latest is the art work). [*Commentator's Note: not true; ASL leaders have a boxed morale number on the broken side to indicate self-rally capability.*]

Table 2 shows the conventional abbreviations we adopted in recording the actions and events during play. There is no indicator for the condition of units while in play (broken, ELR reduced, malfunctioning, etc.) so readers will have to keep track with such status changes on your board as you follow the Event Listings.

Jim and I had a lot of fun playing this scenario for you, but it is not without errors—both tactical and rules violations. We left all these in. Obviously, tactical errors are what make any wargame what it is. And, *ASL* is a difficult game to master, and experienced players have an edge because of their mastery of the rules. We played this game some three weeks after the release of *ASL*. Whenever we made a mistake and caught it, we comment on it ourselves. In other words, we did not retroactively correct errors even though we would look stupid in print. No one (not even Don Greenwood) gets through a game of *ASL* without a rule boo-boo or two. It's no big thing, and arguably is part of the game. Remember A.2.

RUSSIAN UNITS

Board 20

Type Unit	Designation
4-4-7	R.A.
4-4-7	R.B.
4-4-7	R.C.
4-4-7	R.D.
4-4-7	R.E.
8-1 Leader	Changar
?	C.A.
?	C.B.
?	C.C.
?	C.D.
?	C.E.
?	C.F.

Board 23

Type Unit	Designation
4-4-7	R.F.
4-4-7	R.G.
4-4-7	R.H
4-4-7	R.I.
4-5-8	R.J.
4-5-8	R.K.
4-5-8	R.L.
2-2-8	crew
8-0 Leader	Eastonov
7-0	Knezevich

After Set-Up

Type Unit	Designation
?	C.L.
?	C.N.
?	C.Q.
?	C.R.
?	C.S.
?	C.X
?	C.Y.
?	C.Z.
?	C.DD.

Turn 5 Reinforcements

Type Unit	Designation
6-2-8	R.M.
6-2-8	R.N.
6-2-8	R.P.
9-1 Leader	Chernova

GERMAN UNITS

Group One

Type Unit	Designation
4-6-7	G.N.
4-6-7	G.O.
4-6-7	G.P.
4-6-7	G.Q.
4-6-7	G.R.
8-1 Leader	Metzler
8-0 Leader	Oettl
SPW 251	SPW #DD
SPW 251	SPW #EE

Group Two

Type Unit	Designation
4-4-7	G.I.
4-4-7	G.J.
4-4-7	G.K.
4-4-7	G.L.
4-4-7	G.M.
9-1 Leader	Urban
8-0 Leader	Halle
Opel Blitz	Truck D
Opel Blitz	Truck E
Opel Blitz	Truck F

Group Three

Type Unit	Designation
4-3-6	G.A.
4-3-6	G.B.
4-3-6	G.C.
4-3-6	G.D.
4-4-7	G.E.
4-4-7	G.F.
4-4-7	G.G.
4-4-7	G.H.
9-2 Leader	Peopl
8-1 Leader	Blick
8-0 Leader	Behr
7-0 Leader	Kindel

ADDITIONAL UNITS

Russian

Type Unit	Designation
1-4-9	Hero
2-3-7	r.Z.
4-5-8	R.Z.
(1)-0-6	prisoners

German

Type Unit	Designation
4-4-7	G.P.
4-4-7	G.R.
2-4-7	g.N.
2-3-7	g.F
2-3-7	g.G.
2-3-7	g.I.
2-3-7	g.O.
2-3-7	g.P
2-3-6	g.C.
2-3-6	g.D.
2-3-6	g.R.
(1)-0-6	prisoners

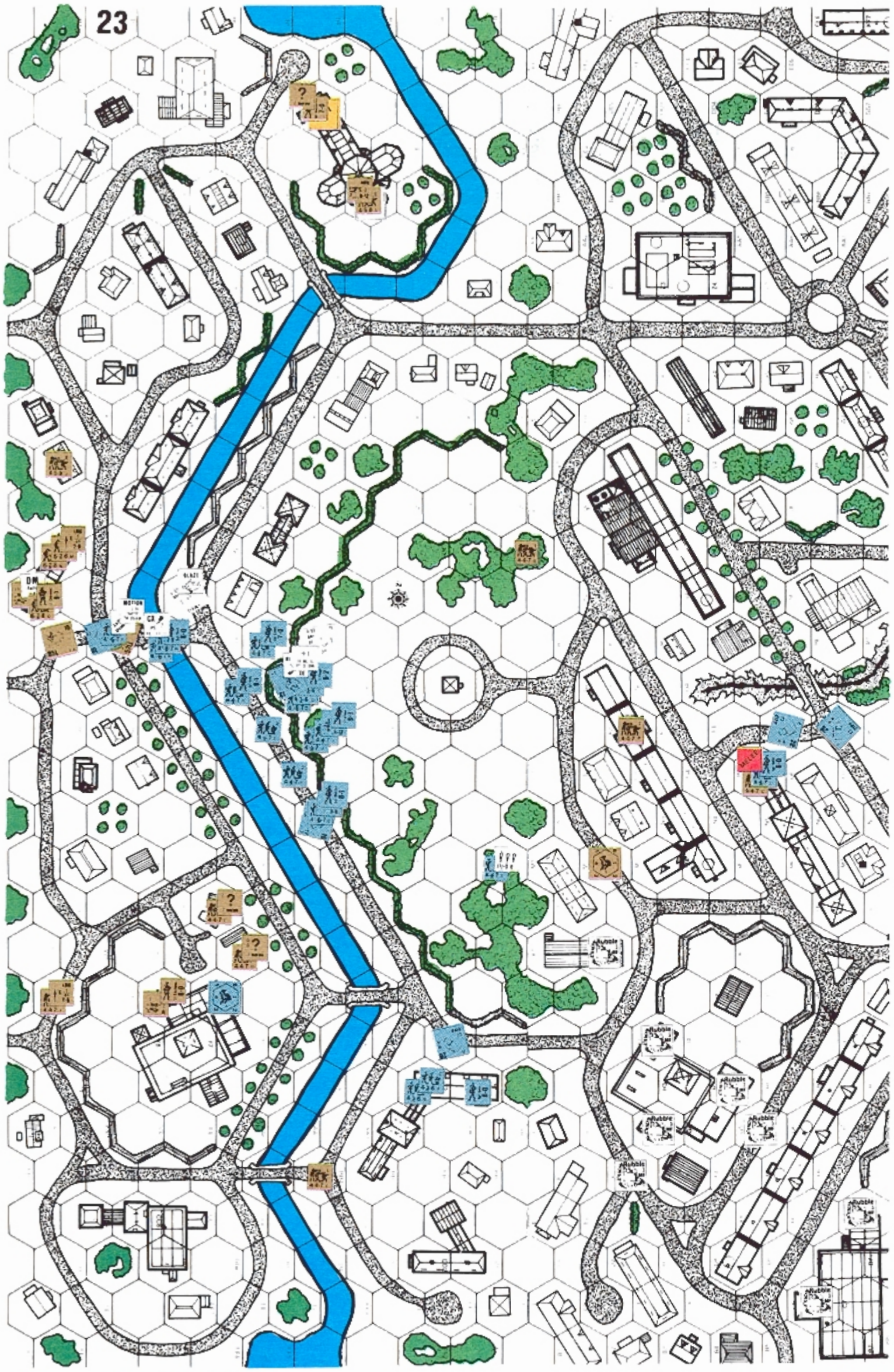


Figure 4: Positions at the end of Turn 5.

TURN 6

German Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
329	Wind Change Attempt		6	NE
330	German StuG main gun repair		4	NE
331	r.Z. rally with Eastonov	−1	6	Rally
332	R.K. (DM) rally with Chernova	−2	5	Rally
Prep Fire Phase				
333	G.R. makes PF check		3	Possesses
334	G.R. fires PF at T34	+4	5	Turret Hit
	To Kill armor class 11		11	T34 KIA
335	T34 crew survival		10	KIA
336	Oettl, G.R., G.N. fire on R.N., R.M. w/LMG—8 IFT	+3	7	NE
Movement Phase				
337	SPW #DD, G.P. in 23P8 change VCA to Q9/P9			
338	R.N., R.O., R.K., R.M. w/LMG fire on SPW #DD crew, G.P. —24 IFT	+2	7	2MC
339	SPW #DD crew—2MC		7	Stunned
340	G.P.—2MC		7	Breaks (DM)
337A	SPW #DD (BU) stops in 23P8			
341	SPW #EE, Metzler, G.Q. w/LMG in 23T4 starts and change VCA to U4/U5			
342	R.F. fires on SPW #EE crew, Metzler, G.Q. w/LMG—4 IFT	+2	2	1MC
343	Metzler—1MC		4	Pass
344	SPW #EE crew—1MC		7	Pinned (BU)
345	G.Q. w/LMG—1MC	−1	7	Pinned (BU)
346	German Sniper Activation		5	NE
341A	SPW #EE (BU) stops in 23T4			
347	G.A., G.B. from 23Z2 to 23BB3			
348	R.E. fires on G.A., G.B.—8 IFT	+2	9	NE
349	Behr from 23Z1 to 23AA3			
350	Truck #D from 23Y2 to 23Z3, stops with VCA AA4/Z4			
351	G.F. w/prisoners use CX movement from 23U1 (BPM V1 and W2) to 23Z3			
352	StuG, Peopl, G.O. armor assault move from 23Q5 to 23P7			
338A	LMG continues fire on Peopl, G.O.—2 IFT	+1	6	Cowers, NE
353	Blick, G.H. from 23R4 to 23M6			
354	Urban, G.I., G.J. from 23R4 to 23N6			
355	R.L. w/HMG fires on Urban, G.I., G.J.—8 IFT	−2	3	2KIA Urban KIA G.J. KIA
356	Urban and G.J. randomly selected and G.I. breaks			
356A	G.I.—LLMC	+1	9	Casualty Reduction
Squad G.I. replaced with g.I. half-squad.				
357	Immediate German Integrity Check	−1	7	NE
358	G.E. from 23R5 to 23Q6			
359	R.H. fires on G.E.—2 IFT		4	1MC
360	G.E.—1MC		8	Breaks (DM)
361	G.K. from 23S5 to 23P6			
362	G.C. from 23Q5 to 23P6			
363	G.D. from 23Q5 to 23P6			
364	G.G. assault move from 23P5 to 23O6			
365	Kindel from 23P5 to 23Q4			
366	Truck #F from 20P6 to 23X3, VCA Y3/X3			
367	Truck #E from 20P5 to 23Y2, stops with VCA Y3/X2			
Defensive Fire Phase				
368	HMG continues fire on Blick, G.H.—6 IFT		8	PTC
369	Blick—PTC		6	Pass
370	G.H.—PTC	−1	9	Pinned
371	R.J. fires on Peopl, Oettl, G.O., G.N., G.R.—4 IFT	+2, +1	4	Cowers, PTC and NMC
372	Peopl—PTC		7	Pass
373	Oettl—NMC		5	Pass
374	G.O.—PTC	−2	6	Pass
375	G.N.—NMC	−2	10	Breaks (DM)
376	G.R.—NMC	−2	6	Pass
377	R.E. fires on G.A., G.B.—4 IFT	+3	9	NE
Advancing Fire Phase				
378	G.A., G.B. fire on R.E.—8 IFT		7	1MC
379	R.E.—1MC		5	Pass
380	G.C., G.D., G.K. fire on R.N., R.M. w/LMG—4 IFT	+5	10	NE
381	Peopl, G.O. fire on R.N., R.M. w/LMG—2 IFT	+1	7	NE
Rout Phase				
382	G.E. routs to 23R4			
383	g.I routs to 23N5			
384	G.N. routs to 23R4			
385	G.N. subject to interdiction by HMG in 23P5		10	Fails
G.N. reduced to g.N. half-squad.				
Advance Phase				
386	G.A., G.B. into 23BB4			
387	Behr into 23AA4			
388	G.F. w/prisoners into 23AA4			
389	Kindel into 23R4			
390	Blick into 23N5			
391	Peopl, G.O., G.R. into 23P8			
392	G.C., G.D., G.K. into 23P7			
393	G.G. into 23N6			
Close Combat Phase				
394	G.R. destroys ATG			
395	G.A., G.B. vs. R.E.		9	NE
396	R.E. vs. G.A., G.B.		7	NE
397	Halle, G.L. vs. R.C.		6	NE
398	R.C. vs. Halle, G.L.		11	NE

Russian Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
399	Wind Change Attempt		7	NE
400	G.E. (DM) rally with Kindel	−1	5	Remove DM
401	g.N. (DM) rally with Kindel	−1	7	Remove DM
402	g.I. (DM) rally with Blick	−2	10	Remove DM
403	German StuG main gun repair		5	NE
Prep Fire Phase				
404	R.L. w/HMG fires on Peopl, G.R., G.O.—8 IFT	+1	7	NMC
405	Peopl—NMC		8	Pass
406	G.R.—NMC	−2	3	Pass
407	G.O.—NMC	−2	9	Pinned
408	R.O., R.N., R.M. w/LMG fire on Peopl, G.R., G.O.—20IFT	+1	7	2MC
409	Peopl—2MC		8	Break (DM)

410	G.R —2MC		10	Break (DM)
411	G.O.—2MC		7	Break (DM)
Movement Phase				
412	R.K. assault moves from 23O10 to 23P9			
413	R.J. from 23L9 to 23N10			
414	R.B. from 20P2 to 23R2			
415	R.A. w/LMG from 23N0 to 23O2			
416	R.I. w/LMG from 23X9 to 23T9			
417	R.F. from 23V6 to BPM 23U8			
418	G.F. fires on R.F. in Bypass —2 IFT		5	NMC
419	R.F.—NMC		6	Pass
417A	R.F. continues to 23T8			
420	r.Z. from 23X7 to 23Z7			
421	R.H. from 23W6 (BPM Y6 and Z6) to 23A6			
417B	G.F. fires on R.H.—2 IFT	−1	7	PTC
422	R.H.—PTC		4	Pass
Defensive Fire Phase				
423	Oettl, G.C., G.D., G.K. fire on R.K.—12 IFT	+2	7	NMC
424	R.K.—NMC		8	Pinned
425	G.G., G.H. fire on R.N., R.M. w/LMG—8 IFT	+3	4	1MC
426	R.M. w/LMG—1MC		4	Pass
427	R.N.—1MC		6	Pass
Advancing Fire Phase				
428	R.K. fires on Peopl, G.R., G.O.—1 IFT	+2	8	NE
429	R.B. fires on Kindel, g.N., G.E.—2 IFT	+1	11	NE (DM)
430	R.A. fires on Kindel, g.N., G.E.—2 IFT	+1	6	NE
431	R.H. fires on G.F. w/prisoners, Behr—2 IFT		8	NE
Rout Phase				
432	Kindel, g.N., G.E. rout to 23Q5			
433	Peopl, G.R., G.O. rout to 23R8			
Advance Phase				
434	r.Z. into 23AA7			
435	R.B. into 23S3			
436	R.A. w/LMG into 23P2			
437	R.F. into 23S8			
438	R.I. w/LMG into 23S9			
439	R.J. into 23O10			
440	Chernova to 23N10			
Close Combat Phase				
441	R.C. vs. Halle, G.L.		5	NE
442	Halle, G.L. vs. R.C.		8	NE
443	R.E. vs. G.A., G.B.		7	NE
444	G.A., G.B. vs. R.E.		8	NE

German: Well, in every critical battle there comes the moment when both sides think they've had it. Victory usually goes at that point to the side which perseveres. Lee's comment at Chancellorsville is appropriate, "I was too weak to defend, so I attacked."

My movement might not seem to make any sense at first, but here is the logic behind it. After polishing off the T-34, I figured that overrunning Russian squad I (23X9) with the SPW 251/1 would be a cute maneuver and would have three collateral benefits: 1) it would surprise Jim and make him think I was crazy; 2) it would attract bullets from the Guards' large fire group with a +2 DRM versus the −2 DRM everyone else would suffer; and 3) it would take over the duty of isolating Russian squads F and H from the battle area.

After that didn't work, I planned to overrun Russian squad E in BB4 and then jump the canal there to divide his attention. Once the SPW 251 and squad Q were pinned, it seemed better to leave well enough alone and not move any further.

My last great idea was to build up a large fire group in 23M6 and 23N6 with −1 leadership and drive away the Guards by fire. Lt. Urban told everybody that the HMG in the church steeple (23F3) was out of effective range. Now poor Urban doesn't get to see the end of the war. *C'est la guerre!*

My only good hope now is to get enough people through his Prep Fire Phase to lay down a serious Panzerfaust barrage during the Defensive Fire Phase. It would also be really nice to win these melees.

I had a really effective Rally Phase during the Russian turn. My small crossing force got beat by his Guards, and I was lucky to just pin down his close assault squad (Russian K). I have to make money *this* next turn or his defense will gel and I'll never get across.

Russian: I was surprised to get such a clear shot with my HMG. It really paid off by killing a 9-1 leader and a squad and a half. Combined with the very effective fire against both halftracks, Don wasn't able to accomplish very much. I'll use this respite in his attack to get as ready for his final assault as I can.

Don still has 51 victory points on the mapboard, so the next turn should tell the tale. Squad K maneuvered to try and take out five points worth of halftracks and passengers, but didn't make it.

The Guards were able to lay down some serious sub-machinegun fire on the bridge's exit hex, during both the Defensive and Prep Fire Phases. So, I started to think that the far south bridge might need a little additional protection. If I can continue to bottle up the center bridge, the two squads coming from Board 20 will be able to put him under encircling fire. At that point, his already poor ELR will bcome much more of a factor.

Psychologically I feel much better now, but I should continue to remember that Don is a crafty veteran, and he might trade those 51 points into some kind of an advantage. Now is the time to watch for a trick.

Neutral Commentator: *I couldn't believe that both halftracks sported about CE. As we can see, the price was paid. Note that the halftrack crew in 23T4 that became pinned did not prevent the vehicle itself from continuing movement. Maybe Don didn't know this (A7.8).*

One error committed in the German turn: the Russian ATG would have to be "possessed" first (A4.44) before being spiked; this could have been done in the MPh (by expending a MF) or in the Rally Phase; both would require a dr less than "6". Then, the gun could be spiked in any Fire Phase in which the possessing unit could otherwise fire it (A9.73).

Those Guards in 23O10 may be a very tough nut for the German to crack. But, in the Russian turn, they still refuse to climb the stairs. Chernova should have prompted them a bit more before taking the back door out.

The German bridgehead is becoming more hemmed-in by the minute. It's amazing that these melees have been going on as long as they have. I guess the Russians are struggling to survive as much as the Germans are trying to escape.

I was also surprised to see that the battlefield Integrity rules were being employed (A16), being Optional as they are (I myself am definitely one of those that "record keeping is offensive to").

TURN 7

German Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
445	*Wind Change Attempt*		*7*	*NE*
446	*G.P. (DM) self-rally*		*8*	*NE*
447	*Peopl (DM) self-rally*	−1	5	Rally
448	G.R. (DM) rally with Peopl	−3	7	NE
449	G.O. (DM) rally with Peopl	−3	7	NE
450	g.N. (DM) rally with Kindel		8	Remove DM
451	G.E. (DM) rally with Kindel		4	Remove DM
452	g.I. rally with Blick	−2	4	Rally
453	German StuG main gun repair		6	Broken
Prep Fire Phase				
454	G.C., G.D., G.K. fire on R.N., R.M. w/LMG—12 IFT		11	NE
455	Oettl marked with Opportunity Fire			
456	SPW #EE, G.Q. w/LMG,			
256	Metzler marked with Opportunity Fire			
Movement Phase				
457	Truck #F from 23X2 to offboard			
458	g.I. uses CX movement from 23N5 (BPM M5) to 23H4			
459	R.L. fires on g.I.—4 IFT	−1	9	NE
460	G.H. uses CX movement from 23M6 to 23I4			
461	G.G. uses CX movement from 23N6 to 23H4			
462	Residual FP attack on G.G.	−1	10	NE
463	Behr, G.F. w/prisoners assult move from 23AA4 to 23BB3			
464	SPW #EE crew, G.Q. w/LMG, Metzler become CE			
465	StuG from 23P7 to 23Q5, stops with VCA R4/Q4			
466	SPW #DD (BU) from 23Q9 (VBM Q9) to 23W10, VCA X9/X10			
467	Blick from 23N5 (BPM K4) to 23J3			
Defensive Fire Phase				
468	HMG fires on g.I., G.G.—6 IFT	+1	7	PTC
469	g.I.—PTC		7	Pass
470	G.G.—PTC		11	Pinned
468A	HMG fires on g.I., G.G.—6 IFT	+1	6	NMC
471	g.I.—NMC		5	Pass
472	G.G.—NMC		9	Breaks (DM)
468B	HMG fires on g.I., G.G.—6 IFT	+1	10	NE
473	R.B. fires on SPW #EE crew, Metzler, G.Q.—4 IFT	+2	10	Cowers, NE
474	R.A. w/LMG fires on Kindel, g.N., G.E.—6 IFT		6	1MC
475	Kindel—1MC		8	Breaks (DM)
476	g.N.—1MC		8	g.N. KIA
477	G.E.—1MC		5	Pass (DM)
478	German Battlefield Integrity Check		8	NE
479	R.K., R.J., R.O., R.N., R.M. w/LMG fire on Oettl, G.K., G.C., G.D.—19 IFT	+1	8	1MC
480	Oettl—1MC		4	Pass
481	G.K.—1MC		7	Breaks (DM)
482	G.C.—1MC		7	Breaks (DM)
483	G.D.—1MC		8	Breaks (DM)
484	R.F., R.I. w/LMG fire on Peopl, G.O., G.R.—20 IFT	+2	5	2MC
485	Peopl—2MC		5	Pass
486	G.R.—2MC	−2	10	Breaks (DM)
Replace G.R. with g.R. half-squad.				
487	G.O.—2MC	−2	6	Pass (DM)
484A	LMG fires on Peopl, g.R., G.O. —4 IFT	+2	5	PTC
488	Peopl—PTC		6	Pass
484B	LMG fires on Peopl, g.R., G.O. —4 IFT	+2	6	NE
489	R.H. fires on Behr, F. w/prisoners —4 IFT	+3	7	NE
Advancing Fire Phase				
490	SPW #EE, Metzler, G.Q. w/LMG fire R.A. w/LMG—10 IFT	−1	5	2MC
491	R.A. w/LMG—2MC		2	Heat of Battle
491A	R.A. Heat of Battle	+2	3	Hero, Fanatic
490A	SPW #EE AAMG, LMG fires on Hero, R.A. w/LMG—6 IFT		11	NE AAMG malf
492	Random selection of malf SW			
493	Oettl makes PF check	+2	1	Possesses
494	Oettl fires PF at R.K.	+5	6	Miss
Rout Phase				
495	Kindel, G.E. rout to 23O5			
496	Kindel interdicted in 23P5 by R.K.		7	Pass
497	G.E. interdicted in 23P5 by R.K		6	Pass
498	Oettl, G.C., G.D., G.K. rout to 23N5			
499	G.C. interdicted in 23P6 by R.K		6	Fails
Replace G.C. with g.C.				
500	G.D. interdicted in 23P6 by R.K.		7	Fails
Replace G.D. with g.D.				
501	G.K. interdicted in 23P6 by R.K.		7	Pass
502	German Battlefield Integrity Check	+1	7	NE
503	G.G. routs to 23J3			
504	G.G. interdicted in 23I4		8	Fails
Replace G.G. with g.G. half-squad.				
505	Peopl, g.R., G.O. rout to 23Q8			
Advance Phase				
506	g.I. into 23G5			
507	G.H. into 23H4			
508	Behr takes prisoners			
509	G.F. into 23BB4			
Close Combat Phase				
510	Halle, G.L. vs. R.C.		9	NE
511	R.C. vs. Halle, G.L.		11	NE
512	G.F., G.A., G.B. vs. R.E.		7	R.E. KIA
513	R.E. vs. G.F.		5	Casualty Reduction
Replace G.F. with g.F half-squad.				
514	Russian Battlefield Integrity Check	+1	8	NE

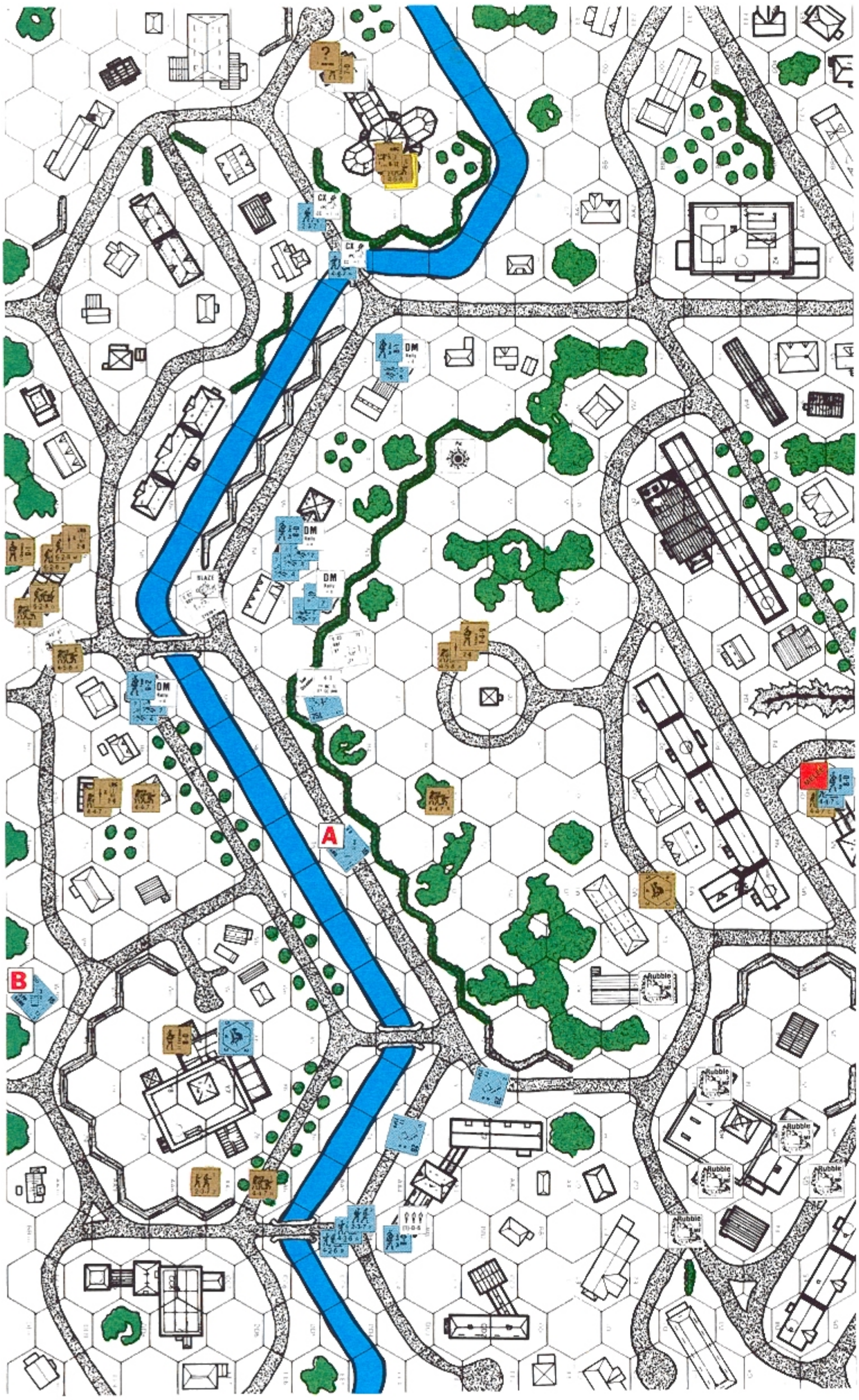


Figure 5: Positions at the end of Turn 7. Above are shown the contents of the two German SPW 251/1 (as marked on the illustration).

Russian Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
515	Wind Change Attempt		7	NE
516	German SPW AAMG repair		3	NE
517	Kindel (DM) self-rally	−1	7	Remove DM
518	G.D. (DM) rally with Oettl	−1	5	Remove DM
519	G.C. (DM) rally with Oettl	−1	9	Remove DM
520	G.K. (DM) rally with Oettl	−1	9	Remove DM
521	G.G. (DM) rally with Blick	−2	7	Remove DM
	(DM) rally with Peopl	−2	5	Remove DM
	(DM) rally with Peopl	−2	8	Remove DM
Prep Fire Phase				
524	R.H. fires on G.F., G.A., G.B.—4 IFT		7	PTC
525	G.F.—PTC		5	Pass
526	G.A.—PTC		5	Pass
527	G.B.—PTC		9	Pinned
528	R.L. fires on G.H.—4 IFT	+1	9	NE
529	HMG fires on G.I.—6 IFT	+1	4	1MC
530	G.I.—1MC		7	Breaks (DM)
529A	HMG fires on G.H.—6 IFT	+1	8	NE
529B	HMG fires on G.H.—6 IFT	+1	3	2MC
531	G.H.—2MC		4	Pass
529C	HMG fires on G.H.—6 IFT	+1	8	Cowers, NE
Movement Phase				
532	r.Z. assault move from 23AA7 to 23BB7			
533	G.A., G.B. fires on r.Z.—8 IFT	−1	6	2MC
534	r.Z.—2MC		5	Pinned
535	R.B. from 23S3 to 23U3			
536	R.F. assault move from 23S8 to 23R7			
537	R.K. assault move from 23P9 to 23P8			
538	Metzler, G.Q. w/LMG fire on R.K.—7 IFT		8	PTC
539	R.K.—PTC		4	Pass
540	R.I. w/LMG from 23S9 to 23V10			
541	Hero, R.A. w/LMG from 23P2 to 23O3			
542	Metzler, G.Q. fire on Hero, R.A. w/LMG—2 IFT	−3	8	NMC
543	Hero—NMC		6	Pass
544	R.A. w/LMG—NMC		8	Pinned
541A	Hero continues to 23N4			
545	R.J. from 23O10 to 23P8			
546	Residual fire on R.J.	−2	8	NE
542A	LMG intensive fires on R.J. −3 IFT		11	LMG malf
545A	R.J. continues to 23P6			
547	R.O. from 23O10 (BPM Q9) to 23R8			
548	R.N. use CX movement from 23N9 (BPM I7) to 23H6			
549	R.M. w/LMG from 23N9 to 23Q9			
550	Chernova assault move from 23N10 to 23O10			
551	Eastonov assault move from 23X7 to 23Y7			
552	C.Y. assault move from 23D4 (2nd) to 23E4 (2nd)			
Defensive Fire Phase				
553	G.H. fires on R.L. w/HMG —4 IFT	+3	10	NE
Advancing Fire Phase				
554	Hero fires on Kindel, G.E. −1 IFT		6	NE
555	R.A. fires on SPW #EE crew, Metzler, G.Q.—1 IFT	+2	9	NE
556	R.B. fires on SPW #EE crew, Metzler, G.Q.—2 IFT	+2	9	NE
557	R.J. fires on Kindel, G.E.—2 IFT	+1	9	NE
558	R.F., R.O., R.K., R.M. w/LMG fire Peopl, G.O., g.R.— 24 IFT		9	2MC
559	Peopl—2MC		10	Breaks (DM)
560	g.R.—2MC		9	g.R. KIA
561	G.O.—2MC		8	Casualty Reduction
Replace squad G.O. with g.O. half-squad.				
562	German Battlefield Integrity Check	+3	11	ELR=1
Rout Phase				
563	Peopl, g.O. surrender to R.F.			
564	Oettl, g.C., g.D., G.K. low crawl to 23M6			
565	Kindel, G.E. rout to 23P4			
566	g.I. routs to 23D7			
Advance Phase				
567	R.L. w/HMG into 23F4 (2nd)			
568	C.Y. into 23F4 (2nd)			
569	R.N. into 23H5			
570	R.J. into 23O6			
571	Hero into 23M5			
572	R.K. into 23P7			
573	R.F. w/prisoners into 23S7			
574	R.O. into 23R7			
575	R.M. w/LMG into 23Q8			
576	R.B. into 23T3			
577	R.H. into 23BB6			
578	Eastanov into 23Z6			
579	Chernova into 23P9			
580	R.I. w/LMG makes PAATC		12	Fails
Close Combat Phase				
581	R.C. vs. Halle, G.L.		11	NE
582	Halle, G.L. vs. R.C.		3	R.C. KIA

German: Who says TAHGC doesn't engineer their games well? If I'd had any more squads, I would have run out of DM counters. It has become abundantly clear that we aren't going to cross the canal at P7. My German forces are getting panicky, so we are trying to flood across all the bridges at the same time and dilute the defense a little.

I brought the impotent StuG III back to hex Q5 for a few seconds worth of cover, from which I ended up routing away anyway. I figured that it was worth risking in a potential Close Combat. Unfortunately, its chances were reduced considerably by my shooting at his squad A and giving them a Hero to go along with a battle-hardened squad. Hey guys, for Russians it is just as easy to surrender on the Heat of Battle Table!

I also want to point out one of my favorite tricks. In Event 459, I declared CX movement. When I got to hex 23I4 with the unit, I asked Jim if he was going to shoot. He undoubtably figured I was going to cross 23H4 (why use CX movement elsewise) so he replied "No" hoping to get a residual fire attack and then another fire attack. Instead I declared the end of its movement. I view this as a legal way not to be shot up with FFNAM/FFMO attacks, but there does seem to be a question as to its legitimacy. I recommend using it only against your friends; it can really frustrate your opponents.

In my mind's eye, I see my squad L on Board 20 groveling in the cellar while Russian squad C is drinking up all the schnapps and vodka upstairs. Halle figures his only chance is to overcome them, one or two at a time, as they come downstairs for more booze.

Behr took over prisoner guard duties so that a decent 3-1 attack could be mounted and break up the melee in 23BB4. This cost me half a squad and the potential future embarassment of a prisoner escape while on "National TV".

After the Russian turn, it really looks dim. All depends on the upcoming Rally Phase. If you look over the last three Rally Phases, you'll see that I have rallied exactly one leader and one half-squad. This is due more to Jim's ability to keep everyone under DM than just bad luck on my part.

Generally speaking, all the *BEYOND VALOR* scenarios end this way—in confusion. This is the natural result of combat in urban areas; this is the *ASL* equivalent of the deterioration experienced in *STORM OVER ARNHEM*.

Russian: Don is obviously giving up the main attack, so now I must parallel his rush to the other bridges. Although there are two German Movement Phases left, I don't believe he can reorganize enough strength to fight his way over another bridge.

Two technical comments to begin my turn with. First, the Assault Fire capability of the Guards adds just enough firepower to kick the AFPh attack (Event 558) up to the next column (24FP). So, for old *SL* players following along, you've just seen another one of the improvements. Secondly, all of the same old *SL* players see nothing wrong with leaving Knezevich concealed and away from the critical HMG position. New *ASL* players probably have recognized this as one of the common mistakes. If I'd had that leader in the hex with the HMG, I would have been spared at least two Cowering attacks and still would not have chanced a LLMC/LLTC because the leader's morale is too low to affect the squad. I lost the advantage of having another Concealment counter on the board a long time ago, and have just been remiss in making the link-up.

My Movement Phase was used to start taking the initiative away from Don. I don't want to give him the chance to rally any units and organize a last-ditch attempt.

I was a bit sad to see squad C get so caught up in the spoils of victory that they blew it. Don told me his interpretation of that Close Combat—I guess drinking and hand grenades don't mix. At least I was able to capture some Germans and so relieve my earlier embarrassment.

Neutral Commentator: *It appears as if the Germans have just about fizzled out. What was once a fairly concentrated and organized attack is now spread out ineffectively over the length of Board 23.*

Noted errors:

Event 486—Already broken units do not suffer ELR reduction (A19.13).

Event 491—German Sniper activation attempt missed.

Event 494—Panzerfaust can't be used here (C8.31).

Event 495—These units are routing toward a known enemy unit (in 23F3) within that unit's range; they would have to stay in place instead.

Event 498—These units are also routing closer to a known enemy unit (23F3); should low crawl to 23P6 instead. Then, in the next Rout Phase, with the HMG out of LOS, they could get to 23N5.

Event 542—A unit may not Subsequent First Fire (A8.3) at a "target at a range > that to the closest known enemy unit". Observe R.B. in 23U3.

Event 542A—As 542 above. Additionally, Sustained Fire (A9.3) cannot be used by a unit marked with Final Fire, as G.Q. would be after his illegal Subsequent First First Fire attack.

Event 553—Again our players have forgotten to add the +1 for a CX unit firing (A4.51).

Event 561—Already broken units are not subject to ELR reduction.

Event 565—The Germans here are routing closer to R.B. in 23U3, a known enemy unit in their LOS.

Event 567—This Advance would require the placement of a CX counter on R.L., according to A4.72—"vs. Difficult Terrain".

At the end of all this, things do look dim indeed for the German. The German had little to cheer for during this turn, save only the end of the standoff in 20O5. As Jim pointed out, a better place for the 7-0 leader is stacked with the HMG. All such heavy SWs should now have leader direction (especially with the upcoming revision of the Cower rule.)

TURN 8

German Player Turn

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
583	Wind Change Attempt		11	NE
584	G.P. self-rally		12	Casualty Reduction
585	Kindel self-rally		11	NE
586	G.D. (DM) rally with Oettl		7	Remove DM
587	G C. (DM) rally with Oettl		9	Remove DM
588	G.K. (DM) rally with Oettl		4	Remove DM
589	G.C. rally with Blick	−2	7	Rally
590	Repair SPW #EE AAMG		3	NE
591	Repair German LMG in 23T4		6	Eliminated
Prep Fire Phase				
592	Chappell abandons his command to change into civilian clothes and and escape to the West			

German: I have conceded to Jim. This is a great personal embarrassment and my chagrin knows no bounds. Whupped in a fair fight on "National TV" by my own protege.

At this point, if you write off the units in P4 and M6 (which is a very safe assumption), then the total possible German points which exist are 33. If you consider the string of luck which would be required to get everybody off, it is clear why I concede. By the way, it is still possible to get Halle and squad L off by using a "magic truck". A magic truck is one that all of a sudden knows you need it even though this one is over 400 meters away at the time. Halle and squad L move to 23Y1 using double time; truck E slips back one hex. On Turn 9 they load (costing 7MP from the truck's allowance) and then move offboard. Trucks may move through enemy units like an overrun, but TPBF by even one squad gets the truck with a TK# of "8" on the IFT. Not a good chance, but still mathematically possible. In any case, the odds of being this lucky across the board do not seem worth the effort involved in continuing to chronicle my downfall for this distinguished audience.

CLOSING COMMENTS

German: We will continue these final comments the way Jim and I always do after a game. A friendly "why did you . . ." question-and-answer session. Jim, what was your overall impression of the game?

Russian: In defeat as in victory, Don, you are so humble. I don't think either of us played our best game on the whole. I had a multitude of little errors in the mechanics—like forgetting Panzerfausts or keeping leaders with SW. You played a more technically proficient game, but lacked the aggressiveness I think the German player needs in order to win. The key to this scenario is getting an early bridgehead and then bulling past the defenders in the first five turns. What I don't understand is why you did not cross at bridge X3 during Turn 4 when you had the chance? That's when you turned north and charged the anti-tank gun.

German: Well, I am happy to hear that you were convinced that X3 was the crossing site. Actually, if you read my initial comments, you'll see that it was a feint and not the main attack. As to charging the anti-tank gun, that is kind of hard to defend right now. The only thing I can say is that the single AT Gun was a lot weaker defense than the four squads covering the northern bridges. Don't you think so?

Russian: No, I don't. Manhandling an ATG out into the street was a desperation move on my part. You had two squads in halftracks which could cross with immunity and then become CE during your Advance Phase; the StuG III and the armored car would have provided a lot of additional close support. Lastly, I thought you'd place that gigantic fire group along the hedge under "Opportunity Fire" counters and then cross with one squad at a time until I had to break Concealment before you built up too big a force as a bridgehead for me to cope with. In fact, that seemed to be what was happening when I took that long-range shot at your armored car with the ATG.

German: Well, that might have worked, and I certainly still had all my strength. Even though I couldn't cross at P7 until after your Guards arrived, it seemed to me that the original plan was still viable. Assuming I could inhibit your Board 23 movement with fire lanes from those halftracks, I would only face the ATG and three short-range squads. (The T-34 would be a problem anywhere you put it.) The only thing I think I should have done differently was not make the move on P7 so soon. If I'd waited until after your Turn 5 movement, would the Guards have come on to reinforce the X3 crossing?

Russian: I might have done that; it's hard to tell now. You should have avoided the question of the Guards effectiveness by attacking immediately in Turn 4, defeating first the Board 23 forces and then the reinforcements in detail. You also moved into range of the HMG, which would have been no factor at such long range—especially with a three-hex blind zone behind every obstacle. What about your luck? It seemed pretty bad to me.

German: I've already averaged up the dice rolls to see if I could cop a plea. *No mas!* Not only were we even overall, but we both were better than average. Still, it is clear that the ammo shortage rule had more effect in this playing than usual. I did not have a functioning ordnance or SW by the end of

Turn 7.

Russian: Well, that's true, and it did help me. You need that extra firepower where it can be concentrated into one hex so a leader can ameliorate the effects of the building DRMs. We can also see what an effect your low ELR had on the game. Slowly but surely, under constant pressure, your force disintegrated. You played a good game with what you had.

German: On the whole, I am not particularly happy with my play. I don't believe that I adapted fast enough to the situation. As you know, I expected to keep my forces together enough to fight through any opposition. As I suffered gaps under normal attrition and from the effects of the ammo shortage, I failed to realize I was no longer capable of fighting a stand-up battle. Certainly, part of this was caused by my rush to engage the ATG instead of waiting until my infantry had the chance to supress the crew. At least I got the T-34 with the Panzerfausts.

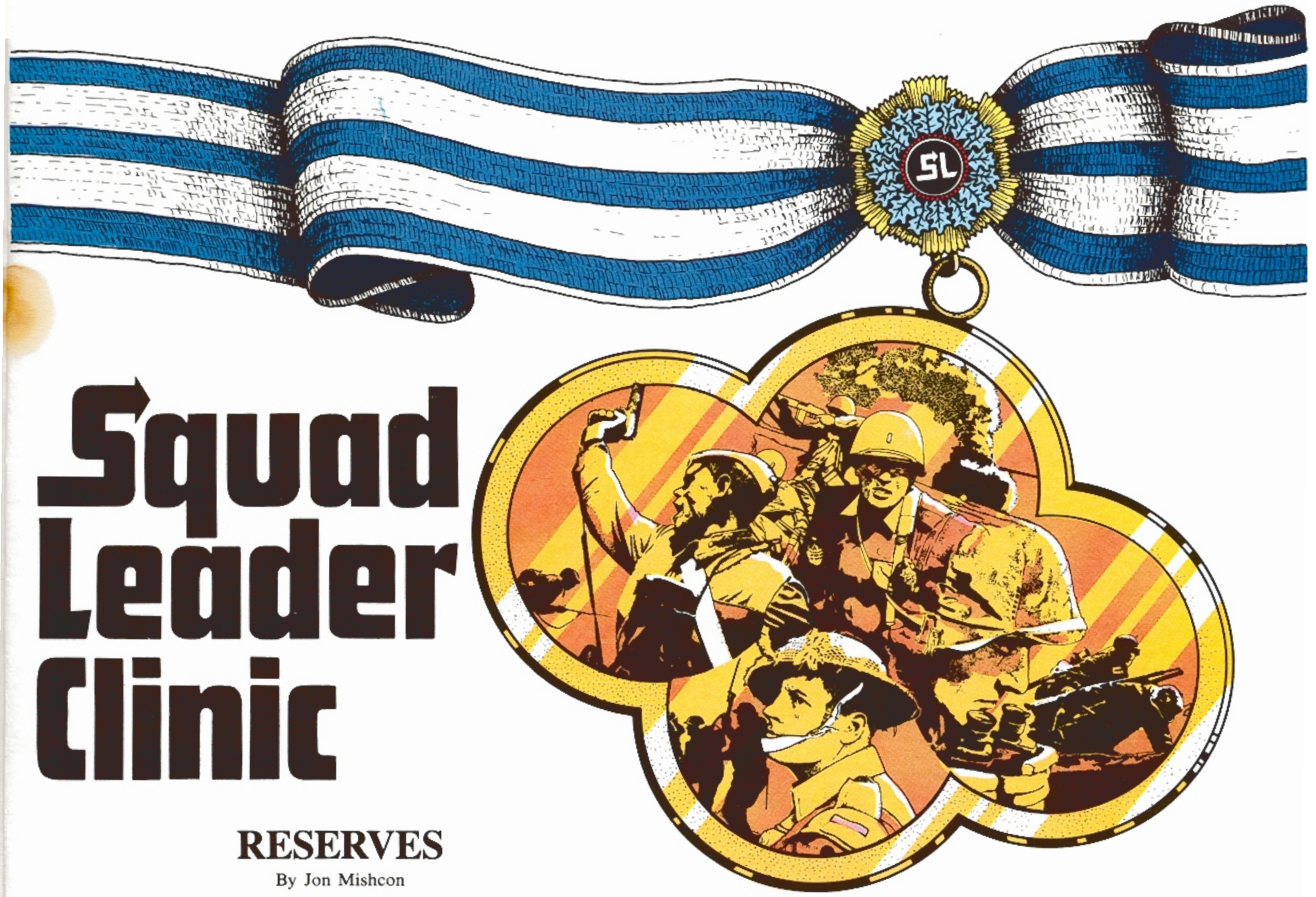
Russian: OK, I guess you can take *one* cheap shot. Just don't make a habit of it or I'll never let the Chappell counter out of the Gulag.

Neutral Commentator: *The one thing that stands out to me in this match is that, despite all the number of errors committed, none had a serious effect on determining the victor. This just goes to show that even YOU can play ASL, not worry too much about getting everything perfect, and still have a good time and a fair game.*

Looking over the players' final comments, I too think that the German should have abandoned his fancy plans, and taken advantage of his local superiority on his Turn 5 by forcing a bridgehead over the 23X3 and 23BB5 bridges. Sure, there's a lot to be said about formulating a solid plan and sticking to it "through thick and thin", but there's even more to be said (in my humble opinion) about being flexible to the situation at hand. I just wonder what might have transpired had this route been taken. Do I detect a strong streak of stubbornness in Don.

All in all though, a fairly well-played game tactically by both players, considering the undertaking involved in producing a Series Replay.





Squad Leader Clinic

RESERVES

By Jon Mishcon

Reserves are units withheld from battle. As such they can be as small as a platoon in tactical reserve or as big as several divisions held in strategic reserve. Reserves serve the dual function of allowing troops to rest while providing the commander with the strength to decisively influence a battle at a critical moment. The use of reserves is probably the single most important skill a grand tactical commander must master and probably the *least* important for skillful play of *SL* or *ASL* scenarios. Perhaps nothing more pointedly demonstrates the fact that the crop of existing scenarios are "just a game" than their inability to simulate the proper use of reserves. Let us examine why reserves are important in combat.

The following elements should be considered in understanding a commander's reliance on reserves: command control, avoiding disaster, reinforcing success, efficient weapons match-up, fresh troop strength, uncertainty. Each is discussed below.

Command control is the ability to make troops do what you want them to. The harder they are to contact, the more dispersed they are, or the busier they are (being close to the enemy makes one very busy even if not a shot is fired) all reduce your ability to control your troops. The great commanders who led from the front did so because that is one of the few ways you're sure you've got their attention.

Should all hell break loose, and you suddenly find bad guys pouring in where they "ain't supposed to be", then avoiding disaster can be simplified by moving up reserves to block the attackers' progress. It is far easier for troops to move up than it is to break contact with the enemy and move back to block a thrust. Thus reserves can save your own personal hide.

Of course, the converse is that once in a while you can achieve an unexpected success. Reserves are your best bet for quickly being able to magnify your victory, for the same reasons as above.

"Efficient weapons match-up" refers to the fact that no one ever has all the proper weapons in the right spot. AT gun concentrations are of limited value against mass infantry assaults. By holding key weapons like HMGs and ATGs in reserve, a commander can swing over to the right tools for any particular threat. *ASL* does a nice job of showing just how hard it really is to mount up a big gun when the pressure is on.

Troops get tired. The strain of being on the front line is more than physical. Constant demands on attention make an individual progressively less effective. Combat amplifies these demands and goes beyond this as weapons run out of ammo or breakdown. Reserves are (or should be) rested and well provisioned. Their ability to deal a decisive blow is enhanced because they are usually pitted against men at the end of their tether.

Uncertainty is the key reason, however, that commanders depend on reserves. All of the above factors are really reflections of how a CO copes with the unknown. As much as is possible, reserves give the leader a known quantity to work with. Reserves are also a psychological buffer. I can recommend Johns' *The Clay Pigeons of St. Lo* for an insightful peek at the thoughts of a battalion commander.

Given all the positive aspects to reserves, why not then hold the majority of troops in reserve? I feel two factors diminish the value of reserves. The first is the psychological reluctance of any commander to commit his reserves. While their potential strength, so long as they are held in reserve, may be great, once committed, their value markedly diminishes. Thus you have to be fairly sure that *this* is the optimum moment for going for broke. Given the uncertainty element noted above, little wonder that commanders hold onto reserves as long as possible.

The second negative feature of reserves are obvious to all *SL/ASL* buffs. Strength in reserve is worth little at the front. Units defending a piece of terrain may be dug in and bore-sighted, adding to their resistance. Attackers need enough power and adequate numbers to break through defending lines. If you must hold onto or break into an objective, you have to maximize your strength at that point (remember "Concentration of Force" from a previous clinic installment). Therefore the actual strength and numbers of reserve units will depend on the given tactical situation. The best analogy I can think of is a football game where goal line plunges require everything up front and mid-field defenses are usually held in considerable depth. So it is on the battlefield.

Why are *SL/ASL* scenarios usually so poor at reflecting the need for reserves? On the whole, *SL/ASL* is probably the wrong scale to deal with the problems noted above. We've not found a good, simple solution to the issue of command control. Players never have to worry about breakthrough,

other than in the context of winning or losing the scenario. Unit stamina could be reflected by having the ELR of a unit slowly drop while it is on the board, but the value of such a rule is questionable. We pay lip service to uncertainty but only one scenario has ever had the attacker uncertain of the make-up of the defender (''In Rommel's Wake''). A case can be made that this is not the failure of the scenarios but rather a side-effect of their intent to focus on the squad level of combat. Yet, given the comprehensive nature of the *ASL* rules, it should be possible to recreate the conditions which call for the use of reserves.

It is the intent of the accompanying scenario (see insert) to force the German player to make some key choices. How many troops will act as delaying forces? Putting the AT gun on the board will give you HIP and bore-sighting; but what if the tanks arrive on another board? We freely admit that this may be the simplest demonstration possible of the use of reserves. The Russian player is fairly well committed from the first turn and the German player has a perfect knowledge of what is coming down the pike. Nevertheless, we have chosen to start with this as an introduction. If readers like the idea, we would hope to expand on this concept in later scenarios.

After Action Report—The Hedgehog of Piepsk

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (Vol. 23, No. 2 in this case). The intent is to provide the *ASL* player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

GERMAN: A 9-1 leader, two 4-6-7 squads, one HMG and one MMG in the second floor of 3N2. Another 9-1, three 4-6-7s and two LMGs in the second floor of 3N1. The 8-1 leader and two squads with LMG in 3R6. Use the 8-0 with the radio as a spotter in 3N1. Boresight the HMG on hex 3U7 and the MMG on 3U8.

RUSSIAN: Six 4-2-6 squads enter spread out on the edge of Board 4 and filter up along the north edge. One 8-0 leader plus five 4-4-7s enter between 3GG6 and 3GG10 and advance along the axis of 3W8 to 3T6 tp 3Q6. The remaining 21 squads enter behind Hill 498 and filter up along the edge of Boards 3/4.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: You should plan to jump off the first assault against building 3N1 no later than Turn 6. Your best shot is to try to draw fire with your flanking ''cheapies'' while the main assault groups try to move completely in cover. take a Commissar along the main axis of advance to rally any unit that breaks in the advance. Expose the MMG at eight hexes range in the woods with the 9-1 leader just as you deploy for your assault. You never know when that lousy pop can pin the defenders and suddenly end multiple shots from the MGs. Pray for the intervention of Fate.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: Shoot when you must, but don't be drawn into long-range shots against lousy targets. Don't forget that sniper fire as well as a broken MG can cripple you. Try to use the artillery against the units advancing into 3U7. The chance of calling in a totally blind FFE is about 40%, so if the Russian player is being very cagey—go for it. The Russians do not have time to recover from eight or so broken squads *and* fight their way up the stairwell of 3M2; so try for broken squads rather than kills. Naturally, using a defensive FFE on 3R1 at about Turn 5 can really crimp the Russian style.

Hill 621

RUSSIAN: 9-1 leader with 5-2-7 and MMG in the second floor of 3N1. An 8-0 leader with 5-2-7 and MMG in second floor of 3M2. Sniper bait 5-2-7s in 3O2 and 3M3. Rest of squads spread out along the entire width of edge of Board 3. Try placing the remaining 8-0 leader in 3C1. Put stacks of 4-4-7s next to 5-2-7s so you'll have both long-range fire and assault fire when needed.

GERMAN: 8-1 leader with radio, three squads, one LMG in hex 4FF1. The 9-2 with three squads, MMG and HMG in 4W1. Two squads with two LMGs go in 4G1.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: Spread out. Run like crazy on Turn 1. Run cautiously on Turn 2. Bring the T-34s on at 3Y10 and drive for Hill 538 unless the German player brings the ATG onto the third level of 621. Then you must enter at 3Q10 and drive down the center. Plan that your infantry will have to make its final assault based from hexes 2S6, 2N9 and 2J6. Consider having your tanks swing around the flanks of Hill 621 on the next-to-last turn. If for no other reason than to divert those German ATGs.

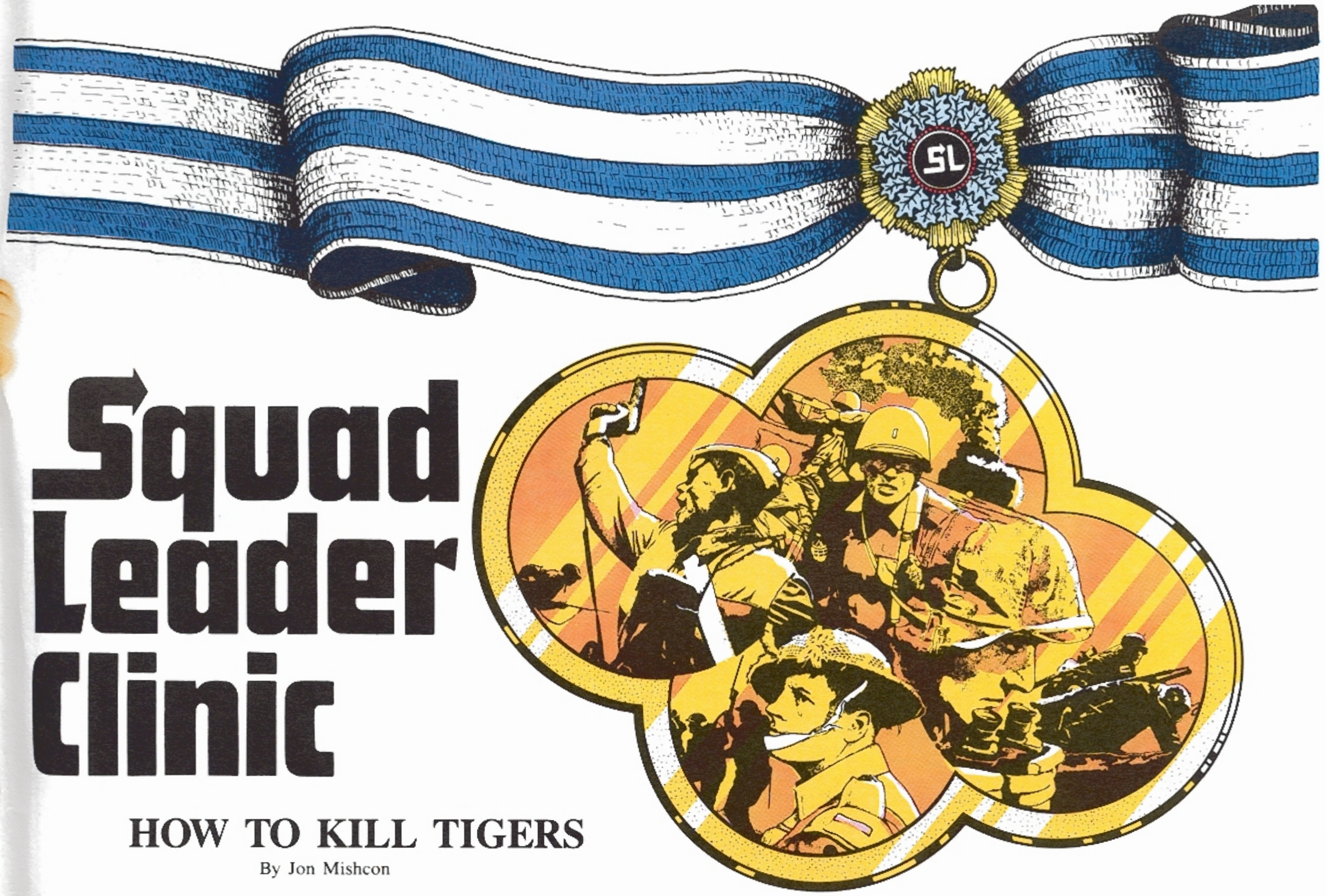
DEFENDER'S TACTICS: Do *not* try to stand up to the Russians. Everybody pulls back. Your goal is to try and move someplace where you can lay down some inhibiting Defensive Fire during Russian Turn 2. The radio 2CC8 is very nice. I also like the 9-2 on 3S7 and the 75L ATG on 3R2. (Check out that LOS before you scoff.) The key to holding Hill 621 is actually holding Hill 538. So plan to bring your Turn 2 tanks onto 2DD4 through 2DD7 inclusive. Then on Turn 3, the lead MkIV can move to 2T3 while the rest go for hulldown positions on 538. Remember that you can stop and start again, so go for Level 2 positions that are close by. Final defense of 621 should be *on* the crest of 621 (advance there on the last turn). ☆

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING

Titles Listed: 98 **Total Responses: 355**

Rank: Title	Pub	Rank Times Last Time	On List	Freq. Ratio
1. B-17	AH	6	2	2.6
2. Advanced SL	AH	1	5	2.5
3. Third Reich	AH	5	34	2.4
4. Air Force	AH	—	1	2.3
5. Squad Leader	AH	2	34	2.2
6. Russian Campaign	AH	11	34	2.0
7. Up Front	AH	3	16	1.8
8. Cross of Iron	AH	12	9	1.6
9. Diplomacy	AH	9	6	1.4
10. Firepower	AH	13	8	1.3
11. G.I.	AH	7	3	1.2
12. Gunslinger	AH	—	1	1.2
13. Bulge '81	AH	—	1	1.1
14. Flight Leader	AH	19	2	1.1
15. Russian Front	AH	4	4	1.1
16. Ambush	VG	—	1	1.0
17. Dauntless	AH	—	1	1.0
18. Flat Top	AH	17	3	1.0
19. Guns of August	AH	—	1	1.0
20. WS&IM	AH	8	4	1.0

Riding the wave of exposure that Vol. 23, No. 1 of The *GENERAL* gave them, we've a number of air wargames on the list this time. *B-17, QUEEN OF THE SKIES* leaps to the top of the chart. *AIR FORCE* and *DAUNTLESS* put in an appearance; and the featured game, *FLIGHT LEADER*, moves up the listing a bit. For those whose feet are firmly on the ground, the *ASL/SL* family of games continues its lengthy strong showing. Totally unexpected, on the other hand, is the sudden showing of *GUNSLINGER*. Among those dropping off the listing were *LONGEST DAY, HITLER'S WAR, CIVILIZATION* and the *ASL* modules *BEYOND VALOR* and *PARATROOPER*—but we expect them to show up again in the future.



Squad Leader Clinic

HOW TO KILL TIGERS

By Jon Mishcon

ASL finally gives the heavy tanks of WW2 their historical due. A T-34 commander quickly learned that a Tiger was not just difficult to kill with a front shot—barring a critical hit, it was impossible. The see-saw of technological advances allowed many tanks brief stardom followed by a lingering fall into obscurity. For those players given PzKw IIs versus KVs, or T-34s against PzKw VIEs (or even Shermans against JgPz VIs), the task seems daunting. As we worked at rebalancing "The Paw of the Tiger" it became evident that a Clinic might be in order as to how light tanks take on their heavier brethren.

OK, you've just sat down with a horde of light tanks and the other guy gets the big boomers. What do you do? The most important consideration has to be, "What must I do to win the scenario?" If you can win without fighting, then that's usually your best bet. If you must fight to win, then must you kill or can you just immobilize? An immobilized tank is often "mission-killed" regardless of how potent its armor and gun. If you must fight and must kill, do you have non-armor resources that can do the job better than your tanks? Infantry, even without special SWs, are potent tank killers in dense terrain.

However, for those who must fight, must kill, and must use armor, then this article discusses the most common tactical tricks that you can use when your side has armor that is easily penetrated by enemy guns and your main guns cannot kill the enemy frontally.

The most important and frequently wasted tool is *time*. All too often we see ten-turn scenarios ending on Turn 6. If a scenario gives you ten turns, plan on using them all. If your opponent holds his fire till the end, then don't move the last few vehicles. If he starts to shoot early, then start to scoot forward. Remember that the more shots he takes, the more likely he is to break a gun.

Motion status at the end of a turn decreases vulnerability and increases movement in the next MPh. If you can't shoot it out, then keep moving. Dazzle him with your footwork. Don't forget to turn in place if you must to simply stay in motion.

The use of cover is critical. Look for walls (HD), gullies (usually out of LOS while therein), and movement through woods and VBM to decrease exposure. Use smoke shells and vehicular smoke dispensers to reduce visibility. Remember that if you throw a particularly vulnerable AFV forward and it burns, you can use its smoky pall to hide behind.

Risk ESB routinely but sparingly. If the choice is between staying in the open or getting behind cover, then always go for the extra movement. Additionally, the judicious use of ESB makes your opponent calculate what he must do if you move 125% of normal. Nice for discomforting him.

Don't hesitate to expose your rear if your frontal armor is nearly worthless anyway. Better to move along briskly rather than depend on marginally better armor protection.

If the enemy moves toward you and you are stopped, don't shoot—get into motion (D2.401). If you fail, there is time enough for desperate shooting. If you have hordes of AFVs, then use "stop-and-go" fire ("Gun Duels") and pray for a critical hit. Sure it's less than a 3% chance, but for every couple of gun malfunctions, the gods of chance owe you a CH. Even better is that "stop-and-go" fire may preserve your ROF while Advancing Fire is limited to one shot. Better still is baiting your opponent into taking lousy shots as you move from cover, fire ("come on, snake eyes") and then zip back into cover.

Use HE if need be. High explosive is often great against CE AFVs (don't forget to use your MGs too) or detrack the behemoths. Occasionally HE will be strong enough to allow real shock effect. Use special ammo early. Like as not, most vehicles won't survive, so best use that APCR/HEAT while you've got the chance.

When you do finally close in for the kill, maximize your chances whenever possible. This may mean moving through the enemy AFV's hex in order to get a rear shot. It's a great way to disconcert the enemy player and increase your killing power at the same time. Get adjacent and use Intensive Fire in addition to Gun Duels. We try to get four light tanks to surround one "biggie". This gives you the maximum TH and TK modifiers, so you may as well go for broke.

If you are "brewed up" on your approach, roll for CS. Two or three crews can often end up rushing a vehicle. The best you can hope for is to divert the enemy's attention, but there is always the chance of a berserker or a hero. Use everything in these situations.

Lastly, if the "pedal is to the metal" and nothing seems to work, you can always go for deliberate immobilization and hope he abandons the vehicle. (Remember, we are presupposing for this discussion that you must kill it.) True, Deliberate Immobilization is +5 TH DRM, only works with hull hits, and acquisitions are valueless. Nonetheless, we constantly use our ordnance smaller than 45mm to go for immobilization. Often these guns have a high ROF which allows for more than one attempt. The

Germans may have called the 37mm ATG "door-knocker", but we use them more as door-stoppers. (A playbalance note: if players end up preferring the 37L ATG to the 50L, then you might want to consider having the crew pass a TC before each Deliberate Immobilization shot; in the midst of battle, it would be remarkable that anyone would try to simply stop rather than kill the iron monster.)

The "Paw of the Tiger" is a great teaching scenario. The T-34s and T-43s are vastly superior to the PzKw IIINs and equally inferior to the Tigers. Appended, players will find two *ASL* reworkings of *COI* scenarios, including the infamous Scenario 14.



After Action Report—Timoshenko's Attack

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (Vol. 23, No. 3 in this case). The intent is to provide the *ASL* player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can compare his findings with our summation.

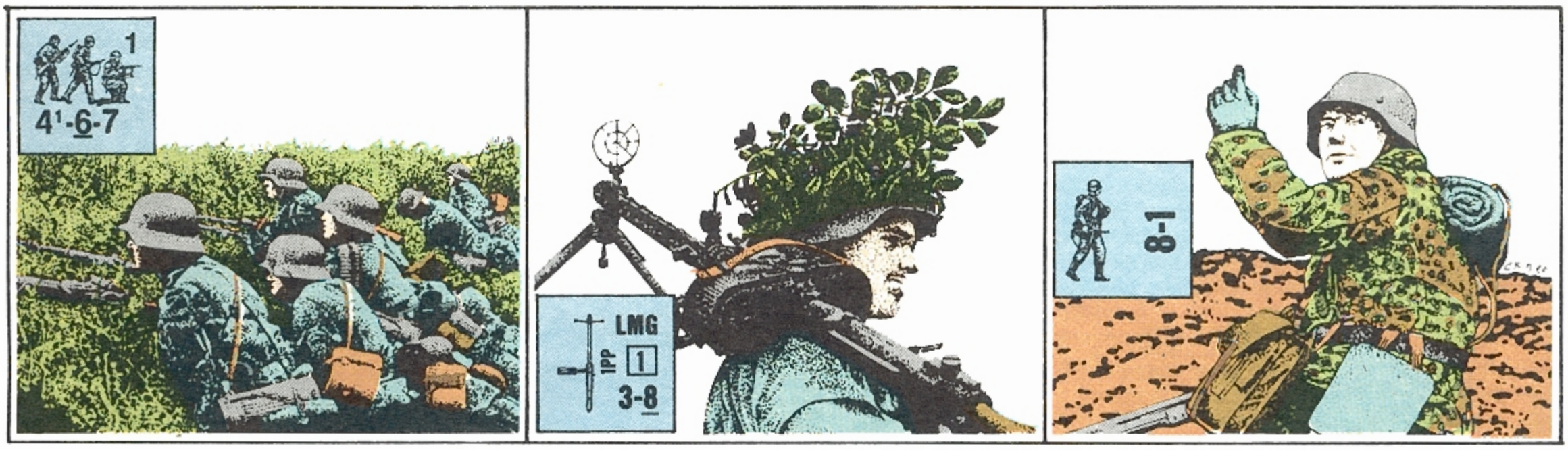
GERMAN: 8-1 leader, two squads and a LMG in 10T6; 9-1 leader, squad with HMG on first floor of 10U5. Place a squad and LMG in 22Q1; the 9-2, two squads, LMG and MMG in 22Q3; squad and LMG in 22Q8. Place a squad and LMG in 11Q1; 8-0 leader radio and squad in 11W3. Put the rest of the force in reserve.

RUSSIAN: Fairly straightforward. Group 1 attacks on Board 11; Group 2 attacks Board 22; and Group 3 on Board 10.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: If the radio is on Board 11, your best bet is still to use the open terrain for the tanks, but to use independent movement once you have to button up. Board 10 is very tough to assault, so be bold for the first two turns and try to get the German to overcommit there. Board 22 is the one you're most likely to win on with whatever group you use. Try to outflank the initial German line and press forward fast.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: Don't forget that the LMGs and the 50mm MTR are valuable anti-tank weapons. Have your screen fall back slowly while your reserves throw back any infiltrating attackers. Most importantly, don't commit too much to any one board. Time and again players will find that the German player wins handily on two boards only to lose the whole scenario on the third. This scenario may well require repeated play before you form an opinion.





GOING ALL OUT

Design Your Own (My Way)

By Greg Schmittgens and Charles Kibler

ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER!! I knew my ELR and that I wouldn't break to Green with another *SL* purchase. Then I heard some vague rumblings that "The System" had been restructured, clarified, and otherwise improved—but that the scenarios developed for *BEYOND VALOR*, the first module, were less than marvelous. Not to worry though, a complete point system for "Design Your Own" (DYO) scenarios was included.

So I bought The System, worked my way carefully through PTCs, TPBFs and FFNAMs. Finally I found the golden section near the end. But I gasped when I first read the words, "the players must first agree on the 'current' historical month and year. They then mutually agree on their respective total BPV allotment, the board configuration, and Victory Conditions."

Now, I'm just as creative and imaginative as the next gamer. This free-form approach doesn't really bother me, although it's sometimes hard to decide whether eight or nine squads exited should constitute a victory without an awful lot of playtesting. But I also must deal with a regular opponent (and friend) who is convinced that, a) all the ideas I come up with are inherently unbalanced and that b) any random event is weighted in my favor.

So, for all of you *ASL*-ers who would like to be thrust into a combat situation not necessarily of your choosing and unaware of what you face, I'd like to offer my *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER DYO Generation Addendum*.

Sequence of Scenario Design

Follow this step-by-step determination process to define the parameters of your *ASL* DYO scenario. According to the following system, players now have a methodology to determine a scenario's time frame, weather, basic point values, mapboard configuration, victory conditions, and more. The numbered steps of this process reflect the order of determination/selection. These should be followed in the order given. As in any DYO system, players are ever free to decide amiably on any parameter(s) they do not want to leave to chance, but the following allows them to determine all this randomly if agreement cannot be reached (and the parameters will be based on the strategic situation of the time).

1. Theater of Operations
2. Optional Rules
3. Date
4. Weather
5. Game Length
6. Basic Point Value
7. Select Nationality
8. Initiative
9. Final Point Value
10. Board Configuration
11. Select Preferred Terrain
12. Mapboards and Alignment
13. Scenario Conditions
14. Realign Boards (as permitted)
15. Agree that Scenario is Valid
16. Compose Order of Battle and Set Up

General Rules

Requirements for Building Control (A26.3), Casualty Victory Points (A26.12) and Exit Victory Points (A26.2) are as defined in *ASL* unless specifically noted otherwise.

The terms "Primary Objective" and "Secondary Objective" are used to refer to the buildings on each mapboard of the selected Board Configuration which contain the hexes detailed in Table 11. For instance, the Primary Objective on Board 1 encompasses all locations of building X3.

Rule H1.14 applies to use of the term "player" throughout this article.

All buildings on a player's *set-up* board are considered Controlled by that player at the start of play. All buildings on non-occupied boards after set-up are considered uncontrolled at game start.

Any *reinforcements* entering play (as per H1.7) can enter on any single east or west board edge (whichever is an outer edge, of course) of the mapboard which that side intitially set up or entered on unless otherwise specified by the scenario in play.

The following restrictions on purchase of units should be observed for a more historic and realistic scenario:

1) *SAN Purchase Points*: A side with an Attack Initiative may not spend points to increase its SAN (H1.29) by more than *one*; a side with a Recon Initiative may not spend points to increase its SAN by more than *three*. A side with a Defend Initiative is not restricted in purchasing SAN.

2) *Fortifications*: Only a side with a Defend Initiative may purchase fortifications (H1.6). [EXC: Any side may purchase additional "?" counters.]

3) *Airdrops*: Only a side with an Attack Initiative may purchase Paradrop or Glider capability (E9. or E8.).

1. Theater of Operations

Players are urged to determine the specific Theater of War that the scenario is to take place in by mutual consent, since the countermix available must of necessity limit this. If unwilling or unable to make a mutual decision, roll a single die and consult the following table. Continue to roll until a Theater for which counters are available results.

TABLE 1

dr	Theater
1	East Front
2	West Front
3	Italy/Balkans
4	Italy/Balkans
5	West Front
6	East Front

For purposes of simplicity, the "East Front" is defined as any action taking place in the Soviet Union, Finland, Poland, or eastern Germany. The "West Front" is defined as encompassing actions taking place in France, Great Britain, Norway, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Denmark, Austria or western Germany. "Italy/Balkans" encompasses those actions taking place in Italy (including Sicily and Sardinia), Albania, Yugoslavia, Greece (and its islands), Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungry, or Crete.

2. Optional Rules

Again, by mutual agreement, players should concur on which *ASL* "Optional Rules" will be utilized (and, of course, any "House Rules"). Only Optional Rules that *both* players agree to can be utilized.

3. Date

To determine date of scenario, one player rolls three dice—one red, one green, one white. The red die determines the year in which the action takes place. The green die determines whether the scenario occurs in the first half, or latter half, of that year. The white die determines which specific month in that time-period the action falls within. Refer to the table below.

TABLE 2

YEAR (Red Die)		YEAR HALF (Green Die)		MONTH (White Die)	
dr	Year	dr	Half	dr	Month
1	1940	1-3	Jan-June	1	Jan (July)
2	1941	4-6	July-Dec	2	Feb (Aug)
3	1942			3	Mar (Sept)
4	1943			4	Apr (Oct)
5	1944			5	May (Nov)
6	1945			6	June (Dec)

If the resulting date has no historical action in the pre-determined Theater (as, for instance, April 1941 on the East Front), players should simply re-roll until a suitable time period is determined. Refer to Table 6 if unsure as to whether historical action in the agreed Theater occurred.

4. Weather

Using the appropriate DYO Weather Chart (E3.) for the selected Theater of Operations, determine the scenario's Weather conditions. This dice roll is required unless the Weather rules are not in play (being optional). In that case, make only a dr for Environmental Conditions (B25.5). Make a Wind Force dr (B25.63).

Additionally, at this point make a dice roll to determine whether this scenario is to take place at Night (E1.); on a roll of "11" or "12", the scenario will be a Night scenario, providing players have agreed to the optional Night rules. Use DYO rules from the Night section to determine the conditions for this Night scenario.

5. Game Length

Roll two dice and refer to the following table to determine the length of the scenario, given in Game Turns.

TABLE 3

DR	Game Turns
2	6
3-4	7
5-6	8
7-8	9
9-10	10
11	11
12	12

6. Basic Point Value

For the *Basic* Point Value (BPV) allotment, one player rolls three six-sided dice. Multiply the resulting sum by 50 (the following table displays the results for those who do not trust their mathematical skills). The result is the Basic Point Value *per side*. The Initiative of each side may affect the personal BPV, giving a player his "Final Point Value" with which he will purchase his Order of Battle (H1.).

TABLE 4

DR	BPV		
3	150	11	550
4	200	12	600
5	250	13	650
6	300	14	700
7	350	15	750
8	400	16	800
9	450	17	850
10	500	18	900

[OPTIONAL: Should players wish to engage in even larger scenarios, or for scenarios involving more than two players, they may choose to roll more than three dice. Again, for a BPV result, simply multiply the sum of the dots by 50.]

7. Select Nationality

Players should now choose sides, keeping in mind date and Theater of Operations as determined above. If unable to agree, settle the matter by having one player randomly make a die roll; on a roll of "1-3" he takes the Axis role. Each player may then freely select which nationality, of his side (Axis or Allied) which was active at that date on that front, that he wishes to play (dependent of course on the countermix available). If unsure of which nationalities are available for this choice, refer to Table 6.

8. Initiative

Using the die roll modifiers given in Table 6, determine each side's Initiative for the scenario—either Attack, Recon or Defend. "Attack" refers to an all-out offensive. "Recon" may be considered a reconnaissance in force, more cautious than an "Attack" but still aggressive. "Defend" may be either a passive defense or a reaction force, depending on the player's preference and temperament. The drm given in Table 6 are based on the overall strategic situation at that date for the nationality listed for each Theater. (Note that these are color-coded according to nationality.)

In practice, each player rolls one die, applying the appropriate drm, and consults the table below. This determines his Initiative, which in turn will determine his Final Point Value.

TABLE 5

dr	Initiative
≤ 2	Attack
3-4	Recon
≥ 5	Defend

9. Final Point Value

The *Final* Point Value (FPV) each player is to receive, and with which he will actually purchase his Order of Battle (H1.), is based on the BPV and each side's individual Initiative. If a player has an Attack Initiative, the BPV is multiplied by 1.25 and the result rounded up to the nearest whole number to produce his FPV. If a player has a Recon Initiative, his FPV is the same as the BPV. If a player has a Defend Initiative, the BPV is multiplied by .75 (FRU) to produce his FPV. (It should be noted that, for those players with the onus of Defend or Recon against an Attack, special considerations highlighted later in this article offset the seeming discrepancy in FPV.) The table below summarizes these values.

TABLE 7

BPV	Attack FPV	Recon FPV	Defend FPV
150	188	150	113
200	250	200	150
250	313	250	188
300	375	300	225
350	438	350	263
400	500	400	300
450	563	450	338
500	625	500	375
550	688	550	413
600	750	600	450
650	813	650	488
700	875	700	525
750	938	750	563
800	1000	800	600
850	1063	850	638
900	1125	900	675

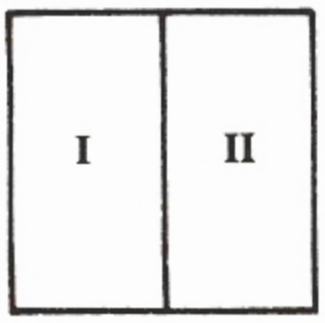
10. Board Configuration

Roll one die and refer to Table 8 below. This determines the number of mapboards that will be used in the scenario.

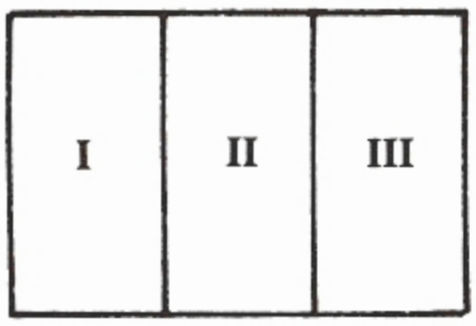
TABLE 8

dr	Mapboards
1-2	2 boards
3-4	3 boards
5-6	4 boards

CONFIGURATIONS

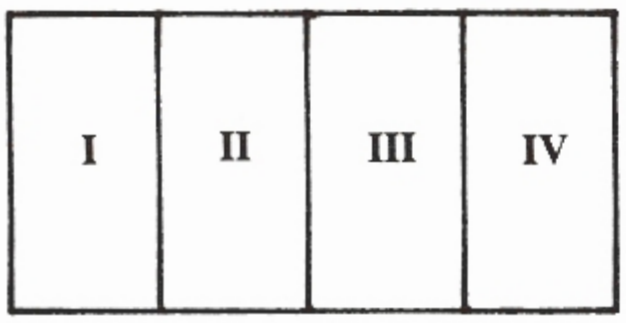


2 Boards



3 Boards





4 Boards

11. Select Preferred Terrain

Each player now secretly notes down the Terrain type (Town, Village, Farmland, Hills, or Woods) in which he would prefer to do battle. The Terrain types selected, when cross-indexed on the Table 9 matrix, will indicate the column to be used to determine specific boards from Table 10.

12. Mapboards and Alignment

Players next reveal their selected Preferred Terrain types. These are then cross-indexed on Table 9. The resulting letter from this matrix determines the Terrain column to be used when rolling for each specific mapboard.

TABLE 9

	Town	Village	Farmland	Hills	Woods
Town	A	A	B	B	D
Village	A	A	B	C	D
Farmland	B	B	B	C	E
Hills	B	C	C	C	E
Woods	D	D	E	E	E

Next roll two dice (one white, one colored) to determine the specific mapboards, using the appropriate column on Table 10. As each mapboard is selected (roll for board I first, then board II, etc.), determine its alignment by the roll of the colored die. On a dr of "1-3", the board's number is placed to be the north edge; on a "4-6", this edge is the southern edge. *Note: if any board is selected more than once, reroll for that board until all boards in play are different.*

TABLE 10

DR	A	B	C	D	E
2	24	6	4	24	2
3	17	10	16	4	18
4	3	4	13	12	15
5	1	12	11	10	32
6	22	17	15	17	19
7	21	16	2	5	5
8	20	3	18	13	16
9	23	18	9	32	11
10	10	24	3	6	17
11	12	15	17	19	9
12	14	22	19	3	6

The table below shows the "Primary" and "Secondary" Objectives, encompassing the building containing the hex indicated, on each mapboard that may enter play. Control of these Objectives are used to determine victory in some scenarios.

TABLE 6

The chart presented below is used primarily for determining the Initiative die roll modifier for players (which in turn defines the role of each side in the DYO scenario being devised—Attack, Recon, Defend), but has various other uses as well. For instance, it can be used as an aid for players on **Table 2** above in deciding if an action was historically possible on a given front.

The three columns below define the three fronts currently available in the system; the drm are color coded. Axis powers are shown as white digits on a colored background; Allies as colored digits. Please refer to the accompanying Nationality Key. Players should note that these drm values are intended to reflect the *overall* situation for specific nationalities in the admittedly large regions represented by the various fronts.

Date	Theatre of Operations		
Mo/Yr	East Front	Italy/Balkans	West Front
1/40	−2 +1		
2/40	+1 −1		
3/40	+1 −2		
4/40			−1 0 0 +1[r]
5/40			−2 +1 +1 +1[BH]
6/40			−2 −1 +2
7/40			
8/40			
9/40			
10/40		−1	+1[G]
11/40		+1	−1[G]
12/40		0	0[G]
1/41		+1	+1[G]
2/41		+1	+1[G]
3/41		0	+1[G]
4/41		−2 0 −1[bh] +1	+2[GY]
5/41		−2 0 +1	
6/41	−3 −2 −2[r] +2		
7/41	−2 −2 −2[hr] +1		
8/41	−2 −1 −2 −1[hr] +1		
9/41	−2 0 −1 −1[hr] 0		
10/41	−2 0 −1 −1[hr] +1		
11/41	−1 +1 0 0[hr] 0		
12/41	+1 +1 +1 +1[hr] −2		
1/42	+2 +1 +2 +2[hr] −2		
2/42	+1 +1 +2 +2[hr] −2		
3/42	0 +1 +1 +1[hr] −1		
4/42	0 +1 +1 +1[hr] 0		
5/42	−1 +1 0 0[hr] +1		
6/42	−2 +1 −1 −1[hr] +1		
7/42	−2 +1 −1 −1[hr] +2		
8/42	−2 +1 0 −1[hr] +2		
9/42	−1 +1 0 0[hr] +1		
10/42	0 +1 +1 +1[hr] 0		
11/42	+1 +1 +2 +3[hr] −1		
12/42	0 +1 +3 +2[hr] −1		
1/43	+1 +1 +3 +2[hr] −2		
2/43	0 +1 +2 +2[hr] −1		
3/43	−1 +1 +3 +1[hr] −1		
4/43	0 +1 +1[hr] +1		
5/43	+1 +1 +1[hr] +1		
6/43	+1 +1 +1[hr] +1		
7/43	−1 +1 +1[hr] 0	0 +2 −1 −1	
8/43	0 +1 +2[hr] −1	+1 +2 −1 −1	
9/43	+1 +1 +2[hr] −1	+1 +3 −1 −1	
10/43	+1 +1 +2[hr] −1	+1 −1 −1	
11/43	0 +1 +2[hr] −1	+2 −1 −1	
12/43	0 +1 +2[hr] −1	+2 −1 −1	
1/44	+1 +1 +3[hr] −1	+1 −2 −2	
2/44	0 +1 +2[hr] −1	−1 −1 −1	
3/44	+1 +1 +2[hr] −2	+1 0 0	
4/44	+1 +1 −1	+2 +2[hr] 0 0 −2	
5/44	+1 +2 −1	+2 +2[hr] −2 −2 −2	
6/44	+2 +2 −2	+2 +2[hr] −1 −1 −2	+2 −2 −2
7/44	+1 +3 −2	+2 +2[hr] −2 −2 −2	+1 −2 −2
8/44	+1 −1	+2 +3[h] −2 −2 −2	0 −1 −2
9/44	+1 −1	+2 +3[h] −1 −2 −1	0 −2 −1
10/44	0 −1	+2 −1 −2 −1	+1 0 0
11/44	+1 −2	+2 0 0 −1	+2 −1 −1
12/44	0 −1	+2 0 −1 −1	−1 0 0
1/45	0 −1	+2 0 0 −1	+1 −1 −1
2/45	+1 −1	+2 +1 +1 −2	+1 −2 −2
3/45	+1 −1	+3 +1 +1 −2	+2 −2 −2
4/45	+2 −2	+3 +1 +1 −2	+2 −2 −2
5/45	+2 −2	+3 +1 +1 −1	+3 −2 −2

Nationality Key:

Axis: German: 0; Finnish: 0; Italian: 0; Axis Minor: 0

Allied: Russian: 0; British: 0; French: 0; American: 0; Allied Minor: 0

Minor Country Key:

Axis	Allied
b: Bulgaria	B: Belguim
h: Hungary	G: Greece
r: Rumania	H: Holland
	N: Norway

TABLE 11

Board	Primary Objective	Secondary Objective
1	X3	J5
2	W7	T1
3	M2	R5
4	O6	Y9
5	R1	FF6
6	M5	J8
7	P2	P10
8	W6	N2
9	DD3	O10
10	Z6	L3
11	I6	S4
12	U5	O4
13	I8	W4
14	L5	S9
15	Q8	H5
16	O4	L6
17	Q4	S6
18	K3	R9
19	K7	X6
20	H3	AA3
21	J4	EE4
22	H4	W8
23	Y7	F3
24	V3	R5
32	C4	FF4

13. Scenario Conditions

To determine the Scenario Conditions (description, set-up, Victory Conditions), first cross-index the players' Initiative (as determined in **Table 5** above) on the table below. Then refer to the specific scenario descriptions immediately following.

TABLE 12

	Attack	Recon	Defend
Attack	ME	SD	FD
Recon	SD	ATC	PR
Defend	FD	PR	SS

ME —Meeting Engagement
ATC—Advance to Contact
SD —Screen Defense
FD —Fixed Defense
PR —Probe
SS —Static Situation

MEETING ENGAGEMENT: A head-on collision between two advancing forces. (Attack vs. Attack)

SET-UP: All forces start off-board. Randomly choose first player to move by competitive dr. First player enters from west edge of Board I; all units of first player receive only one-half MP/MF on first Game Turn. Second player enters from east edge of map. All reinforcements must enter from the same board edge as the player's initial forces.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: Roll two dice on table below.

DR	Victory Conditions
2-3	Use Battlefield Integrity rules (A16.). The first side to cause the other to lose an ELR level wins immediately. The Case A DRM of A16.2 is doubled during all Integrity Checks in this scenario. If there is no winner in this manner by game end, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
4	The player Controlling the majority of both Primary and Secondary Objectives wins. If tied for building Control, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
5	The player Controlling the most Secondary Objectives wins. If tied for building Control, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
6	The player Controlling the most Primary Objectives wins. If tied for building Control, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
7	The player earning the most Casualty Victory Points wins. If tied, the player Controlling the most Objectives (of both types) wins. If tied for building Control, the scenario ends in a draw.
8	The player exiting the most Exit Victory Points off the opponent's entry map edge wins. If tied, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
9	The player having the most *Terrain* Victory Points wins; these are awarded for Control of Objectives: 3 points for each Primary, and 2 for each Secondary Objective. If tied, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
10	The first player Controlling the Primary Objective on the opponent's entry board wins immediately. If there is no winner in this manner by game end, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
11-12	The player Controlling the most buildings, of any type, at game end is the winner. If tied for number of buildings Controlled, the player Controlling the most Objectives (of either type) wins. If still tied, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.

ADVANCE TO CONTACT: Another head-on collision, but between two more cautious adversaries probing for an opening. (Recon vs. Recon)

SET-UP: Randomly determine the player to set up on Board I. The other player will set up his forces on the easternmost board. Both players set up simultaneously (use a divider screen to conceal set-up or any other convenient method). Both players must set up all units within five hexes, inclusive, of their friendly board edge—west or east. After set-up by both players is complete, roll again to randomly determine player moving first.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: Roll two dice on table below.

DR	Victory Conditions
2-3	The first player to exit ≥ 20% of his OB (in terms of Exit Victory Points) off the opponent's board edge wins immediately. If there is no winner in this manner by game end, the victor is the player who has exited the most Exit Victory Points; if tied for Exit Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
4	The first player to exit ≥ 10% of his OB (in terms of Exit Victory Points) off the opponent's board edge wins immediately. If there is no winner in this manner by game end, the victor is the player who has exited the most Exit Victory Points; if tied for Exit Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
5	The player Controlling the most Secondary Objectives wins. If tied for building Control, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
6	The player Controlling the most Primary Objectives wins. If tied for building Control, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
7	The player earning the most Casualty Victory Points wins. If tied, the player Controlling the most Objectives (of both types) wins. If tied for building Control, the scenario ends in a draw
8	The player Controlling the most buildings, of any type, on the opponent's entry map wins. If tied, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
9	The player having the most *Terrain* Victory Points wins; these are awarded for Control of Objectives: 3 points for each Primary, and 2 for each Secondary Objective. If tied, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
10	The first player Controlling the Primary Objective on the opponent's entry board wins immediately. If there is no winner in this manner by game end, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
11-12	Use Battlefield Integrity rules (A16.). The first side to cause the other to lose an ELR level wins immediately. The Case A DRM of A16.2 is doubled during all Integrity Checks in this scenario. If there is no winner in this manner by game end, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.

SCREEN DEFENSE: An assault against a formation poised for a counter-attack. (Attack vs. Recon)

SET-UP: Prior to play (during **14.** below), the Recon player may change the north-south orientation of any one board in play; the board may not be moved east or west of its original position. The Recon player then sets up first on Board I. The Attacking player sets up second on the easternmost board, at least five whole hexes from the nearest non-HIP enemy unit. The Attacking player moves first.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: Roll two dice on table below.

DR	Victory Conditions
2	The Attacking player must exit ≥ 25% of his OB (in terms of Exit Victory Points) off the Recon player's west board edge.
3	The Attacking player must Control the Primary and Secondary Objectives on the Recon player's board.
4	The Attacking player must Control the Primary Objective on the Recon player's board.
5	The Attacking player must Control the Secondary Objective on the Recon player's board.
6	The Attacking player must Control at least one-third of all buildings on the Recon player's board.
7	The Attacking player must have at least a 3:2 advantage in Good Order squads (or equivalents) on the Recon player's board. For purposes of determining victory, any mobile AFV with functioning MA is considered two squads; if immobile/without MA, one squad.
8	The Attacking player, prior to set-up, secretly designates either the Primary or the Secondary Objective on the Recon player's board as his target. The Attacking player must Control this building at the end of the scenario. The identity of this Objective need not be revealed until the conclusion of play.
9	The player earning the most Casualty Victory Points wins. If tied, the Recon player is the victor.
10	The Attacking player must Control at least one-half of all buildings on the Recon player's board.
11-12	The Attacking player wins immediately if he can show a continuous path of road hexes, from the east edge to the west edge of the mapboard, with no Good Order enemy units on/adjacent to any hexes of the designated path. If no such path of road hexes is possible at the beginning of the scenario, reroll for Victory Conditions.

FIXED DEFENSE: An assault against an enemy in prepared positions. (Attack vs. Defend)

SET-UP: Prior to play (during **14.** below), the Defend player may either

a) change the north-south orientation of any one board in play or

b) switch the locations of any two boards in play, maintaining the same north-south orientation or

c) replace any one board with one from the same terrain type (from the same column on Table 10) or with board 7 or 8 (only if three or four boards are in play); the orientation is then chosen randomly. If board 7 or 8 is chosen, place three one-lane bridges across the river connecting the roads which terminate at the waters' edge. Roll one die for each: on a roll of "1-3", the bridge is of stone construction; on a "4-6", it is wooden.

The Defending player then sets up first on Board I. The Attacking player sets up second on the easternmost board, at least five whole hexes from the nearest non-HIP enemy unit. The Attacking player moves first.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: Roll two dice on table below.

DR	Victory Conditions
2	The Attacking player must exit ≥ 40% of his OB (in terms of Exit Victory Points) off the Defending player's west board edge.
3	The player earning the most Casualty Victory Points wins. If tied, the Defending player is the victor.
4	The Attacking player, prior to set-up, secretly designates either the Primary or the Secondary Objective on the Defending player's board as his target. The Attacking player must Control this building at the end of the scenario. The identity of this Objective need not be revealed until the conclusion of play.
5	The Attacking player must Control the Secondary Objective on the Defending player's board.
6	The Attacking player must Control the Primary Objective on the Defending player's board.
7	The Defending player, prior to set-up, secretly designates either the Primary or Secondary Objective on his board as his HQ. The Attacking player must Control the Defender's HQ at scenario end.
8	The Attacking player wins immediately if he can show a continuous path of road hexes, from the east edge to the west edge of the mapboard, out of all enemy units' normal range (see A10.532 for Ordnance). If no such path of road hexes is possible at the beginning of the scenario, reroll for Victory Conditions.
9	The Attacking player must Control at least two-thirds of all buildings on the Defending player's board.
10	The Attacking player must have at least a 2:1 advantage in Good Order squads (or equivalents) on the Defending player's board. For purposes of determining victory, any mobile AFV with functioning MA is considered two squads; if immobile/without MA, one squad.
11	The Attacking player must Control both the Primary and the Secondary Objectives on the Defending player's board.
12	The Attacking player must earn twice as many Casualty Victory Points as the Defender *or* Control all buildings on the Defending player's board.

PROBE: A probe against an enemy in prepared positions. (Recon vs. Defend)

SET-UP: Prior to play (during **14.** below), the Defending player may change the north-south orientation of any one board in play; the board may not be moved east or west of its original position. The Defending player then sets up first on Board I. The Recon player sets up second on the easternmost board, at least five whole hexes from the nearest non-HIP enemy unit. The Recon player moves first.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: Roll two dice on table below.

DR	Victory Conditions
2	The Recon player must Control the Secondary Objective on the Defending player's board.
3	The Defending player, prior to set-up, secretly designates either the Primary or Secondary Objective on his board as his HQ. The Recon player must Control the Defender's HQ at scenario end.
4	The Recon player must Control at least one-third of all buildings on the Defending player's board.
5	The Recon player must exit ≥ 25% of his OB (in terms of Exit Victory Points) off the Defending player's west board edge.
6	The Recon player must earn more Casualty Victory Points than the Defending player.
7	The Recon player, prior to set-up, openly designates any three buildings on the Defending player's board. None of these may be within four hexes of any other selected building. The Recon player must Control at least two of these designated buildings at the end of play.
8	The player earning the most Casualty Victory Points wins. However, Casualty Victory Points are also awarded for Control of each Primary and Secondary Objective: four VPs for each Primary Objective Controlled, two for each Secondary Objective Controlled.
9	The Recon player must Control the Primary Objective on the Defending player's board.
10	The Recon player must Control the Secondary Objective on the Defending player's board AND earn more Casualty Victory Points than the Defending player.
11	The Recon player must have a 3:2 advantage in Good Order squads (or equivalents) on the Defending player's board. For purposes of determining victory, any mobile AFV with functioning MA is considered two squads; if immobile/without MA, one squad.
12	The Recon player wins immediately if he can show a continuous path of road hexes, from the east edge to the west edge of the mapboard, with no Good Order enemy units on/adjacent to any hexes of the designated path. If no such path of road hexes is possible at the beginning of the scenario, reroll for Victory Conditions.

STATIC SITUATION: A set-piece battle between two dug-in opposing forces. (Defend vs. Defend)

SET-UP: Randomly determine the player to set up on Board I. The other player will set up his forces on the easternmost board. Both players set up simultaneously (use a divider screen to conceal set-up or any other convenient method). Both players must set up all units within seven hexes, inclusive, of their friendly board edge—west or east. After set-up of both players is complete, roll again to randomly determine player moving first.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: Roll two dice on table below.

DR	Victory Conditions
2 3	The first player to exit any squad or AFV with functioning MA off the opponent's board edge—west or east—wins immediately. If there is no winner in this manner by game end, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
4	The player Controlling the most Secondary Objectives at game end wins. If tied, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in draw.
5	The player Controlling the most Primary Objectives at game end wins. If tied, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in draw.
6	The player Controlling the most Primary and Secondary Objectives at game end wins. If tied, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
7	Each player, prior to set-up, openly designates any two buildings on the other player's board. None of these may be within four hexes of any other selected building. The player simultaneously Controlling any three of these four buildings wins immediately. If there is no winner in this manner by game end, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
8	The player earning the most Casualty Victory Points wins. If tied for Casualty Victory Points, the player having the most Good Order squads (or equivalents) on the opposing player's board is the victor; if still tied, the scenario ends in a draw.
9	The first player to have at least a 2:1 in Good Order squads (or equivalents) on the opposing player's board wins immediately. If there is no winner in this manner by game end, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points, if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
10	The first player to exit a Captured (A20.) enemy unit off his own board edge—west or east—wins immediately. If there is no winner in this manner by game end, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.
11-12	Use Battlefield Integrity rules (A16.). The first side to cause the other to lose an ELR level wins immediately. The Case A DRM of A16.2 is doubled during all Integrity Checks in this scenario. If there is no winner in this manner by game end, the victor is the player scoring the most Casualty Victory Points; if tied for Casualty Victory Points, the scenario ends in a draw.

14. Realign Boards

Some scenario types (e.g., FD, SD and PR) permit a player to realign or transpose or even select a new board, depending on his Initiative for the scenario. That player must exercise this option at this time or forfeit the opportunity.

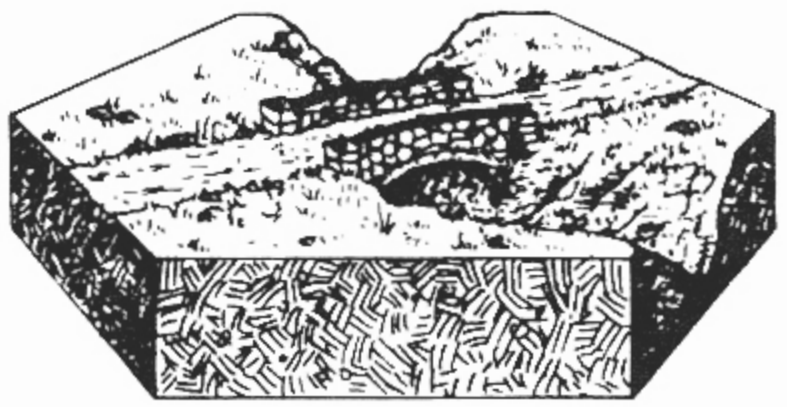
After the specific mapboard configuration has at last been finalized, players should determine all river or stream depth(s) and river current. Refer to appropriate rules (B20.4, B21.121 and .122) for procedure.

15. Agree that Scenario is Valid

Once all parameters of the scenario are determined, the players must both concur that the scenario will result in a satisfactory contest. Unless specifically stated under the Victory Conditions (i.e., "immediately"), all scenarios are played to the conclusion of the final player turn of the specified last game turn (as determined in **Table 3** above); victory is determined at the conclusion of this final player turn. If either player feels the scenario is not reasonably balanced, the players should repeat the above procedure until both players are satisfied with the proposed game.

16. Compose Order of Battle and Set Up

Players now compose their respective Orders of Battle, following the procedure in the DESIGN YOUR OWN Chapter (H) of the *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* Rulebook, determining rarity factors and other variables as they proceed. When this is completed, players should refer to the scenario's specific set-up instructions, place their units, and commence play.



I have tried to make this system, first proposed by Mr. Schmittgens and then modified heavily by Mr. Kibler, as complete as possible. It should serve for all participants for the East Front, West Front and Italy/Balkans, despite the fact that readers may have to await the release of the counters of some nationalities before being able to use it to full effect. A blank, and a completed sample, DYO form utilizing this system can be found on Page 20 of this issue. Players are urged to copy and make use of this form. In future articles, it is hoped that the North African and Pacific/Asian Theaters can be incorporated to present the most challenging play that the ASL devotee can face. ☆



Squad Leader Clinic

NIGHT MOVES

By Jon Mishcon

"Escape from Velikiye Luki" [Scenario 6 in the original *SQUAD LEADER*] and night rules in general, must appeal to the *ASL* gamer who likes things a little wild. Even the player most jaded to fortune's whim (allow me to here mention my two, consecutive "snake-eyes" MG shots against Joe's 10-3 leader in our playtest of the 1987 tournament scenarios) will find each playing unique. Play-balance is, at best, a "guesstimate".

The very first question that must be answered is why bother to have night rules at all? My guess is that there are three reasons. The first is to satisfy the player who loves uncertainty; night rules insure that you'll never be certain of anything. The second is the desire to have the *ASL* rules become a complete reflection of 1935-1945 combat. Night attacks were standard fare and there will be players who desire to recreate those actions. The final reason is the use of *ASL* as a teaching tool for military history. For all the supposed flaws in the system, it may well provide the best insight as to what local commanders did and why. If you want to learn why night attacks was purposeful madness, then a couple of playings of this scenario will be enlightening.

Thankfully, the night rules are all optional. Their inclusion in *YANKS* is "icing on the cake" and allows me to continue our efforts to redo all the original *SL* scenarios.

Well, what works for night combat and what doesn't? Delightfully, the game is true to history. Simplicity works. Or at least it may work. Complexity doesn't. Or at least, not often enough to be worth a damn.

The attacker should go with every man clumped together moving towards one objective. Don't be shocked if 25% of your force starts to drift off. If at all possible, use column movement to maintain cohesion. Even if you can't get the Column rules in play, try to keep all your eggs tucked neatly together so you'll have a chance to obtain local superiority. Use one "dummy" Cloaking counter with your real force to, hopefully, absorb sniper and other fire. Use the extra Cloaking counters to feint in another direction; but if your march is long enough, no-one (including you) will know exactly what the original lines of attack were.

Spending 10 BPV on Recon is a real gamble for two reasons. There's a lot of terrain to hide in, so you tend to get into guessing games when you pick search sites *and* I often don't end up where I thought I was going anyway. (Does anyone recall that old WWII song about, "You never know where you're going till you get there"?)

The defender should huddle on the objective with at least 75% of his force. Use as light a picket screen as you can get away with. Now, in this particular scenario, you've got to spread out; but it's still best to put your units in packets rather than in a thin line. Hide your leaders with some of your best troops and perforce sit tight.

The most important consideration for the defender is the placement of his best leader, the troops he can stack with, and the troops he can reach in one Movement Phase. Unless there is an absolute contraindication, you must plan to put your best leader in the rear center with your best troops *and* put two stacks of good troops one Movement Phase away toward both flanks. Thus your chances of getting two stacks rolling are greatly improved.

The thought will occur to any experienced player that using hidden units may allow traps to be formed. So you set up certain areas with no units, almost inviting attacks; while you cover other areas heavily with both hidden and non-hidden forces. Good luck chums. This may work if the opposing player can control his advance. It tends to fall apart if the attacking units that get lost on the advance waltz right through that little hole.

The bottom line is that the night rules are a playtester's nightmare. Want to find out why Japanese coordinated attacks failed in Guadalcanal? Try marching two or three columns up five boards and check out what happens.

Our re-working of "Escape from Velikiye Luki" is enclosed on the insert for players to get a chance to further experiment with the night rules.

After Action Report—The Paw of the Tiger

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (Vol. 23, No. 5 in this case). The intent is to provide the *ASL* player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

GERMAN: Put the Tigers and the radio onto any commanding heights. We like 2Q6 and 2CC8. Use your pre-game drm to try to get hulldown positions.

Have the infantry, the 37L ATG, and the Pzkw IIINs set up behind the Tigers to protect their rear and flanks. Check out T1 as a location for the 37L ATG.

RUSSIAN: If you're going to try a flanking move through the southern woods (5I10), use at least six tanks there and go for trailbreaks. Otherwise, split evenly between the other two roads.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: Call in the artillery as soon as possible. Shoot early in First Fire during the first couple of turns to get maximum potential use of retained ROF. By Turn 5, wait until fairly late in the move before shooting. Always try to kill the T34s first. If you can reduce the number of mobile Russian AFVs to six, then try and hide. Don't forget to set up your ATG using HIP. Boresight the 88s on the bridges—5Y8 and 5EE2.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: Reread the article "How to Kill Tigers" (Vol. 23, No. 5).

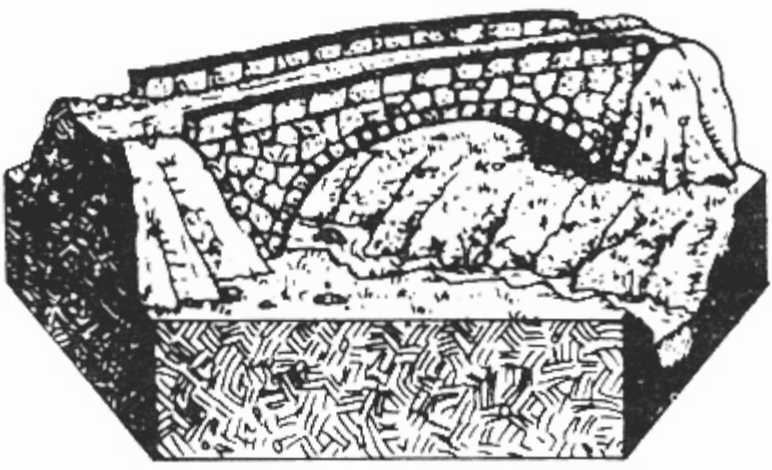
Hube's Pocket

GERMAN: Move the Panther to 2I4 in the first move. Screen in front of the Panther with infantry in the F2 and C1 woods. The sMG halftrack and one Mk IVH should move behind the ridge line heading for 2O5 and 2P5. The rest of the tanks and halftracks must move as quickly as possible along the Board 5 woods road heading for positions in the gully around the 5EE2 and 5R6 woods.

RUSSIAN: Bring on the bulk of your infantry and all your T34/85s on 4EE1, 4FF0 and 4GG1 and move as quickly as possible for Board 2. Some infantry (riding tanks) and your T34/76s are best left behind cover on the other side of the board around positions like 4L8, 4M10, 4I4 and 4E4.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: Your Panther is the linchpin of your defense. You will find that you can easily move into LOS and expect to kill. However, the Russian T34s are likely to try and swarm it, so you must always screen the Panther with infantry. While your Panther kills off the T34s on one side, the rest of your armor plus your mounted infantry (give these guys the SWs) must plan to go in and dig the Russians out from around 2EE8. Don't forget to use smoke whenever possible.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: If the Panther shoots early in your move, and you can swarm it, do so. It is worth four T34s to kill the Panther. Otherwise, spread out, stay in cover, force the German to come to you. Don't forget to try immobilization shots. It should be easy to deny entry to the convoy on Boards 4 and 2 with your infantry (just digging in on the road can really screw up convoy movement), but you'll have to use armor to block the road on Board 5. Assuming that the 5R6 hex is German occupied, optimum tactics probably means staying under cover and trying to shoot up the convoy into three sections as it enters. Leaving the T34/76s on the other side of the board assures you that the Germans can't concentrate against you and the T34 mobility will allow them to close ranks when the convoy does enter the map. For those who enjoy duking it out, you can go out and cut up the SS infantry and Mk IVHs, but the Panther will just eat you alive if you do.





SERIES REPLAY

STREETS OF FIRE, Scenario 1

German Player—Darryl Burk
Russian Player—Bill Conner
Neutral Commentator—Mark C. Nixon

Bill Conner has long been a familiar figure in the final rounds of tournament play, winning a healthy share of SQUAD LEADER and ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER events not only at Origins, but at a number of other conventions. He first became involved with SL through playtesting with Bob McNamara's group in Ohio, and most recently Bill has organized his own SL/ASL tournament—the Oktoberfest, which makes its second annual showing this fall. Darryl Burk was also involved in the McNamara playtest group. He has always been a tenacious opponent and can lay claim to having beaten Bill more times than everyone else in the world combined. Mark Nixon is readily recognizable to our long-term readership, having crafted a number of articles on G.I. some issues back. Though he has won many ASL events, he is quick to point out that none have required him to face either Bill or Darryl, making him content to look over their shoulders on this meeting.

OPENING COMMENTS

Russian: Since meeting through The *GENERAL*'s "Opponents Wanted" column early in 1982, Darryl and I have been each other's principal and toughest opponent, teaching one another the game system along with many valuable lessons. Having played hundreds of scenarios—published and in playtest—we are well accustomed to each other's style of play. Darryl is not afraid to try the unorthodox, and will seldom use the same plan even if previously successful. His greatest weakness is in feeling sorry for me while destroying my forces. He takes his lumps better than I and deserves much of the credit for my tournament successes.

We chose to play "Guryev's Headquarters" because it is our favorite *STREETS OF FIRE* scenario, maybe even our favorite of all those for *ASL*. It is the quick-play piece of *Deluxe ASL*, much as the *SL* classic "The Guards Counterattack" was for the original game. It is a simple, small-area action utilizing only basic infantry; only this time it is the German line infantry attacking the Russian elite forces instead of vice-versa. This replay should be easily followed by experienced *ASL*-ers, *SL*-ers, and maybe even the uninitiated. We highly recommend playing it several times because it is extremely enjoyable as a training scenario for those new to the gaming pleasures of the *ASL* system.

Each *ASL* scenario has a balance provision, which is influenced by our choice of sides. It tends to make for some very interesting variations while also keeping players from being overly greedy. Usually, this is some kind of relaxed Victory Condition, terrain or troop alteration, or even some special restriction on the enemy player. It all boils down to one thing: if each player wants the same side, a die is rolled with the winner getting to play that side and the loser getting the balance provision in his favor.

Although I would rather play as the German in this scenario, in order to be on the attack, I chose the Russians. My reasoning is that if "Action" Burk also chooses to play the Germans, one of us will get the Russians and the HQ fortified. This doesn't sit too well with me, unless I were to get that fortified building, because I feel that it makes the Russians a little too tough, whereas the reinforcement restriction by both of us choosing the Russians is much less dramatic. Besides, the Russians have been winning a lot lately.

German: I consider "Fish" [Bill Conner] to be the ideal opponent, not just for *ASL* but for any game. The traits that have made him a master of the *SL/ASL* system apply to any game he plays. First and foremost, he is an outstanding gamesman and good sport. Over the course of hundreds of games I've never known him to lose his temper because of an unfavorable result, lost game, or for any other reason. His gaming ethics are matched in quality by his skill in actual play.

My choice to play the Germans in "Guryev's Headquarters" was based mainly on the results of our previous experiences with it. While it appears an easy scenario for the Germans to win, the Russians have won whenever building bE1 was strongly defended (which is most of the time). Though I have lost several times as the German player, I have a plan for the Germans to take that building and I am eager to try it out.

Also, I don't want the balance provisions to come into effect if Fish and I both chose the same side. Here I've tried to outguess Conner. If he should choose the Germans to play, thus giving the Russians fortification of building dL1 on the ground level, I feel my plan for the Germans would still work if I win the die roll for sides and get the Germans. The fortified building would not hamper my plans that much. However, if I lost the dice roll, the fortified building would be a nice refuge to weather the fury of Fish's attack.

Neutral Commentator: *I first met "Fish" Conner and "Action" Burk when they entered the G.I. tournament at Origins '83. In a field of 28, I had them ranked #1 and #6 respectively, based on a short questionnaire I used to seed the tourney. Today I would change only one thing: I would now rank Darryl higher than I did then.*

They have played each other hundreds (yes, literally hundreds) of times. This is their eighth confrontation at "Guryev's Headquarters", so I expect this replay to reflect their familiarity with one another's style of play as well as the general situation. They have previously tried several tactics, including an end sweep across the south side of the battlefield, the "north board edge creep", and the "up front defense" in building bE1 with remote firebases (such as dH3, second level).

As luck would have it, this game is something of a special occasion for our antagonists. This playing marks their 100th ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER confrontation. Their caliber of play is very high, so expect a clean, crisp game.

Initial Set-Up

Serial	Event	Final DRM	DR	Result
1	R.B. and C.B. in bF1			
2	R.D. and C.D. in bF1 (1st)			
3	Golikov and R.H. w/HMG in bE1			
4	R.G. w/LMG and C.G. in bE2			
5	R.F. in bD1			
6	R.C. and C.C. in bD2			
7	R.E. and C.E. in bD2 (1st)			
8	HIP R.I. w/LMG in bC1			
9	HIP Petrakov and R.A. w/MMG in dI1			
10	Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, G.N. in bC4 (1st)			
11	Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG, G.Q. in bD4 (1st)			
12	Pilsl and G.K. w/LMG in bE4			
13	G.A., G.B. and g.C. in bF3			
14	G.F., G.G. and G.J. in bF3 (1st)			
15	Behr in bF4			
16	G.D., G.E. and g.CC. in bG3			
17	G.H. and G.I. in bG3 (1st)			
18	Werth in bI4			
19	German Sniper placed in bG4			
20	Russian Sniper placed in dM1			

Following Set-up of Russian sniper, Russian player places Concealment counters: C.F. in bD1 and C.H. in bE1. German player then places Concealment counters: C.R. in bF4 and C.S. in bI4.

Russian: The Victory Condition states that, to win, I need only as many good order squads in the GHQ as the German at the end of seven turns. Initially I control approximately 75% of the playing area—my opponent, about 10%. However, this is meaningless because a closer look reveals most hexes in the German set-up area are only five to six hexes from the GHQ, and I am outnumbered two to one. I cannot possibly hope to defend everything.

Multiple playings have given Darryl and I an appreciation of the relative unimportance of everything south of hexrow H, and the extreme importance of building bE1. Yielding this building too soon is a grave mistake which would probably lead to defeat, because that building makes such an excellent jump-off point for the attack on the GHQ. Therefore, I will use the best cover available and prepare to defend building bE1 against an all-out assault, with units therein assigned a dual mission: aided by reinforcements, to restrict flanking maneuvers and to fall back by design or forcibly as the situation warrants. I will fight a delaying action and make the enemy pay with troops and time for ground gained.

Sorry folks, there are no perfect plans in this scenario. And here's why. Surprise for the Russian in the GHQ, a very important aspect of his defense, is only achieved through placement and use of two HIP squads, possibly joined by leaders and support weapons, as allowed by SSR and, to a lesser extent, by five Concealment counters. But this element of surprise is lost if units are repeatedly set-up in the same locations. *Any* Russian set-up can be "countered" and easily picked apart; so the Russian player must conceal his intentions as long as possible.

As in most scenarios, HIP units have the potential to surprise the enemy with CC ambushes or by setting traps to bring devastating firepower against a position previously thought "safe". HIP itself is usually more important as a deterrent force than the value of any unit's actual firepower, for as long as the whereabouts of those units are unknown, the opposition must exercise caution (both in set-up and movement). My HIP units are a 6-2-8 with LMG in bC1 and a 9-1 leader, 4-5-8 squad with MMG in dI1. The 6-2-8 will guard against any north edge run or movement into bC2, which covers part of my withdrawal route from building bE1 back to GHQ. When discovered, he will withdraw to the safety of the dM1 rubble. Notice this position can-

not be attacked from the German set-up area.

Lt. Petrakov and his boys, squad A with a MMG, in dI1 guard against a south edge sweep and movement into bF2, bG1 and bG2, or will fire at upper levels of the rowhouse. In the event of a major assault on building bE1, they will move to hex bE1. The LOS from the German set-up area to this position is also restricted. Positions along the road south of dI1 offer greater surprise potential for HIP set-up, but lack the flexibility of immediate reinforcement for building bE1.

My 4-5-8 squad F is set-up unconcealed in bD1 as bait. It initially can be seen only from the upper levels of bB4. He may distract fire from my squads guarding the street in building bE1, and helps guard against enemy movement into bC2.

Golikov is used to hide the HMG and squad H, keeping them from Cowering, can help move the weapon, and will allow first-turn rally possibilities in the ''Death Trap''. The rest of the guys will set up concealed and spread out in the ''Death Trap'' facing the rowhouse. Their mission is to form a ''Wall of Fire'' a massive firegroup dealing with German firebases—or can individually harass any attempts to cross the street.

Units in the upper levels are at greater risk than those at ground level; if they break and the Germans move adjacent to the stairwells, they will have to remain upstairs until either self-rallied or captured. The lines of sight which those units have, though, are very important—especially bD2 (1st) to bA3—so it's worth the risk. On the other hand, hex bD2 can be hit from 18 locations within normal range in the German set-up area, and the units there can be prevented from routing to bE1 by Germans in bH2. All other rout possibilities would leave them in locations within LOS of the Germans, subject to further attacks. Again, this is a risk I must take.

My reinforcements will move to GHQ, counter-attacking if necessary, or will deal with any south end flanking attempt. Also, I will exchange the 8-1 leader for a 10-0 ''Fearless Leader'' Commissar, as he raises everyone's morale by one and negates Desperation Morale. My sniper is placed to deal with Darryl's sniper if placed behind my lines, or with the leading elements of his attack who will hopefully have their hands too full to afford Sniper Checks.

My greatest fear is an all-out German assault on the ''Death Trap''; hence this set-up. From these positions I should be able to respond to anything Darryl throws at me. I feel this placement is the most conservative one I have used for this scenario to date. I am taking no great risks other than those mentioned above, while still giving the impression of previously successful and more risky set-ups which placed all my units into the ''Wall of Fire''. In those set-ups, I even placed both HIP squads, the HMG, MMG and the 9-1 leader up front, often with a concealed squad. Those units were at risk, subject to discovery by some lucky fire, but during the Final Fire and the following Prep Fire ruined one enemy three-squad firegroup after another. Darryl may be intimidated, as he was the receipient of many of those set-ups.

I expect play to be more conservative than normal in this replay. Neither of us desires to be totally thrashed in full view of future opponents on this center stage.

German: My plan for play of this scenario centers on taking building bE1 as soon as possible. I know that it will be stoutly defended because ''Fish'' knows that it is the key to a successful Russian defense. I plan to bust the Russian hold on this building by using massive firepower and a steady advance to force the issue there before too many reinforcements arrive. Large firegroups seem to be the only way to hurt the elite Russian defenders and I must keep up a steady advance; even though the distance is short, the Russian can make it a long journey to dL1.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMENTS

We liked the format used by Messers. Chappell, Blick and Kibler in their replay (*GENERAL*, Vol. 23, Nos. 2-3) so well that we adopted it for this Series Replay with only minor modifications. These, along with some clarifications, are as follows.

1. Whenever we refer to a hex side or vertex, we always designate them as though an Artillery Request counter were in the hex, oriented with the ''1'' hex side containing the grid coordinate. Vertex #1, then, is the one between ''1'' and ''2''; vertex #2 is between ''2'' and ''3''; and so forth.

2. With the above in mind, we always orient Sniper counters with the ''1'' side matching the hex side containing the grid coordinates. If you adhere to this rule, you need never worry about perfectly aligning your Sniper counter, and eliminate any player ever questioning the direction it is facing. When the Sniper counter moves to another board, it is simply reoriented properly if necessary. When it lands in a half hex with no grid coordinate, it is oriented as other hexes on that board; or oriented on the lower numbered board if in a whole hex made up of two un-numbered half hexes.

3. Again referring to the above, bypass movement is recorded by referring to the hexside bypassed. For example, ''bK5/5-6'' means that hex bK5 was bypassed across hexsides ''5'' and ''6''.

4. When called upon to show both dice in a result, as with Sniper movement, we recorded the colored die first.

5. We did not use letter designations for events; each has its own number.

6. We did not record actual placement of DM or Residual Fire counters, feeling these are an inherent part of their respective events and would only serve to clutter the notes.

7. Snipers were resolved immediately when rolled, instead of after resolution of the generating event. Don't be surprised when play is interrupted for immediate Sniper activity.

8. Another time saver was our ''Random Events'' priority. Whenever a Random Event must be rolled for multiple units in a location, we instituted a set priority which eliminated the hassle of designating each die to a certain unit and the inconvenience of a stack suddenly keeling over in the middle of the often frantic behavior we players are all subject to during such excitement.

Our system is simple: predesignate your dice for all time, light to dark, on paper and preferably someplace where this list can be seen during play. Every Random Event takes this priority, light to dark: Hero (alphabetically if multiple heroes); Leader (Commissar first, then by quality and then alphabetically); Squad or HS (by alphabetic designation, then per A25 Chart if duplicated); finally, Crew (by number).

This may seem a lot of trouble during set-up, but once done is set for the game. It truly saves a lot of time when you're playing better than 100 scenarios a year.

EVENT LISTING LEGEND

NE	No Effect
w/	with or possessing
(1st)	First Level
(2nd)	Second Level
G.-.	German Squad
R.-.	Russian Squad
C.-.	Concealment Counter
g.-.	German HS
malf	Malfunction

(all other abbreviations are ASL standard.)

RUSSIAN UNITS

Type Unit	*Designation*
9-1 Leader	Petravkov
7-0 Leader	Golikov
4-5-8	R.A.
4-5-8	R.B.
4-5-8	R.C.
4-5-8	R.D.
4-5-8	R.E.
4-5-8	R.F.
6-2-8	R.G.
6-2-8	R.H.
6-2-8	R.I.
?	C.B.
?	C.C.
?	C.D.
?	C.E.
?	C.G.

GERMAN UNITS

Type Unit	*Designation*
9-1 Leader	Bauman
8-1 Leader	Kalmer
8-1 Leader	Pilsl
8-0 Leader	Behr
7-0 Leader	Werth
4-6-7	G.A.
4-6-7	G.B.
4-6-7	G.D.
4-6-7	G.E.
4-6-7	G.F.
4-6-7	G.G.
4-6-7	G.H.
4-6-7	G.I.
4-6-7	G.J.
4-6-7	G.K.
4-6-7	G.L.
4-6-7	G.M.
4-6-7	G.N.
4-6-7	G.O.
4-6-7	G.P.
4-6-7	G.Q.
2-4-7	g.C.
2-4-7	g.CC.

ADDITIONAL UNITS

Russian Reinforcements

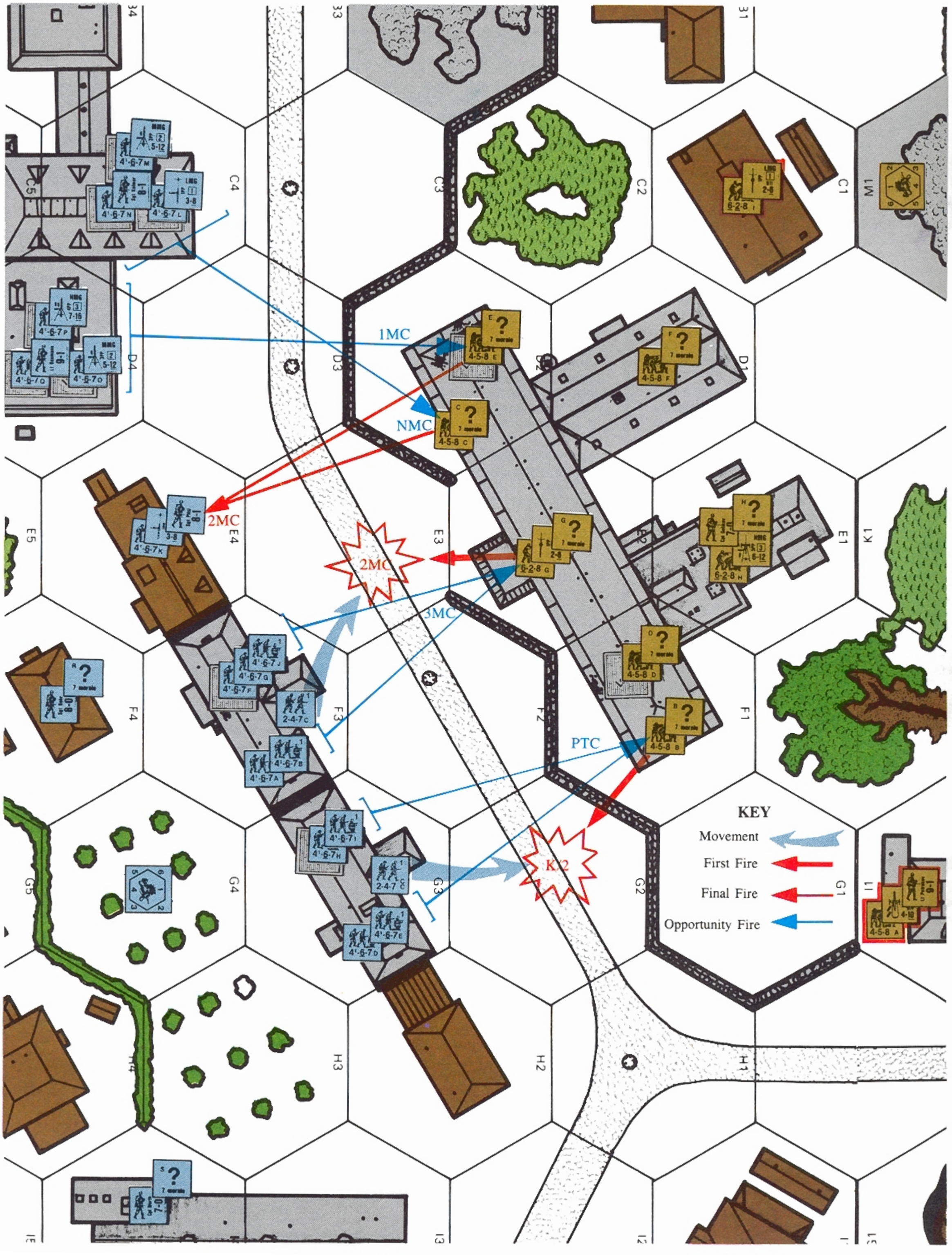
Type Unit	*Designation*
8-1 Leader	Petrov
6-2-8	R.J.
6-2-8	R.K.
6-2-8	R.L.
6-2-8	R.M.
6-2-8	R.N.
6-2-8	R.O.

Russian

Type Unit	*Designation*
1-4-9 Hero	Gurewicz
5-2-7	R.H.
?	C.F.
?	C.H.
?	C.I.
?	C.J.
?	C.N.
?	C.O.
?	C.AA
?	C.BB.
?	C.CC.
?	C.DD

German

Type Unit	*Designation*
1-4-9 Hero	Stein
4-4-7	G.K.
2-3-7	g.K.
2-4-7	g.A.
2-4-7	g.B.
2-4-7	g.D.
4-6-8	G.N.
?	C.R.
?	C.S.
?	C.T.
?	C.X.
?	C.Y.
?	C.Z.


1MC
NMC
2MC
2MC
3MC
PTC
KEY
Movement
First Fire
Final Fire
Opportunity Fire

I will use large infantry firegroups in the rowhouse and machinegun firebases in building bB4. The MG firebases will be directed by −1 leaders to prevent cowering. Half-squads will be sent out to search for tragets for these first-turn opportunity shots. These firebases also cover the advance of my infantry from the rowhouse as they assault building bE1. When the infantry has secured all or most of that building, the firebases will leapfrog across the street to start a flanking move along the north edge, or to support the infantry—whichever the situation requires.

When building bE1 is taken, I will regroup there for the final assault on the GHQ. It will serve as an excellent jumping-off point for the attack and as a safe haven for broken units. That's the plan that I hope will break the string of Russian victories in this scenario, all the result of a tough defense of building bE1.

Neutral Commentator: *Looking at the Russian set-up first, all the known and concealed Russians are in building bE1, leaving the north edge seemingly undefended. This creates the first dilemma of the game: will Darryl take advantage of this opening, or will he not be lured into such an apparent trap?*

With only one unit visible in bD2 (1st) to fire on Germans moving across the street in bA3, and units on the ground level of bD2 able to "snap shot" only at bA4/1, both possibly under cover of smoke in bC3, "Fish" may have left the north too weak. For that matter, German prep fire might break those defenders and allow an unopposed street crossing. Why did Bill leave the north so weak? There is a three-part answer:

First, the HIP squad I with a LMG in bC1 does preclude free German movement beyond bA2. Any Germans moving into bA1 for a free ride to GHQ get blasted. Even more important, Darryl knows there are HIP forces out there, and this is a likely spot for them. So he may not even perceive the north as undefended. For one thing, he knows from experience "Fish" wouldn't leave a gaping hole. Would "Fish" take advantage of that? Darryl would be gambling to try the north and Bill expects better than that from him.

Second, "Fish" obviously puts a lot of stock in building bE1. I believe he is intent on demonstrating it is so powerful that the north can be offered as a gambit to draw in the enemy, consuming an early turn of German movement which might otherwise have been spent firing into building bE1. His set-up in that building does a good job of protecting against any direct German assault across the street, the Russian's biggest fear if bE1 is the acknowledged key to the game. Bill and Darryl have fought so many bloody engagements in this building that they have nicknamed it the "Death Trap", due mainly to the certain death dealt forces trapped in upper levels. Because the stairwells in this building are located adjacent to the street, within reach of German troops, you won't see "Fish" routing into level one or two of hexes E1 or D1.

Third, anticipating the worst case in the north, a German first turn street crossing in force to bB1 and bC2, what real danger do these Germans pose? If they have boldly moved to B1 so that they are in position to advance to bC1, the HIP squad I is in good shape to lie in wait and ambush them (as he is hidden, they CX). His alternatives are to fire at them or intentionally break and then rout away. The latter is unlikely, the fomer dangerous if additional units are still available to move along the A-row towards GHQ once R.I. commits his first fire at adjacent units.

But squad I is expendable. He will likely go down, but should take somebody with him. The main thing is that he prevents an early German romp across the north. Once substantial German forces are committed there, "Fish" can respond with heavy fire from the "Death Trap"—and that is the key. Those Germans will have a very tough time getting to GHQ against fire from all levels of bE1. In addition, not only possible reinforcements, but also Petrakov and squad A with his MMG, can reach GHQ before the Germans can get there. So, the German might send a small force across the north, but the Russian I will engage it and Bill would probably welcome such enemy dispersal.

Despite all this, the northern gambit is at least a viable alternative to a direct assault on the "Death Trap". A swing across the southern edge of the battlefield, however, is a move of dubious merit. The Russian defense is arranged to hit any Germans crossing the street to the south, possibly stopping the enemy cold in the bJ2/J3 area.

"Fish" also banks on the knowledge that if considerable enemy forces burn up several turns maneuvering to the south, that is all the more opportunity they lose to fire on Russians in building bE1. The end result of a southern flanking action of several turns finds the Germans in the bI1/dG2 area, still facing a street crossing against a defender now possibly strengthened with reinforcements. Furthermore, a street crossing in this part of the battlefield does not enjoy covering fire from such superior positions as are inherent in the German set-up area. To be sure, some Germans would have to engage building bE1 during this action, but the likelihood of significant progress with this reduced force is slim. This is just another case of the German player assisting Russian chances by dispersing his attack.

Toughest decision for the Russian player is how many squads to present for initial German prep fire. "Fish" puts six of his nine squads up front, risking a lot, but justified for several reasons. All but one is concealed. There is only one squad per location, so only one per attack can be harmed. They all get +3 TEM. "Fish" needs to deny Darryl easy access to the wall. If he intends to defend the front line at all, he must do it with more than two or three squads who could conceivably be blown away by German prep fire, allowing other Germans to enter the "Death Trap" unopposed in the Advance Phase. Any Germans who prep fire are not crossing the street in the first turn. It should take more than the German has to knock out five concealed squads; anyone moving into the street will take fire. In other words, "If they're shooting at ya, at least they ain't running at ya!"

I am surprised that the 9-1 leader isn't in bE1 to lend extra Rally support to inevitable font line casualties. "Fish" has him sighting the MMG in dI1. I think this demonstrates excess concern on his part for possible southern enemy movement. What other reason would lead him to place his best unit away from the crucial defenses in the "Death Trap"?

But other than switching the leader locations, I find no fault with his set-up. For that matter, Petrakov is not far from bE1, so "Fish" gives away nothing important by locating him so; merely inconvenient should any Turn 1 rally attempts miss by only one, and loss of HIP should he move to the building. Probably a small price to pay for an added −1 DRM assurance that any enemy southern excursion bites the dust.

Although starting the HMG in bI1 in order to place a Fire Lane to bC4 is probably the best defense against a rookie whom you expect to rush across the street to the "Death Trap", locating that weapon in such a remote base against a battle-hardened foe as Darryl could lead to its loss (or at least nullification). "Action" Burk won't move large stacks in the open, and excluding either the HMG or the MMG from the immediate defense of bE1 would seriously weaken that position. Placing these weapons in the front line of the building is another risky option, as the attending squads might break, and then must drop the MG in order to rout. That's the key. At least from hex bE1 there will be point-blank targets, and should the owner break there will likely be someone else available to pick it up.

Turning to the German plans, despite all the good reasons for not attacking in the north, it may seem strange to more than a few casual readers to see the German player running head-on into concealed enemy positions in stone buildings. But Darryl initially has substantial firepower advantages and plans to employ them to literally blow away the defenders, rather than risk his infantry crossing a street which might be covered by HIP units.

To top it all off, in our pre-game interview he disclosed a plan which is absolutely brilliant in its application of combined Opportunity Fire and Searching, and should be an ASL standard tactic for situations such as this. As he explained above, everybody uses opportunity fire except two half-squads, who move into the street to expose any Russians who fire or who are ferretted out by successful searches. Simple and very effective.

Thus, "Action" Burk circumvents the odious task of blugeoning those concealed positions. Darryl's plan displays a fine grasp of the tactical options available and a spark of genius as he attempts to finesse his way past the immediate obstacle of Russian concealment. Because he has this plan, there is no need for Darryl to second-guess his decision to forego any flanking action after seeing the enemy set-up. He is almost guaranteed non-concealed targets during the Advancing Fire Phase, possibly even more than he can effectively attack. His risk is small: the two half-squads and potential casualties to any opportunity firers "Fish" might attempt to shoot up (consequently revealing additional Russian units, by the way). If enough of these front-line Russians are exposed, Darryl's opportunity fire and his Advance Phase might easily put a lock on building bE1.

Darryl could have started Cpl. Werth in the first level of bB4 to deny concealment to Russian squad F. Denying concealment to even one squad in this manner can have an impact, for in Bill's first turn Advance Phase, that squad could not then advance into the front of building bE1 without foregoing concealment gain. Given Darryl's plan of attack, it would not have been wise to start Kalmer's group in bB4 (1st) as that would preclude any potential firegroup with Bauman's force.

Our antagonists have both expressed concern over enemy Sniper activity. Notice how both counters are placed to maximize probability of attacking enemy front-line units.

TURN 1

German Player Turn

Serial	Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
21	Wind Change Attempt		7	NE
Prep Fire Phase				
22	G.D., G.E., G.H., G.I. opportunity fire			
23	G.A., G.B., G.F., G.G. G.J. opportunity fire			
24	Pilsl, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG, G.Q. opportunity fire			
25	Bauman, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, G.N. opportunity fire			
Movement Phase				
26	g.C. from bF3 to bE3			
27	R.G. w/LMG fires on g.C.—16 IFT	−2	9	2MC
28	g.C.—2MC		8	Breaks (DM)
29	g.CC. from bG3 to bG2			
30	R.B. fires on g.CC.—8 IFT	−2	5	K/2
Defensive Fire Phase				
31	R.G. final fires on g.C.—8 IFT		3	K/2
32	German Sniper Activation		3	NE
33	R.C, R.E. fire on Pilsl, G.K. w/LMG—8 IFT	+2	3	2MC
34	German Sniper Activation		6	NE
35	Pilsl—2MC		7	Breaks (DM)
36	G.K.—2 MC		10	Breaks (DM)

Figure 1: The opening attack

4-6-7 G.K. replaced with 4-4-7 G.K.				
37	Petrakov, R.A. w/MMG fire on G.A., G.B.—8 IFT	+2	12	NE MMG malf
Advancing Fire Phase				
38	G.D., G.E, G.H., G.I. fire on R.B.—16 IFT	+3	8	PTC
39	R.B.—PTC		9	Pinned
40	G.A., G.B., G.F., G.G. G.H. fire on R.G. w/LMG—20 IFT	+3	2	Cower, 3MC
41	R.G.—3MC		6	Breaks (DM)
42	Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, G.N. fire on R.C.—20 IFT	+2	9	NMC
43	R.C.—NMC		2	Heat of Battle
44	R.C. Heat of Battle	+1	8	Berserk
45	Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG, G.Q. fire on R.E.—24 IFT	+2	8	1MC
46	R.E.—1MC		8	Breaks (DM)
Route Phase				
47	Pilsl, G.K. w/LMG rout to bF4			
48	R.E. routs to bE1			
49	R.G. routs to bE1			
Advance Phase				
49	G.B. into bE3			
50	G.D. into bF2			
51	G.J. into bF3			
52	G.H. into bG3			
53	Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, G.N. into bB4 (1st)			

Russian Player Turn

Serial	Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
54	Wind Change Attempt		6	NE
55	Repair Russian MMG in dI1		3	NE
56	R.G. (DM) with Golikov		6	Remove DM
57	R.E. (DM) with Golikov		8	Remove DM
58	Pilsl (DM) self-rally		8	Remove DM
59	G.K. (DM) with Behr		11	Remove DM
Movement Phase				
60	R.C. from bD2 to bE3			
61	G.A., G.J., G.F., G.F., G.B. fire on R.C.—36 IFT	−5	4	KIA
62	R.D., C.D. assault move from bF1 (1st) to bE1 (1st)			
63	R.B. assault moves from bF1 to bE1			
64	R.F., C.F. assault move from bD1 to bD0			
65	Petrakov, R.A. w/MMG use CX movement from dI1 to dK1			
Defensive Fire				
66	G.E., G.H., G.D. fire on suspected units in bE2 (1st)—8 IFT	+3	7	NE
67	Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG, G.Q. fire on suspected units in bE2 (1st)—12 IFt	+2	10	NE
Advance Phase				
68	R.H. passes HMG to R.B.			
69	R.F., C.F. into bD1			
70	R.D., C.D. into bF1 (1st)			
71	R.H., C.H. int bE2			
72	Golikov marked with C.AA.			
73	R.A. w/MMG into bD0			
74	Petrakov into bE1 75			
75	Golikov, C.AA. into bD0			

Russian player places C.B. on Petrakov and R.B. w/HMG in bE1.

German: All in all, not a bad turn. Even though I've already lost a squad, the "Death Trap" is considerably weakened, especially on the north side. Half-Squad CC was moved into G2 so that his squad G couldn't Subsequent First Fire, and another defender would have had to be exposed to stop the HS's Searching dr.

My advancing fire was used to break up the Russian firegroup, the first step toward clearing building bE1. His berserker is a mixed blessing. It's a chance for an "easy" KIA, but he could pose a problem if he survives First Fire.

I advanced squads B and D into the street to apply direct pressure on the Russian defenders. Their position as the weak link in the firegroup makes them prime targets, but it had to be done sometime. If "Fish" shoots them up in prep fire, I'll at least have targets for my firegroups.

As Bill shows during his half of the turn, direct pressure seems to have worked. His decision not to get involved in a firefight is most likely a result of his need to conserve his squads. The berserk squad had to be considered as lost, and a few more broken squads coupled with a poor Rally Phase could leave him in bad shape.

The 4KIA on the Berserker was most satisfying. There are three reasons I used such a large firegroup. The fewer DR I make the fewer chances I take of his Sniper activation. A KIA would allow the firing units to Subsequent Fire on any units which might move to the front of building bE1. And I needed to eliminate a Russian squad to even losses and a 36(−2) attack is a good way to do that.

The first reason above is why I didn't do a lot of probing fire. The chance of a sniper attack is much greater than that of finding the HIP squad, but I had to try a few attacks on bE2 (1st). It seems a likely location because it would have linked the original Russian firegroup and because it covers so many of the approaches across the street.

At the end of the turn, the situation looks good. Even though the Russian still has a considerable force in the "Death Trap", he has given me the chance to get units into the building on Turn 2. The possibility of such an early foothold in this key position is unexpected and welcome—unless, of course, it is a trap. I'll stick to my plan of using Opportunity Fire and Searches to root out concealed defenders and perhaps find that remaining HIP squad in the process.

Russian: A excellent opening move by Darryl, risking only two half-squads. He has learned the importance of building bE1, and is assaulting it right from the "gitgo". Both HS pose a big threat, so I had to nail them. A successful Search this early would have given Darryl too much information about what is and isn't in the "Death Trap". I fired squad G rather than C or E because of his greater firepower, and the fact that less of that deadly opportunity fire can be directed at him.

At that time, C and E were to remain concealed, but when Final Fire rolled around I felt they might do some damage as well as draw some fire away from my squad G. After all, both squads needed to rout this player turn, voluntarily breaking if necessary. Otherwise, they would face more heavy fire next turn.

You may wonder why I revealed the HIP guys in dI1, breaking the MMG in the process, after that spiel about surprise and the value of HIP. I admit it may have been a mistake, as Darryl no longer has to fear a large firegroup lurking somewhere just waiting to blast him. But since no southern flanking maneuver developed, Petrakov intends to fulfill his alternative assignment and reinforce building bE1. So he would have revealed himself in the Movement Phase anyway. Besides, I just rolled two "3"s and was overcome with the "when you're hot, you're hot" frenzy.

Russian squad C accepted his berserk death sentence and charged out into the street, hoping to draw fire that would activate my sniper (but more important, because the rules require it). He might have drawn even more fire, but Burk's first shot does him in. Spectators to this slaughter, everyone else pulls back and hides, neutralizing for the moment Darryl's firepower advantage.

Since concealed units have the best chance of standing up to enemy heavy firepower, only they advance into the front lines, taking positions to cover any enemy crossing of the street. Squad H first transfers the HMG to R.B. because it would have been unwise to advance with it, making H CX and exposing it to enemy fire and eventual capture.

My concealed Golikov was thinking about advancing to bF1 as a bluff, but decided against it at the last second. He has no desire to be mauled so early. Petrakov advances to bE1 to rally the two broken squads; they need 10s, and he can add in his leadership to any necessary fire attacks. The rest of the troops will gain concealment this turn in preparation for moving forward next turn.

Neutral Commentator: *So, we're all decided that the German HS did their job.*

During the German player turn, I was amazed that "Fish" dropped concealment to fire squads C and E at bE4 for a mere 8(+2). He probably felt that Darryl had more targets than needed at that point, but his action exposes these two squads to full firepower from Kalmer's group, which previously drew a bead on only concealed targets. An 8(+2) at Pilsl seems small compensation for exchanging Kalmer's 8(+2) for a 20(+2)! But "Fish" rolled "3" for a 2MC, the sniper was ineffective, and both Pilsl and squad K broke (the latter ELRed down to a 4-4-7). To complete the picture, Kalmer's 20(+2) return shot at bD2 yielded only a NMC, to which Bill responded with "eyes". Subseqeunt Heat of Battle drove squad C berserk, saving an otherwise dreadful exchange for Darryl. Had C remained concealed throughout, Kalmer's shot on the "8" column would not have removed that Concealment counter. True, Pilsl and K would then maintain good order, but the berserker C now appears headed for death in the street. Still, his charge will draw fire which would otherwise break any Russian defender.

This whole exchange, kicked off by the 8(+2) against bE4, is but a sample of Bill's competitiveness—his drive to bring misfortune to the enemy before they do likewise to him. After all, he is covered by +3 TEM and troops with "8" morale ought to withstand more fire than those of but "7". The whole attack is also in line with his professed inclination to anticipate a DR of "7" when analysing probabilities. If Kalmer rolls "7" on a 20 (+2) attack, R.C. would not break on his resultant roll of "7" for the MC. That made the initial 8(+2) at Pilsl a "free" shot, one which "Fish" could use to try to make something happen since what followed should have even chances for each side. Add to that his opportunity to break not only a squad but Pilsl as well, and "Fish" is fully justified in shooting.

Finally, "Fish" can feel secure about exposing these squads because concealed reserve squads H and F are available to Advance forward in his own player turn. Had Darryl set up to deny concealment to F, would C and E have held their concealment in deference to their primary assignment to defend the building?

Petrakov and squad A, however, have already outlived their Hidden usefulness on the southern fringe. "Fish" wisely shoots them off and intends to use them every turn rather than waste these valuable pieces for unknown use at some later time. At this point, any southern German movement can just as well be covered from building bE1. It was just bad luck that the MMG malfunctioned. Dare we say that Bill had it coming after rolling consecutive "3"s?

In his own player turn, "Fish" makes the only berserk move available and gets it annihilated. Darryl demonstrates familiarity with his opponent, tipped off well in advance by complete lack of Russian prep fire, and throws the kitchen sink at the enemy squad—literally hitting him in the head with it from a first level bF3 window. "He's not only merely dead, he's really most sincerely dead." Had the berserker survived this hail of lead, he would still have to face Subsequent First Fire as well as shots from bF2, bG3 and bD4. The German expects no other targets.

I personally think Bill displayed admirable fortitude this turn by ignoring the plight of his Berserk squad. How tempting it must have been to prep fire squads B and D at those Germans in the street in an attempt to save the berserker. Had the Germans broken, the berserker's chance to get into close combat would have dramatically increased due not only to this reduction of enemy firepower, but possibly also due to Darryl allocating some of his fire to shoot

up B and D. But such attempts to hang on to each and every squad usually end in remorse. The likely result of it would have been a dead berserker and a broken Russian defender or two in exchange for maybe a broken German squad or two. The Russian can't afford to trade like that, at least not just yet. He must do his best to limit casualties, not simply trade them and "Fish" coolly lays off and lets the berserker go.

Notice how Petrakov and squad A moved the MMG to dK1 during Bill's turn. Squad A moved CX and Petrakov lends not only his two MF bonus, but also his one PP assistance. Had Petrakov himelf used CX movement, his one PP aid would be wiped out and dK1 become unreachable. Instead, A has 6 MF (8 less 2 for carrying a 5PP weapon with only 3PP capability) and so gets to bK1.

Otherwise, "Fish" still hides from the enemy and waits for him to come across the street. His south flank ends this turn very weak, and even though Darryl doesn't know the location of the last HIP squad, with dI1 revealed in the south I expect him to move toward that location or maybe even the bridge in dH1. Still, Darryl's good shooting on the first turn finds the "Death Trap" short two Russian squads and an all-out attack there might even put the game away early. Darryl would probably be correct to ignore both these thoughts, stick to his plan, and go straight for Bill's throat in a "meatgrinder" attack on the "Death Trap".

TURN 2

German Player Turn

Serial Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase			
76 Wind Change Attempt		11	NE
77 Pilsl self-rally		6	Rally
78 G.K with Pilsl	−1	12	NE
4-4-7 G.K. replaced with 2-3-7 g.K.			
79 Repair Russian MMG in bD0		3	NE
80 R.G. with Petrakov	−1	6	Rally
81 R.E. with Petrakov	−1	11	NE
Prep Fire Phase			
82 Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, G.N. opportunity fire			
83 Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG, G.Q. opportunity fire			
84 G.A., G.J. opportunity fire			
85 G.F., G.G. opportunity fire			
86 G.E., G.H. opportunity fire			
87 G.I. opportunity fire			
Movement Phase			
88 G.B. from bE3 to bD2			
89 G.B. searches building		1	reveal R.F. and R.H.
90 G.B.—search casualties		3	reduce
4-6-7 G.B. replaced with 2-4-7 g.B.			
Defensive Fire Phase			
91 R.F. fires on g.B.—4 IFT	+3	10	NE
92 R.H. fires on G.D.—12 IFT	+2	6	1MC
93 G.D.—1MC		10	Breaks (DM)
94 R.D. fires on G.D.—8 IFT	+2	4	Cower, 1MC
95 G.D.—1MC		6	Pass
96 Russian Sniper Activation Target Selection 5,6 moves Sniper to bF2		1	Fires
97 Casualty Reduction of G.D.			
4-6-7 G.D. replaced with 2-4-7 g.D.			
Advancing Fire Phase			
98 G.E., G.H., G.I. fire on R.H.—12 IFT	+3	7	PTC
99 R.H.—PTC		6	Pass
100 G.A., G.J., G.F., G.G. fire on R.H. 16 IFT	+3	5	1MC
101 R.H.—1MC		5	Pass
102 Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG, G.Q. fire on R.H.—24 IFT	+2	5	3MC
103 R.H.—3MC		9	Breaks (DM)
6-2-8 R.H. replaced with 5-2-7 R.H.			
104 HMG and MMG ROF fire on R.D.—12IFT	+2	9	NE
105 HMG ROF fires on R.D.—6 IFT	+2	7	NE
106 HMG ROF fires on R.D.—6 IFT	+2	7	NE
107 HMG ROF fires on R.D.—6 IFT	+2	5	NMC
108 R.D.—NMC		5	Pass
109 HMG ROF fires on R.D.—6 IFT	+2	7	NE
110 Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, G.N. fire on G.F.—20 IFT	+2	7	1MC
111 R.F.—1MC		6	Pass
112 LMG and MMG ROF fire on R.D.—8 IFT	+2	9	NE
Rout Phase			
113 g.D. routs to dF4			
114 R.H. routs to dF0			
Advance Phase			
115 G.A.,G.J. into bE3			
116 G.G, G.F. into bF3			
117 G.E. into bF2			
118 G.H into bG2			
119 G.I. into bG3			
120 Behr, C.R. into bE4			
121 Werth, C.S into bH3			
122 Kalmer, G.L w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, G.N into bB4 (2nd)			

German player places C.T. on Pilsl in bF4.

Russian Player Turn

Serial Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase			
123 Wind Change Attempt			NE
124 Provisional Reinforcements		1	two squads
R.J. and R.O. set up adjacent to dK5, offboard. Russian player places C.J. and C.O. on these squads.			
125 Repair Russian MMG in bD0		2	Repaired
126 R.H. self-rally		7	Remove DM
127 R.E. with Petrakov	−1	7	Rally
128 G.K. with Pilsl	−1	8	Rally
129 g.D. with Pilsl	−1	7	Remove DM
Movement Phase			
130 R.J., C.J. use CX movement from offboard to dK3			
131 R.O., C.O. use CX movement from offboard to dK2			
132 R.D. assault move from bF1 (1st) to bE1 (1st)			
133 R.E. assault move from bE1 to bD0			
134 Golikov, C.AA., R.A w/MMG from bD0 to bE1			
135 LOS check to vertex bE1/1 from bG2			
136 Golikov, C.AA., R.A w/MMG continues to bF0			
137 R.F. assault move from bD1 to bE1			
Advance Phase			
138 R.B. passes HMG to R.G.			
139 R.J. into bK2 (combine under C.O.)			
140 R.B., C.B. into bD1			
141 Petrakov marked with C.BB.			
142 R.E. into bE1			

Russian player places C.D. on R.D., C.AA. on Golikov and R.A., C.BB. on Petrakov, R.F., R.E., R.G. w/LMG and HMG.

German: So far the plan seems to be working. A HS in building bE1 may not seem like much of a toehold, but he is in a secure position and opposed by one squad. My machinegun firebases and squad firegroups cover all the hexes that could counterattack half-squad B, and "Fish" may temporarily give me that corner of the building rather than fight when he is outgunned.

It is interesting that my casualties during the first half of Turn 2 are all non-IFT events. The Rally Phase casualty reduction and the Sniper attack were random occurrences, but the Searching casualty check was a nice move on Conner's part. It cost him nothing and reminded me, at the expense of a HS, that searching has its hazards.

My advancing fire was an attempt to clear the front of the "Death Trap" for the units which would be moving into the street during the Advance Phase, and to take some pressure off B. The rate of fire from my HMG was impressive but ineffective. While all those shots contradicted my plan on minimizing the chance of sniper attack, I felt that I had to keep shooting. If the large fire attacks to which I have committed the bulk of my forces were not producing results, I have to take what Fate provides—and a leader-directed 6(+2) is better than a lot of shots I will take.

The Advance Phase gave me control of the front of the "Death Trap" as four squads advanced into the street. "Fish" cannot afford to face the point-blank fire of so many squads. Kalmer's group advanced to the second level to harass any reinforcements that might appear. Bauman stayed in bD4 to support the assault in the street. Cpl. Werth advanced to bH3 so he could assault move to bG3 next turn and maintain concealment. Sgt. Behr moved to bE4 to provide another rally point and to be in position to lead the next wave across the street. Besides, two leaders in the same hex next to an enemy Sniper makes me nervous. At the end of my turn, I think I'm in good position to be in the "Death Trap" in force next turn. And if "Fish" decides to counterattack during his coming player turn (which I doubt), I'm ready.

"Fish" wisely uses his half of the turn to build a strong defensive position instead of foolishly risking his squads against a superior force. He is forcing me to risk my good squads while doing as much as he can to protect his own. Notice that every good order Russian unit is concealed at the end, and that he has left me only one possible shot for prep fire—a 2(+3).

However . . . although "Fish" has a strong position, there is little he can do to stop me from flooding the "Death Trap" with German squads. Whether or not this flood can crest once in that building is another matter. I must take building bE1 soon if it is to serve as the jump-off point for my assault on GHQ.

Russian: Darryl rolls his obligatory "12" during rally and I thank him. It's nice when your opponent helps you with the destruction of his forces. My most important rally was sucessful; I could have used even better, but I'm not complaining.

Darryl surprises me with his use of opportunity fire. He is bringing maximum firepower to bear while risking very little. I decide to let squad B Search so that I might teach him a lesson about snooping by causing some casualties. Squad B paid the price while I retain full fire capability. I also felt that any information that Darryl might gain at this point was much less valuable than it would have been before. Besides, my boys were going to lose concealment anyway with a couple of "hail Mary" shots. Although my sniper nailed a HS, I would rather have broken B instead. What a complaint, huh?

Squad H's ELR failure is more like what I expected on Turn 1. Although the HMG fired six times and had little effect on my men, it left me hanging on the edge. Sometimes I don't care what the DR is, just hoping for no ROF. It's a good thing my troops are in excellent cover.

My own Rally Phase was extremely satisfying, especially the arrival of reinforcements and the repair of my MMG. I need more juice up front. So squads "O/J" (I think I had to do it) get the call instead of "Fearless Leader" Petrov. I think he is trying to round up some more malingerers. Besides, I don't need him just yet anyway. Free LOS checks against concealed units O and J from bB4, second level, cause them to move forward with caution so that J wastes a MF and ends in dK3 instead of dK2 like his smarter comrade.

It looks like squad D will have to fall back and remain upstairs for awhile, satisfied to survive and harass the enemy, who will be forced to flush him out. Following the orders of Petrakov and Golikov, the rest of the guys reposition themselves during movement.

During my Advance Phase, B passes the HMG to G even though G already possesses a LMG, and then advances to bD1 to deny that location to the German (at least during enemy movement). Squads O and J stay put to help protect against any rush across the bridge and into the gully. They also help guard hex dI1. I wish I had somebody in dI1, but will make do with what I have. At least everyone is concealed.

Neutral Commentator: *That poor German squad K must have left his bullets at home. First his ELR fails under a lousy 8(+2) attack, and now he has a casualty reduction during the German rally attempts. Squad K must be the "Klutz" squad!*

I too was surprised Darryl had the restraint to once again opportunity fire everybody, avoiding any southward excursion. All his fire managed to break

only one squad, while he also lost a squad. Still, he is crossing the street in fine shape. Kalmer on the second level of bB4 slows down Russian reinforcements and brings some heavy fire into enemy rear areas. "Fish" needs to rally squad E and repairing the MMG won't hurt. Without a favorable DR exchange ratio during the German Advancing Fire (Darryl's 6.9 to Bill's 6.2), "Fish" might be hurting despite the +3 building modifiers.

I was also surprised that the Russian F didn't fire at adjacent G.B. to try to keep the enemy out of the building. His shot on Kalmer promised bigger things but with a much slimmer chance of success. "Fish" doesn't fear the HS. Look how the defense has contracted upon bE1—like a spring tightening into a coil. Will it explode when sprung or simply tip over like a "Slinky"?

The saga of the Russian squad E continues during the German turn. The guy who failed to rally last time when Petrakov wasn't there, this time fails to rally with him present. Now it's been a complete game turn that he has been useless and "Fish" must be wondering about this squad's elite status. But, not only does Bill bring back E and the MMG in the Russian turn, but also he gets two reinforcement squads. Already we see him putting together a stronger defense in order to recoup some of his lost advantage. Quite frankly, after that lousy "OJ" pun, I'm rooting for "Action" Burk to knock him on his "can".

"Fish" plays a coy defense this turn, allowing Darryl nothing whatsoever to shoot. Burk considered trying to activate the enemy Sniper, but finally decided he didn't want to find that last enemy squad that bad after all. Over the next turn, the "Death Trap" is going to receive deadly fire as Darryl moves in and "Fish" either fights or withdraws. Watch for Darryl to probe bE1 with small forces advancing adjacent.

"Fish" moved heavy forces into bF0, so it will now be difficult for Darryl to move on building dI1. But Russians in the gully can't see the road and now there is no one in bF1 (1st), so I again expect some southern German movement. The building bE1 is a dare; just how bad do the Germans want it?

Notice that Darryl alertly takes the free LOS check to bE1/1. Since the moving units include one concealed, he is allowed this free check—even though to a bypass vertex only—because the moving Russian units are using non-assault movement. I think "Fish" may have considered extricating his D from the first level, but decided he would serve a better purpose as a nuisance force there. At least by hiding, the squad is guaranteed to see the next turn.

The Russian MMG has meanwhile been run all over the board. Will it ever find a home? Is squad A looking for the bullets?

I was surprised that squad O did not advance from dK2. Either Bill wants him back there to protect the bridge, or it was an oversight, or he is keeping O and J together to set up another chinzy juice joke. [I hope it's not the latter case.]

This was a very important turn for "Fish", not so much for what happened on board as for what happened at command headquarters. That is, he decided to yield the front of the building and preserve his squads rather than fight and allow the Germans to mangle them. Entrance of two reinforcing squads actually makes the Russian stronger now than at scenario start by one squad, while Darryl is down two squads. But positionally, the Russian is down as "Action" Burk has forced the street crossing.

TURN 3

German Player Turn

Serial Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase			
143 Wind Change Attempt		8	NE
144 g.D. with Pilsl	−1	8	Rally
145 R.G. passes LMG to R.E.			
146 R.H. with Golikov		2	Heat of Battle
147 R.H. Heat of Battle		7	Berserk
No LOS to enemy, so 5-2-7 R.H replaced with 6-2-8 R.H			
Prep Fire Phase			
148 Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, G.N. opportunity fire			
Movement Phase			
149 G.B. from bD2 to bD2 (2nd)			
150 G.A. assault moves from bE3 to bD2			
151 G.J. assault moves from bD3 to bD2			
152 G.H from bG2 to bH0			
153 R.D. fires Snap Shot on G.H. at bH1/1 −2 IFT	+2	9	NE
154 G.I. assault moves from bG3 to bG2			
155 G.G assault moves from bF3 to bF2			
156 G.F. assault moves from bF3 to bF2			
157 Werth, C.S. from bH3 to bG2			
158 Behr, C.R. assault move from bE4 to bE3			
159 G.K. w/LMG use CX movement from bE3 to bB2			
160 Pilsl, C.T., g.D. from bF4 to bB2, losing C.T.			
161 Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG, G.Q. from bD4 (1st) to bD3			
Advancing Fire Phase			
162 Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, G.N. fire on R.B.—8 IFT	+2	5	1MC
163 R.B.—1MC		9	Breaks (DM)
164 G.A., G.J. at R.B.—8 IFt	+3	9	NE
Rout Phase			
165 R.B. routs to bL2			
Advance Phase			
165 Pilsl, g.D. into bB1			
166 G.B. into bD1 (2nd)			
167 G.A. into bD1			
168 G.J into bD1			
169 Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P w/HMG into bD2			
170 G.Q. into bC3			
171 G.F. into bE2			
172 G.G. into bE2			
173 G.E. into dF1, encircling R.D.			
174 Werth, C.S. into dF1			
175 G.I. into dG1			
176 G.H. into dI1			
177 Behr, C.R into dF3			

German player places C.X. on Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG; C.T. on Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, G.N.; attempts roll for concealment of G.Q (fails on 6)

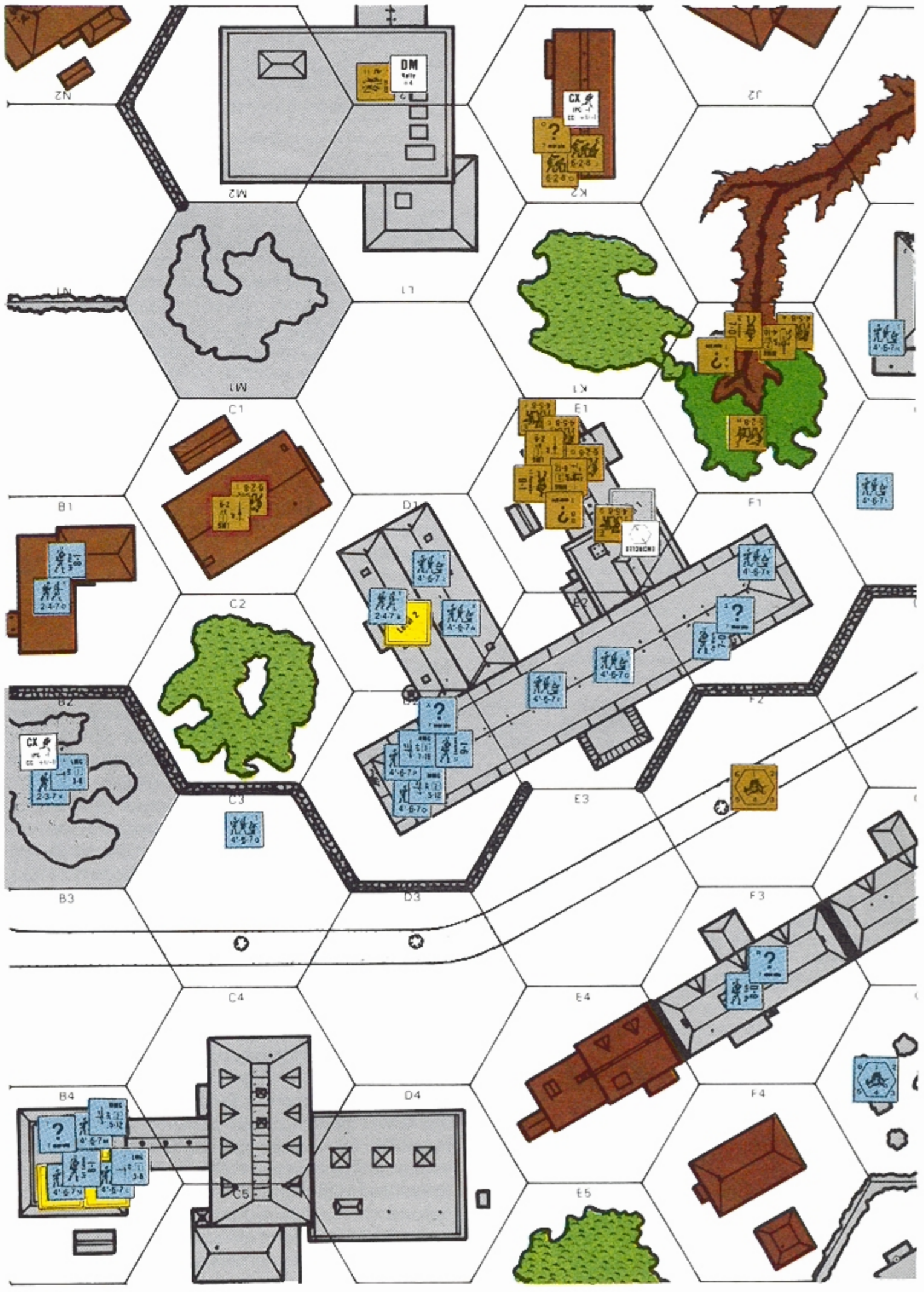


Figure 2: The situation at the end of the German player turn of Turn 3. Readers should note, if they haven't before this, that all non-Gully Woods hexes are considered stone rubble and are depicted with grey hexes on the illustrations.

Russian Player Turn

Serial Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase			
178 Wind Change Attempt		6	NE
179 Provisional Reinforcements		6	NE
180 R.A. passes MMG to R.H.			
181 R.B. self-rally		5	Remove DM
Prep Fire Phase			
182 R.D. fires on G.I.—4 IFT	+1	8	Cower, NE
183 R.A., R.H. fire on G.H.—20 IFT	+3	3	3MC
184 German Sniper Activation		6	NE
185 G.H.—3MC		5	Breaks (DM)
186 MMG fires at G.I.—8 IFT	+1	10	NE
187 Petrakov, R.E. w/LMG, R.G. w/HMG fire on G.G.F., G.G.—36 IFT	+2	7	3MC
188 G.F.—3MC		8	Breaks (DM)
190 HMG ROF fires on G.A., G.J.—12 IFT	+2	5	1MC
191 G.A.—1MC		10	Breaks (DM)
192 G.J.—1MC		10	Breaks (DM)
193 R.F. fires on G.I.—4 IFT		6	NMC
194 G.I.—NMC		3	Pass
Movement Phase			
195 R.J. assault moves from dK2 to dK1			
196 R.J. marked with C.J.			
197 R.O., C.O. assault move from dK2 to dJ1			
198 Golikov from bF0 to dK2, losing C.AA.			
Defensive Fire Phase			
199 G.E., G.I. fires on R.A., R.H. −16 IFT	+1	10	Cower, NE
200 G.B. fires on Petrakov, R.E. w/LMG, R.F., R.G. w/HMG—4 IFT	+3	4	Cower, NE
Advancing Fire Phase			
201 R.O. fires on G.H.—6 IFT	+3	4	NMC
202 G.H.—NMC		7	Pass
Rout Phase			
203 G.H. routs to bJ1			
204 G.J. routs to bC1			
Eliminate for routing into HIP R.I.; place R.I. under C.I. on board.			
205 G.A. routs to bF3			
206 G.G. routs to bF3			
207 G.F. routs to bF3			
Advance Phase			
208 R.H. passes MMG to R.A.			
209 R.G. passes HMG to R.F.			
210 R.E. passes LMG to Petrakov			
211 R.O. into dI1			
212 R.D. into bF1 (1st)			
213 R.H. into bG1			
214 R.G. into bF1			
215 R.J., C.J. into bE1			
216 Golikov into dL2			
217 R.I., C.I. into dM1			
218 R.E. into bE2			
Close Combat Phase			
219 Ambush in bF1 results in German Ambush			
220 G.E., Werth vs. R.G.		2	R.G. KIA
221 R.H. vs. G.I.		7	NE
222 G.I. vs. R.H.		5	NE

Russian player places C.AA. on Golikov.

German: The defense now hinges upon bE1 and it is a strongly defended position that offers any attacker few options for assault. I chose this turn to attack bE1 in force because I have to keep up the momentum of my assault and keep the pressure on "Fish". His reinforcements have begun to arrive and I will gain nothing by waiting while he consolidates his positions and grows stronger. The scenario will be at the halfway point next game turn, and I don't have time to waste. The sooner I start the main attack, the longer I'll have to rally its inevitable casualties. I fully expect this game turn to be crucial to the outcome of this playing.

Kalmer's group was opportunity fired because I hoped Russian squad B would drop concealment to fire. I wanted to clear D1 so Bauman could advance his machineguns into D2 without the distraction of adjacent enemy units.

My own B moved upstairs to scout the terrain, but didn't Search because I can't afford to lose a HS to a Search casualty dr. He can be put to more effective use by advancing to the rear of the building where his firepower can cover some of the Russian approach and escape paths. A or J could have searched to reveal Russian squad B, but that would have left a squad TI in D2. That squad will be needed in the assault against bE1, and for rout purposes I wanted to end with only two squads in D2. Sgt. Pilsl moves the two HS to outflank building bE1, and to seize bC1-dM1 as stepping stones into GHQ.

But "Fish" was not intimidated by my large firegroup and his decision to stand and fight seems to have paid off. The inevitable casualties have turned up in droves. I knew clearing building bE1 would be a nasty job, and it's living up to my expectations. Still, things could have been much worse; and I didn't think my troops would remain unscathed if Bill decided to fight it out in the "Death Trap". Failure of his reinforcements to arrive was a break for me and I would not have been surprised if "Fish" pulled back to get some troops into GHQ.

The Russian had to be pleased with his prep fire. Five broken squads go a long way toward blunting my attack, and I was left with few shots for final fire. While I would have preferred to attack bE1 with my Final Fire, I didn't feel that there was much chance to bust it open with a 12(+3). Besides, I hate attacks which only cause a NMC if I roll my opponent's SAN. I needed to break some Russian squads to offset my own losses; the attack on bF0 seemed the best bet.

Though my discovery of HIP squad I cost me German squad J during the Rout Phase, his loss was acceptable in view of the information gained. At this point I need Good Order units able to attack now to take advantage of the lack of enemy reinforcements. Squad J's loss hurt, but not as much as losing a stack of units during some future Movement Phase.

The value of a concealed unit in close combat was very well demonstrated by Cpl. Werth, much to my delight. A squad/SMC combination in close combat is a much tougher proposition than a lone squad. Even a lowly 7-0 can be of great value when concealed since both units share concealed advantages for Ambush purposes. I didn't advance after the successful ambush because I wanted to put as many squads as possible in position to attack bE1. "Fish" is still in building bE1 in force, but I still have a toehold in it. It's anybody's ball game now.

Russian: My squad H rolled "eyes" in his Rally attempt, and then went berserk in his Heat of Battle determination; but it was amended to mere Battle Hardening since he's out of LOS. That is one good reason to rout out of enemy LOS. Notice that "2" on a self-rally attempt does not invoke Heat of Battle, but usually creates a leader instead.

I watched a lot of free maneuvering during "Action" Burk's turn, giving me very little to shoot. A Russian squad in dI1 would have helped immensely. Squad B held his fire to retain concealment in hope of surviving Kalmer's opportunity fire and to spring an ambush, but broke anyway. Although bC1 was a legitimate rout possibility, going there would only cause problems for both B and the HIP unit, so B went to dL2 since it is out of enemy LOS. He is allowed to do so because dC1 is no further from enemy occupied bC3 than his current location and it need not be considered a rout possibility.

After Burk's Advance Phase, swallowing and breathing became extremely difficult. I'm suffering increased heart beat and a severe case of the shakes. It seems the moment of truth has arrived sooner than I had hoped. Here I am "between a rock and a hard place", "on the horns of a dilemma" and "up the creek without a paddle". In less cliched terms, Darryl has me cornered! Great game this *ASL*, ain't it?

I have reached one of those all too familiar points which happen at least once in most games (and many times in some) when a decision must be made weighing the risks and the gains. The path I choose will decide the game. The question is how many Russian troops will stand and fight and how many should be withdrawn from bE1. Or do they all do one or the other?

A total withdrawal means taking at least some amount of negative modified fire. Also, my original plan was to make the enemy pay for terrain with time and troops. But if my troops stand, they face point blank firepower from the survivors of my prep fire.

After much soul-searching, I decide that both worst cases are essentially the same (my boys all break) while the best cases are not (I might break him if I shoot but have no chance to do so if I run). Besides, even if all my troops were to withdraw unharmed, the German would be in excellent shape, still control the initiative and hold the best terrain only two hexes away from GHQ with four turns to go.

On the other hand, with average "6", "7" and "8" dice rolls my prep fire should break enough Germans to reduce their firepower significantly, allowing most of my men good survival possibilities. A successful Prep Fire Phase will not cripple the German, but will slow him considerably and may wrest the initiative from his grasp and even deny him control of bE1, forcing him to expend yet more energy to take it.

I feel Darryl forces me to fire because the withdrawal routes are now covered. Since I have so much more to gain by firing, I will!

So phenominal was my Prep Fire (I averaged 6.5 while Darryl rolled 7.5) that squads O and J didn't have to fire at dI1 and were free to move. With HIP squad I doing nothing except continuing to hide, he could have put a 16(+3) into bD1 had the defense there not crumbled anyway.

I guess that Burk's boys couldn't take the pressure, and with everyone around them breaking, they cower to no effect in Final Fire. After HIP squad I gunned down a German squad in the Rout Phase, he advanced out of Kalmer's LOS and into the dM1 rubble.

I even decided to press my luck and launch a small counterattack in the "Death Trap" aimed at tying up the remaining Germans. If victorious, I will be able to bring home some DM-maintaining fire on the enemy that just routed back across the street. Disaster nearly struck me down as squad G was killed in ambush and squad H held in Melee.

Neutral Commentator: *Wow! Darryl's advance certainly separated the men from the boys. Russian prep fire will determine who's a whip and who's a wimp. I expected a more tentative advance, but Darryl has really sunk his teeth into the "Death Trap". This is a bold move, but it allows "Fish" to prove his Russians in prep fire or back out of the building entirely; he gets to choose. Advances by squads H, I, B and Pilsl's group put pressure on the flanks as well; Darryl means business. He has maneuvered nicely and is now in position to dish out some punishment.*

"Fish" had pulled everything into a two-hex defense, bF0 and bE1, backed by marginal units (encircled D, HIP I, and the reinforcements in dK2). Facing an adjacent five-squad firegroup, who can blame "Fish" if he decided to pull back to dK1, yield the "Death Trap" and fight on for GHO? But this would be an early loss, tough to recoup, so I think he is forced to shoot it out.

Another approach for Darryl would have been to move squad B to the first or second level of bE2, followed by assault moves to bE1, bE2 and bD2. With additional troops in the street ready to advance in and with Russian troops unconcealed, this would have put maximum pressure on the defense. Psychologically, this would have been an excellent way to make "Fish" pay for snubbing the HS in the second turn in favor of his cheap 4(+3) at Kalmer.

But this plan almost guarantees the loss of squad B, and Darryl opted to wait until he is 100% ready

and advances adjacent to bE1. After all, his best bet may have been to leave open an opportunity for Petrakov to escape. All has gone fairly well thus far, and Burk decided to proceed in a deliberate manner rather than force the building in his player turn. The unfortunate part of all this is that he has moved so strongly against bE1 that "Fish" feels compelled to shoot. Granted he could retain concealment by moving to dK1, but he would be leaving +3 TEM. Darryl knows this; he expects Conner to fight. he has wheeled his assault into an early confrontation, based on early successes.

And Russian prep fire on bE2 and bD1 was crushing! Chasing squad H out of dI1 was the final blow. "Fish" lost a little with his HIP revealed at bC1, but finishing J was probably about an even trade. Close combat action in bF1 led to surprising German local victory thanks to the ambush. But there is no doubt that this turn belonged to Bill. Four broken and one dead German squad against one dead Russian squad is quite a bloody exchange ratio. "Action" Burk can't take too much of that action.

Suddenly Darryl's strength in the center is gone and he must now look for the northern troops—his strongest forces—to take up the fight. Building bE1 will be tough to bypass, but right now he has little choice. For one thing, "Fish" surprisingly throws the two reinforcements to the south, into bE1 and dI1; I wonder why the north has been left so weak? Will Kalmer come down and fight?

I can't fault Darryl for moving so strongly against bE1 either. I think it was one of those moments when he had so much to gain, thanks to his early gangbusters tactics, that he simply had to press the attack. Sure he could have held back, advancing only one squad into each hex, or even tried to bypass bE1 altogether. But either of these options would have wasted time while the advantage was his. Without taking the "Death Trap", he knew he would have a much harder battle getting to GHQ. Plus, he had the Russian down and you just don't give a gamer like "Fish" the chance to get back up again. You hit him when he's down, and you keep kicking him (General Patton said all this long ago).

Besides, Darryl's chances were reasonable. The Russians might have retreated, enemy prep fire might have had little or no effect, the HMG might have at least missed ROF and the German squads might have held—at least a few of them. Total defeat was quite remote, but that's what happened. That both attacks Darryl managed to get off this turn barely missed PTC due to cowering was testimony to the futility of his whole turn.

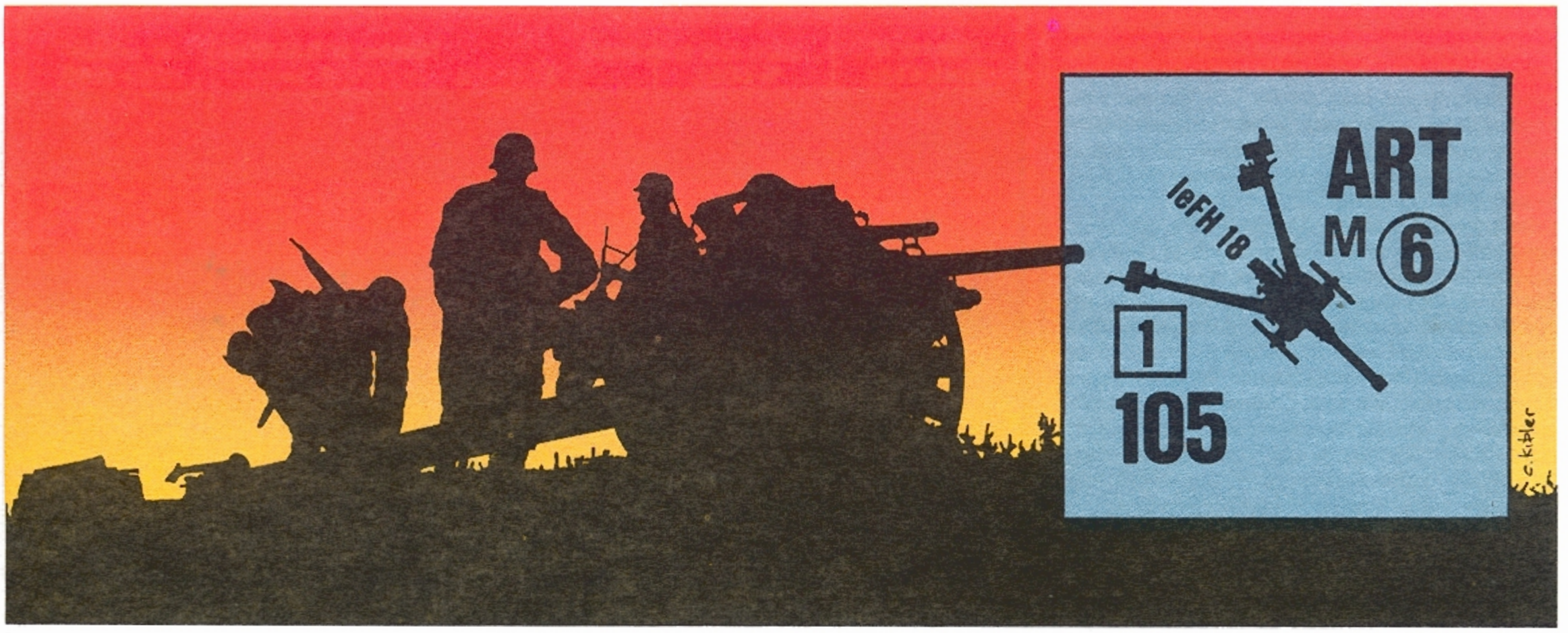
Notice how quickly "Fish" tried to take up the initiative, moving forward squads O and J, and advancing to contest previous German-occupied hexes bG1 through bE2. Golikov and squad I both moved to strengthen the GHQ. Though weak in the north, "Fish" has plenty to handle Pilsl's meager force. It's what follows Pilsl he should fear!

The first German to enter Board d—squad H in dI1—breaks and routs back to the safer Board b. This may only be part of the overall woeful German luck, but could it portend even more evil on that board next turn?



With the German assault stalled, and our stalwart players fighting tooth and nail in the "Death Trap", space limitations demand that we must pause in this Series Replay. Next issue will see the conclusion of our rendition of Deluxe Scenario 1.





FIRST IMPRESSIONS

An Introduction to ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER: Offboard Artillery

By Robert Medrow

INTRODUCTION

This is the third, and last, major article of this series. While there will be more of this general type from me in the future, they are all planned to be shorter. To add a personal note, I have enjoyed hearing from so many of you as a result of the first two "First Impressions" articles (which appeared back in Vol. 22, No. 6 and Vol. 23, No. 2). Some of your suggestions will be reflected in "Chapter M" of the rulebook when that section is published. As yet, due in part to a protracted illness and some unexpected professional demands, I have been unable to answer many of your letters. Once this article is on its way, getting back to these will become my highest priority. (If readers have anything they'd like to send along, the address is still 1322 Highland Drive, Rolla, MO 65401.)

Since this article is a continuation of the previous two, the tables begin with "27". As all of the articles deal with the same game system, it is practically necessary to refer occasionally to information found in those earlier pieces. For those of you who are new subscribers to The *GENERAL*, these are available from The Avalon Hill Game Company. The scope of *ASL* is such that trying to be comprehensive in one issue would have been impossible.

Ordnance, in particular the high explosive (HE) stuff, is what we're going to consider in this article. Since the original *SQUAD LEADER* itself, ordnance has always been divided into two main categories: onboard and offboard. Each of these works in very different ways. The mechanics of how onboard ordnance operates has been considered at length in the earlier articles, and need not be repeated here.

Compared to the previous articles, this one has a rather narrow focus therefore. Hopefully, you'll agree that the topics considered are of exceptional importance to good *ASL* play. As always, it is my hope that what you find will make you a better player. Except for the gifted among us, it's probably safe to say that many of the game's mechanics are complex enough that determining a solid, let alone the "best", strategy can be difficult. Until we have a reasonable knowledge of what we can expect from our various weapon systems, we will never play well. And that, of course, is what it's all about. All of the tables are there in the rules to help you develop intelligent doctrines. Where I've been able to devise what seem to be sound ideas about play, those numbers will let you see what prompts me.

OFFBOARD ORDNANCE

Offboard artillery is now in its third incarnation. In *SQUAD LEADER*, things were relatively simple to understand. If you had an artillery module, you drew one of the eight chits supplied. As soon as you looked at it you (but not your opponent) knew how many shots (from one to four) that the module would provide, assuming that you could get and maintain radio contact. Artillery rules remained that easy through *CROSS OF IRON*. It was not until *CRESCENDO OF DOOM* came along that the idea of "battery access" appeared. From *COD* onward, not only did you have to get and maintain radio contact, but you also had to convince the folks back at the guns that you needed help by rolling equal to or below your battery access number. The initial value, nominally "8", could be thought of as varying from "7" through "9", depending upon whether you began with scarce, normal or plentiful ammunition supplies. Rolls against these effective initial values were modified: −1 DRM for coninuation of an existing FFE, and +1 for each Fire Mission already used. Thus, for the first time, the probability of getting another shot became a function of how successful you'd been in the past. If we accept the very plausible argument that artillery batteries had many claims upon their services, this then is as it should be.

The Chits

ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER continues this concept, but does so in a different way. Now, an artillery module comes with a specified number of black chits and red chits. If, when it becomes necessary to gain battery access, a black one is drawn, the guns are available. In *ASL*, each black chit drawn represents a pair of FFE missions to be resolved in successive player turns. A red chit means that you have to wait until at least the next turn before you can try again. The number of red chits varies from two to four, depending upon both ammunition supply and nationality. However, there is a wild card in this deck that wasn't there before. When the second red chit is drawn, the module is over. In addition, of course, it is still necessary to gain and maintain radio contact—at least through the player turn in which a FFE marker appears on the mapboard. When a chit has been drawn, it is not returned to the cup.

Table 27 lists the chits available for the four major European powers. As you can see, the supply levels

Ammunition supply

Force	Scarce	Normal	Plentiful
English	8/3	8/2	9/2
U.S.	9/4	9/3	10/3
German	8/4	8/3	9/3
Russian	5/3	5/2	6/2

Table 27—Chits (black/red) for the major powers.

Number of Black Chits

Number of red Chits	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
2	3.33	4.00	4.67	5.33	6.00	6.67	—
3	2.50	3.00	3.50	4.00	4.50	5.00	5.50
4	—	2.40	2.80	3.20	3.60	—	—

Table 28—The average number of black chits drawn in unlimited time.

included are still three in number, a fact which will simplify the later comparison between the current worth of an artillery module and its *COD* value. For the United States, "plentiful" is the usual supply condition. These four forces will be the ones examined. As we will see, a careful look at them will be enough to give us a reasonably clear notion of what to expect for any of the forces who've yet to take the field in *ASL*.

Because of the effect of two red chits, the average number of black chits drawn will of necessity be less than the maximum number there, even if we don't think about things such as finite scenario length and the dread spector of radio malfunction. The results of my first effort to look at the worth of an artillery scenario are to be seen in Table 28. From the previous table, a normal German artillery module comes with eight black and three red chits. According to Table 28, the average module will then produce 4.00 fire misions, each one worth two FFEs, assuming time and radio performance.

These numbers were obtained in two ways. To begin with, I calculated the average values using the appropriate probabilistic equations. Then I did the sort of thing already mentioned in my first article; I built a computer program which, in effect, sat there and patiently drew chits until it either ran out of black ones or accumulated two red ones. The program then recorded how many black chits had been drawn. And it did this operation over, and over, and over. When this had been done the specified number of times, the average number of black chits drawn was calculated. Since I already knew the answer for the German model, this would have been a waste of time—except that it gave me the opportunity to learn something about how many trials were required in order to get a reasonably accurate answer. In addition, it let me validate the chit drawing logic of another program, the results of which are considered below. Computers are wonderful devices, capable of doing many useful things. Unfortunately, they are also able to give you the wrong answers when you misstate the question.

Average values are of some use. But knowing the average value will not always mean a lot. For example, the average value for the sum of spots of two six-sided dice is "7". However, that number itself only comes up one-sixth of the time, and the sum can be anything from "2" up to "12" (although these extreme values would appear only one-sixth as often as would "7"). To pick another example, suppose you put nine chits numbered "1" through "9" into a cup and drew one out, wrote down the value, put the chit back into the cup, shook it, and repeated the process again and again. The long-term average of the values you recorded would be "5"; however, on the average, "5" would be no more likely to show up than would "1" or "8" or any other number. One more example: let's think about repeating the last experiment, except that this time the cup contains seven chits worth "5", one worth "4" and one worth "6". The average of the values would still be "5", as in the previous example; this time, however, that value appears seven times out of nine.

These examples are intended to demonstrate that it's important to know something about the distribution of the values themselves. That's the sort of information that tells us about the range of possible values and the relative probabilities of each of them. For example, a plentiful American module would, as Table 28 shows, yield an average of five fire missions in an unending scenario. However, you actually only get that many 12.6% of the time. The probabilities for getting zero, one, two, three or four missions are, respectively, 3.8%, 7.0%, 9.4%, 11.2% and 12.2%. Since the distribution is symmetrical about the value of "5", the probability of six fire missions is 12.2%, that of seven is 11.2%, etc. Thus, the distribution is relatively flat from three through seven missions. The moral of all this is that you shouldn't expect to get five missions in very many games.

Number of Black Chits	% LOS	Number of Red Chits: 2		3		4	
10	100			46	74		
	70			38	65		
	40			27	51		
9	100	52	79	42	70	40	67
	70	38	66	38	62	31	59
	40	26	50	27	50	27	50
8	100	51	76	43	71	40	69
	70	39	66	38	65	32	57
	40	30	53	27	48	27	48

(a) Values for the British, the U.S. and the Germans.

Chits (black/red)	% LOS	Initial Radio Contact Number: 6		7		8	
6/2	100	17	37	29	56	46	74
	70	14	30	25	46	31	59
	40	9	21	17	36	25	47
5/2	100	17	36	32	56	44	72
	70	13	29	23	43	33	62
	40	9	21	15	31	22	42
5/3	100	16	32	27	52	34	64
	70	12	27	20	43	27	52
	40	7	18	13	29	18	39

(b) Values for the Russians.

Table 29—The probability of obtaining a FFE on the second player turn, or by the third player turn; −1 contact modifier.

How It Really Works

Of course, scenarios don't go on forever (no matter what some of my opponents claim), and radios are as prone to malfunction as are the other weapons systems in *ASL*. Thus, it is necessary to take these factors into account in some manner. In addition, since the SR (Spotting Round) won't always land where you would wish to see it, the probability that a scattering shot will fall within LOS of the Observer plays a role as well.

To see how these factors enter in, let's review the sequence of events. In the first player turn in which radio contact can be established, a chit is drawn. If a black chit is drawn, the player may place an "Artillery Request" (AR) marker on a hex containing a Location within the observer's LOS. An accuracy dr is then made. As in the past, those forces which use the red To Hit numbers (except the U.S.) must roll a "1" in order to place a Red SR in the hex containing the AR. Everyone else hits the targeted hex on a "2" or less. The only favorable modifier to this is for Pre-Registered Fire (not very common), whereas any Hindrance (all too common) works against you. If the dr is too high, direction and distance of scatter are obtained by rolling two different dice. Should the actual target hex be within the Observer's LOS, a Red SR is placed; otherwise a Blue one is used. Either action ends the phase.

During the following phase, assuming that radio contact has been maintained, the player has several options. If the SR is to be moved, the conservative approach is to merely attempt to move the SR. Since such a correction might scatter, the more adventuresome option of moving and placing a FFE wherever fate wills can produce nasty surprises for either (or both) parties. When such an option has been selected and the FFE falls outside of the Observer's LOS, a Blue FFE marker is used. If, in the appropriate phase of any turn, a Blue FFE is on the board, an effort to move it must be made; a Red FFE need be moved only if desired. Finally, the Fire Mission can be terminated at will; unless terminated by the owner, a FFE lasts for two successive player turns.

As an aside, this last option is sometimes the best one I have found. As an example, if, as a result of SR placement, the enemy withdraws from a cluster of buildings leaving you with no legal target to which to switch the SR, letting the shells fall may well deprive you of some cover for your own advancing forces.

The Artillery Game Model

In light of these considerations, I wrote a program which would play out 20 player turns, during which it would attempt to get off as many shots as it could—subject to what struck me as a reasonable philosophy. If a Red SR had been achieved, it was assumed that there would be a FFE on the board during the next two player turns. This supposes that a FFE centered about any Red SR would be satisfactory. The net effect probably produces FFEs a bit faster than would really be the case during actual play. To balance that, the program was written so that each successful Fire Mission would be followed by placement of a new AR, even if radio contact was maintained and a Black chit was drawn. Under these circumstances, the option to continue a FFE from the same point exists. Since this option would certainly be effective in some game situations, eliminating it should have the effect of slightly reducing the number of FFEs produced during the game. After the game was over, all sorts of interesting facts were stored away.

This process was then repeated, for a given set of conditions, anywhere from 1000 to 10000 times. Experimentation, beginning with the things mentioned earlier, indicated that 1000 playings would be sufficient for the kind of information of interest to us. For those who are curious about this sort of thing, playing that many "games" took about 90 seconds on my IBM PC. All of the runs made in connection with this article kept it busy, on and off, for over 30 hours.

Number of Black Chits	# of turns	Number of Red Chits 2		3		4	
10	5			2.0	1.8		
				1.7	1.6		
	10			4.2	3.7		
				3.2	2.9		
	20			7.1	6.4		
				5.4	5.1		
9	5	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.9	1.6
		1.7	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5
	10	4.3	3.9	4.0	3.6	3.7	3.3
		3.3	3.0	3.2	2.8	2.9	2.7
	20	7.7	7.1	6.6	6.2	5.7	5.4
		5.8	5.4	5.5	4.9	4.7	4.4
8	5	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.6
		1.8	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.5
	10	4.4	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.5	3.2
		3.4	3.0	3.4	2.7	2.8	2.6
	20	7.7	6.8	6.3	6.0	5.2	5.0
		6.0	5.4	5.3	4.7	4.5	4.3

(a) Values for the British, the U.S. and the Germans.

Chits (black/red)	# of turns	Initial Radio Contact Number 6		7		8	
6/2	5	1.2	1.0	1.6	1.4	1.9	1.6
		1.1	1.0	2.8	2.4	1.7	1.6
	10	2.6	2.3	3.5	2.9	4.1	3.6
		2.2	2.0	2.8	2.4	3.2	2.9
	20	4.8	4.3	6.0	5.3	6.7	6.0
		3.9	3.7	4.9	4.3	5.5	5.0
5/2	5	1.2	0.9	1.6	1.4	1.9	1.7
		1.1	0.9	1.5	1.3	1.7	1.5
	10	2.6	2.1	4.3	2.9	4.0	3.5
		2.1	1.9	2.7	2.4	3.1	2.8
	20	4.6	3.9	5.4	4.9	6.0	5.7
		3.8	3.5	4.7	4.2	5.1	4.6
5/3	5	1.1	0.9	1.5	1.3	1.7	1.5
		1.0	0.8	1.4	1.2	1.6	1.4
	10	2.3	1.9	3.1	2.6	3.2	3.0
		1.8	1.7	2.4	2.1	2.7	2.5
	20	3.8	3.3	4.4	4.0	4.4	4.2
		3.2	2.9	3.9	3.4	4.1	4.0

(b) Values for the Russians.

Table 30—The average number of FFEs for both 100 and 70% LOS.

The results were printed out after each set of 1000 games, including the conditions under which it had been played and a statistical report of the outcomes. These results can be divided into three topics: how quickly a shot can be obtained, the average number of FFEs obtained, and the distribution of the FFEs. The conclusions I've drawn will be summarized as these topics are considered below.

FIRE FOR EFFECT

All of the other attacks in the *ASL* system can be executed in the turn in which the target presents itself. With OBA, one is guaranteed of at least one player turn delay. It is, therefore, a matter of some interest to know just how much more than one turn a player might expect to wait. In this, as in so much else in *ASL*, he who trusts to luck will come up short in the long run.

Table 29 summarizes the probabilities of getting a FFE within the minimum of two player turns, and the probability of getting at least one FFE within three player turns. Thus, each entry consists of two numbers. The results are divided into two sections. This introduces a situation which will be echoed several times before we are finished with studying OBA. Back in the old days, the basic radio contact number for the Germans and the British was "7", the U.S. was blessed with a "9", and the Russian values rose from "5" to "7" during the course of the war. Now, however, the first three nationalities are all set at "8" and the Russians, while they still start off in a comparative hole, start at "6" and move up to "8". Furthermore, the accuracy dr is the same for the first three, as are the radio repair/permanent malfunction numbers (another relative loss for the American forces). This means that a nine black/three red (9B/3R) chit artillery module will be worth just as much to the German player as it is to the U.S. player. For these reasons, the results of trials for the first three nationalities will generally be grouped together. Since, in general, these forces are comparably supplied with leaders, such differences as exist will be found in the chits available.

The (comparatively) poor Russians end up being segregated because, even when they have a radio contact value of "8", they alone use the 6B/2R, 5B/2R and 5B/3R chit combinations. Since no nationality likely to appear in the game system will be in worse shape, we can expect to see all other forces somewhere in between the Germans/Americans/British and the Russians. It is important to note that the column headings are usually different in these two-part tables.

In looking at Table 29 you'll note that, for each chit combination (and, for the Russians, radio contact number) there are three different "% LOS" entries: 100%, 70% and 40%. These are the probabilities that a scattered shot will fall within the LOS of the Observer. The 100% value was picked for obvious reasons. The 70% value is one that I used in my *COD* article ("First Impressions", Vol. 17, No. 2) and it reflected my feelings concerning a typical game situation at that time. I have since, probably due in no small way to the number of *Deluxe ASL* scenarios I've been playing, concluded that a lower value ought to be included. I choose 40% as the value simply because using it puts the same interval between the numbers.

Let's suppose that you're the U.S. player, sitting somewhere with a view of almost everything, and have a "Plentiful" artillery module. From part (a) of the table, for 100% LOS, you have a 46% chance of getting a FFE in the minimum two player turns and a 74% chance of doing it within three. At the other extreme, consider an early war Russian module with "Scarce" ammunition in a city scenario. At 40% LOS, the corresponding numbers from part (b) of the table are now 7% and 18%. After looking at these numbers and going over my collection of *ASL* scenarios, I'm of the opinion that, unless there's at least a 50% chance of getting a shot off within three player turns, a Russian player should just forget about using an artillery module; it's hard for me to find a situation in which that leader wouldn't be better employed moving or rallying troops.

Part (a), however, offers some other interesting results. Table 28 showed us that, category for category, the British numbers are better than the American ones. We see the same thing here. In both cases, the "Plentiful" U.S. module has less worth than does a British "Normal" one. The thing that struck me was the extent to which these probabilities were insensitive to the ammo supply level. It's quite clear that the thing which *really* matters is the probability that the SR will fall within the Observer's LOS. This will, in general, mean that the Observer will have to be on the move. This will certainly limit his ability to call down fire, which may have a negative effect elsewhere in play. We will see.

In the caption for Table 29, you'll notice that the contact modifier is "−1". If the artillery in question is 76mm-82mm mortars, the modifier is "−2". This too is something we'll be taking a look at the significance of a bit later on.

Average Return on Investment

In Table 30 there are four numbers for each combination of chits (and radio contact number) and number of player turns. Before going into the conditions associated with these four numbers, let me explain the "Number of Player Turns" parameter. These are the same numbers I used back in the *COD* article, and I still feel that they are reasonable chraracterizations of short-, medium-, and long-term return. The results for five player turns should give us some notion of the quick-strike capability of an artillery module, while the 20-turn results should be an upper bound for most scenarios.

Force	Ammunition Supply Scarce		Normal		Plentiful	
	COD	ASL	COD	ASL	COD	ASL
British	2.8	6.3	3.6	7.7	4.5	7.7
U.S.	4.0	5.7	4.8	6.6	5.6	7.1
German	2.8	5.2	3.6	6.3	4.5	6.6
Russian (early)	1.3	3.8	1.6	4.6	2.2	4.8

Table 31—The Average number of FFEs in 20 turns for 100% LOS, −1 contact number.

Chits (black/red)	# of turns	Number of FFEs 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	5	11 15	3 6	61 64	24 15							
10/3	10	8 8	0 0	13 19	3 4	30 37	16 14	31 17				
	20	8 7	0 0	11 12	0 0	10 13	0 1	13 17	1 2	18 19	2 4	20 17
	5	9 14	3 7	63 62	26 17							
9/2	10	5 7	0 0	14 16	2 5	30 41	16 14	32 18				
	20	5 6	0 0	10 8	0 0	8 12	0 0	10 13	1 2	17 22	3 7	23 21
	5	15 18	5 8	60 61	21 14							
9/3	10	10 9	0 0	13 19	3 5	35 39	15 10	25 18				
	20	10 8	0 0	10 11	0 0	14 16	0 1	15 16	1 2	14 21	3 4	19 18
	5	14 22	5 6	64 61	17 12							
9/4	10	11 14	0 1	18 22	2 3	34 37	14 10	21 14				
	20	11 13	0 0	16 16	0 0	18 16	0 1	16 18	0 1	15 18	2 3	14 12
	5	9 15	5 6	58 63	28 16							
8/2	10	6 8	0 0	10 17	2 3	30 38	15 14	36 20				
	20	6 7	0 0	8 10	0 0	10 11	0 1	11 15	1 2	17 21	3 5	23 20
	5	13 16	5 7	64 62	19 15							
8/3	10	9 10	0 0	17 19	2 4	34 40	14 11	24 17				
	20	9 9	0 0	13 14	0 0	16 15	0 1	16 19	1 1	17 19	2 4	16 14
	5	17 22	5 6	62 62	16 10							
8/4	10	13 15	0 0	22 23	2 4	32 37	13 10	19 11				
	20	13 15	0 0	19 16	0 0	17 19	0 1	18 18	0 2	16 17	2 1	11 9

(a) Values for the British, the U.S. and the Germans.

Chits (black/red)	# of turns	Number of FFEs 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	5	12 19	5 8	62 63	21 11							
6/2 (8)	10	8 10	0 1	13 20	2 5	34 40	15 11	28 14				
	20	8 9	0 0	9 12	0 0	14 15	0 0	16 18	1 1	20 24	3 3	20 16
	5	18 30	10 10	61 54	10 7							
6/2 (7)	10	9 12	0 2	20 30	5 8	43 37	11 6	12 5				
	20	9 10	0 0	12 11	0 1	14 19	0 1	21 26	2 3	25 20	4 3	12 7
	5	36 46	12 10	49 42	3 2							
6/2 (6)	10	14 19	2 3	38 43	8 7	33 25	3 2	2 1				
	20	10 11	0 0	16 19	0 1	23 26	2 3	27 24	3 3	15 11	2 1	3 1
	5	13 17	5 8	63 65	20 10							
5/2 (8)	10	8 9	0 1	15 20	2 5	35 42	14 11	26 13				
	20	8 8	0 0	12 13	0 0	16 17	0 1	19 22	0 2	26 24	1 2	18 12
	5	21 28	8 12	61 55	10 5							
5/2 (7)	10	10 13	1 1	24 33	5 7	41 36	10 5	10 6				
	20	9 10	0 0	15 17	0 1	18 21	0 1	22 24	2 4	22 16	3 2	9 5
	5	38 49	11 10	48 39	3 2							
5/2 (6)	10	15 23	2 3	38 44	9 5	30 23	3 1	3 1				
	20	11 13	0 0	15 20	1 1	23 30	2 4	30 20	3 2	13 8	2 0	2 1
	5	18 24	6 8	63 61	14 7							
5/3 (8)	10	15 17	0 1	26 26	3 4	33 36	10 8	14 8				
	20	15 16	0 0	23 21	0 0	22 23	0 0	18 19	0 1	14 15	1 1	8 4
	5	24 34	9 11	59 51	8 4							
5/3 (7)	10	13 19	1 2	28 34	6 7	38 32	7 4	8 3				
	20	12 16	0 0	20 21	0 0	26 25	0 1	22 22	2 1	14 12	1 1	3 1
	5	42 52	11 10	43 37	3 2							
5/3 (6)	10	20 27	2 2	44 46	6 5	25 17	2 1	2 1				
	20	16 17	0 0	23 28	1 2	27 28	1 2	22 18	2 1	8 4	0 0	1 1

(b) Values for the Russians. The value in parentheses is the radio contact number.

Table 32—The probability, for British, U.S. and Russian forces, of obtaining various numbers of FFEs. In each pair of numbers the values are for 100% and 70% LOS, respectively.

Force		British		U.S.		German		Russian	
Number of turns	Modifier	% none	av	% none	av	% none	av	% none	av
5	−1	15	1.8	15	1.8	16	1.8	28	1.4
	−2	11	1.9	13	1.9	15	1.8	25	1.5
10	−1	8	3.8	8	3.7	10	3.6	13	2.9
	−2	6	4.1	8	3.9	9	3.8	12	3.1
20	−1	7	6.8	7	6.4	9	6.0	10	4.9
	−2	5	7.1	7	6.9	9	6.1	9	5.1

Table 33—The effect of the contact maintenance DR, for 70% LOS, on both the number of games with no FFEs and the average number of FFEs.

For each combination of parameters, the top two numbers refer to the results from the model for Table 29 described earlier. The value on the left is for 100% LOS; the value on the right is for 70% LOS. That pair of values in the second line has the same LOS parameters, but they suppose that upon completion of a Fire Mission, no further effort is made to obtain another mission for two player turns. This means that the leader could move once before attempting to arrange another shot.

For any force except the Russian one, the effects of "Plentiful", "Normal" and "Scarce" supply are obtained by looking at the block of results for "plentiful", then the block directly below it, and finally at the block to the right of the second one. For the Russians, it is simply a matter of reading down from top to bottom in part (b). Look at the American results. Using the "Observer Never Moves" line, the values, in 20 player turns, with 70% LOS are: 6.4, 6.2 and 5.4. That pretty much tells the story. For a given force, the differences to be seen between having "Plentiful" and "Normal" supply are generally quite small. Going from "Normal" to "Scarce" shows more effect. This is but one example of the significance of that extra red chit.

The effects of supply level become smaller if we look at shorter times and the second line of results. For the Americans again, the corresponding 10-turn results, with at least two player turns between shots, are 2.9, 2.8 and 2.7. As we shall be seeing in our look at distributions, the significance of these average values is such that we might play several games in a row in which a "Scarce" artillery module outperforms a "Plentiful" one.

The results of these calculations, as well as some of the others, have convinced me that it is better to attempt fewer shots if that is the price required in order to increase the chances of having a wayward SR land within the Observer's LOS. In particular, we can see in this last table cases in which the turns spent moving will be just about compensated for by having better LOS.

The results for various supply levels have some important implications with regard to DYO scenarios. In general, purchase of "Plentiful" ammunition at a cost of 20% doesn't seem like a good idea for any nationality except, possibly, the Russians late in the war. In general, when on the attack, the chronic Russian leader shortage is a bit less bothersome, and late in the war is when the Russians are likely to be attacking. However, saving 20%, once you've decided to pop for an artillery module, is probably false economy.

This seems like a good place to make a comparison between what the general worth of an artillery module is now, and what it once was. The numbers in Table 31 are a combination of ones from Table 30 for 100% LOS and ones calculated long ago when *COD* first appeared. Clearly, the Russians are the big winners in terms of overall gain, but the British have done nearly as well on a percentage basis—and they were better to start with. If you hadn't already noticed, artillery in *ASL* does your boys more damage. (One of the players who wrote to me did so, in part, to express the opinion that the British should come out better than do the Americans; it is safe to say that the designers agree with him.)

The Distribution of Results

It is from distributions such as those shown in Table 32 that the averages discussed in the previous section were obtained. At 1000 runs per case, these are the least reliable results, but I would trust any of them within 3% either way. Remember that the averages get better a lot faster than do the details of the distribution. In this case, what I'd like to point out is well illustrated by the results for 100% LOS, with 8B/3R chits. The probabilities of obtaining zero through five complete Fire Missions (each worth

OBA GUN CALIBER					
DRM	80	100	120	150	200+
−3	37.0	37.0	24.1	13.9	6.5
−2	50.9	50.9	37.0	24.1	13.9
−1	65.7	65.7	50.9	37.0	24.1
+0	77.8	77.8	65.7	50.9	37.0
+1	87.0	87.0	77.8	65.7	50.9
+2	93.5	93.5	87.0	77.8	65.7

Table 34—The probability that an AFV will both survive and remain Mobile after an OBA FFE attack.

two FFEs) in 20 turns are 9%, 13%, 16%, 16%, 17% and 16%. While that distribution isn't as flat as that seen in one of my earlier examples, the numbers tell us that we really can't count on, in any given playing, getting anywhere close to the average value. What that means is that your game strategy should not be based upon an expectation of big help from the guns. It may be there, but it might not.

The Russian results show more variation. For example, the 5B/3R module has 20-turn values of 16%, 23%, 22%, 8% and 1%. This is the result of the smaller number of black chits which will, after all, place a ceiling on just how many Fire Missions you can get.

As mentioned earlier, it's easier to maintain contact if you are talking to the local mortar crews. Some idea of what this is worth can be gained from Table 33. The ammunition supplies are all "Normal", except for the U.S. entry (which is "Plentiful"). The Russian values are for the late war. While the differences between the −1 and −2 values are not particularly large, note that the differences are sometimes greater than those due to changes in the ammunition supply level.

Effects on Armor

The effects of HE fire of a given weight upon infantry have already been explored in the early tables in my first *ASL* article dealing with infantry. However, OBA effects on armor deserve some attention. The way the rules now read, a KIA result kills the AFV, while a K# result (or a roll one greater than that) immobilizes the vehicle if it's a hull hit and automatically Shocks it with a turret hit. A Shock hit will be fatal one-third of the time. The IFT roll is subject to a DRM ranging from −3 (an open-topped vehicle, having all armor factors of less than or equal to "4", parked in the woods) to +2 (a vehicle with all armor factors of greater than or equal to "8" parked next to a wall). Thus, the results in Table 34 provide a complete picture of what can happen.

To pick a specific situation for study, a German PzKpfw IVH out in the open has no modifiers at all. Even so, an 81mm mortar FFE has better than a 20% chance of taking it out of the conflict. That chance more than doubles if the artillery gets a second shot. If you park that tank in the woods, that same ordnance has a better than even chance of causing trouble with two shots. Since there are only three German vehicles that qualify for the +1 modifier due to high armor values, this means that no AFV can afford to ignore artillery fire, even if everything is buttoned up. AFVs are prime OBA targets, especially if you have onboard AT weapons to coordinate with the FFEs. The AFV owner, faced with a choice between stopping in the open, thereby improving the chances of enemy AT fire, or of rolling through another hex of FFE, is not a happy commander. But then, who, being victimized by intelligent play of OBA, is a happy commander? Let's hope that all our opponents fall into that category.



SERIES REPLAY

STREETS OF FIRE, Scenario 1

German Player—Darryl Burk
Russian Player—Bill Conner
Neutral Commentator—Mark C. Nixon

We pick up the account of the battle for GHQ with the fourth turn of Deluxe ASL Scenario 1. While the German plan was disrupted by a sudden swing in the luck last turn, much fighting remains for the outcome still hangs in the balance. Welcome back to the "Death Trap".

Darryl Burk and Bill Conner are both well known faces at the highest levels of ASL competition. They have faced each other so many times that they even have their own names for some of the terrain features—aka, "Death Trap" for building bE1. Mark Nixon, coming back into the fold of writing wargamers after a too-long absence, has been gleefully looking over their shoulders to provide the insightful neutral commentary.

TURN 4

German Player Turn

Serial	Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
223	Wind Change Attempt		6	NE
224	G.H. self-rally		8	Remove DM
225	G.A. with Behr		9	Remove DM
226	G.F. with Behr		11	Remove DM
227	G.G with Behr		6	Remove DM
228	R.B. with Golikov		9	Rally
Prep Fire Phase				
229	Pilsl, g.D., G.K. w/LMG opportunity fire			
230	Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG fire on R.E.—36 IFT	+2	7	3MC
231	R.E.—3MC		5	Pinned
232	HMG ROF fires on R.E.—24 IFT	+2	8	1MC
233	R.E.—1MC		3	Pass
234	German Sniper Activation Target Selection 1,4 moves Sniper to dI1		2	Fires
235	Pins R.O.			
236	G.E. fires on Petrakov w/LMG, R.F. w/HMG R.J., C.J.—8/4 IFT	+3	5	NMC/NE
237	Petrakov w/LMG—NMC		7	Pass
238	R.F. w/HMG—NMC	−1	7	Pass
Movement Phase				
239	Behr from bF3 to bF4			
240	g.B from bD1 (2nd) to bF1 (2nd)			
241	R.B. fires on g.B.—4 IFT	+2	7	NE
242	R.B. final fires on g.B −2 IFT	+2	3	NMC
243	German Sniper Activation		3	NE
244	g.B —NMC		11	Breaks (DM)
245	G.Q. from bC3 to bD2 (1st)			
246	Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, G.N., C.T. from bB4 to bB2			
Defensive Fire Phase				
247	R.I. w/LMG fires on Pilsl, g.D., G.K. w/LMG—8 IFT	+2	6	NMC
248	Pilsl—NMC		4	Pass
249	g.D.—NMC	−1	10	Breaks (DM)
250	G.K. w/LMG—NMC	−1	8	Pinned
251	G.A. w/MMG fires on Werth, C.S., G.E.—8/16 IFT	+3	3	1MC/2MC
252	German Sniper Activation Target Selection 5,5 moves Sniper to dI1		1	Fires
253	Breaks R.O.			Breaks (DM)
254	Werth—1MC		12	Wounded
255	Wound Severity		3	Light
256	G.E.—2MC		7	Breaks (DM)
257	R.D. fires on Behr, G.A., G.F., G.G.—4 IFT	+3	10	Cower, NE
258	MMG ROF fires on G.I., R.H—8 IFT	+1	7	NMC
259	R.H.—NMC		4	Pass
260	G.I.—NMC		6	Pass
261	Russian Sniper Activation		3	NE
Rout Phase				
262	g.B routs to bD2 (1st)			
263	Werth, G.E. have no rout			KIA
264	g.D. routs to bD2 (1st)			
265	Pilsl voluntary routs to bD2 (1st)			
266	G.A., G.F., G.G. rout to bF4			
267	R.O. routs to dJ2			
Advance Phase				
268	Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG, C.T. into bB1			
269	G.N. marked with C.R.			
270	G.N., C.R. into bC2			
271	G.Q. into bD1 (1st)			
272	Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG, C.S. into bC2			
273	Remove C.S.			
Close Combat Phase				
274	German player declares Hand-to-Hand in bG1			
275	G.I. vs. R.H.		4	R.H. KIA
276	R.H. vs. G.I.		7	G.I. KIA

German player places C.S. on Behr; C.X. on Bauman; C.Y. on Pilsl.

Russian Player Turn

Serial	Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
277	Wind Change Attempt		6	NE
278	Provisional Reinforcements		4	NE
279	Petrakov passes LMG to R.J.			
280	R.O. self-rally		6	Remove DM
281	G.A. with Behr		5	Remove DM
282	G.F. with Behr		4	Rally
283	G.G. with Behr		7	Remove DM
284	g.D. with Pilsl	−1	4	Rally
285	G.B. with Pilsl	−1	8	Remove DM
Prep Fire Phase				
286	Petrakov, R.F. w/HMG, R.J. w/LMG fires on G.Q.—36 IFT	+2	7	3MC
287	G.Q.—3MC		8	Breaks (DM)
Movement Phase				
288	R.D. assault moves from bF1 (1st) to bE2 (1st)			DM G.B.
289	R.E. assault moves from bE2 to bF2			
290	Pilsl, g.D. fire on R.E.—2 IFT	+1	11	NE
291	R.I. w/LMG assault moves from dM1 to dL1			
292	R.A w/MMG from bF0 to bG1			
293	Golikov from dL2 to dJ3			
294	R.B. from dL2 to dL1			
Defensive Fire Phase				
295	Pilsl, g.D. final fire on R.D. −2 IFT	+2	7	NE
Rout Phase				
296	G.Q. has no rout			KIA
297	G.B. routs to bC4			
298	Pilsl voluntary routs to bC4			
Advance Phase				
299	R.I. passes LMG to R.B.			
300	R.I into dM2			
301	R.B. w/LMG into dM1			
302	Golikov into dJ2			
303	R.D. into bD2 (1st)			
304	R.E. into into bF3			DM G.A., G.G.
305	R.A. w/MMG into dI1			CX R.A.
Close Combat Phase				
306	No Ambush in bD1 (1st)			
307	R.D. vs. g.D.		7	g.D. KIA
308	g.D. vs. R.D.		6	NE

German: My attack has shifted northward as building bE1 remains in the hands of the stubborn Russian defenders. The bC1-dM1 approach to GHQ is about the only choice I have now. Unfortunately, bE1 covers it quite nicely. Although the "Death Trap" will not be the springboard of the final assault as I had hoped, it may still be useful to me as a drain on Russian manpower. "Fish" now has more good order squads than I, not a good situation when you are on the attack.

Prep fire was a futile attempt to correct that imbalance by breaking a few Russian squads, so an attack on bE1 wouldn't have to face some 36 firepower factors. Cpl. Werth and squad E were in a bad spot and probably should have moved. I had considered two alternatives for them, an assault move to bG2 or a bolder move to bG2-bH1-bH0-dM1-dH2 with an advance to dG2. Either alternative would have given broken units a chance to rout. The demise of Cpl. Werth and E would have been acceptable had E's attack on bE1 broken a defender or two.

I had planned to advance E and a concealed Werth against Russian D, which was why I moved the half-squad B to the second level of bF1. Had B survived that awesome 2(+2) attack, he would have joined E in close combat against D.

Kalmer abandoned bB4 even though his was the only position I had to harass Russian reinforcements from, because the assault needs a shot in the arm both manpower and firepower. His group can be put to far better use on the front line than in a position from which they merely inconvenience Bill's reinforcements. The Advance Phase was used to support the thrust through bC1-dM1, but I failed to protect my broken units! What a disaster. My broken squads are now on their own.

Cpl. Werth and E bore the price of their commander's mistakes. Their loss, combined with my six broken units, has me in dire straits. I need a good Rally Phase during the Russian player turn. I had a feeling that time was running out for squad I, so I opted Hand-to-Hand combat in order to take someone with him. The fighting in bG1 was a gamble that just didn't work out.

The end of my player turn leaves the German in questionable shape. I'm only a few hexes from the final objective, but accurate Russian fire has really thinned the ranks. I can't afford to lose any more squads in the Rout Phase but, unfortunately, that's what I've set myself up to suffer. Hurt as they are these Germans are still a force to be reckoned with.

Yes, building bE1 has again lived up to its reputation as the "Death Trap". A few foolish moves on my part have enhanced this mystique. My poor handling of the Rout and Advance Phases during my fourth turn come back to haunt me during Bill's player turn. What a mistake to move Bauman out of bD2 where he covered so many of my broken squads. He would have been much better positioned in bD2 (1st). At least the units which did rally provided a little cover for their broken comrades.

The delay in the arrival of the reinforcements is the only thing keeping me from being totally blown out of this game. With the excellent way "Fish" has handled the troops he already has, I really don't need him getting any more. My only chance is to get some squads into GHQ and cut off those Russians concentrated west of the building.

Russian: Soviet Order of the Red Star is awarded squad E, as he miraculously survives German Prep Fire attacks of 36(+2) and 24(+2), suffering only a Pin in the process. But they missed a chance for even greater glory when I forgot to fire them during Final Fire. Wait till the Commissar hears of this!

Golikov, directing squad B, does hammer the German half-squad with a murderous 2(+2) Subsequent First Fire. It was his only shot; what can I say? Only the MMG fired into the Melee, hoping to cause a little confusion. Werth broke, wounded and dropped in ELR, making him in effect a 5+2. Befitting such a stalwart, he was gunned down in the Rout Phase along with E.

And Kalmer's group left its crow's nest, forfeiting excellent fields of fire, forced to join the attack because of Darryl's lack of front line manpower. Ground level of dM2 and dM1 may now be occupied without fear of Kalmer's 20(−1) firegroup. Hex dM2 is particularly nice, because the enemy must be in either adjacent rubble, open ground or an upper level to have LOS.

During my own turn, support weapon transfers again reduce the risk of their loss. During the Movement Phase, my expendable squad E assault moves into the street to harass enemy units behind the rowhouse. While this squad was drawing fire, my squad D moved to cut off Darryl's Q's rout. Fearing no death, E advanced to DM enemy A and G squads while D entered bE1 (1st) for close combat, won that, and ended in position to either draw fire from Bauman or take a point-blank Snap Shot (halved twice) as they leave bC2.

Squad A gets out of the gully, takes a quick body count in bG1, and then CXs to advance into dI1. He will make the enemy's Movement Phase miserable (especially G.H.'s should he self-rally). That, unfortunately, will come easier than it should since E earlier forgot to DM him.

I've hurt "Action" Burk badly over the last two turns, killing three squads and a half squad and a leader while losing only one squad myself this turn. Building bE1, which I now control, has again proved to be the core of the resistance. Those D1/E1 wings spell death for broken units. But Darryl is not out of it yet. The bulk of his force is in position to push its way into the GHQ, a move which would cut off the majority of my force. I feel he is forced to take greater risks though, and then hope for some good luck. Stranger things have happened in *ASL* play.

Neutral Commentator: *I liked the flexibility of Darryl's attack. After his third turn advance, he was in bD1-dI1 in strength. This turn he is in bD1-dB1, ready to go at "Fish" again. Unfortunately, in the interim a large portion of his army got pounded.*

Notice how a simple thing like Russian squad D not being CX has pronounced impact this turn. Were the players aware that squad D should have been CX, it would not be able to force DM status on bF3 (because he would need "2" to obtain a NMC; said roll would then Cower to the "2" column, where DM with a +4 DRM is impossible). Units in bF3 would then rally on "8" after Behr advances in. Looking ahead, both German squads A and G would have rallied with the roll they make!

But the most surprising event happened in the German Advance Phase when Bauman decided not to go after the pinned Russian in bE2. Admittedly, this would have put a lot on the line, with Bauman facing an adjacent 36(+2) during Russian prep fire, but it would have given Darryl an easy "kill" right now as well as kept the Russian on the east side of the street. Besides, "Action" Burk would have enjoyed a dr modifier advantage in Ambush and may well have destroyed E and skated away from bE1 altogether!

Still, as I said, this would have put a tremendous amount of the German force "on the line", just when he needs them to take up the fight. The point is, putting Bauman anywhere but where he went may

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMENTS

We liked the format used by Messers. Chappell, Blick and Kibler in their replay (*GENERAL*, Vol. 23, Nos. 2-3) so well that we adopted it for this Series Replay with only minor modifications. These, along with some clarifications, are as follows.

1. Whenever we refer to a hex side or vertex, we always designate them as though an Artillery Request counter were in the hex, oriented with the "1" hex side containing the grid coordinate. Vertex #1, then, is the one between "1" and "2"; vertex #2 is between "2" and "3"; and so forth.

2. With the above in mind, we always orient Sniper counters with the "1" side matching the hex side containing the grid coordinates. If you adhere to this rule, you need never worry about perfectly aligning your Sniper counter, and eliminate any player ever questioning the direction it is facing. When the Sniper counter moves to another board, it is simply reoriented properly if necessary. When it lands in a half hex with no grid coordinate, it is oriented as other hexes on that board; or oriented on the lower numbered board if in a whole hex made up of two un-numbered half hexes.

3. Again referring to the above, bypass movement is recorded by referring to the hexside bypassed. For example, "bK5/5-6" means that hex bK5 was bypassed across hexsides "5" and "6".

4. When called upon to show both dice in a result, as with Sniper movement, we recorded the colored die first.

5. We did not use letter designations for events; each has its own number.

6. We did not record actual placement of DM or Residual Fire counters, feeling these are an inherent part of their respective events and would only serve to clutter the notes.

7. Snipers were resolved immediately when rolled, instead of after resolution of the generating event. Don't be surprised when play is interrupted for immediate Sniper activity.

8. Another time saver was our "Random Events" priority. Whenever a Random Event must be rolled for multiple units in a location, we instituted a set priority which eliminated the hassle of designating each die to a certain unit and the inconvenience of a stack suddenly keeling over in the middle of the often frantic behavior we players are all subject to during such excitement.

Our system is simple: predesignate your dice for all time, light to dark, on paper and preferably someplace where this list can be seen during play. Every Random Event takes this priority, light to dark: Hero (alphabetically if multiple heroes); Leader (Commissar first, then by quality and then alphabetically); Squad or HS (by alphabetic designation, then per A25 Chart if duplicated); finally, Crew (by number).

This may seem a lot of trouble during set-up, but once done is set for the game. It truly saves a lot of time when you're playing better than 100 scenarios a year.

EVENT LISTING LEGEND

NE	No Effect
w/	with or possessing
(1st)	First Level
(2nd)	Second Level
G.-.	German Squad
R.-.	Russian Squad
C.-.	Concealment Counter
g.-.	German HS
malf	Malfunction

(all other abbreviations are ASL standard.)

RUSSIAN UNITS

Type Unit	*Designation*
9-1 Leader	Petravkov
7-0 Leader	Golikov
4-5-8	R A.
4-5-8	R B
4-5-8	R C.
4-5-8	R D.
4-5-8	R E.
4-5-8	R F
6-2-8	R G.
6-2-8	R H.
6-2-8	R I
?	C B.
?	C C.
?	C D
?	C E.
?	C G.

GERMAN UNITS

Type Unit	*Designation*
9-1 Leader	Bauman
8-1 Leader	Kalmer
8-1 Leader	Pilsl
8-0 Leader	Behr
7-0 Leader	Werth
4-6-7	G A.
4-6-7	G B.
4-6-7	G D.
4-6-7	G E.
4-6-7	G F
4-6-7	G G.
4-6-7	G H.
4-6-7	G I
4-6-7	G J.
4-6-7	G K.
4-6-7	G L
4-6-7	G M
4-6-7	G N.
4-6-7	G O.
4-6-7	G P.
4-6-7	G Q.
2-4-7	g.C
2-4-7	g.CC

ADDITIONAL UNITS

Russian Reinforcements

Type Unit	*Designation*
8-1 Leader	Petrov
6-2-8	R J.
6-2-8	R K.
6-2-8	R L.
6-2-8	R M.
6-2-8	R N.
6-2-8	R O.

Russian

Type Unit	*Designation*
1-4-9 Hero	Gurewicz
5-2-7	R H.
?	C F
?	C H.
?	C I.
?	C J.
?	C N
?	C O.
?	C AA.
?	C BB
?	C CC.
?	C DD.

German

Type Unit	*Designation*
1-4-9 Hero	Stein
4-4-7	G K.
2-3-7	g.K.
2-4-7	g.A
2-4-7	g.B
2-4-7	g.D.
4-6-8	G N.
?	C R.
?	C S.
?	C T.
?	C X.
?	C Y.
?	C Z.

have been a better move. Moving squad Q to bE2 (1st) would have protected the broken German A, F and G. The south is left hanging open. While the decision of "Fish" to stand and fight in Turn 3 determined the future course of this scenario, Bauman's Advance Phase move signified acceptance of that decision by Darryl.

Had Darryl not managed to rally F and D from DM, "Fish" would have been all over them. Things are bad enough for the German as they are—these were very fortunate rallies.

Look at the smart turn "Fish" put in this round. He didn't try anything outstanding, yet he accomplished a lot. He put DMs on F4, nailed a half-squad in bD1, defended the southern flank against any potential rally of German squad H, and maneuvered to rally his own squad O. He continues to rely on his terrain advantages, making the German come to him—making the other guy take the risks.

Still, if "Action" Burk can break Russian E, he might be able to knock over I by force of numbers. More likely he will move a bit more cautiously, attempt to set up a firebase in bC1 and dM1 to interdict Russian movement from bE1, and grind away at the enemy in dM2. But, though "Fish" completely forgot to place Concealment counters at the end of this turn, the situation does seem hopelessly stacked against Darryl. It will be interesting to see if the lack of concealment inconveniences Bill this next turn. Could the Russian commander be growing lax? Had he missed something like this earlier, he surely would have paid heavily. The question now is whether the German player has enough left to exact the toll.

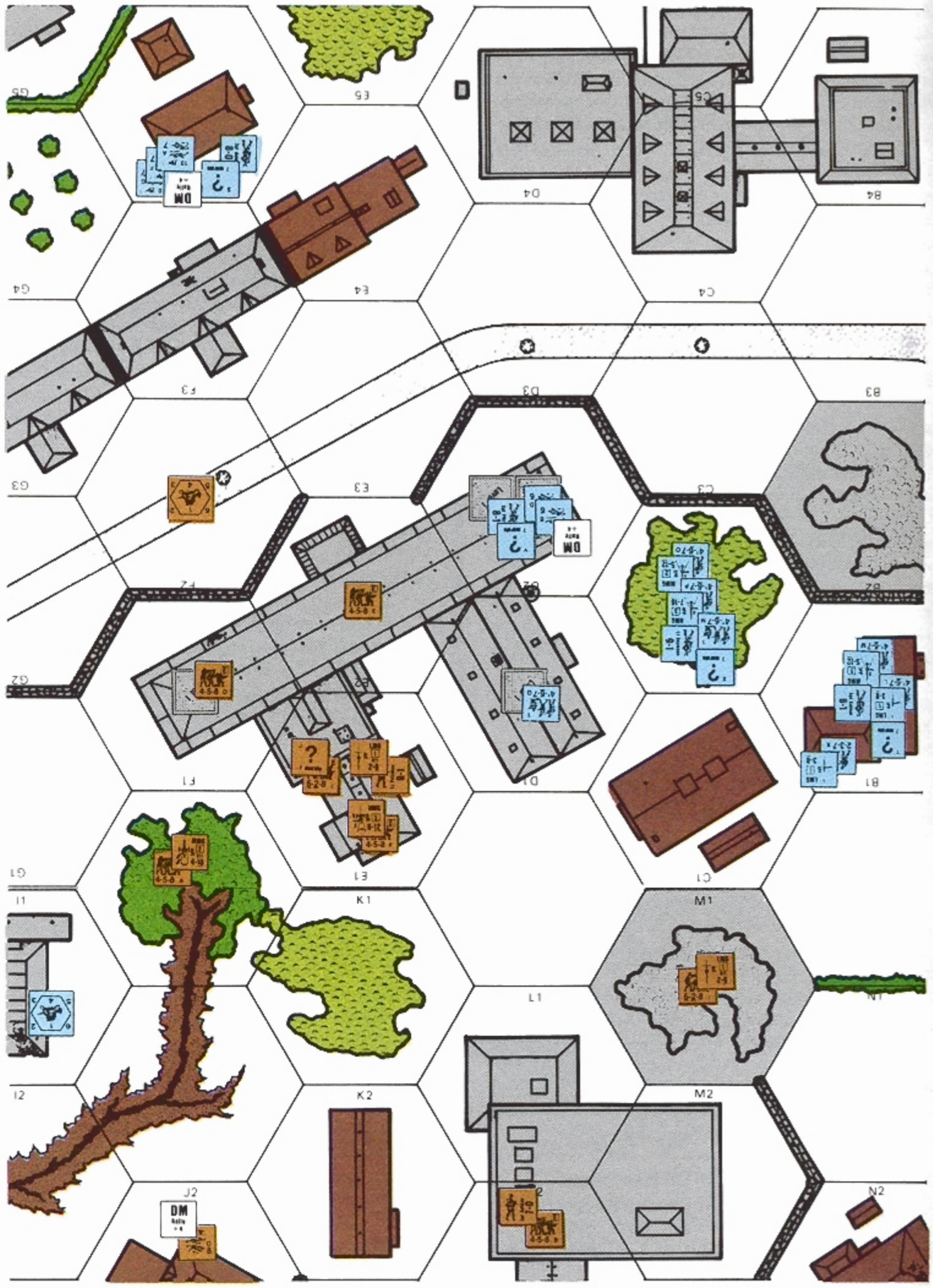


Figure 3: The situation at the end of the German player turn of Turn 4.

TURN 5

German Player Turn

Serial	Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
309	Wind Change Attempt		7	NE
310	G.H. self-rally		6	Rally
311	G.A. with Behr		7	Rally
312	G.G. with Behr		9	Remove DM
313	g.B with Pilsl	+1	4	Rally
314	R.O. with Golikov		11	NE
Prep Fire				
315	Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG fire on R.D.—36 IFT	+2	7	3MC
316	R.D.—3MC		5	Pinned
317	MMG, HMG ROF fire on R.D.—24 IFT	+2	11	NE
318	Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG fire on R.B. w/LMG—16 IFT	+2	3	3MC
319	R.B. w/LMG—3MC		2	Heat of Battle
320	R.B. Heat of Battle		2	Fanatic, and Hero Gurewicz
321	MMG ROF fires on R.B. w/LMG, Gurewicz −4 IFT	+2	6	NE
322	Russian Sniper Activation Target Selection 4,3 moves Sniper to bF4		1	Fires
323	Random DR selects G.F			Breaks (DM)
Movement Phase				
324	Behr from bF4 to bG5			
325	G.H. from bJ1 to dD1/2-3			
326	R.A. w/MMG fires on G.H.—8 IFT	−1	8	1MC
327	G.H.—1MC		5	Pass
328	G.H. continues move to dD2			
329	Pilsl, g.B from bC4 to bD2			
330	G.N., C.X. assault move from bC2 to bC1			
331	Petrakov, R.J. w/LMG, R.F. w/HMG fire on G.N.—8 IFT	+1	10	NE
332	G.K. w/LMG, C.T. assault move from bB1 to bC1			
333	Residual Fire in bC1	+2	3	1MC
334	German Sniper Activation		5	NE
335	G.K.—1MC		6	Pinned
336	Russian Sniper Activation		4	NE
Defensive Fire Phase				
337	R.D. fires on Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG—4 IFT		7	PTC
338	Bauman—PTC		7	Pass
339	G.P. w/HMG—PTC		3	Pass
340	G.O. w/MMG—PTC		7	Pass
341	R.E. fires on G.F., G.A, G.G.—8 IFT	+2	7	NE
342	R.B. w/LMG fires on G.K. w/LMG, G.N., C.X—12/6 IFT	+1	4	Cower, 2MC/1MC
343	G.K.—2MC		4	Pass
344	G.N.—1MC		2	Heat of Battle
345	G.N. Heat of Battle		5	Hardens, and Hero Stein
4-6-7 G.N. replaced with 4-6-8 G.N.				
Advancing Fire Phase				
346	G.K., G.N., Stein fire on R.B. w/LMG −6 IFT	+2	7	NE
347	Pilsl, g.B fire on R.D.—2 IFT	+2	4	PTC
Rout Phase				
348	G.F., G.A., G.G. routs to bH4			
Advance Phase				
349	Behr into bH4			
350	Pilsl, g.B into bD2 (1st)			
351	Stein, G.N. into dM1			
352	Bauman, G.O w/ MMG, G P. w/HMG into bD1			
353	Kalmer, G.K. w/LMG, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG into bC1			
354	G.H. into dE3			
Close Combat Phase				
355	German player declares Hand-to-Hand in dM1			
356	G.N., Stein vs. R.B. w/LMG		9	NE
357	R.B. vs. G.N., Stein		5	G.N., Stein KIA
358	No Ambush in bD2 (1st)			
359	German player declares Hand-to-Hand in bD2 (1st)			
360	Pilsl, G.B. vs. R.D.		4	R.D. KIA
361	R.D. vs. Pilsl, g.B		8	NE

Russian Player Turn

Serial	Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
362	Wind Change Attempt		7	NE
363	Provisional Reinforcements		3	All enter
Petrov, R.K., R.L. R.M set up adjacent to dM5, offboard; R.N. adjacent to dG5, offboard. Russian player places C.AA. and C.N. on these, respectively.				
364	G.A. with Behr		4	Rally
365	G.F. with Behr		4	Rally
366	G.G. with Behr		9	Remove DM
Movement Fire				
367	Gurewicz, R.B. w/LMG assault move from dM1 to dM2			
368	Petrov, R.K., R.L., R.M., C.AA. from offboard to dL2			

369	Petrakov, R.F. w/HMG, R.J. w/LMG from bE1 to dL2			
370	R.N., C.N. from offboard to dG5			
371	Golikov. R.O. from dJ2 to dJ3			
372	G.H. fires Snap Shot on Golikov, R.O. at dJ2/4—2 IFT	+1	8	Cower, NE
373	Golikov, R.O. continue to dM3			
374	R.E. Dash from bF3 to bF1			
375	Pilsl, g.B fire Snap Shot on R.E. at bF2/4—1 IFT	−1	11	NE

Advance Phase

376	R.B passes LMG to R.I.
377	R.B. into dM1
378	Golikov, R.O. into dM2
379	R.M., R.L. into dL1
380	Place C.CC on R.M., R.L.
381	R.K. into dM2
382	Place C.BB. on R.K.
383	R.N., C.N. into dF4
384	R.E. into bF1 (1st)

Russian player places C.O. on Petrakov, R.A. w/MMG, R.F. w/HMG, R.J. w/LMG; C.E. on R.E.; C.BB. on Golikov, Gurewicz, R.I. w/LMG, R.K., R.O.

German: These Russians are incredibly tough! Level three MCs do nothing but cause a few guys to duck their heads. The Russian squad B's refusal to crumble was especially damaging. When I rolled the 3MC against him, I saw the door to GHQ opening, but reality and a pair of "eyes" slammed that door in my face. I really hate it when my opponent ends up in better shape after I attack him than before that attack. When the Russian sniper broke my only squad in bF4 which could prep fire, it was the icing on the cake. Sgt. Behr didn't attempt a Sniper Check because he didn't want to be TI adjacent to a Russian squad.

Squad H is trying to get into position to harass some reinforcements or even perhaps encircle some Russians. Squad N assault moved to bC1 to set up an ambush in close combat, and my half-squad moved in to support him. I must clear dM1, even if it means risking a unit or two in CC; I'll never get into the GHQ otherwise. Sgt. Pilsl and my B attempted, in vain, to draw some fire away from Bauman; I was amazed when they made it to bD2. Their success in close combat was even more amazing, and helps to take some of the heat off bC1.

With the end of the game rapidly approaching, my attitude for the Advance Phase is that if shooting at these Russians is having no effect then it is time for bayonet and rifle butt. Had the combat in dM1 turned out as well as Pilsl's effort, the scenario would not look so rosy for "Fish" as it now does. But Bill always puts his best into every scenario playing. This is what makes him as tough an opponent as he is. His best is excellent, and even his worst is still very good.

The close combat defeat in dM1 may truely have spelled the end for me. Once again I put everything on the line, and once again got hurt. It's not so much the loss of a squad and freshly-created Hero that hurt so bad, as the failure to eliminate the Russian squad and newly-created Hero. *Any* other result in this close combat would have been to my advantage. The need to eliminate Russians is why I continue to opt for "Hand-to-Hand" combat.

And the Russian reinforcements couldn't have arrived at a worst time for me. I wanted to be in GHQ before them, but the ferocious Russian defense prevented that. The Russian Rally Phase was a morale booster for me. It's always encouraging to have your troops rally when the chips are down. I'm not beaten yet, and there is enough time left to get Behr and his comrades into the fight just when I need them most. Every squad I can muster has to be in position to enter GHQ by the end of the next turn. The half-squads will be used for cannon-fodder, regrettable but necessary.

The situation going into the Russian player turn would have been much worse had "Fish" chosen to attack the last vestiges of my assault force instead of falling back, although falling back was the safer move and probably the smarter one as well. I can bring a lot of firepower to bear on the front line defense of GHQ, but firepower alone has yet to prove the answer. Broken, elite squads in a stone building with a Commissar tend to return to action rather quickly. I always take a Commissar if given the chance; they do a wonderful job of instilling life into broken units.

The final assault on GHQ is going to be extremely tough. My main hope is that his dice coll off a bit; they're starting to glow from the heat of his luck.

Russian: I love this game! The dice cause some really weird events. "Action" Burk would have been better off had he not even attacked this turn. It's hard to believe.

Compared with shooting up Bauman, Pilsl and his boys were chump change, so I didn't fire at them as they crossed the street. Darryl knows that he must make things happen, and nearly does with a Hero rising to the occasion while his buddies battle-harden, only all to die in close combat. Losing those newly inflamed veterans while mine survived was the worst possible outcome for Darryl. Had the results here been reversed and followed by a bad reinforcements die roll, the entire game could have turned around. At least "Action" would have regained the initiative. But it just didn't happen that way.

Unfortunately for the German, the reinforcements have arrived with "fearless Leader" directing a platoon, at gunpoint, into GHQ. A lone squad moves on to deal with enemy squad H on the south flank. Petrakov's boys might have been able to finish off Darryl by smashing Bauman in my Prep Fire Phase, but instead I used the more conservative low risk/low gain approach and move them safely to dI1. Petrakov joins squad A in "safe" dI, covering not only the rubble in dM2 but also the area south of it.

My Fanatic B and Gurewicz return to GHQ for further orders and to wash the blood off their hands. Squad B then returns to the rubble to prevent enemy entrance until the next Advance Phase. This allows a German rush of GHQ only through my open ground "killing zones". Petrov keeps his eye, and his Ppsh 41, on the guys in GHQ. (Can you imagine the balance provision in effect; all these guys would be in a fortified building!)

It seems that the timely arrival of reinforcements has just about finished off all hope of victory for "Action" Burk, although he still has a remote chance—like a sniper attack against one of my three stacks.

Neutral Commentator: *Darryl won the "manic screaming rights" with his Prep Fire Phase this turn. He shot off 36(+2), a 16(+2) and a 24(+2) attacks and pinned only one enemy squad, gave his opponent a Hero and a fanatic squad, and brought the sniper down on bF4 to break his only good order squad in that location! One word describes how Darryl feels about all this . . . and it's unprintable.*

Bill's squads in bF3 and bD2 are in extremely powerful positions at the start of this fifth turn. The German force in bB1 and bC2 is not encircled, but

Figure 4: The situation at the end of the Russian player turn of Turn 5.



is surrounded by Russian fire. Nevertheless, the German Movement Phase brought Darryl some hope as squad H got around the south end, N battle-hardened and called up Stein from the outskirts of Toledo. Unfortunately, close combat erased these gains despite a German victory on the first level of bD2.

I was surprised that Darryl went into bD1 with so much. I am getting the impression that he may be afraid the attack is winding down and is trying to force something "big" to happen. I couldn't agree more, but would send this help through bC1 instead. Finally, Burk's decision to engage in hand-to-hand combat in dM1 does not fit with his need to tie up these enemy units. If locking them in Melee would have been satisfactory, he should never have opted for the higher casualties of Hand-to-Hand. Instead, I believe he saw a chance to at least trade Hero for Hero and squad for squad, which would have been much to his advantage. Clearing dM1 was what he wanted, so he could use Kalmer to dare Russian squad I forward. It simply backfired. Again, German attempts to enter Board d prove unfortunate. The close combat in dM1 is a tell-tale sign of the last German offensive push beginning to unravel.

In his own turn, "Fish" again pulls back to allow the enemy to do the dirty work and break himself upon the near invincible Russian defense. "Action" Burk needs a really big turn. GHQ itself is very tough. The Fanatic squad up front in dM1 stands a fair chance of holding off the entire German assault singlehanded this turn.

TURN 6

German Player Turn

Serial	Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
385	Wind Change Attempt		6	NE
386	G.G. with Behr		8	Rally
Prep Fire Phase				
387	Kalmer, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG fire on R.B.—32 IFT	+2	7	2MC
388	R.B.—2MC		7	Pinned
389	Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG fire on R.B.—20 IFT	+2	10	PTC
Movement Phase				
390	Behr, G.F., G.A., G.G. use CX movement from bH4 to bD4			
391	R.E. fires on Behr, G.F., G.A., G.G. −4 IFT	+2	3	1MC
392	German Sniper Activation		3	NE
393	Behr—1MC		6	Pass
394	Russian Sniper Activation		3	NE
395	G.A.—1MC		7	Breaks (DM)
396	G.F.—1MC		6	Pinned
397	Russian Sniper Activation		5	NE
398	G.G.—1MC		4	Pass
399	Behr, G.G. continue to bC3			
400	Pilsl, G.B. assault move from bD2 (1st) to bE2 (1st)			
401	G.H. use CX movement from dE3 to dF3			
402	R.N. fires on G.H.—12 IFT	2	8	2MC
403	G.N.—2MC		4	Pass
404	Petrakov, R.A. w/MMG, R.F. w/HMG, R.J.w/LMG fires on G.H.—20 IFT	−3	10	2MC
405	G.H.—2MC		7	Breaks (DM)
Defensive Fire Phase				
406	R.B. fires on Kalmer, G.K. w/LMG, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG—4 IFT	+2	10	NE
407	R.L., R.M. fire on Bauman, G.O. w/MMG, G.P. w/HMG—12 IFT	+3	7	PTC
408	Bauman—PTC		6	Pass
409	Russian Sniper Activation Target Selection 5,6 moves Sniper to bD4		1	Fires
410	Random DR selects G.A.			Casualty
4-6-7 G.A. replaced with 2-4-7 g.A. (DM).				
411	G.P. w/HMG—PTC		9	Pinned
412	G.O. w/MMG—PTC		12	Pinned
413	R.E. fires on Pilsl, g.B.—4 IFT	+3	8	NE
414	R.N. fires on G.H.—6 IFT		12	Cower, NE
Advancing Fire Phase				
415	Pilsl, g.B fires on R.E.—2 IFt	+2	12	NE
Rout Phase				
416	G.H. routs to dD2			
417	Interdiction claimed		6	Pass
418	G.H. continues to dB1			
419	g.A. routs to bB4			
420	R.B. voluntary break and rout to dD2			
Advance Phase				
421	Pilsl, g.B into bF1			
422	Kalmer, G.K. w/LMG, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG into dM1			
423	Behr, G.G. into bC2			
Close Combat Phase				
424	Russian Ambush in bF1			
425	R.F. vs. Pilsl, G.B.		3	Pilsl, G.B. KIA

German player places C.R. on Behr, G.G.

Russian Player Turn

Serial	Event	DRM	DR	Result
Rally Phase				
426	Wind Change Attempt		4	NE
427	R.B. self-rally		6	Rally
Prep Fire Phase				
428	Golikov, Gurewicz, R.I w/LMG, R.K., R.O. fire on Kalmer, G.K. w/LMG, G.L. w/LMG, G.M. w/MMG—36 IFT	+2	7	3MC
429	Kalmer—3MC		11	Breaks (DM)
430	G.K. w/LMG—3MC		7	Breaks (DM)
431	G.L. w/LMG—3MC		8	Breaks (DM)
432	G.M. w/MMG—3MC		7	Breaks (DM)
433	German command admits defeat			

German: I have to gain control of dM1 this turn to have any chance to push into GHQ next turn. The continued failure of my huge firepower attacks to score good results is not helping my cause in the slightest. However, the prospect of Sgt. Behr bringing fresh troops into the fray warded off any discouragement due to poor marksmanship on my part.

The euphoria of prospective reinforcements was short-lived however, as squad D demonstrated that movement (even in a stone building) is not always as safe as might be desired. With two squads stranded in bD4, Sgt. Behr's infusion of fresh manpower becomes rather anemic. A better move for Behr would have been to go to bD3, where he could advance to bD4 to rally squad A and provide F enough movement factors to get into GHQ without becoming CX.

Sgt. Pilsl and half-squad B were sent to keep his E occupied so it couldn't deliver flanking fire into my assault force. Squad H had no choice but to bravely march into the deadly fire. He could be of use only by getting closer to, or into, GHQ. His goal was dJ3, with an advance into dK3 planned—but I wasn't counting on him reaching it. I had to advance into dM1 in force. There is neither time nor room for any subtle moves now. I was hoping Sgt. Pilsl would eliminate or tie down Russian E, but it wasn't meant to be.

The last hopes that I had of getting into GHQ disappeared in the hail of lead that cut down Kalmer's group. I've no chance to get things organized to push into the building now, even if "Fish" left my units alone to rally in peace. There is really no option now but to concede.

Russian: My fanatic B, having accomplished his mission to deny Movement Phase entry of the rubble in dM2, voluntarily broke and routed back to his Commissar. A dice roll of "11" or less will be good enough to bring him back as the Commissar nullifies DM and raises his morale by another one. This is one way to make Communism worthwhile (at least when using elite troops) for otherwise, as in many *SOF* scenarios, broken squads equal dead squads.

My squad E adds insult to injury by ambushing Pilsl and his boys, wiping them out, then using Ambush Withdrawal to go downstairs. He could have used the withdrawal before attacking, but I was hoping to lock the enemy in Melee. Eliminating them was just a bonus.

And, as my last action, I simply took my best shot. I can't help but agree with Darryl—his situation looks hopeless.

Neutral Commentator: *Darryl makes the anticipated rush by squads F, A, G and H. But the turn was lost when Kalmer and Bauman couldn't subdue the fanatics in hex dM1. Kalmer ends this turn adjacent to the GHQ, and Petrakov is in dI1 (somewhat out of the picture); but nobody can really expect Kalmer to kick these Russians out of the building alone.*

"Fish", playing conservative to the extreme now, ensures that the fanatic B squad will not be blown away by routing him into the GHQ. This is "heads-up" play. It would be easy to relax at this point, in an apparently "won" situation. Instead, Bill gets B out of danger and puts him where, once rallied, he helps fulfill the victory conditions.

This same logic justifies "Action" Burk's persistence in an engagement where many commanders might have called it quits. These are veterans; they know that anything can happen. Darryl can still try to throw every squad into GHQ. It might not be pretty, but it might work! Too bad that the luck still seems to elude Darryl. The Russian Prep Fire puts paid to all his plans.

CLOSING COMMENTS

German: I feel that my attack failed for two reasons, only one of which I had control over.

Reason 1: The Russian units held tough against the fiercest attacks I could muster, shrugging off 3MCs and delivering accurate attacks that tore up the assault again and again. There is not much to do about "hot" dice though and I could have weathered that storm if it had not been for the second reason for my defeat.

Reason 2: Much more important to the outcome than the reason above was my squad losses due to failure to rout and my failure to provide covering fire for broken units. "Fish" did an excellent job taking advantage of my poor handling of broken units. The squads lost because this ineptitude could easily have turned the tide in my favor. I've said before that "Fish" readily takes advantage of an opponent's mistakes, and this was a very good example of that skill of his.

All in all, I was pleased with my plan of attack. I stuck to it and it seemed to be working, at least in the early stages. As it was, I nearly made it; a few different dice rolls in the Close Combat Phase could have resulted in an even closer game. It was a "good" loss, and playing the scenario remained as enjoyable this eighth time as it was the first.

Russian: I feel Darryl played an excellent game and lost, not so much because my play was better (because it wasn't), but because of the old adage that "all dice rolls are not created equal". I rolled nearly as many "3"s as "7"s, and it seemed I always got the right dice at the right time. Only one of my squads suffered ELR reduction—a major miracle for the Russians—and even that was negated by his eventual battle-hardening!

With the dice in my favor, I was able to stick to my plan. To illustrate, consider the fact that Darryl's large firegroups eliminated only one squad (and that was a berserker). My other three losses were all in close combat. Thus, "Action" Burk's firepower superiority may have forced me to do some things I otherwise might have avoided, but it did not inflict much lasting damage on my positions.

I feel that I was fortunate enough to avoid trouble even when I left myself open for a counterblow. In the Russian half of Turn 2, I ended with a two-hex defense in bF0/bE1 due to congestion in and around bE1 during the Movement Phase. This invited the assault Darryl made in his next player turn's Advance Phase, when he put my Russians to the ultimate test. This very nearly cost me the scenario, while Darryl risked only the loss of the initiative. He still would hold solid ground with plenty of time to recover for the final attack on GHQ if it failed. But my luck held.

TABLE 1:
DR Summary

DR	GERMAN IFT	GERMAN MC/PTC	GERMAN TOTAL	DR	RUSSIAN IFT	RUSSIAN MC/PTC	RUSSIAN TOTAL
2	0	1	1	**2**	0	2	2
3	1	2	3	**3**	7	1	8
4	2	4	6	**4**	3	1	4
5	6	2	8	**5**	2	4	6
6	1	7	8	**6**	3	3	6
7	10	10	20	**7**	8	3	11
8	5	5	10	**8**	4	1	5
9	4	1	5	**9**	2	3	5
10	2	4	6	**10**	6	0	6
11	4	2	6	**11**	0	0	0
12	1	2	3	**12**	2	0	0

TABLE 2:
DR Percentages

Type	Turns	GERMAN Number	GERMAN Average	RUSSIAN Number	RUSSIAN Average
	1-3	20	7.25	16	6.50
IFT	4-6	16	7.75	21	7.00
	Total	36	7.47	37	6.78
MC	1-3	12	7.58	10	6.50
and	4-6	29	6.89	8	5.00
PTC	Total	41	7.09	18	5.83
	1-3	7	8.57	8	6.50
Rally	4-6	17	6.64	5	7.20
	Total	24	7.20	13	6.77
CC	Total	6	5.16	6	6.50
	TOTALS	107	7.14	74	6.50

TABLE 3:
Sniper Summary

Nationality	Turn	dr	Effect
German	German 1st	3	—
German	German 1st	6	—
Russian	German 2nd	1	Broken 4-6-7 Casualty Reduction
German	Russian 3rd	6	—
German	German 4th	2	Pins 6-2-8
German	German 4th	3	—
German	German 4th	1	Breaks 6-2-8
Russian	German 4th	3	—
Russian	German 5th	1	Breaks 4-6-7
German	German 5th	5	—
Russian	German 5th	5	—
German	German 6th	3	—
Russian	German 6th	3	—
Russian	German 6th	3	—
Russian	German 6th	1	Breaks 2-4-7

Of 55 rolls, Russian Player rolled "3" eight times; of 77 rolls, German Player rolled "6" eight times (the eighth during Rout and not subject to Sniper attack). The Russian Player had an average roll of 2.4 with three results—breaking one squad and one half-squad, and reducing one squad to a half-squad. The German Player had an average roll of 3.6 with two results—pinning and breaking the same squad in the same phase.

TABLE 4:
Status at Conclusion of Play

GERMAN Leaders	GERMAN Squads		RUSSIAN Leaders	RUSSIAN Squads
2	4	**Good Order**	3	11
1	4	**Broken**	0	0
2	9	**KIA**	0	4

All SW possessed and in working order; one Russian Hero in play.

On the other hand, Darryl seemed to pay for even his smallest mistakes, due both to the mechanics of the game as well as my own efforts to do him in. Anyone interested in pursuing what might have happened in this scenario might consider setting up the positions at the beginning of my third turn and proceeding from there.

Neutral Commentator: *I don't think Darryl made any glaring mistakes, certainly none which single-handedly cost him the game. He did a fine job developing his attack in a deliberate manner and stuck with his plan to grind forward. That he was unsuccessful in his attempts to chew up the Russians in the process is testimony to the excellent performance turned in by "Fish", and an unfortunate exchange of dice rolls on his large fire attacks. Throughout these pages I have sung ample praise of Bill's play, and now I would like to illustrate what I mean about the luck.*

Tables 1 and 2 graphically display the range of luck both players encountered. I present this merely for the information of the readers; you can draw what conclusions from it you will. I wish only to mention the disparate numbers of "2" and "3" rolls as compared with "11" and "12" DR made by our two antagonists. Also worth noting is Darryl's Turn 4-6 IFT attack average of 7.75 as opposed by Bill's Turn 4-6 MC and PTC average of 5.00! Many comparisons of this sort might be added here; suffice it to say that "Action" Burk suffered tremendously at the hands of Lady Luck.

None of which is to say that the game was decided by the dice. Games decided by dice alone I play with my four-year-old. (Yes, she usually wins.) Instead, "Action" Burk and "Fish" Conner responded well to the type of luck they encountered. Bill invested his increasing strength ratio to generate an imposing defense, while Darryl correctly redoubled his efforts to march into GHQ—even from an alternate direction when his primary avenue was blocked. This confrontation was at least classy, if not "classic".

Darryl took "Fish" directly to the wire with his assault on the "Death Trap". By the third turn, it looked as though he were about to smash the Russians in that building and put "Fish" so far down he could never hope to recover. Had Bill's Prep Fire failed him, I believe that's what would have happened. Even after that initial assault was crushed, the German still came on, first squelching a Russian counterattack and then moving on GHQ with the balance of his forces. "Fish" never tried another counterattack after his abortive one in Turn 3, although that brief resistance did win him control of Darryl's broken squads during the middle game.

Darryl's self-assessment of his troubles with broken units, though harsh, seems accurate to me. He did leave a lot of holes, and "Fish" was quick to take advantage of them.

For his part, Bill played a gutsy "hide-n-seek" style defense, showing his troops in force only three times: during his third turn Prep Fire when he burned Darryl, later in the same turn when he himself was burned in the Close Combat Phase, and during his goal line stand at GHQ where he enjoyed outstanding superiority in force. I think "Fish" hit on the best defense for this situation. It obviously paid off this time against "Action". He protected his troops, made few mistakes, and rolled better dice. This combination always brings victory.

Table 3 lists Sniper activity which, despite five effective shots, did not contribute much to the outcome of the scenario. However, once again, "Fish" definitely held the advantage here.

Finally, Table 4 itemizes the infantry status at the end of the play. This table is proof that the German player was at the end of his tether. Indeed, it suggests a Russian counterattack could sweep him from the board. There can be no doubt that both sides gave it all they had. ☆



Squad Leader Clinic

THE 1987 ASL TOURNAMENT

By Joseph Suchar

The *ASL* ORIGINS '87 tournament was a very special event for me. Thirty-two players began the five-round, single elimination tournament on the morning of 3 July, and the final four finished the fifth round the next day. The fireworks display put on by the city of Baltimore on the evening of the 4th was, for me, an anticlimax after watching the play in the final two rounds.

The result of our effort are the four scenarios which follow. The design criteria we (Jon Mishcon and I) adopted were quite simple: they should use one mapboard and a maximum of 25 counters per side; they should be six turns long; and most important of all, they must all be balanced. As a special touch, we designed them around a specific theme—the role of superior leadership in battle. With the exception of ASL Scenario T2, for which two mapboards were necessary, I believe we successfully accomplished these goals.

What made the tournament special for me was the lesson in humility I was given. This lesson was delivered by what I consider to be an absolutely dazzling level of play in the last two rounds. It was, quite frankly, an advanced seminar on "How to Play ASL like a Pro".

The scenarios were played in numerical order, with Scenario T1 being used again in the final round. The first playing of T1 resulted in ten American and six German wins; T2 saw five Russian and three German victories; the results of T3 was even with two American and two German wins, as was T4's results with one German and one Russian. Round 5 opened with Andrea Cantatore and Eric Baker playing for the first and second positions and Mark Nixon and Pat Jonke going against each other for third and fourth. Andy had won as the American in the first round while Eric had won as the German. Similarly, Pat had been triumphant as the American player and Mark as the German. The players were required to switch sides for this playoff. Both games were nail-biters, going down to the final phase of the final turn with the outcome decided on the final dice rolls. When the smoke had settled, Andrea Cantatore finished in first place, with Eric, Mark and Pat following in order of finish.

During the course of play there were the usual extreme events we veteran players of *ASL* have come to take for granted—berserk units, hero creation, rates of fire sustained for many consecutive rolls, broken guns and all the rest. There were several "occurrences" that I have never witnessed, one of which I feel compelled to relate to the readers. At a crucial point in one scenario, the 10-3 leader was captured by the Germans—a devastating blow! But two turns later, a sniper shot wounded the guarding squad, thus enabling the leader to get free and reappear intact in the German rear. That reincarnated leader ultimately became the margin of victory for the American player, once again demonstrating that "It ain't over till the fat lady sings."

At this point, a discussion of the scenarios is in order, with some suggested setups and lines of play. To recreate the feel of the tournament, you should read no further, find an opponent, give yourself four hours to play each scenario, and play from the start. Only then should you turn to the discussion that follows. A major caveat—what follows is in no way a representation of "optimal" play; rather this is just a general set of tactical guidelines.

SCENARIO T1—Gavin Take

AMERICAN: There are three basic openings for you. First, a dual flanking move—Ostberg with three squads moving to D3-G8-N10 in the first three turns, the fourth squad following as quickly as it can; Gavin-Mahoney moving straight down the road Y1-Y5 (if not covered by fire) or behind the hedge line to the east of the road. Both of these routes can be interdicted by fire and smoke will be necessary to mitigate the negative modifiers. Mahoney and three squads should be used for smoke laying while Gavin and the remaining squads move as deeply as possible. Your goal is V10 by the end of Turn 2 with luck.

Second possible opening for you is a flanking move by Ostberg while the Gavin force moves aggressively to occupy T1-U2 at the end of the Advance Phase of Turn 1; you will be trying to provoke a firefight or force the Germans to pull back. The third option is a concerted drive by both forces through the center using your superior firepower and leadership to bull your way through.

Whichever option you use, your forward motion must be relentless. There are only six turns at your disposal, and you must have at least three squads and two leaders in position for the final dash by Turn 5. Remember to leave a covering force behind since the German player moves last and can therefore exit his troops, modifying the Victory Conditions.

Finally, don't forget how potent the 10-3 leader is for rally. A broken 7-4-7 in cover with the 10-3 while under DM will rally on an "8" or less (a probability of 72%). There is nothing more disconcert-

ing for the German player than to see a stack in a forward position crunched, only to reappear the very next Rally Phase.

GERMAN: Not much choice for you; you need to set up in forward positions in an attempt to inflict maximum delay. In the first level S3, put the 9-1 leader, a 4-6-7 squad and MMG. In R3 (first level), put an 8-1 leader and 4-6-7 squad and MMG. The remaining squads and LMGs should consider occupying O5, T3, T4 and/or P4. Important fallback positions to consider are the first levels of R6 (which interdicts W10, V9, U9 and Q10) and R5 (which interdicts T8 and U10). Finally, Q7 should be the destination for your MMGs and three squads if possible; a firelane from here to Q10 can be effective. One final nasty tactic is to start a 4-4-7 in hex Q7 and on Turn 1 move it to Q10. On the second and third turns, attempt to entrench it. If successful, the American players will have a real problem. Even if you break in the hex, he will have to move adjacent to force a rout, costing him an additional turn. The trade-off through is one less squad to face an already superior enemy force. (As a final consideration, I saw no one use this tactic during the tournament.)

SCENARIO T2—The Puma Prowls

Before I review the two sides, a few remarks on dice probabilities may be in order. While the outcome of a die roll is beyond our control, it is important to know what the chances are for a particular outcome to occur. I believe this is crucial to good play in any game. The very first thing we did when we started playing *SL* was to produce a set of probability tables to aid us in making decisions. After *COI* was introduced, Bob Medrow wrote an excellent article in which tables of the type to which I refer were presented (The *GENERAL*, Vol. 15, No. 6). The TH/TK table on Page 7 of that article is pertinent here. For new players, I highly recommend this article. Careful study of these tables will, I believe, enhance your play. A rational basis for making decisions is, in the long run, more productive than relying on "instinct". Let us see how we might conduct our play in this scenario using a knowledge of the appropriate probabilities.

To keep things simple, I will ignore penetration modifiers. Hence, we will look at ranges of three to 18 hexes inclusive. We will also ignore leader modifiers and APCR. From three to six hexes inclusive, the German TH# is "10", but the Russian here is a small target for a net TH# of "9". The 50L has a TK# of "13" and the Russian frontal armor of the T-70 is "6". Assume that the German firing is CE and we can see that we need a roll of "9" or less followed by a roll of "7" or less to score—yielding a 48% chance of success. The Russian TH# is "9" (he must be buttoned-up to fire, remember) with a TK# of "10" against a frontal armor of "4". Hence the Russian player must roll "9" or less and then "6" or less to have an effect, or a 35% chance of success.

If we extend the range to the 7-12 hex spread, under the same conditions we have a German success rate of 42% while the Russian rate drops to 24%. At a range of 13-18, the German has a success rate of 34%; the Russian, 18%.

If these observations are significant to you, a detailed analysis with all pertinent factors included will be necessary. If you find this approach too detailed or "mathematical" and would rather ignore it, then continue as before. The beauty of *ASL* is the multiple levels at which it can be played and enjoyed.

GERMAN: You are outnumbered and a draw is a Russian win, so you must kill to win. As the previous paragraphs show, you have the edge in kill capability and your leader enhances that. A ROF of "2" will compensate for having fewer vehicles (if four tanks fire, the probability is 80% that at least one of them will shoot again). The 33 MF allowance gives you better mobility, and when used with your ROF, bounding fire can be potent. A first move to 4K3, 4J3, 4I1 and 4I2 will keep you concentrated with the opportunity to respond to the Russian's second move, which will be critical. The player who scores first will have an enormous advantage. If the enemy splits his force and allows you the opportunity to bring multiple fire on an isolated unit, take it; a quick kill will give you the initiative. No further moves can be suggested here, since you will have to react to his opening initiative. Don't forget about APCR; I recommend you use it immediately as you will want that first kill.

RUSSIAN: Your major disadvantages are slow turret traverse, the need to be buttoned up to shoot, and an inferior kill capability. This is offset by the 10-2 leader, one more vehicle, a better APCR number, and the need for the German to come to you. Your opening move is fixed: enter CE and put the lead vehicle on EE5 with the others behind. The cautious second move will to move CE to Q2-T2-Y2. The exact hexes will be determined by the German position and the range of his reach on his next move. All tanks should be stopped now, with turrets aligned to anticipate the most likely threats. Your leader should be in one of the middle AFVs to avoid being picked off on an opening shot. The many buildings and flat terrain will make long-range shooting difficult for the Germans, forcing him to close on your units—which diminishes his kill superiority. Your next move will be determined by the aggressiveness of the German's second move.

SCENARIO T3—Ranger Stronghold

AMERICAN: Your primary goal is to prevent a rapid German move forward. You are outnumbered and outgunned, hence you must prevent the German from closing with you as long as possible as well. The 10-3 leader is your major asset, and will be the linchpin of your last stand.

A suggested setup for the American player is to put a 7-4-7 and bazooka in O7; the 8-0 in N6; another 7-4-7 and bazooka in O1; another 7-4-7 and bazooka in M3; a lone 7-4-7 in N3; and all remaining units in J4. The unit in O7 covers the gap at S8, while J4 and O1 cover V1-T2. The hexes at O7 and J4 can be brought under fire in the Prep Fire Phase from Hill 538. In fact, the fire can be severe if the German player chooses to use his vehicles and MGs from those positions. But every unit that shot has just lost a precious turn of movement, and that is—after all—your goal.

The American first turn orders are to fall back. From J4, go to the treeline L0-J1 to cover the road and heights. The unit in O7 (if unbroken) goes to J6 or L3; otherwise, it tries to rally in N6. The 7-4-7 in O1 stands if unbroken; those in M3 and N3 try to entrench.

The suggested last stand will take place in the L0-J0 woodline. Notice that units in J0 can be seen from a maximum distance of only four hexes. Try to have at least two squads, an MMG, two bazookas and the 10-3 leader here. The leader modified BAZ will intimidate any tank that tries to bring you under fire. Remember, you can't prevent the German advance; you just want to delay it.

GERMAN: The primary goal for the German is envelopment and destruction of the American force, rather than just pushing him out of the VC zone. The enemy moves last and a last-turn rush could find an unbroken unit in the area, resulting in an American victory. Notice that an unbroken leader is sufficient to win. Unless the American player has exposed a majority of his force to fire, I would recommend against any Prep Fire and aim instead for maximum penetration.

I like the following set-up: 7-0, three 4-4-7 with two LMGs in W10; a tank in W8; the 8-1 and three 4-6-7s at W6; the 9-2 and three more with a LMG and a MMG in W4; finally, 8-0 leader with three 4-4-7 squads, two LMGs and a panzer in W1. The force in W10 moves under cover to S9 and advances to R8/R9. The ones in W6 moves CX to R6 and advances to Q7. Those men in W4 move CX to Q5 and advance to P4/P5; while the units in W1, under cover of the tank, move to T2. Lack of interdicting fire and/or boldness on your part will determine the depth of your advance. You want to try to get as deep as possible as soon as possible. The units in W10 and W8 are to penetrate rather than fight, with their goal being H3/I4 by Turn 3 or 4. The two center groups can bring fire down from the heights, while the flanking groups move forward as fast as feasible. By Turn 4, the American force should be enveloped. On Turn 5, a concerted rush from all sides should be launched. If the majority of your forces reached their position for this, you have an excellent chance of annihilating the American.

SCENARIO T4—Shklov's Labors Lost

RUSSIAN: Your most important decision is how far forward to set up your forces. I will suggest a conservative rear area placement—2-4-8 and ATR in T7; two 4-5-8, MMG and 10-0 in P5; 4-5-8 in P4; two 4-5-8, LMG and HMG with 10-3 in P3; a 4-5-8 in O2 and another in P8. This set-up will make a German flank advance risky and will also allow most of your units to be concealed. It does allow, though, a safe advance for the enemy through the center; but when he advances into firing range, you will be concealed. On the first turn you can assault move where possible out of LOS and then advance back to your original hex (e.g., units in P3 assault move to Q4 and then advance back to P3). This tactic forces the German player to prep fire on Turn 2, thus denying the firing units a chance to move. And since you are still concealed your chances of surviving are improved. The object here is to preserve your forces as long as possible. Inevitably though, this scenario will become a slugfest. Your final stand will likely be made in building P3 since it offers good access to the upper levels. Try to have the 10-0 commissar in the same stack as the 10-3 leader to obtain maximum morale advantages. The ATR in the rear will make it risky for the Germans to deploy their armor behind your main force in P3 since any attempt to come around will usually offer a rear shot to you. Do not overlook the possibility for a frontal immobilization shot if offered. If immobilization is your main goal, then stack the ATR with the 10-3 to gain the TH modification.

GERMAN: Your set-up will be determined by what the Russian gives you in his. If he sets up the majority of his forces forward, use your superior firepower to smash as much as possible. If he uses a rear set-up, move as far forward as possible without incurring defensive fire, using your Advance Phase to move into firing positions for Turn 2. The heart of your maneuver/fire group will be two stacks: 10-3, three 4-6-8s, two MMGs and a LMG; 9-2, three 4-6-8s and three LMGs. The remainder of your infantry should threaten the flanks as best as possible. The armor should aim for the rear along both flanks, striving for maximum penetration. By Turn 3, you should be able to bring in encircling fire. Don't overlook the use of your vehicles to fire smoke to aid in crossing open ground. While the ATR should be treated with respect, you cannot allow it to prohibit your movement. Remember, the vehicles are most effectively used in the Russian's rear.

Scenario T1—50/50
Scenario T2—55 pro-German
Scenario T3—55 pro-American
Scenario T4—60 pro-German

☆

ASL ARMOR STUDIES

Exceptions to the Rule

By Lorrin Bird

Although the basic armor game presented in *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* works out exceedingly well for the majority of tanks and weapons, and represents the pace-setting miniatures rule set nicely, wargame systems designed to cover *all* AFV almost invariably fail to do proper justice to a number of tanks that are unusual. There is always a group of tanks, and scatttered individual vehicles, with armor protection and areas that cannot be fit into the general system used to define armor ratings. In terms of *ASL*, three areas of tank design and protection can be identified where vehicle vulnerability in the game might be better reflected—APCR hits on sloped armor, split hull ratings where upper and lower hull protection is significantly different, and the "Stalin" tank turret front protection.

Studies of APCR hits on sloped armor indicate that the effective resistance of the armor to penetration increases by up to 32% over the AP shell value when APCR hits occur. For the cases where APCR hits highly sloped armor, the resistance of the plate is often sufficiently higher than the AP shot value that wargame rules should present *two* armor ratings, one for AP and another for APCR (for the purposes of this article, "AP" includes all non-APCR shells).

Examining armor protection on the front hulls of AFV, there are a number of cases where the hull presents two large areas (upper and lower nose) with different effective armor thicknesses. For vehicles such as the IS-2m, with 26 AF armor on the upper hull glacis but only 14 AF protection on the lower hull front (equating the actual effective armor thickness to the *ASL* system AF rating), limiting the hull front designation to a consideration of only the 26 AF glacis obviously overstates the difficulty involved in obtaining front hull penetrations.

Referring back again to the "Stalin" tanks (IS-2 and IS-2m), the armor protection indicated by the game AF ratings for the turret front is not a true indication of the vehicle vulnerability on turret hits. While the turret face was 160mm thick, with steep slopes, the gunshield (or mantlet) was 100mm thick at its maximum cross-section, and thinned out towards the upper and lower edges. The 18 AF turret front armor rating is a reasonable model for the turret face but severely limits, or rules out, the possibility of a penetration by shells with sufficient penetration to punch through the 11 AF gunshield (such as the 75L and 88L).

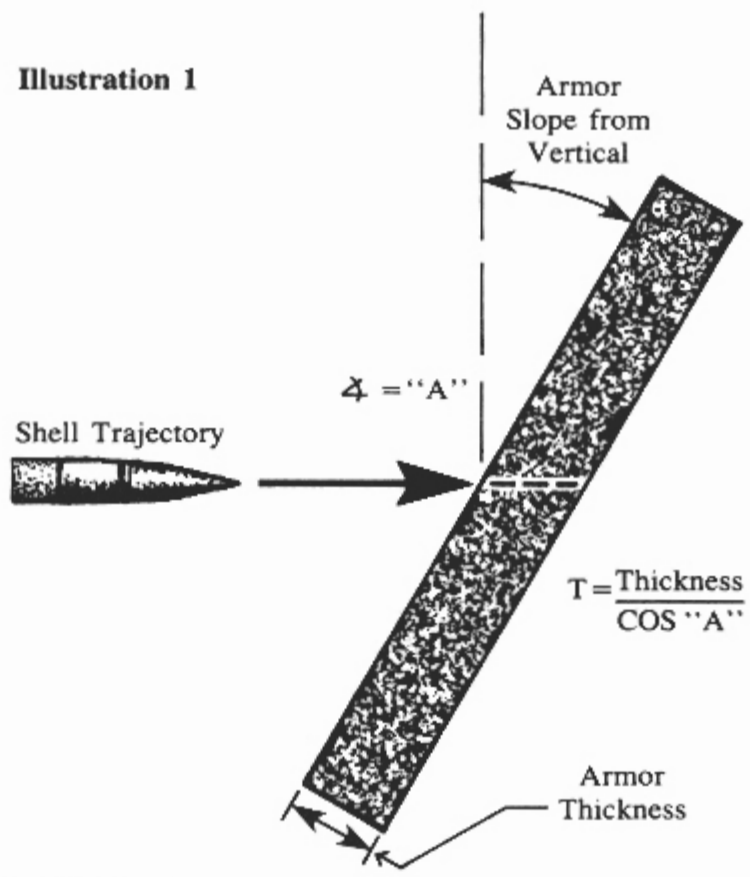
In view of the possibility for several improvements to the *ASL* armor rating system for select vehicles, the following sections of this article will propose some simple-to-use variants that add extra detail. The intent of the suggested improvements is not to replace the overall *ASL* armor system but to round out some of the edges that still contain a bit of roughness.

APCR Hits on Sloped Armor

The earliest theory used in armor gaming to explain the effective resistance of sloped armor to penetration was the *T=1/cosine A* formula, where "T" was the distance a shell had to travel to pierce the plate, and "A" was the slope of the plate (measured from vertical; so a vertical plate had no slope and a horizontal plate equaled 90° slope from vertical). For tanks such as the T34/76, where a 45mm hull plate was sloped 60° from vertical, the above formula predicted a 90mm effective thickness (i.e., a shell required at least 90mm penetration against a vertical target to pierce the 45mm plate sloped at 60°).

The main problem with the 1/cosine formula of effective thickness was that actual ballistic tests, where plates were fired upon by shells, produced results that were not constant with the predicted value. During WWII, the U.S. Army test fired most of the armor piercing shells in their inventory against plate sloped at a variety of angles and published the results in "Technical Manual TM9-1914". The Army found that a 60° slope from vertical increased the effective penetration resistance by 160%, as opposed to the 100% increase predicted by the 1/cosine formula. Thus, when a 76mm shell hit 45mm at 60° slope, the effective thickness was actually 117mm (a 30% increase over the 1/cosine value).

Illustration 1



The 1/COSINE formula assumed a simple geometric approach to effective thickness determinations.

Consistent with the overall use of state-of-the-art design procedures in *ASL*, the armor values used to define game AF ratings are based on the actual ballistic slope multiples found during test firings. Thus, players are using theoretical armor protection quantities that are consistent with the actual performance of AP shells against sloped plate. The only problem that one might find with this approach is that APCR rounds have been found to vary significantly from AP shell performance as the slope of the armor exceeds a 20° slope.

Comparing U.S. and German data for APCR round penetration against sloped armor, the result is that sloped armor resists penetration against APCR with a greater effective thickness than opposes AP shells. For instance, the British 76LL round could penetrate the Panther upper front hull (80mm at 55° slope) at 500 meters, where the shell penetrated about 180mm of vertical plate (the armor had an effective thickness of 180mm versus 76LL AP). The U.S. 76L APCR round, with over 210mm penetration at 500 meters, could only penetrate the same Panther hull armor out to 250 meters, where the penetration was 228. Thus, the APCR round was resisted by an effective thickness 48mm greater than experienced by the AP hits.

The German 88L APCR round, which is similar to most of the other German high velocity armor piercing rounds in terms of slope effects, was resisted by 132mm effective thickness on hits against the T34/76 front hull. Due to the fact that the 88L was unusually effective against sloped armor (while most shells experience a 160% increase in armor resistance for 60° slopes, the 88L AP only saw an increase of 138%), the T34 hull front represented a 107mm effective thickness versus AP. The effect of APCR hits on armor effective resistance can therefore be equated to a 23% increase over AP hits.

A study of the differences between AP and APCR effective thicknesses indicated that AF ratings would only need to be supplemented with special APCR upgradings when the slope exceeded 20°, and then only for a select number of AFV. It was also noted that the AFV with special APCR armor ratings fortunately fell into some general groupings (such as all T34/76 and T34/85) which simplified the presentation of study findings. The following table indicates the AFV where APCR will increase the *ASL* AF ratings by one level (for example, "8" becomes "11") and the target armor that is improved versus APCR:

VEHICLE ARMOR IMPROVED BY APCR HITS

AFV	Armor to be Upgraded
all T34	HF, HS, HR
all OT-34	HF, HS, HR
all T43	HF, HS, HR
T44	HF
PzKpfw VIB	HS, HR)
JgPz IV	UBF
JgPz IV(L)	UBF
JgPz IV(70L)	UBF
all JgPz 38(t)	UBF
Elefant	HF

* HF, HS, and HR refer to hull front, hull side and hull rear respectively. UBF refers to Upper Body Front hits on SPG or TD. These armor upgradings only apply to Russian-Soviet combat.

From a game play perspective, introduction of APCR armor upgrading will significantly affect the lethality of high velocity shell hits on armor. On the actual battlefield, the T34 front hull presented 132mm resistance to German APCR, so the 50L APCR round (116mm penetration at 500 meters) would be outmatched. With use of APCR armor upgrading in *ASL*, the 17 TK# of 50L APCR (from seven to twelve hexes) will be resisted by 14 AF hull protection on the T34—for a resulting TK# of "3" (8% chance of penetration damage). Thus, the results of using armor upgrading will be to bring game results more closely into line with expected battlefield performance (using AF of 11 for the T34 front hull would allow 42% of APCR hits to cause damage).

Split Hull Armor Ratings

The main problem area associated with rule systems that describe AFV hull and turret protection with a single factor is the handling of different ratings on the hull or turret. The IS-2m had 26 AF glacis protection, but a 14 AF lower hull front; and the Panther upper hull was 18 AF with a lower hull area equivalent to 14 (the Panther upper and lower hull fronts were both sloped at 55°, but the lower hull was 60mm thick and the upper area was 80mm). If only one rating is chosen, the use of the higher factor overestimates the protection, while the use of the lower rating produces unrealistic vulnerability to penetration.

To allow for a more complete description of the full armor protection, the following table was developed. From an analysis of areas presented to incoming rounds, a statistical distribution of hits

ASL ARMOR SYSTEM ERROR ANALYSIS

Although it is difficult to say with any certainty exactly how close a particular armor model comes to the real thing, since the available data is often too restricted and unreliable to come to definite conclusions, an attempt was made to compare the *ASL* AFV TO KILL results with a very detailed and comprehensive model. During the research for this article, a mathematical model of penetraton probabilities was prepared that considered all of the major factors, including hex-by-hex penetration data (in millimeters), random variations in shell penetration and armor hardness, angle of firer to the target (not all shots are at target pointing straight at the firer), and *all* of the armor plates making up the target turret and hull protection (effective thickness in millimeters). The final conclusion to be drawn from the comparison of *ASL* with one of the more involved models of penetration available in wargaming is that the *ASL* armor system, simple as it is, comes remarkably close to the results predicted by the intricate system.

Comparing the 7-12 hex penetration probabilities for a variety of guns versus the PzKpfw IVH frontal armor (turret and hull penetrations were considered in a total result), for example, the *ASL* results for the Soviet 76L and 85L and the American 75 and 57L were found to vary by the following amounts:

PzKpfw IVH Penetration Probabilities after a Frontal Hit:

Weapon	ASL	Model	Variation
U.S. 57L	67%	89%	1-in-4
U.S. 75	55%	50%	1-in-20
Soviet 76L	40%	33%	1-in-14
Soviet 85L	89%	89%	None

The definition of "Variation" in the table above is the probability of different results occurring when one compares the *ASL* one with the more complex model. Since there is a 5% absolute difference between the American 75mm penetration probabilities, on 100 hits there would be five more kills in the *ASL* system than in the elaborate model. A difference of five kills in 100 works out to be "1-in-20". In terms of the average variation between system results, the above figures indicate that different results will occur on one of every twelve hits—which is an acceptable difference considering the limitations of any armor penetration model.

Comparisons for other major AFV (such as the KV-1 Model 42, the Panther, the Tiger E, the IS-2m, and ISU-122) indicate that the *ASL* system will generally differ from any mathematical model on about one out of every fourteen frontal hits (i.e., out of every 14 hits, there will be one occasion—on the average—where *ASL* indicates a different result than the detailed models). With regard to the armor model variants proposed in the article, the revised *ASL* armor ratings (including the IS turret value) were essentially in line with the mathematical model predictions:

Frontal Hit Penetration Probabilities:

Target	Weapon	ASL	Model	Variation
IS-2m	75L	20%	24%	1-in-25
IS-2m	88L	44%	39%	1-in-20
IS-2m	75LL	60%	55%	1-in-20
KV-1 M42	75L	20%	25%	1-in-20
KV-1 M42	88L	57%	54%	1-in-33
KV-1 M42	75LL	89%	83%	1-in-16
Panther	76LL	74%	66%	1-in-12
Panther	85L	5%	2%	1-in-33

Note: The *ASL* prediction is based on the variant armor ratings in the accompanying article where applicable.

Although the IS-2m armor variant was based on some risky assumptions regarding the turret armor that would be hit, the overall result was very consistent with the expectations one has after analyzing the situation from a detailed statistical viewpoint.

One interesting point came out of the KV-1 analysis that sheds some light on the character of "cast" turret armor: although the KV cast turret was 120mm thick on front and sides and rear, German penetration charts versus the turret were based on 108mm effective armor due to their recognition of cast armor strength deficiencies relative to rolled armor. For many tanks carrying cast armor during WWII, the quality of the cast plating was not up to rolled armor, so one inch of cast plate might only be equal to .9 inch of rolled plate, as in the case of the KV turret (if one assumes that the German penetration range data is an accurate assessment of the KV armor). Thus, the effective thickness of the KV-1 M42 turret would rate an AF of 11, all around, if the armor is assumed to match the German predictions of 88L effectiveness versus that tank. (The German *Panzerbeschuesstafel* for the 8.8cm KwK 36, the Tiger E tank gun, indicates that the KV-1 M42 frontal turret armor was equivalent to the earlier KV model turrets within 700 meters in terms of resisting penetration.)

Since the *ASL* and the mathematical models represent separate developments based on widely differing assumptions (the game is, after all, meant as a simple approximation), it came as quite a surprise to see how close the two results were. While the *ASL* results for separate turret and hull penetrations did vary significantly from the more complex model, the overall probability of a frontal penetration was similar; and any dissimilarities in turret and hull tended to cancel out. Thus, the *ASL* system brings results comparable to more complex systems with one-tenth the effort and player involvement, and rates with the best rulesets.

With respect to the overall validity of the *ASL* armor ratings, it is quite a testament to the research effort involved in the design [*thanks to Robert McNamara*] that after intense scrutiny by the author's group of researchers, only two turret ratings (the IS and KV-1 M42) and a few hull figures can be differed with. Whereas the *COI* data required constant updating and additions, it is obvious that *ASL* is here to stay.

between the two areas was determined and related to a two-dice roll system. Representative AF ratings were then computed after slope correction, and the overall results are here offered for use (after a hull front hit on one of the noted AFV, roll two dice and consult the table below for the proper AF rating):

SPLIT ARMOR RATINGS TABLE

Roll	Panther/ Jagd Panther	KV (8)	KV (11)	IS-2m	Tiger II	T43
2	*18*	11	14	*26*	*26*	*14*
3	*18*	11	14	*26*	*26*	*14*
4	*18*	11	14	*26*	*26*	*14*
5	*18*	11	14	*26*	*26*	*14*
6	*18*	11	14	*26*	*26*	*14*
7	*18*	8	11	*26*	*26*	*14*
8	*18*	8	11	14	*18*	*14*
9	*14*	8	11	14	*18*	*14*
10	*14*	8	11	14	*18*	*11*
11	*14*	8	11	14	*18*	*11*
12	*14*	8	11	14	*18*	*11*

* Italicized armor ratings are upgraded on APCR hits, with 26 AF values exceeding 26 (i.e., 26 becomes 33). Non-italicized armor ratings are not affected by APCR hits. "KV (8)" refers to KV tanks with 8 AF front hull armor; "KV (11)" to tanks with 11 AF front hull armor.

Although most of the discussion of split armor ratings has centered on overestimates of armor protection, in the case of the KV vehicles, the *ASL* armor ratings underestimate the protection offered by the drivers plate (upper hull area). The KV-1 presented a frontal hull with 11 AF upper, and 8 AF lower, hull front armor—where the 96mm effective thickness drivers plate qualified for 11 AF designation. The armor was superior to the 50L penetration at 500 meters, 78mm for a TK# of 13, and with an AF of 11 only one out of every 36 hits by the 50L should cause damage.

The split hull armor ratings for the IS-2m will have a major effect on the battlefield vulnerability of this tank. Whereas the Stalin tank hull front was previously immune to penetration by 75L, 75LL, 88L and 88LL hits, with split hull usage of weaker lower hull areas, the hull penetration probabilities change now to 3% (75L), 35% (75LL), 18% (88L) and 42% (88LL).

Wth the use of split hull armor ratngs, the IS-2m frontal hull armor is still a formidable target for panzer weapons, but the hull armor can be defeated when the shot strikes the weaker lower hull area. With regard to the Panther split hull armor, the 14 AF is still a difficult task for guns with a 17 TK# at 2-18 hexes (the Soviet 85L and the American 76L), but guns with more effectiveness against 14 AF will reap significant benefits.

The Stalin Tank Turret Front

As noted at the beginning of this article, the IS series of tanks carried varying degrees of protection on the front of both the turret and hull, offering virtually impenetratable armor next to the plates that were relatively vulnerable. On the IS turret face, 160mm plates with moderate to extreme slopes were married to a gunshield that was fair game for any late war panzer weapon. The problem for us hardcore players then becomes one of determining the proper rating to assign—choosing between an 11 AF value that slightly overestimates vulnerability or the 14 AF value that rules out penetration by the 75L. (A third alternative, a "split turret rating", will not be explored in this article since it is the subject of a further armor study currently under investigation.)

Knowing that the Stalin tank turret front offered the best chance of a penetration to 75L through 128L weapons, on the basis of battlefield experience and analysis of captured tanks, panzer and ATG crews were instructed to aim at the turret center. German battle reports indicate that the tactic of firing at IS tank turret fronts was widely pursued, with many reported kills of Stalin tanks by 75mm penetrations of the gunshield. (One report lists an 88LL penetra-

tion of the Stalin gunshield at 1.61 miles—or 65 *ASL* hexes—on a Nashorn shot, which is surely too far to qualify as a shot "aimed" at the gunshield!)

Since the Stalin tank turret gunshield was the most likely aiming point for shots at the vehicle, and most turret hits would strike near the centerline, it is recommended that players use an 11 AF rating for front turret hits on the IS tanks. While this rating will slightly overestimate the vulnerability of the armor, the results will not be totally lethal to the tank crews. The 75L gun will be able to gain turret front penetrations on 42% of the hits, but the overall 75L kill probability after a frontal hit (hull and turret combined) will only reach 21%. Every 75LL hit against the turret front will kill (and 42% will lead to "brew up"), and the overall probability that a 75LL frontal hit will kill a IS-2m will reach 60%—which is consistent with battlefield reports that indicate how Panthers were often able to defeat IS tanks at close range.

Summary and Conclusions

The choice of a system to depict armor protection is one of the most difficult decisions facing any game designer, since the inclusion of ever greater detail generally leads to longer and more involved playing procedures. With the use of AF rating classes in *ASL*, a high level system has been selected (many tactical wargames do not differentiate between hull and turret armor, but instead use a weighted average of hull and turret or simply present the weaker of the two) and the ensuing detail is quite good. In fact, on the basis of combat resolution time versus realism of results, *ASL* players are using one of the most efficient and compact procedures available in armor miniatures gaming.

With the use of streamlined play mechanics comes a glossing over of some of the detail, which in most cases is limited to factors that have a secondary (or lower) impact on play or cannot be modelled realistically in any event. The loss of detail only becomes of concern when the gameboard chances of an AFV (such as the IS-2m) are clearly affected to a degree that seems too pronounced.

Because exceptions to the rule always occur, even in the most sophisticated and time-consuming game systems, the task facing the designer is to identify and correct the cases that deserve attention. Players will find the *ASL* system more than adequate for most tank hits. The above suggestions are of interest only to the afficionado. After extensive study of the *ASL* armor system mechanics and over a year of experience with the overall game system, it is felt that hard-core players are now ready to absorb a game development that can focus on very limited improvements to selected areas of the simulation. The basic system is complete and will withstand the tests of time; there is only a need to hammer out a few wrinkles.



KREMLIN

In this year of *glasnost* and arms limitation talks, do we really know what goes on in Moscow? Has a thaw come to the Soviet bureaucracy? Now you can take a light-hearted peek over the walls and test the muddy waters of politics in Russia. **KREMLIN**, the definitive, multi-player game of satire and diplomacy for the 1980s is in playtesting at The Avalon Hill Game Company. Watch these pages for our announcement of the availability of 1988's biggest hit.



Squad Leader Clinic

ARMED AND ARMORED HALFTRACKS

By Jon Mishcon

The playtest experience in re-working *SL* scenarios #7 and #8 emphasized the considerable changes in the ways that *ASL* handles halftracks. This column reviews our thoughts for the tactical usage of armed and armored halftracks.

It is worthwhile to recall that halftracks were developed to provide pre-assault cross-country mobility for infantry and heavy weapons. Many nations also used fully-tracked carriers (i.e., Kangaroos, Brens, etc.) but the expense of production and maintenance of fully-tracked AFVs precluded their common use as mere transports. That, of course, is the key reason for the existence of halftracks. They were less expensive in every aspect than were tanks. Yet they could transport "soft targets" through shelling and sniper fire. Clearly, halftracks were viewed as "battlefield taxis", not as assault vehicles.

True, both Germans and Americans did use halftrack mounted troops to try and rip through weak defenses. However, the vulnerability of halftracks was pronounced. While quite resistant to shrapnel and rifle fire, they were easy prey to SCWs, even the lightest of ATGs, and even rifle-calibre MGs.

The original *SQUAD LEADER*, regretfully, portrayed halftracks as a kind of tankette. We often used clustered halftracks as a sort of armored assault group. Load three or so squads and leaders, drive up to within six hexes, pop-up in the Adavance Phase, blast away with defensive fire, and then drive off to the next target next turn. Ah, the good old days. Do that in *ASL* and you'll likely lose all three halftracks before getting off a single shot. Quite rightly too. That kind of clustered target would have brought a smile to any .50-calibre gunner.

There are two rule changes that have dictated a change in tactics. First, the improved armor penetration tables give a more realistic representation of the vulnerability of halftrack armor. Second, the ability of machine guns to take multiple shots means that tight concentrations may take a number of hits. Knowing that even a MMG will get three shots 11% of the time and may have a 16% Kill chance with each hit tends to make one a mite nervous.

So, forget the "mailed fist" tactic. Ditto using halftracks as isolated AA platforms. Even the use of halftracks as mobile MG platforms versus infantry is probably no longer a good idea. Generally speaking, a halftrack is easier to kill than an infantry-manned MG and usually the same MG used off-vehicle will have a higher rate of fire.

How do we use halftracks? One role is their historical one. Halftracks can generally carry more troops and SWs faster cross-country than any other vehicle. This mobility is always nice, and occasionally required (see the rewrite of "Hube's Pocket").

Even better is the "abandon ship" ploy. Take, for example, the M3 halftrack in "Buchholz Station". Firepower is "4", ROF is "1", range of eight hexes, and the vehicle is vulnerable to the German HMG out to a range of 16 hexes. Potential loss of five victory points. Rather than just hiding this vehicle away in a corner, try driving it up onto a reverse slope. Abandon the vehicle, taking the MG, and advance onto the ridgeline. Now you have a MMG with the same FP but a ROF of "2", a range of 10 hexes, and with a self-rallying crew. A much lower value target with a more potent weapon. Nicely done.

Halftracks are also the only decent way to get a four-squad fire group in one hex. (OK, OK, four squads and a crew—jeez, the nitpickers.) By "decent", I mean without the overstack penalties (see A5.4). This can be crucial. The American last stand in "Buchholz Station" is often 3X0. Most of the time this is held by three squads armed with two MMGs. Add in an M3 halftrack with a passenger squad and the firepower rises from "24" to "36". All commanded by the same leader! Much more intimidating.

Lastly, I must mention the *panzerblitz* assault. An AFV overruns an HMG position and stays in the hex, preferably in Motion. Halftracks then move up adjacent to the position and unload at least one squad. The HMG can't fire at the halftracks (A7.212) and the combination of overrun, adjacent infantry firepower, and close combat is usually enough to take the position. Even if the MG position is moderately well protected, laying OBA smoke down frequently permits the rush. The assaulting player then gets to experiment with a captured MG in the enemy rear or flank. Naturally, this kind of wild charge can be warded off by

adequate defenders flanking the HMG. The problem is often that the number of covering units seriously denudes any defending maneuver force.

The rules *have* changed. I think for the better. As conditions change, so must tactics. Sounds almost historical.

Our re-working of "Buchholz Station" and "The Bitchie Salient" are included on the insert of this issue to allow readers to get a chance to experiment further. Please allow us at this time to express our gratitude to Bill Connor, Andrea Cantatore, James Turpin, Mark Nixon and their associates for their continuing help in playtesting these scenarios. We would hope all the work is worth the effort.

After Action Report—Escape from Velikiye Luki

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (Vol. 24, No. 1 in this case). The intent is to provide the *ASL* player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenario, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

RUSSIAN: Place a "?" and two squads in 3B3; "?" and three squads with a MMG and 8-0 leader in 3E4; "?" and two squads in 3P2; "?" and three squads with a LMG in 3CC5 (HIP for two squads and the LMG); "?" over three squads, 9-1 leader and two LMGs in 3W4 (using HIP for all but one squad with a LMG); four "?" in 3N2 (2nd level) and "?" in 3W5.

GERMAN: Put the 10-2 leader, three squads and two LMGs on Cloaking Counter A; the 9-1, 8-1, two squads, two LMGs on Cloaking Counter B.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: The German cloaking counters A, B, C are on one flank. Counters D and E are on the other. Might as well roll a die for which flank. Try to stick close to the board edge. Don't shoot unless you must.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: Once the best Russian leader is activated, use him to alert your other troops rather than getting him immediately into the fray. Don't forget that the Germans must exit to win, so better to fight a delaying action than trying to win a stand-up fight. The key to winning lies in getting your 9-1 leader active ASAP.





Squad Leader Clinic

NO HOLLOW THREAT

By Jon Mishcon

Hollow-charge explosive devices were developed before World War II. Also called "shaped-charge weapons", they developed their potency by generating a "super-hot" flame that explosively burned through resistive material. As the flame is hottest, and therefore strongest, at its tip, hollow-charge devices required three preconditions in order to be most effective.

First, the fire had to ignite at a specific distance from the material to be penetrated. Should the fire start smack adjacent to the target, or worse if the hollow cone is cracked, the flame will be diffused and without strength. Second, the fire is disrupted if spun; therefore the device's flight should be without any rotation. Thus the "rifling" that lines most barreled weapons dramatically degrades hollow-charge ammunition effectiveness. Thirdly, if possible, nothing should be in front of the flame. Anything that stands in front of the flame requires energy to burn through, thus naturally diminishing the penetration.

For use as demolition charges, a hollow-charge weapon could approach the ideal. The Germans early had a series of cup-shaped charges with base fuses and fold-down legs for use as DCs. The prospect of delicately folding down three legs and standing 30 pounds of explosives atop the target must have been somewhat daunting however, since many countries developed hollow-charge *projectiles*. Standing off and shooting at the target may be safer, but it did compromise the weapon.

The use of hollow-charge projectiles requires a balancing of tactical needs against the best possible penetration. A fuse in front of the explosive is needed to achieve the stand-off distance. As the "shape" of a shaped-charge is an inverted cone, some form of ballistic cap is necessary to allow smooth flight. Finally, due care must be exercised to avoid having the energy that propels the weapon disrupt the hollow-charge shape.

Luckily, the burn-through effect of a hollow charge doesn't require a high velocity. Indeed, low velocity is actually preferable as it allows the fuse to work best for insuring proper stand-off and minimizes the risk to the hollow charge's shape. Three basic approaches were followed to direct the flight of these low-velocity projectiles.

First, fin-stabilized shells were developed experimentally for conventional rifle-barreled weapons. These shells had tail fins and a roller-mounted band attached that reduced the spin to approximately 30%. Nice, but even 30% of the normal spin was still disruptive.

Second, spigot dischargers allowed conventional explosive propulsive charges to "squirt" out hollow-charge projectiles. The British made a special study of spigot dischargers starting in the early 1930s. A spigot device had the hollow base tube of the shaped-charge projectile placed *over* the firing pin. Trigger the pin and the resulting explosion sent the shell on its way, with the distance traversed by the base tube over the pin giving direction to the weapon's flight. Also nice, but the practial limitations of carrying around a large number of long-tubed projectiles shortened the base-tube length, and therefore the accurate range of the spigots. Although the *Panzerfaust* was not a spigot device, as the discharge tube surrounded the propellent, the same limitation in accuracy applied since the head of the device stuck out beyond the guiding tube.

Thirdly, rockets were seized upon as an effective mechanism for delivering hollow charges to their targets. In 1918, Goddard actually developed the precursor of the bazooka with a light-weight rocket launcher. As there were no shaped charges at the time, the idea was held in limbo until World War II. The American shaped-charge projectile had a far smaller explosive head than the *Panzerfaust* but, since the rocket travelled the relatively long length of the launcher, the bazooka was more accurate.

Lastly, some comment is required about the anti-personnel effect of all shaped-charge weapons. Assuming, as noted in Hogg's *German Artillery of World War Two*, that the most effective size of anti-personnel fragments is 0.04 oz (1.1 gram), hollow-charge weapons do a generally lousy job. Given the need for a light ballistic cap that provides few effective fragments, and a "super-hot" directed flame that tends to burn through, rather than break up, hollow-charge weapons were not valuable for disrupting infantry in the open. Moreover, the projectile's impact fuse would not detonate unless it struck a hard surface, and had to hit it at an angle more perpendicular than not. (Unlike the graze fuse of an artillery shell, the SCW projectile's fuse would not be detonated by a glancing hit.)

All of the above is reflected rather well in *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*. Rule C8.31 requires that SCWs be directed at hard targets (although the 16 FP of the PF is probably a better reflection of later models with the anti-personnel

fragmentation collar). Rule C13, which contains essentially all the other rules on SCWs, demonstrates the power of the ubiquitous 'faust and range-accuracy advantages of the bazooka. Gone are the days of huge stacks of PF counters, as this is now an inherent weapon for the German when available. Of special note is the fact that only German *squads* can get two cracks at firing Panzerfausts in a single fire phase. Additionally, there is a +1 drm for PF availability for half-squads. This is of paramount importance in considering the tactical usage of SCWs. Remember, however, the +1 availability drm for firing one at a non-AFV target.

We have a few tactical hints for the use of SCWs in *ASL* play. First and foremost, if you got 'em, use 'em. We've witnessed many the tournament game in which the German player, unless faced with tanks, never fires a 'faust. Even recognizing the 16% chance of being pinned, the potency of these weapons against adjacent enemy infantry in a building or behind a wall shouldn't be ignored.

Second, don't forget Deliberate Immobilization (C5.7). The '44 BAZ is still good for a "4" at two-hex range (DFPh against a large, non-moving target). If you can't bust his front armor, you've still got a 16% chance of detracking him, with the bonus that he may abandon ship in that case. Third, we always sing the praises of WP. A wonderful combined offensive and defensive tool that costs you nothing (barring possible weapon malfunction) if you blow the availability roll (C8.9).

Fourth, for the Germans, stick with squads for best PF availability. Players are advised to use crews, when available, for bazookas and *Panzerschrecks*. Once again, this is strictly in keeping with the tactical doctrine of the 1940s. Bazookas and PSKs were seen as "special weapons", while the Germans considered PFs as part of the basic squad armament.

Fifth, although rocket-propelled SCWs may be fired from buildings without the risk of backblast by using Case C^3 (C13.8), it is preferable to take wall advantage (B9.32) when possible. Even when you are in the hex with a building, if you claim wall advantage you are considered in the open behind the wall (example B9.321). Less modifiers, more hits.

Sixth, don't forget that Guns are acceptable SCW targets. Even if you don't knock out the gun, the SCW may affect the crew (C11.4).

Seventh, remember the difference between PIATs and the other SCW. The PIAT used a spring-loaded spigot to hurl its HEAT projectile. Although it can't be used at targets one or more levels lower in the same or an adjacent hex (C13.61), the fact that it can be manned by one man (Heroes!) and can be used inside a building (it has no backblast; C13.8) will make it a potent weapon indeed.

Lastly, some mention of Desperation (C13.81) is worthwhile. If you're in a *single-story* building and about to be overrun, think twice before firing at that oncoming AFV. If you fire from within restrictive terrain with a rocket-propelled SCW, then you'd best plan on having everyone therein break. Ours always do. If you wait and "take" the overrun (and survive), not only do you get a better target (0 Range, rear shot) but you also have a decent chance of having the AFV turn your nice little hovel into rubble—thus avoiding the backblast dr. Nice.

We have included a new scenario, "Rocket's Red Glare" on the insert to allow readers to experiment with some of the ideas described above.

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (Vol. 24, No. 4 in this case). The intent is to provide the *ASL* player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker intial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

After Action Report—Buchholz Station

Setup for BOTH sides is fixed.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: It is not worthwhile for the Germans to loop either west of Hill 498 nor east of Hill 522. Drive as fast as you can between them trying to cause as many U.S. casualties as you can on Turn 1. Use the Advance Phase with several groups to "winkle" the U.S. player out of his defensive positions. At some point you must rush through 3AA2, so plan to use smoke there. Try to win by knocking out 13 American victory points, but to do so you'll have to threaten to exit.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: Don't try to hold on Turn 1. Pull the GIs back and use the fall-back defender tactics as per our prior Clinic installment (Vol. 21, No. 6). Use a 9-1 leader with the .50-cal. in the building and put the 9-2 with your best up-front stack. Remember that he has to come to you, and that time is on your side. Also note that 3W4 covers 3Y1.

The Bitche Salient

AMERICAN: The water-cooled .30-cal. goes into the stone building, one bazooka into Z1, the .50-cal. goes into J4 with a bazooka in H5. I try to set up an assault force with two MMGs and a bazooka in G1, G3 and F4 to put pressure on the Germans. Good locations are S2, T3, U2, V3, X1, Z1, BB1 and Z3 for your holding force. You're going to take some lumps, so try and be sure that units can rout to a leader.

GERMAN: Place an 8-0 and radio in foxhole in 2R2, pre-registered on 4X1. Three squads with LMG and MMG and 9-1 in foxhole under the wire in W10. Wire across the edge of board Q to X in hexes 9 or 10. Place a squad with MMG in foxhole in 2Q6. And squads with LMGs in foxholes 2W5 and 2K5.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: The Americans must defend around 4X1 while attacking uphill around 4G1. Capture the hilltop defenders. Once you have the heights, you can use your HMGs and OBA to try to rack up more victory points and win.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: The Germans should cover the hilltop with as few pieces as possible. Attack *onto* Board 4 and capture building X1. Use the troops that come on the south end of Board 4 and dig in around the road.

☆

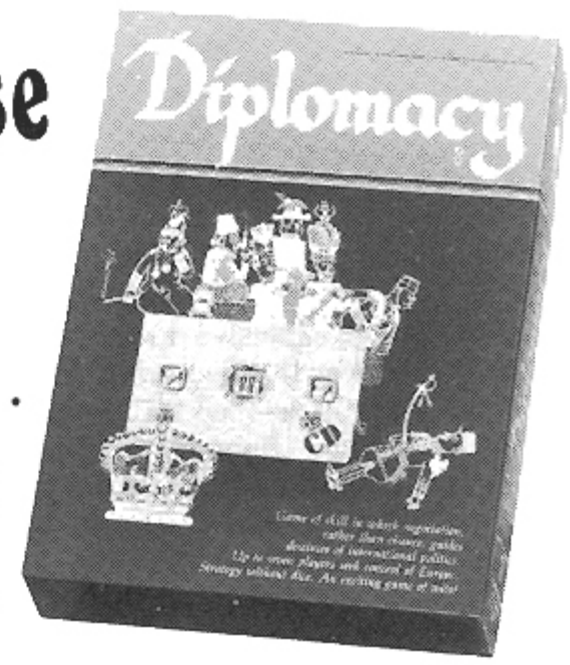
COPIES

If the readers should need a copy of an article from an out-of-print back issue of The *GENERAL* or one of the Wargamer's Guides, The Avalon Hill Game Company does provide a photocopying service. The charge for this service is $1.00 per page, with a minimum order of five pages required. Please specify the article title, volume and number it appeared in, and the pages on which it can be found. This service is also extended to our other publications, past and present—*ALL-STAR REPLAY* and *HEROES*. Standard Avalon Hill Game Company postage rates of 10% of the amount of the order must be included for domestic orders (20% for Canadian orders and 30% for overseas orders).

What the White House Needs Now . . .

is a copy of **Diplomacy**. . . the internationally famous board game!

$18 Retail



Today our foreign policy is in shambles. The worst it's ever been! Is there any parallel to the fact that our diplomatic expertise started going downhill when those cabinet members familiar with the **DIPLOMACY** game left their government posts???

Whatever your opinions of the Nixon administration have been, you must admit they had one sharp foreign policy . . . due, perhaps, to the fact that members of the Nixon cabinet were **DIPLOMACY** players.

In *All the President's Men*, the award-winning novel exposing the Watergate mess, it was stated that cabinet members, including David Eisenhower, played **DIPLOMACY** to get their minds off of Watergate.

It was told to Gyles Brandeth, *Games & Puzzles Magazine* editor, that **DIPLOMACY** was Dr. Henry Kissinger's favorite board game. Dr. Kissinger was Secretary of State at the time.

Charles Grenville, *London Daily Mail*, wrote back in November 1962, "they play it in the White House. In fact, it's the rage in America. And at Cambridge, the Dean of Trinity College, John Gallagher, is an expert. In ecclesiastical circles, the Bishop of Woolwich knows all about it . . . IT? The game called **DIPLOMACY**!"

Angus McGill, *London Evening Standard*, claims that the Kennedy's were said to play **DIPLOMACY** at the White House.

Well . . . there ain't nobody playing it today at the White House . . . obviously.

YOU CAN HELP

It's not too late to salvage the situation. If every person reading this would send one copy of **DIPLOMACY** to the White House, someone surely would get the message.

Better still—why not send one copy to your best friend! Who knows, the person you introduce to **DIPLOMACY** might end up as Secretary of State himself.

Coming Attractions

THE LAST HURRAH

Following the overwhelmingly favorable response that came with publication of a preview in Vol. 24, No. 5 of Don Greenwood's re-working of SIEGE OF JERUSALEM, and in recognition of the large majority on our survey who indicated that they wanted news on works in progress, the editors decided that a new regular column might be in order. Even with the small design staff these days—every one a demon at creating games though—Avalon Hill still releases some dozen titles a year. And publication of something new is always just around the corner. This short column is intended to give readers a short peek at one of these in each issue.

When Bob McNamara got sand in his eyes and turned his attention to the *ASL* desert, I decided that I'd stay home. Figuratively speaking of course. Bob is breaking new ground with the system, having spent half a year to see the British and combat in North Africa brought to the fanatics with the release of *WEST OF ALAMEIN*. Now he labors on the Italians; and soon he will be sweating with the Japanese. I, on the other hand, felt that finishing the update of nationalities that appeared in the original *SL* system was equally important. At my strident insistence, the Axis Minors infantry OB and a couple of scenarios featuring them were included with *PARTISAN!* Realizing that Bob wasn't going to be able to devote time to continuing this trend of bringing out the "lesser powers" in small modules, I brazenly voluteered. The first result of my labors will be *THE LAST HURRAH*, an *ASL* module that should see print before the end of 1988.

THE LAST HURRAH will be the sixth *ASL* module, and much similar to *PARTISAN!* in content. The single counter sheet will carry the Allied Minors infantry OB, some 260 half-inch counters. As before, these encompass a host of nations quickly overrun by the invaders—the Poles, Norwegians, Dutch, Belgians, Yugoslavs and Greeks. All the infantry weapons are included, including the various models of MGs and ATRs with which they struggled to stop the onslaught. The two mapboards include the revised #11, featuring a couple of small hills broken by extensive hedges, and the new #33, open terrain dominated by an extensive (85-hex) grainfield. Together with the original four *SL* mapboards, they can give a fair approximation of the terrain over which the early *blitzkriegs* rolled.

But the heart of the new module will be, as always, the new scenarios. These eight focus on historical situations involving the early German *blitzkriegs* of World War II and the many nationalities that fought desperately against the invaders. Paratroopers, armor, air power, audacity and courage were the tools with which Germany planned to overrun the neutral states of Europe. And in less than two years, in actions as far apart as Norway and Crete, the German military accomplished all they set out to do. For the most part, the invaded neutrals were defended by hastily-mobilized reservists stiffened by a few elite units. The actions depicted in *THE LAST HURRAH* will hopefully challenge veteran *ASL* players to match the tenacity, audacity and victories on both sides in these scenarios recreating in a small way the German march of conquest. Whether commanding German armor, Polish cavalry, Greek infantry, Belgian Chasseurs, Norwegian reservists or Luftwaffe paratroopers, if you're an *ASL* grognard you're bound to find something of interest in the wide spectrum of scenarios included.

The playtest of *THE LAST HURRAH* began in mid-summer with eight scenarios I'd drawn from various sources. With a bit of effort, I managed to locate at least one covering an action by each of the Allied Minor powers. For instance, the Greek scenario simulates a small portion of the fighting around Kastelli in Crete, where a poorly-armed Greek regiment—survivor of the flight from the mainland and their homeland—plunged into the hills to hunt down German paratroopers during the airborne invasion; my research for this one included such esoteric studies as the Australian Official History, a book written in 1943 by an American lady who survived the fall of Greece to flee to Crete and then North Africa, a German pamphlet, and some war crimes testimony about alledged German atrocities on the island presented during the trials in Athens after the war. In fact, I had to do a great deal more digging for these scenarios than I'd had to for the previous *ASL* module I'd overseen (*HEDGEROW HELL*). And I rediscovered my enjoyment of shifting through dusty old tomes in dank libraries and tracking down elusive bits of information needed to bring a scenario to life.

The playtesters have often felt like orphans I'm sure, since due to the press of other projects (notably this magazine) long periods occasionally pass between contact. But all of them—lead by Russ Hall, John Anderson, Kurt Nordquest, Dan Huberman, Jim Stahler, Mitchell Balicki and Chris Gammon—have contributed mightily. In final form, the playability and challenge of these scenarios will be due more to their efforts than mine. Why, Brian Martuzas even devised a scenario pitting the Poles against the Russians in 1939 that I thought so clever it will bump one of the others in the module. (Never fear, the "ninth" scenario dealing with the Allied Minors will appear in The *GENERAL* at some point).

These scenarios, numbered 43 through 50 (a landmark of sorts for the system) with one to appear later, encompass quite a range of actions. I had originally hoped to concentrate on cavalry actions (as Mac had on partisan ones in the previous small module), but soon found that was impossible. Even with the best of intentions, I couldn't cram horses into every scenario. After that, my self-set task became simpler—locating little-known actions and tracking down as much information on each as I could. Along the way, I was pleased to discover that most of the elements that marked the startling German method of making war came into play in one or more of the scenarios: Stuka support, fast armored drives against disorganized defenders, attack from unexpected quarters, and all the rest. The playtesters then plunged in with a will to refine the raw scenarios, and even though there are disagreements on a host of small points, all seem to have had fun with it. We've together done our best

Continued on Page 55, Column 1

to balance the scenarios, and make them a challenge for any true *ASL* devotee. I think you'll find that, once again, you will learn a bit once you've mastered these, for they certainly play different from those rather "regular" ones found in *BEYOND VALOR*, *PARATROOPER* and *YANKS*.

I've mentioned only a couple of the scenarios thus far. Everyone involved has their favorite, of course. Every *ASL*-er I've ever known will regale you with tales of what he considers the best of the published scenarios; I'm no different. For my money, the very first in this module is the very best, wherein the Polish "Pomorska" Cavalry Brigade clashes with German armor. But your favorite might well be different, and you've quite a range of situations to choose from: the above-mentioned Greek scenario; an attempt by German paratroopers to crash through a Norwegian roadblock; German SS playing hide-and-seek in the Ardennes with elite Belgian troops; a desperate battle between mobilizing Yugoslavian reservists and the lead elements of a hard-driving panzer division; Dutch defense of their fortified line against a German assault from the rear; a Belgian attempt to retake a bridge near Eban-Emael in which Stukas play a role; and a Polish charge to break through Russian lines to freedom in the last days of the fighting there (the scenario contributed by Brian Martuzas). Together, I think these actions give an excellent cross-section of the heroism and frustration of those early days of World War II. ☆



Squad Leader Clinic

ACHTUNG MINEN!

By Jon Mishcon

The title may be a little dramatic, but I already titled an article written in 1981 (see Vol. 18, No. 3) "Minefields and Booby Traps". Long-time readers may well want to peek back at that article just to contrast what I had to say then with the current state of affairs. It was rather interesting for me to do so. For those lacking that article, it briefly reviewed who used what kind of mines (U.S. and German forces used manufactured mines while the Japanese made do with what was available) and the German approach to mine tactics. A brief reprise of those historical concepts is in order before we turn to *ASL* mine usage.

German mine policy specified usage of mines both offensively and defensively. On offense, hastily-laid mine screens were used to shield the flanks of an advance and protect key rail/road junctions that had been overrun. Defensively, minefields were emplaced to slow enemy advances, channel attacks into sited "killing grounds", and permit greater defensive troop concentrations in the unmined areas. In all cases great stress was laid on ensuring adequate firepower to protect the fields from hasty breaching.

The Germans preached rellatively few keys to successful mine use. First, where mines were laid they must be of adequate depth and number to intimidate enemy movement. Second, mines are not a rigid barrier. Rather, they serve as a psychological obstruction. Third, the intent of minefields is to ensure that the employer will have adequate time and troop concentration to counterattack vigorously. Lastly, the effectiveness of any given minefield varies directly with the ability of the troops behind it to protect the field.

Standard German minefield construction involved surveying each and every mine location and type. The edge closest to the enemy was composed mostly of anti-tank mines. This was to protect the anti-personnel devices from harmless detonation by an AFV. The core of the barrier was composed of staggered rows of anti-personnel mines interspersed with anti-tank devices. Specific channels were left open to allow safe passage of patrols and counter-attacking troops. These channels were changed periodically. Time permitting, potential enemy cover beyond the mine belt was laced with booby traps. Although spreading the mines increased the difficulty of mine removal, and obviously widened the area of defense, the use of mine patches was condemned as being too easily bypassed.

ASL scenarios may give players a fixed number of mine factors which may be allocated in three manners: anti-personnel, anti-tank, and booby traps. In the standard *ASL* rules these are always hidden (unless placed upon a hardtop surface—B28.53) from enemy view. The *WEST OF ALAMEIN* module has updated the mine rules with four paragraphs that deal with "Known" and "Dummy" minefields—special applications which may appear in any scenario, but which historically were used most often in North Africa. Due to the mobile nature of that campaign, minefields were often marked with signs (the German ones usually read "Achtung Minen!" and/or perimeter wire. Often the enemy could see these indications of a minefield, yet not know its strength or even if it was just a "dummy". The new rules (F.7-.7C) cover these possibilities.

We'll take a moment to review *ASL* anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines, and booby traps before discussing the pros and cons.

Anti-personnel mines are low power explosive devices designed to go off under minimal pressure. They may be placed in concentrations of six, eight or twelve factors per hex. They can immobilize an AFV, kill or break troops. They can even take out unarmored vehicles. They go off whenever any unit enters or leaves their Location.

Anti-tank mines are available at a cost of three anti-personnel factors per anti-tank factor. These mines are big and powerful enough to rip the treads off a tank—perhaps even blow through the bottom plate armor. Because of their size, they're expensive. Thus, they're adjusted only to detonate under the kind of ground pressure generated by a vehicle. Anti-tank mines can be laid in strengths of one through five per hex. Don't go off until a vehicle enters/exits their Location and a die roll ≤ the AT mine concentration is made. They always attack on the 36+ column of the IFT. Obviously, a KIA result kills an AFV, while a K or MC immobilizes it.

Booby traps are low power explosive traps that are often concealed above ground. Generally they are not set off by pressure, but rather triggered by an action (opening a door, flushing a toilet, straightening a picture—that kind of thing). Booby traps are available in three levels. Each level costs 10 mine factors. They cause Casualty Reduction on Task Check die rolls of "12" (level C), "11" (level B) or "11 and 12" (level A).

Anti-personnel mines are your "best buy". Undoubtably they will be the overwhelming majority

of mines purchased. First and foremost, you know they'll always go off whenever a unit enters/leaves their Location. Even a six-factor minefield is a considerable threat to foot sloggers. Second, they really are a threat to AFVs. AFVs with any hull armor factor of "0" are treated as unarmored versus mines, and even medium tanks generally have about a 16% chance of being immobilized moving through the hex.

Anti-tank mines are probably only worth the expense if you face more than one AFV. If you do face a bunch of steel monsters, the anti-tank mines are valuable indeed. They can be planted in density as low as one per hex (wide coverage, but still about 30% chance of going off if a vehicle tries to move through). They don't go off if just infantry or cavalry move through. That means that maniacal HS zipping along hoping to expose mines won't reveal your little anti-tank trap unless it searches. Best of all, when AT mines do go off they always rack up some damage.

Booby traps are both wonderful and terrible. As they depend on Task Check rolls of "11" and/or "12", you can go through a whole scenario and they never have any effect. On the other hand, we've seen tough troops cut up badly by multiple Casualty Reductions. When booby traps go off, they can affect any unit (except a crew taking an Immobilization Check) and always hit (none of this "MC" jive), and it should be pointed out that booby traps can be "detonated" only by enemy units—not by units of the side with the booby trap capability.

Your use of mines should tend to follow standard patterns much akin to German mine policy.

First, ensure that the minefield is laid out in adequate depth and breadth. Mining singe hexes just means that your crafty opponent will search them out and go round. This means that most of the time, you'll be using the lowest mine density. More mined hexes means more shots, more clearing, and really gives you your best odds of doing some damage.

Second, if you think your opponent is likely to use AFVs to make trail breaks, try to put anti-tank mines in front of your anti-personnel minefields. This "leading edge" can really put a crimp in his breaching.

Third, if you think your opponent is likely to use mine clearing, then invest in Level B booby traps (assuming he is not Inexperienced Infantry). That'll mean dice rolls of "11" or "12" will *both* clobber him.

Fourth, don't try to mine everywhere. You'll end up with fields too shallow to divert the attacker.

Last but not least, minefields *must* have some firepower protection. As a rule of thumb, I try to use mines to guard one-third or one-half my line with one-sixth to one-fourth of my force protecting the mines.

We've included revisions of two of the original *SQUAD LEADER* scenarios featuring mines on the insert to allow players to experiment with some of the ideas examined above.

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (in this case, with Vol. 24, No. 6). The intent is to provide the *ASL* player with one of the numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

After Action Report—Rocket's Red Glare

GERMAN: Place an 8-0 with squad and LMG in 3L4; squad and LMG in M5; crew and PSK in Q5; the 9-2 with three squads and HMG and MMG in R5; a single squad in U6; an 8-0 leader and squad with LMG in W8. Place the crew and artillery piece in N8 facing M8/N7. Put the FlakPz in P8 facing O8/P7 and the StuG in R8 facing R7/S8.

AMERICAN: Relatively straightforward—the 9-2 and three squads with two MMGs and Baz44 and PF in T1; the 8-0 plus three squads with Baz45 and PF in X3. All the rest enter on I1.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: Use your AFV only to prevent the Germans from gaining any second-level positions; it is too vulnerable to throw into a duel with the German armor or infantry. Try to concentrate on getting a second-level fire position which hinders the German movement and then moving all your forces to attack the other building in close combat. Remember, you only need one building to win.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: Use your firepower to delay or hinder the American movement. Use the tactics of "fallback defense" until the U.S. player commits his assault to one direction—and then hunker down around that building.

Even as you read this installment, our effort on the "ASL Annual '89" (due for release at ORIGINS) enters its final stages. Articles have been selected and edited, and some 20 scenarios are ready for playtest. If you have an interest in playtesting some of these, contact Rex A. Martin by post and specify whether you'd like to test the proposed ASL, Deluxe ASL, or original SL scenarios.



AH Philosophy . . . *Cont'd from Page 4*

our wargames. In a few cases, this was certainly justified; in most, it wasn't—merely reflecting the lack of the critics' own knowledge and understanding. Given that no game can ever be a "perfect" simulation of war, some seemingly approach the boundaries of being a solid "historical study" of some facet. Among these must be numbered the following:

Components:

1. FLATTOP 1.76
2. ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER 2.04
3. EMPIRES IN ARMS 2.11
4. RUSSIAN FRONT 2.40
5. RAID ON ST. NAZAIRE 2.52
6. WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN . . . 2.60
7. DEVIL'S DEN 2.61
8. THUNDER AT CASSINO 2.63
9. FIREPOWER 2.88
10. BULL RUN 2.93

Of great importance to most gamers is the length of time it takes to play their favorite game to conclusion; indeed, game length may be the deciding factor in making it their "favorite". Avalon Hill has long stressed playability, and this is—to some extent—reflected by the playing time demanded. Personal free time among the bulk of our readership is at a premium, what with career and family, and so the category **Shortest** gives new buyers an indication of which games can be played in a single sitting. At the other end of the spectrum are those players who like to play a game over several sessions; for them, the **Longest** Game Length ratings. Luckily, our extensive line can satisfy any gamer's choice, spanning the range from the 37 minutes it takes to play *B-17* to the 47+ hours demanded of the campaign game of *EMPIRES IN ARMS*.

For lunch-break wargamers and tournament organizers, the following are the ten games rated as quickest-playing; for the actual time in minutes, merely multiply the value given by ten:

Shortest Game Length:

1. B-17 . . . . . 3.76
2. NAVAL WAR 3.88

GUNNED-UP IN THE DESERT

A WEST OF ALAMEIN Adventure

By Mark C. Nixon

Anti-tank guns to the left of us; FFE to the right. There were minefields in front of us, and a Creeping Barrage was rolling across the desert straight for us. There we were, just me and Erwin Rommel in our MkIIIs, dueling with the Desert Rats. The armor in this tank felt mighty thin (I was accustomed to at least an "11" frontal armor) and there were no trees or buildings in LOS to hide in, no hills to cover our approach. I might have been worried about those ATGs, had we not already discovered them to be only 40Ls. Ha! Back in Russia we used to laugh at anything less than 75mm. Those puny shells would bounce off even the light armor of these MkIIIs. (Yes, in the *ASL* milieu I am a time traveller, for even though I am a conscript in this desert fighting, I have already fought *BEYOND VALOR* in *STREETS OF FIRE*, and against *PARATROOPERS, YANKS, PARTISANS* and even in *HEDGEROW HELL* country!)

We started our engines, but when I shifted into gear my roll was boxcars. Damned dust. I silently wished it were after 9/41 so this unforgiving machine would do what I asked of it. I changed tanks, scrambling with my crew into a brand new MkIII. I noticed Erwin impatiently drumming his fingers on the open hatch lid of his purring MkIII, trying not to look distracted while, to the rear, the repair crews seemed to heave a collective sigh as they picked up their tools to work on yet another immobilized tank. My second tank revved to life, and I managed a smooth shift to start moving. "Heh, heh, that's got it," I needlessly explained into my headset. But Erwin was already moving, so I jolted off to keep even with him. I wanted to remain side-by-side so our vehicle dust wouldn't ruin the new paint job on this MkIII.

CRACK!

"What was that?"

"Must have been a 40mm round. Pretty close too. It was a nice opening shot," Erwin replied.

"Nice opening shot?" I muttered to the crew. "Is this the stuff legends are made of?"

I noticed Herr Rommel was CE, but I couldn't imagine it, what with all that choking dust out there. And then he even dropped behind my tank to eat my dust. Well, so much for the legendary Desert Fox, I mused. How smart is a guy who pulls a stunt like that?

CRACK—CRACK—CLANG!

Wow, two more near misses and a hit! How fortunate that it bounced off my side armor. I noticed Erwin still CE, and with his turret frontal armor swung around to face the offending ATG. Hey, now that is a clever idea, but my crew was already swinging our turret. Can't be too concerned about the trim of our MkIII; that frontal turret armor might actually make a big difference if we're hit again.

CRACK—CRACK—CRACK—CLANG—CRACK—CLANG!!

Hey, how much ROF do those guys get anyway, and how much longer will we be out here before we can shoot back at that ATG? "Dummkopf," comes the reply from Erwin. "There are four ATGs out there. If you calculate their 3-ROF, Multiple Hits, Intensive Fire and Overrun Prevention possibilities, they can shoot at us for what seems like forever. Why aren't you making smoke?"

Making smoke? Who's he kidding? All I could think about was that if Erwin didn't move out of my dust and the enemy started shooting at him, we'd have to look up all those specifications to determine when that dust appeared/disappeared, what effect it had, and what would happen if the wind kicked up or it started to rain. What would happen then? I knew the immediate effect would be that I'd have to start reading all those rules. But then I noticed something curious; something probably obvious to most commanders but, being a conscript, apparently outside the borders of my comprehension until forced within by the stress of a battlefield situation. *The enemy weren't shooting at Erwin at all!*

"This isn't fair," I screamed into my headset. The only reply was a chuckle from Erwin.

"Double Dummkopf, what did you expect? Why would the Tommies shoot at me while you are such an inviting target?"

But I wasn't listening. I was sorting through my manual for the vehicle dust specs. I had always considered VD something to be avoided at all costs. You can imagine my concern as I first debarked in North Afrika and was informed that in the open desert, VD follows us tankers around wherever we go—like the plague. The training films had not warned of this. Now this new interpretation certainly thrust new meaning into the conception . . . er, contraception . . . er, ah, into the idea. There—finally found it. "What," I screamed, "a +2 Hindrance DRM for dust? Now what do I do?"

One devious trick came to mind. I could slow down so that I no longer raised that screening dust for Erwin. Providing the enemy another target would be a very effective way to take the heat off myself, although in this case, since it was none other than the Desert Fox himself, it might not be my best choice. I could imagine the wrath this tactic would elicit from Herr Rommel; and since I didn't want him assigning me to ride point for our entire venture across North Afrika, I let this thought die. However, it was an intriguing idea and I carefully stored it in my memory for eventual use—like the next time I come out here with someone of lesser rank.

"Why don't you try your smoke discharger?" came the repeat request.

"My what?" I snapped back to attention from my reverie.

"Haven't you ever crawled underneath your tank and seen all those curious markings on the bottom side? One of those notes says 'sD7'. You can make smoke."

"Great; now you tell me. Why did you wait until the enemy's turn?" I was appalled to catch myself addressing the great general in this tone, but in the battlefield environment he didn't seem to mind.

"No problem. You can try it during their MPh."

"You're kidding. Is there anything else I can do?"

"Of course. See that Crusader entering play behind us, maneuvering for a rear shot?"

"Arrgh. I didn't see him. Where did he come from?"

"Well, first of all, if you had searched the order of battle card, you would have known he was coming; and second, you might even have a chance to hit him if you weren't buttoned up. At least if you missed with your shot you would have a chance to throw some Crew Smoke. At the very least, you can roll for Motion to change your VCA and swing your frontal armor toward him."

"But I'm already in Motion!"

"So what? You can roll anyway. Have you ever considered *reading* your manual? It may come as a SHOCK to you (hah, hah, did I scare you? . . . Just a little tanker humor), but until you are familiar with that manual, you will always be a conscript."

"Well, I think you've convinced me. But what do we do right now . . . surrounded, Acquired and outgunned?"

"We follow our instincts, as would any natural-born fighter in such a situation . . . we run away! This battle is lost, but we will try again later."

As we turned our tanks around, I became CE just in time to see Erwin button up. Now there's a clever fellow. He rides CE in my dust, but when we turn around so that I'm in his dust, he closes up. It was in that very instant of realization that I was hit with yet another inkling of what it takes to become a 10-2 armor leader. I had forgotten about the Creeping Barrage. Apparently Erwin had not. I was literally STUNNED by the manifestation. All I could do was watch Erwin successfully skate offboard, his turret swinging this way and that as he moved to face each anticipated enemy shot. "Sigh, what a guy."

Fortunately for me the barrage passed, and the British mysteriously withdrew. I was able to bring the crew back to their senses. We started up and drove off. As luck would have it, we returned to base with valuable information; at least Erwin seemed to think so. He hypothesized that the Tommies might be low on ammo or possibly have something else to hide. Why would they retire from a situation in which they had us so outnumbered if they had nothing to hide? Perhaps they were low on fuel? With that hope bringing a gleam to his eye, Erwin quickly decided to go after them. With a bit of luck they might lead us to a fresh supply of petrol. We loaded up immediately and darted off in pursuit. I was beginning to get the message that my conception of "desert training" was mere illusion. It was looking like the rule of thumb out here would be hands-on experience only. I was in the opening stages of mentally conducting a symposium of this realization, justified with the survival-of-the-fittest school of though, when I caught myself at it and rejected that line of thinking. Since it's my survival at stake here, I determined that the best course would be to avoid wasting effort on useless complaining and simply stick close to Erwin. He seemed to be the one who knew what was going on out here, so I might as well learn from a pro.

But the first thing I had to wonder about was why in the name of Otto von Bismarck were we using Platoon Movement? Back in Russia we used to prey on those Red tankers moving in such awkward fashion. Yet here we all were, radios fully operational, yet using Platoon Movement. I had to wonder about the legendary Fox for the second time today. The next thing I noticed was that we were not headed for the scene of our earlier skirmish, but were driving off on a tangent to the west. After running this through my mind several times, all I could conclude was that Erwin must know something I didn't. Maybe he knew where the enemy was headed? Maybe he just wanted to take advantage of this road so we could gain time and overtake the fleeing British?

Such thoughts were quickly driven from my head, however, when on a signal from Erwin the MkII platoons pulled off the road and took up a parallel course about 120 meters [*three hexes*] off our right flank. To avoid outdistancing them, we had to slow our own pace to what seemed like a crawl. Visions of those hordes of burning Russian tank platoons flashed across my memory. Were we destined to be caught by the enemy in this confounded formation and mauled like chumps? I was incredulous when we came under ATG fire almost immediately. When I realized that Erwin fully intended to ride through the enemy fire in this abstract formation, my feeling turned to panic. Surely we were all going to die!

But then I noticed a curious phenomena. While the "CRACK" of enemy 40mm rounds screamed all around us as they flew past at supersonic speed, not one of our tanks had been hit. I had to wonder at what appeared to be poor gunnery from the British, of all troops! Were these new recruits, or maybe some untrained detachment of colonials? Well, either of those might explain a great deal, but as I pondered on this situation I began to piece together some extenuating facts to explain our apparent invulnerability to enemy fire. First, we were at long range. The range modifiers of enemy To Hit chances for 40mm and 57mm ATGs offered much better protection than I had ever experienced against those 75mm guns I had faced in Russia. That is, although the enemy could see us approaching from a great distance, that same great distance itself dictated that their fire fell on To Hit ranges I had rarely—if ever—seen. This meant that my old logic of "if they're shooting at you, you're in trouble" no longer applied, for the very elementary reason that conditions might be such that there is actually very little danger of a hit—and only miniscule probablity of a kill. This becomes even more understandable once the modifiers for small caliber (C4) are added to those long-range tables. So long as we remained at a distance of at least 760 meters [*19 hexes*], those 40L guns should hit a stationary target with only 41% of their first shots.

Still, I knew better than to feel secure based on that sparse protection. Once they gained −2 Acquisition, their accuracy goes up to 72%—and with their massive ROF and Multiple Hits we ought to be seeing some kills any minute now. That was when I dug deeper. There must be something more to explain our continued good fortune.

Of course I knew we were more difficult to hit because we were moving, and our reduced speed did not alter this (movement is movement) other than by virtue of leaving us exposed to more shots over a period of time than had we been moving faster. But the kicker was that cloud of dust raised by the MkII platoons. I had first seen the use of such a screening maneuver in training films, but those accounts had not done justice to this very intricate desert tactic. I had always assumed that one vehicle would cruise alongside everyone else to raise this dust, but seeing it in person revealed that the dust settled out or dispersed too readily for that to be effective. And yet, it initially was too dense to expect independent vehicles to maintain contact with one another in order to ensure a continuous screen. Suddenly, I grasped Rommel's genius in using Platoon Movement. All the drawbacks be damned, it was providing our main battle line column an extra +2 cover! To be sure, some of the MkIIs were naked to enemy fire, but their small size already made them tough to hit and, after all, this was war! We couldn't expect to slide through it without some losses. If the enemy were going to shoot at us, let them aim at those antiques if they so choose.

One interesting benefit of the dust I hadn't previously considered is that it can even hinder LOS to such a degree that a total block is achieved. A good rule of thumb seems to be that LOS traced through 120 meters of dust is a total block. The most outstanding ramifications for me here were that: one, the enemy can't shoot what they cannot see; and two, even Acquisition is lost through only 120 meters [*three hexes*] of dust. As the LOS between our platoons and those ATGs altered across the fluctuating dust of the MkII screening force, I was amazed at how readily Acquisition dropped off us. It was one impressive display of desert tactics being demostrated by MkIIs. I had already observed that driving through desert scrub and hamada required added caution, which translated to slowing down (2MP). Thus, if the MkIIs were to drive in line across this desert clutter, they would be forced to slow to such a pace (due to also driving through the dust raised by the lead vehicles) that no such dust would be raised in the first place. What a vicious circle that! By travelling in staggered fashion, they not only avoided this problem, but also forced enemy LOS to trace through more than one VD in many cases.

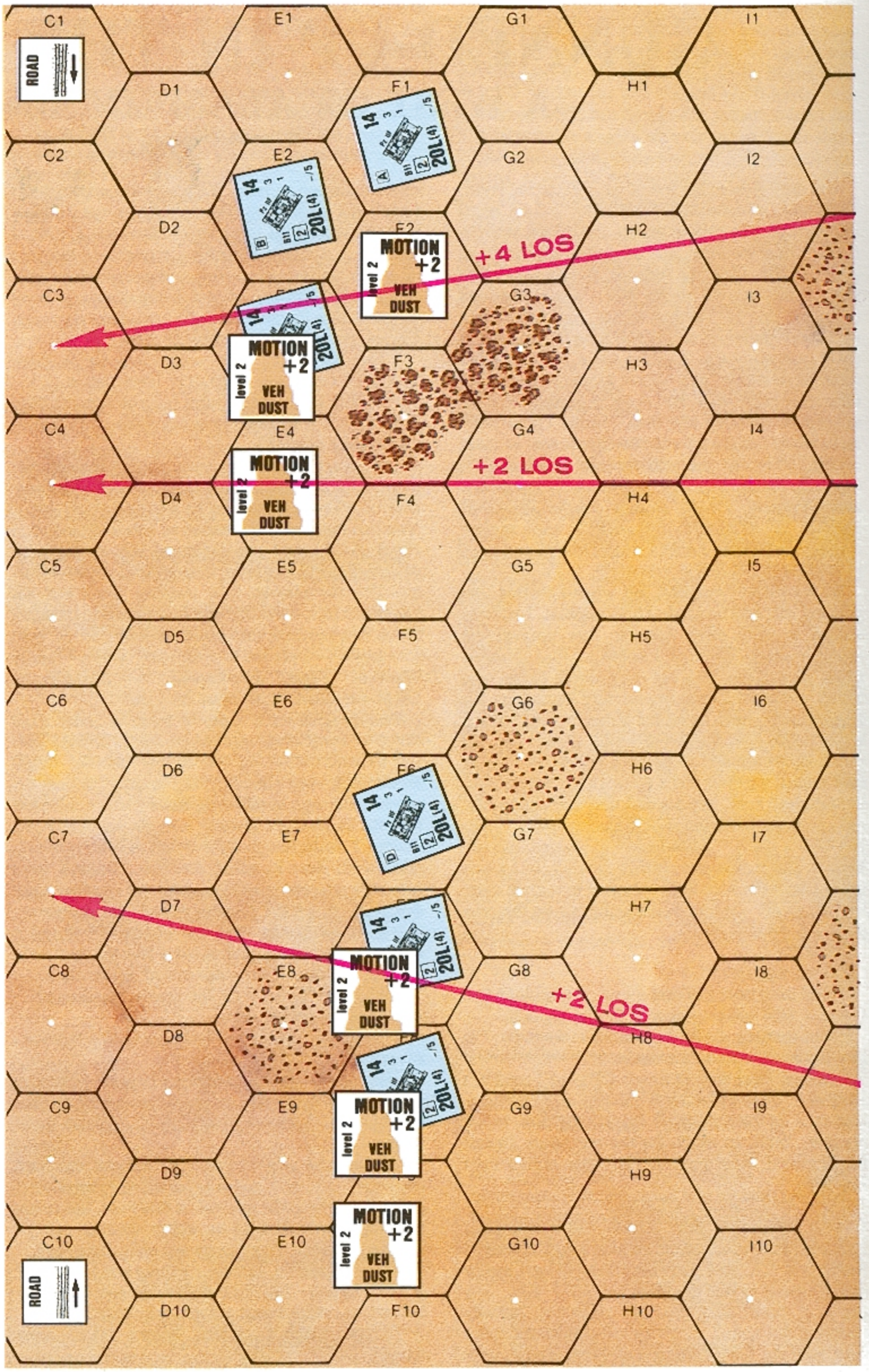


Figure #1: The MkIIs twist and turn to drive through the desert scrub and hamada while maintaining a screen of vehicle dust.

But the most ingenious tactic was yet to come. Early on I had wondered why the last platoon of MkIIs seemed to always lag behind. But then, all of a sudden, here they came at full tilt, charging across our right flank three abreast. They received a hearty cheer from us MkIII commanders as they swept past and we realized their purpose—for as they crossed the LOS between us and those enemy ATGs, all remaining Acquisition was peeled from our ranks automatically. Interruption for even just this brief instant by their three dust clouds was sufficient LOS disruption to free us from all Acquisition. Later, when we, in turn, passed this platoon (in the next MPh) all new acquisition fell from us yet again. I was beginning to see how Erwin had gained his reputation.

As if all this were not enough, in any location where the MkII dust screen was incomplete, our own MkIIIs attempted to fire their smoke dischargers. The combination of smoke and dust made for a truely bewildering swirl of visual confusion. Small wonder the "CRACK" of hostile rounds continued to scream all around us to no effect. When

I mentally added all this new information to our 760 meter range and motion, I was pleased to arrive at only a 3% chance ("eyes") of a hit through 40 meters (one hex) of dust—and only improbable hit chances through 80 meters of dust ("eyes" followed by a 1-3 dr). Thus, even on his third and each subsequent shot (−2 Acqisition), the enemy enjoyed only 16% and 3% chances of hitting through one and two hexes of dust. I wondered whether Erwin had worked this out as well, or did he simply "feel" it (an ability many leaders have claimed)? Either way, I realized he commanded the experience to justify his conclusions.

As I noticed the enemy fire beginning to slacken, yet another thought crossed my mind. Because of the very high volume of fire those ATGs had been putting out, it stood to reason that before too long some of them should either deplete their immediate ammo supply, overheat, break down or, for other more remote reasons, simply stop firing. My experiences in Russia and Hedgerow country were that a gun usually took a shot or two and then one of three things happened: the target was eliminated, or the target ran from LOS, or else the target eliminated the gun via direct fire or overrun. Out here in the open, however, those guns could fire at us for so long before that moving attacker could hide or return effective fire that running from LOS or eliminating the gun did not seem like viable options. That left only the option of target destruction, which did not rest too well with me in our current situation. Fortunately, all the To Hit modifiers worked in our favor, and now this slackening of enemy fire was providing yet another bonus. The crux, then, was that the very great number of shots should lead to a great many more gun breakdowns of one type or another than I had seen previously.

Thus, the silencing of an enemy by this means is transformed from something extremely rare (a very real reason to celebrate) to something which could actually be anticipated (an event bound to occur sooner or later). Furthermore, since an ATG with a high ROF expects to average two shots every fire phase without even risking Intensive Fire or Overrun Prevention, loss of one or more of these weapons is a very serious blow to the enemy. The culmination of this continuous firing as practiced here in the desert was that one should anticipate a 3-ROF weapon to be forced to stop firing within about 45 minutes [*nine turns*]. Considering how many shots each gun might be entitled to enjoy prior to such a breakdown (from one to 35), this may at first glance seem immaterial. But some of those guns will break down on their first shot, some on their second, and so on. What all this meant to me was that there were not merely three alternatives when facing an ATG as I had thought—but four! The fourth is that by employing an effective screen of To Hit modifiers, one can avoid destruction even to the point of making it more likely a firing gun will malfunction than destroy the target. I did note that use of this tactic might be limited to desert warfare and other situations in which the attacker commands exceptional screening potential.

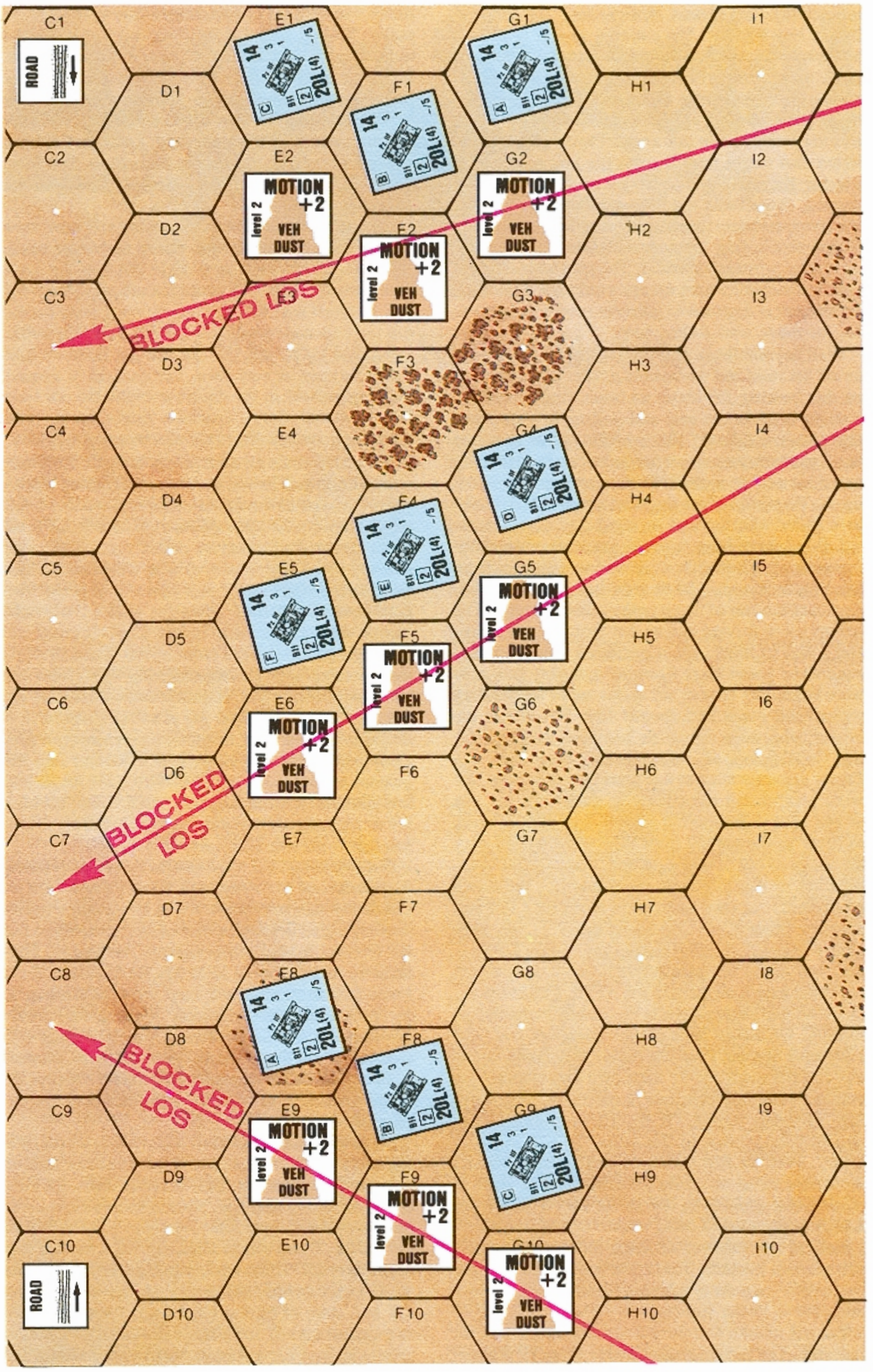


Figure #2: The MkII platoons create a complete LOS block as they pass between the enemy and the road.

So the name of this game is to force all those enemy shots at the worst possible To Hit odds. Our motion at long range from ATGs firing through 40-80 meters of dust and smoke certainly went a long way towards limiting enemy hit chances. Add to that the low probability one of those 40mm rounds could penetrate our six frontal armor at this range [*"3" Final TK#*] and it was an elementary calculation to prove that the probability of a gun breakdown before a kill was actually more than ten-to-one! Even with −2 Acquisition, we could expect twice as many gun breakdowns as kills. Of course this ignored the inevitable Immobilizations, Shocks and Stuns we would suffer, but since they were not outright kills, those tanks would either return to haunt the enemy by firing at him or else would draw yet more fire, much to the benefit of our still mobile vehicles.

KABOOM!!

Oops! After all that optimism the enemy finally did hit one of our tanks. I turned to look and saw it was a MkIIIG, hit in the side turret. Flames were leaping from the motionless tank already. I swung my gaze back to Erwin, to see how he was taking it, and was not surprised to catch a perturbed look on his face. Just when you thought it was safe to go out in the desert, something like this has to happen. But as any top-notch commander must do, Erwin quickly turned his attention back to his plan. No time to mourn our losses now; there was work to be done.

We finally were pulling beyond range of that ATG screen and continued to work our way westward, deeper into the enemy lines. The MkIIs had returned to the road and we were once again making all speed. Casualties in the encounter with the ATGs had been extremely light, only one tank loss thanks to Erwin's proficient desert tactics. I marvelled at this, for even though the enemy ATGs were very small caliber by my standards, I had expected abundant casualties by way of Immobilization and Shock as much as outright kills. But the problem for those gunners was that they could not even hit us, and therefore were denied a reasonable chance of harming us in any manner. This gave me renewed

appreciation for desert tactics—and for the old Desert Fox himself. His cunning in that headlong run across the sights of emplaced enemy anti-tank guns, a situation which offered to my East Front trained eye practically no chance of survival, re-established him in my estimation as one of the premier tacticians in our army. Participating in an action that might have caused the end of us all if not for the skill and courage of his leadership (indeed, those were the only attributes we held in our favor) certainly went a great deal further towards giving me a lasting appreciation of the Fox than any amount of propaganda could. The man who can find a path to victory where others would not even dare the attempt is destined to gain the trust and admiration of those who follow him.

Well beyond those gun emplacements, Erwin led us off the road and we headed north. We continued on this bearing for about an hour, finally making a slight hook to the east and pulling to a stop just shy of a low hillock. Erwin deployed us in a line north to south, and we sat while he carefully maneuvered himself up to the hillock in a cluster of desert scrub. He would begin the next scenario HIP. I had to wonder what he had in mind.

I didn't have long to wait, for after only about a quarter of an hour Erwin spotted an enemy column heading across our front from the southeast and signalled the rest of us up to the hillock's edge. The enemy were driving across our front on a tangent, and I had to blink, for it appeared they were not concerned about Herr Rommel and only just now were beginning to respond as our entire battlegroup pulled into place and opened fire. But it was the enemy who were doing the heaviest blinking, for the justification of our afternoon-long trek was finally apparent even to this untrained observer. We were now facing the enemy at dusk with the sun at our backs. Rommel's silence had allowed him to draw in the enemy until they were within easy kill range of our 50mm guns and, thanks to the combination of sun blindness (+2) and our hulldown placement, our own movement modifier (+2) and enemy motion (Case C + lower die × 2), we were nearly impossible to hit during the enemy DFPh—and they could not gain acquisition on us whereas we could gain it on them in the AFPh. Furthermore, since we had stopped while the enemy remained in motion, we would have the advantage of our next Defensive fire and Prep fire before they could return any fire not modified by their own movement. The enemy could only continue in motion or stop moving, suffering horrid TH modifiers in either case should they attempt to fire at us. To add insult to injury, even the few ATGs we had brought with us were able to set up while the enemy tanks were in motion and could open fire in our DFPh before the British tankers could bring effective fire upon them. I realized the value of catching the enemy by surprise in this manner. That trick with the ATGs had to go into long-term memory; I could visualize a need for it in the future.

For all intents and purposes, this battle was all but over. The terrain immediately before us was becoming an Anglo-armor graveyard. The enemy hadn't a prayer. Erwin had invested an entire afternoon getting us to this point and this was the payoff. How much different this situation was than our earlier encounter with those Tommy ATGs! I didn't have to wonder at the disparate results either. The battle before me was won when Erwin drove us to this location, and that with the British ATGs had been lost due to the combination of them digging in too far from the desert road and failing to block the road itself, plus Erwin's screening tactics. The British tankers we were presently despatching were doomed by their own carelessness in an area they thought secure.

Dispite all that, Erwin still carried a chagrined look about him. I supposed that if he had set his heart on obtaining fresh fuel supplies, there was not much to celebrate in smashing a few dozen enemy tanks. Well, I found it thrilling; but, of course, I didn't have to concern myself with strategic worries. Erwin, however, must split his energies in many different directions. Small wonder a 10-2 armor leader is so valuable that we rarely benefit from his actual presence on the battlefield. I was glad to have to think about only the enemy before me. Speaking of which, my thoughts were already turning to the next encounter.

We had taken our toll of the enemy and now were low on fuel, heading home. Speed no longer being essential, Erwin took us straight out into the open desert to the south. We could not afford to burn the fuel to speed past those ATGs as we'd done on the run in. This had to be a low-profile exit. No bows, no curtain calls, just get out and get home. Night would be upon us very soon, and chances of a meeting engagement in the desert at night did not bear extrapolation. Our departure might have been unnoticed, except for a bit of unexpected action.

We had to cross an escarpment to reach the desert to the south, and Erwin was concerned about hidden enemy troops in the undulations and wadis of this rugged terrain. At what appeared to be a choke-point in the descending road, he pulled his MkIII to the side in order to cover everyone as we passed. Thus, the entire column swept past him and only my own tank remained behind when the enemy, who had waited until Final Fire, finally fired—hitting and destroying the MkIII in front of me. Then Erwin's tank was hit with an immobilizing shot, followed by several more hits which failed to kill but did finally force Erwin and his crew to abandon it—whereupon they were raked with machine-gun fire. I saw the driver go down and it looked like the general himself took a bullet. The crew broke and low-crawled into the adjacent wadi. I had to think it was my turn next to play target; the enemy ATGs had not even lost concealment yet.

But I wasn't about to be caught flat-footed. Using the spattering of experience I had gained earlier, I used my AFPh to make a free CA change rather than trying to fire while in motion, pivoting to put my heavier frontal armor toward the enemy. Fortunately, their ensuing Prep fire shots missed since I was still in motion and they were continuing to try for immobilization shots, thinking they could not hurt me but not realizing they had even less chance to hit me with all the modifiers stacked against them. They opted not to Intensive fire, no doubt expecting to nail me with their next Defensive fire shots.

My own fire at the enemy wasn't even worth risking a gun malfunction for, what with my motion and enemy concealment still in effect. But I did have one tactic at my disposal. Since I hadn't shot, I was able to again make a free CA change at the end of my DFPh. I used this to align my VCA toward that adjacent wadi. Thus, by foregoing that improbable To Hit risk (which had better chance of breaking my MA than of hitting anything), I was still able to position myself for a fast exit with this free CA spin. Not bad for a rookie. The enemy would not even have a shot at me with Defensive fire before I disappeared into the wadi.

While I was patting myself on the back I noticed several Crusaders working their way around both flanks to envelop me. That brought another thought to mind. I now had the option of pulling straight into crest status instead of moving INTO the wadi. Once there, I would be hulldown to those ATGs in my rear, and could therefore avoid their irritating immobilization shots, and at the same time be hulldown to the Crusaders in my VCA, putting them at a disadvantage due to facing my gun with only my turret frontal armor exposed. But I rejected this thought, for the enemy were too numerous and, after all, I did still have an ally to my rear who would be my ticket out of this jam once he managed to rally his crew and re-enter his MkIII. No, getting Erwin's −2 DRM back into the act was my best bet, so I plunged into the wadi to draw as many attackers away from my stricken leader as possible.

It was a wild ride up and down through the wadi and I began to despair of ever hearing from Herr Rommel when, to my great relief, his voice came over the radio. "Come back to me now," he commanded, "I have the situation in hand."

I wasted no time turning around and making straight for the protection of his red-hot 50mm gun. I figured the Crusaders on my tail would give up the chase, but they didn't seem to know or care who they were facing. They might have easily outmaneuvered me eventually and swarmed in for the kill—but against Erwin they were in trouble. I recognized the clever twist in Erwin's brand of tactics in bringing me right back into his hex. He gave away a DRM [*due to being overstacked*], but still commanded superior To Hit modifiers over the enemy. In order for them to get me, they would have to expose themselves to him as well and he was very (very) good. In this manner, side-by-side, Herr Rommel in his immobile MkIII and me in my first real desperate situation in the desert fought against the odds. Firing from the same hex, we took out four enemy tanks, forcing the remainder to flee.

In the meantime, under Erwin's radio command, rear elements of our column had maneuvered to bring those ATGs under attack from their rear. All had been subdued or their crews chased away by the time we finished with the Crusaders. We were left to review the damage: four Crusaders and three ATGs with a scattering of prisoners but, more profound for Erwin, his own tank immobilized and three others destroyed. His dilemma now was that we had consumed too much fuel and had several valuable guns which we could use but had no way to tow. He immediately radioed a coded message, and then left a platoon of MkIIIs and some of our own crews to dig in the captured ATGs and hold the position until we could return. We ourselves lurched off for a rendevous in the desert with Rommel's secret mobile fuel force (MFF).

I was relieved that our midnight journey and refueling went by without enemy intervention. I needed the time to collect my thoughts on the day's actions. Remind me to tell you sometime about night combat in the desert, though. Oh boy, is that ever a hair-raising experience!

After we had refueled, Herr Rommel said, "Well, there has been a change of plan. I have a report that our own fuel dump is under a night attack, and enemy armor is reported in the area. I expect them to reinforce the raid at dawn, and we will have to hurry to prevent them from destroying our foothold here in this desolate part of the front. It means we will be driving straight at them in the open desert."

"Excuse me sir, but I have seen what you can do in the worst of situations," I replied. "I'm sure you will find a way." Actually, as much as with any real confidence in what I was saying, I felt compelled to respond in this manner simply because the general had deigned to speak to me so openly of his plans.

"I'm afraid you don't know the worst of it," he answered. "The report mentions the area has had rainfall so there will be no dust, and Heavy Winds are expected so there can be no smoke. To top it off, we have no time to waste and so will be moving into the enemy with the rising sun in our eyes. Now tell me what you think."

"Begging the general's pardon, but I think you must know something I don't . . . or else you are going to call this thing off, perhaps."

"No, not this time. We will have to take our licks. We simply cannot run away from this one. The enemy has outmaneuvered us after all our successes yesterday. It looks like they might be under new, inspired leadership. We must crush this bold attack or forfeit all we have gained these past few months. We *will* fight."

When he put it like that, I was glad it was not my responsibility to lead so many men into such a desperate battle. So many lives at stake. So little time to think the matter out. I had to wonder how much we were all driven by events; how much control did any of us really have over our destinies in this contrived existence called War?

All such thoughts put aside, we were mounting up once again to make our next (for many, certainly the last) ride into combat. Then we were off and running at full speed across the open desert. There was not much of the night remaining, and for this I was thankful. If we were destined to face the enemy at dawn, I didn't much care for any extra hours to dwell on the matter. I let one of the crew members handle our trek; I wanted a bit of rest, to clear my head for the coming battle.

We rode into the rising sun in two columns. At a range of 2000 meters, after several of the enemy had foolishly opened up on us, we split the force. Erwin led the column to the right and I was in the one on our left. As instructed, we did not stop to fire at the enemy until we progressed far enough to have targets in our sights which were not obscured by the sun. In this manner, our column on the left flank engaged enemy tanks on the right, while Erwin's group on the right engaged those enemy on the left immediately in front of me. The unfortunate thing about all this was that the enemy were not so hindered by the rising sun, and were piling up casualty points on us as they were effectively able to engage targets at closer range than we could.

However, the nearer we came, the easier our task became—and it was immediate apparent the enemy were on the horns of a dilemma. Those in our immediate front, who were taking fire from Erwin on the right, had swung their frontal armor around to face him; and the same went for those enemy on the right. So, when we came crashing through what should have been the enemy flank, due to the positioning of his tanks in that locale we, in effect, were in his *rear*. Those poor tankers who remained in their current facing took rear shots from us, and any who spun to engage us took rear shots from Erwin, admittedly still at long range but also still Acquired by the few stationary and immobilized MkIIIs on that flank. The result was a wild melee in which we initially held great advantage and began scoring many kills, which was fortunate since our own losses during that head-on dash at the enemy had cost us dearly.

But we still outnumbered the enemy and wielded overall armor and armament superiority. This combination, brought to bear once again by Erwin's splendid tactics which always seemed to deliver us at the point of decision in every battle, forced the enemy to withdraw. Precious few of them escaped, and those only because Erwin was more interested in continuing on to save our fuel dump to guarantee its survival.

My exploits with the general are now among my most memorable campaigns. To watch and learn how one is able to conquer the uncertain, the new and seemingly unsolvable mystery of the desert war is a lesson I have not failed to recall upon many subsequent occasions. That a man can work his way past such obstacles which even the earth and the elements hurl in his path, to even use these to his own advantage, trusting only to his experience, his intellect and his courage, and to conquer these as well as his enemies, is knowledge I shall carry as a maxim to my grave.

But long before that cold, damp pit greets me, I shall spend many joyous days in the desert expanding upon my newfound experience. I have already grown to enjoy this war in the barren wasteland, perhaps even more so than amidst the trees and city clutter of my past European adventures. Out here a man is a man, and everyone can tell for miles.

Continued on Page 34, Column 2

There is no place for cowering behind a cluster of trees or for springing out to ambush the enemy from some cover. There is no flitting from blind hex to blind hex for those tankers who cowardly fear the enemy guns more than they feel confidence in their own ability to withstand punishment. Now they live by the "Code of the Western Desert" and fight in a landscape where the only security is one's own ability to thrust and parry, to dish it out and to take it. The dead and the wrecks of their comrades may well lead the way to battle—but it will be a battle of honor, one of challenge and acceptance, of laying your cards on the table and daring the enemy to beat you, a return to past conflicts when at least some amount of integrity crept into the madness of war.

As we turned our tanks to depart for home, I noticed a hefty tan-colored box protruding from underneath Herr Rommel's field jacket. It looked like a photograph of a Matilda tank with several British infantry depicted on the cover. I radioed the general, "Excuse me Herr General, but isn't that a new module I see?"

"Why, yes it is," came his somewhat surprised response as he deftly tucked the package back inside his jacket.

"Pardon me, but where might I get a copy?"

"Why, any of the finer hobby shops, or by direct mail from headquarters like always," he replied sheepishly.

Well, so much for legends. And to think I nearly died out here thinking I had to learn this desert warfare the hard way! I was already putting through a call to headquarters, *MasterRaceCard* in hand, to place my order immediately. I ordered an extra set of unmounted mapsheets as usual, for magnetic use inside the tank. Can you believe that I even heard rumors that those goofs back home are actually working on some sort of special coating for the insides of our tanks to make them nonmagnetic in order to prevent us poor tankers from playing the game? It's like they don't want anyone but the GENERALs to understand this war.

Well, I knew better. Once I got my hands on those new specifications, I would master this desert war—Rommel or no Rommel. Let him fool everyone else; I'll pick it up on my own and then come back to next year's tournament and challenge him. Oh how I loved it! I loved the new terrain, the new nationality to challenge (I even hear that the Italians are about to show up down here), all that new information on British vehicles. Erwin was starting to look sick. Ha, ha. I'll bet he's going to feign another serious illness to fly home to gain the freedom to pour over the rules again. He's worried; I know he is. He'll go home and try to work out some new tactics, but I'll be out here living them. He's cooked and he knows it. I bet I can get in ten scenarios a month—no, make that twenty! He'll never catch up. He'll never realize that "the game's the thing."

So it was with a newfound awareness that I drove off into the desert. Enemy aircraft might zero in on me, their artillery might bombard me and their infantry might close assault me. Who cares? I was riding on a cloud. I had the latest module on its way to my tank hatch at this very moment. No doubt it was already enroute via UPS (*Untermensch Parcel Service*) crossing the Mediterranean. The days ahead glistened; my future was secure.





Squad Leader Clinic

GUNS VERSUS TANKS

By Jon Mishcon

One of the recurring lessons of World War II was the need for almost any "gun" to be capable of direct anti-tank fire. Historical texts are replete with examples of "indirect fire" weapons being used to stop a breakthrough or support an advance when nothing else was available. In fact, a whole class of Soviet AFVs are nothing more than an armored box for carting around an artillery piece. *ASL* play will also force players into using any and all available weapons, on occasion, as AT guns. This article deals with how we look at Guns (C2.1) in their anti-tank role, whenever we see a scenario for the first time.

Let us assume you have signed up for one of our *ASL* tourneys, or perhaps you've decided to play a DYO game. Out pops the new scenario. You get an AA gun and an ATG. Your dastardly opponent gets a bunch of metal monsters. All too frequently, tournament players stick their Guns in clumps of woods, often spread out just behind their front line, and wait for opposing armor to blunder into range. Players can improve their play (and chances for winning) by developing a framework for Gun use prior to playing a new scenario—a system that should apply in most scenarios regardless of map configurations and victory conditions. This article describes our method. Naturally, once you dissect any published scenario, there is almost always a *preferred* Gun placement that is contrary to the notes below. Nonetheless, detailing the manner in which we approach a new scenario may help readers in their own approach.

We tend to divide Guns into categories. Mortars all by themselves, as they always use the Area Target type. Next we check for HE-only or AP-only weapons, or just any "important" Guns. Then we look for more potent weapons, perhaps with Special Ammunition available (APCR/APDS/HEAT/SMOKE). Lastly we check out the Manhandling numbers.

If on the offensive, we divide our force into a maneuver element and a "stand and shoot" group. As Guns are so potent, we amost always try to use them as a firebase. The focal point for our attack is usually determined by what axis we can bring the most firepower upon. Much of the time Guns will be the major determinant of firepower availability. This is wonderfully historical. However, as it is rare that the attacker is forced to destroy defending AFVs with Guns, I'll save attack tactics for another article.

Much more commonly, if you've got the Guns, you'll be on the defense. The first thing I do is divide up my defense into "zones". Mentally I break up the mapboard into three areas. Let's call them: *Goal Line, Main Line of Resistance*, and *Front Line*. The Goal Line is the last two or three hexes (or hex-rows) in front of your enemy's objective. This can include a building, exit area, or just your final hold-at-all-costs position. The Front Line is all the foremost *covered* hexes that you are allowed to set up in, plus all hexes forward. The Main Line of Resistance is, naturally, all those hexes in between. Gun placement is based on the category of weapon, considering each zone.

Mortars are easy to place. Unless there is an absolutely pressing need for their placement elsewhere, we always look for a covered position in the Goal Line area that is adjacent to an upper level spotting position. Mortars are very potent if you face open-topped or very weak armored vehicles. Remember that, although they must use halved-FP on the IFT versus AFVs, mortars are always treated as Indirect Fire (C9.1). Thus, they receive a −1 if all AF are ≤ "4" and an additional -1 if OT. Furthermore, any K result is an automatic Shock or immobilization (C7.4 and 7.5). U.S. players, please don't forget WP. Even if the AFV has 8+ AF all around, as long as it is CE then WP can inflict a NMC (+TEM). Most of the time you'll get no minus modifiers. Nonetheless, the exceptional reach of a mortar (a "7" TH out to 36-hex range) and its wonderful ROF makes even a puny 81mm mortar intimidating.

HE-only and AP-only and the "doorknockers" are placed next. Our rule of thumb is to put these guys right behind the Front Line. Most of the HE-only Guns are 70+mm with good ROF, while the AP-only weapons generally have puny TK numbers. Any weapon (except perhaps an 88mm) may be seen as a "doorknocker" depending on your opponent's armor. Unless you are facing some "cheeseball" AFVs, no Gun is likely to make a dent in the on-rushing armored horde. The HE-only Guns can be useful at long range, recalling that HE TK numbers aren't affected by range considerations. However, most of the time we use these guys to try for Deliberate Immobilization (C5.7). Deliberate Immobilization is most valuable when you can stop that tank in front of your line. Furthermore, the further forward your gun is, usually the more time the tank is likely to spend in your LOS. We always try to cover these upfront weapons with a couple of squads nearby, but cover is less important for the Front Line

Guns than is great LOS.

About six hexes behind, and usually slightly off to one side of, the Front Line weaponry is where we like to place our best Guns. These are the fellows that have a decent chance of penetration and *potentially* Special Ammunition. This is the Main Line of Resistance. Locate them in buildings or woods almost always; and always cover them with infantry in and around the position. When possible, use terrain that threatens to Bog (D8.2-8.4) AFVs to help cover your flanks. Try to set them up a couple of hexes behind walls or gulleys! Vehicles exiting such not only spend more time in your LOS, but are vulnerable to Underbelly Hits (D4.3). If you have more than one Gun, we urge you not to spread them too widely. It is far better to have two mutually supporting Guns than two independent targets. If there is a natural route for overrun, especially from the side or rear, then place a squad in that path (or adjacent, ready to use Street Fighting—A11.8).

Finally, we take into consideration the Manhandling number. When possible, try to set up those weapons with with a high Manhandling number either in or next to a road. I can't tell you the number of scenarios I've watched where bypassed Guns just sat around. Dragging guns around was a combat norm. Joe and I routinely prolong our ATGs once any tanks have bypassed them. Sure it's risky. However, it is one more threat the enemy tanks have to deal with. This works best if you've got a couple of extra squads to aid in shoving the iron pig down that road (note, no road bonus).

Tactically we follow a pretty consistent pattern, First we engage with long-range mortar fire. Any AFVs affected are often "mission killed", if not destroyed. But we recognize that the best one can hope for is to slow the rate of advance. Then we try to immobilize with our up front Guns before the tanks reach the Main Line of Resistance. Any immobilized tanks usually spend the rest of the scenario flailing at the Front Line Guns. They're not really "mission killed", but at least the immobilized vehicles can't affect the Main Line of Resistance troops. Those tanks that penetrate the Front Line are now caught. If they simply bypass the Front Line Guns, then the active weapons may turn upon the passing tanks' rear. If the tanks turn to outflank the Front Line Guns, then the Main Line Guns shoot to kill, *not* using any Special Ammunition, hoping for a flank shot. If the tanks simply move to overrun your Main Line of Resistance weapons, then the old last-ditch shot is taken using Special Ammunition. Given that a Special Ammunition TH DR greater than your depletion number is taken as no shot (C8.9), except for the purpose of breakdown, this may give you two shots to take out the closing tank. Finally, if the enemy tanks scoot past all your Guns, the final defensive tactic is to move the Guns out after them. Don't remind me about rear MGs on tanks and hazardous movement; I'm fully aware of these. Like I said above, this is a final desperate defensive tactic.

Note that I've said nothing about hooking up and towing the weapon in pursuit. Frankly, we've not found nor designed a scenario where a Gun can do more than hook up to run away. There are some mega-scenarios where relocation may be possible, but you'll never see one in a tournament. On the other hand, you are often required to unload a Gun during play. Pick a site with good fields of fire and nearby cover. Unload as soon as possible, and simply do not plan to hook up again.

Nor have I made mention of Gun Duels (C2.2401). Unless the circumstances are extraordinary, the threat to a Gun (usually a difficult target) is rarely the "quickie" shot. Our experience is that the owners of Guns grit their teeth, take the incoming fire, and wait for their own best shot.

As a final note, permit me to mention some of the tricks we use. First, don't forget that emplaced Guns may set up HIP even if *not* in concealment terrain, provided they start out of LOS of all enemy units (A12.34). This can be crucial to controlling a key road junction. Moreover, when placed onboard (due to the enemy coming within LOS) the unit automatically gets a "?", again even if not in concealment terrain. This may leave the enemy in doubt as to exactly what you've got (assuming you have more than one type of Gun). Second, read the Ordnance Notes carefully. For instance, the 3.7cm PaK 35/36 is only 30 BPV but it may have both APCR and HEAT. This means a critical shot can be taken with potentially three DR! Combined with a base ROF of "3", the 3.7cm PaK is often a good buy. Lastly, set up so that you open fire, when possible, with one weapon at 18-hex range. Table A12.121 makes fire at 17 and 18 hexes most desirable vis-a-vis retaining concealment when firing.

Guns, even if greatly outnumbered, can be instrumental in defeating an armored assault. Included on this issue's insert is one of our old *SL* tournament scenarios (from Vol. 19, No. 5 of The *GENERAL*) reworked for *ASL*. Hopefully this will give readers a chance to experiment with some of the concepts contained in this article.

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (Vol. 25, No. 2 in this case). The intent is to provide the *ASL* player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

After Action Report— The Cannes Strongpoint

GERMAN: Six AP mine factors in hexes S3, S4, S5, S6, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7 and Q7. One AT mine in hexes T2, T3, T4, T5, S2, S8, R8, Q8, P6 and P7. Wire in hexes S3, S4, S5, S6, R3, R4, R5, R6, Q2, P2, P5, O3, O4, O5, O6, N3, N4 and N5. The 2-5-7 Pillbox in R2, facing R1-Q2, holding five "?"; 1-5-7 Pillbox in R5, facing Q6-R6, with a 4-6-7 and LMG; 1-3-5 Pillbox in Q3, facing P2-P3, holding a single "?", 8-0 leader, 2-2-8 and LMG. Put a "?", 9-1, 8-3-8 and MMG in Q4. The 3-3-5 Pillbox goes in Q5, facing P4-P5, with 10-3, 4-6-7, 2-2-8, MMG and HMG. Put the last pillboxes as follows: 1-5-7 in Q6, facing Q5-P5, with ATG and crew; 2-3-5 in P3, facing P2-Q3, holding an 8-1, 2-28, HMG; 1-3-5 in O4, facing O5-P5, with two "?".

AMERICAN: I'm going to cop out and say that I like to put all four .50-caliber MGs on the second floor at N2 with a 9-1 leader and a 7-0 leader with a radio, and everyone else sets up on Board 4 out of LOS (except for one HS and a 8-0 leader with a radio in LOS, but deep). The reason I don't feel it is reasonable to give an exact set up is the order of placement: first, place German defending troops; second, place US forces; third, place pillboxes in LOS and within 16 hexes *and* the ATG with its crew remains hidden.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: Knowing that time is precious, I'd suggest you'd better use your artillery to smoke the defender first. Then try to find the axis that isn't mined. Throw everybody in that line except for the holding force on the other board. Don't forget to use WP.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: Do shift to meet the advancing Americans. Try to advance up on the last turn to hold the board 3 and 4 roads in LOS.

Hitdorf on The Rhine

GERMAN: Six mines in hexes T2, S2, R2, Q3, P3 and O4. Place the 8-0, 4-6-7 and LMG on the ground floor of M5. One 2-2-8 goes on the ground floor of M2.

AMERICAN: One 9-2 leader, HS, two 7-4-7s and a MMG in J1. The other 9-2, HS, two 7-4-7s and MMG in S1. Put the 7-0 with radio, and three squads in U1. Finally, the 9-1 and 7-4-7 in V1.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: Use your German infantry to contain the U.S. player to two or three buildings and drive any MGs off the hills. Then put the radio in the halftrack atop a hill and call in OBA to soften up the Americans. Finally, use your tanks to knock the U.S. troops out of the one or two buildings you'll need to win.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: You must get a MG up on one of the three heights you can reach, so you can impede the German advance. On the second turn, be aggressive and grab as much terrain as possible. If you can hold the German halftrack off the heights and allow your reinforcements to get into good defensive positions, you should be able to win.

☆

BINDERS

"Out with the old; in with the new." In short, the old style of binder for your precious copies of The *GENERAL* (those with the metal rods locked into a spring at top and bottom) are no longer available. As part of our expansion of Avalon Hill's magazine, a new binder was developed to hold the six thicker issues comfortably. Both higher and wider than the old version, the new binder makes use of the patented "Max-Text" post lock mechanism. This utilizes short, plastic posts to hold an issue firmly, without crimping or tearing the pages as occurred at times with the older style binder. Only the new binder is available, and may be ordered direct from Avalon Hill (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214) for $7.00 each (plus 10% for shipping and handling).

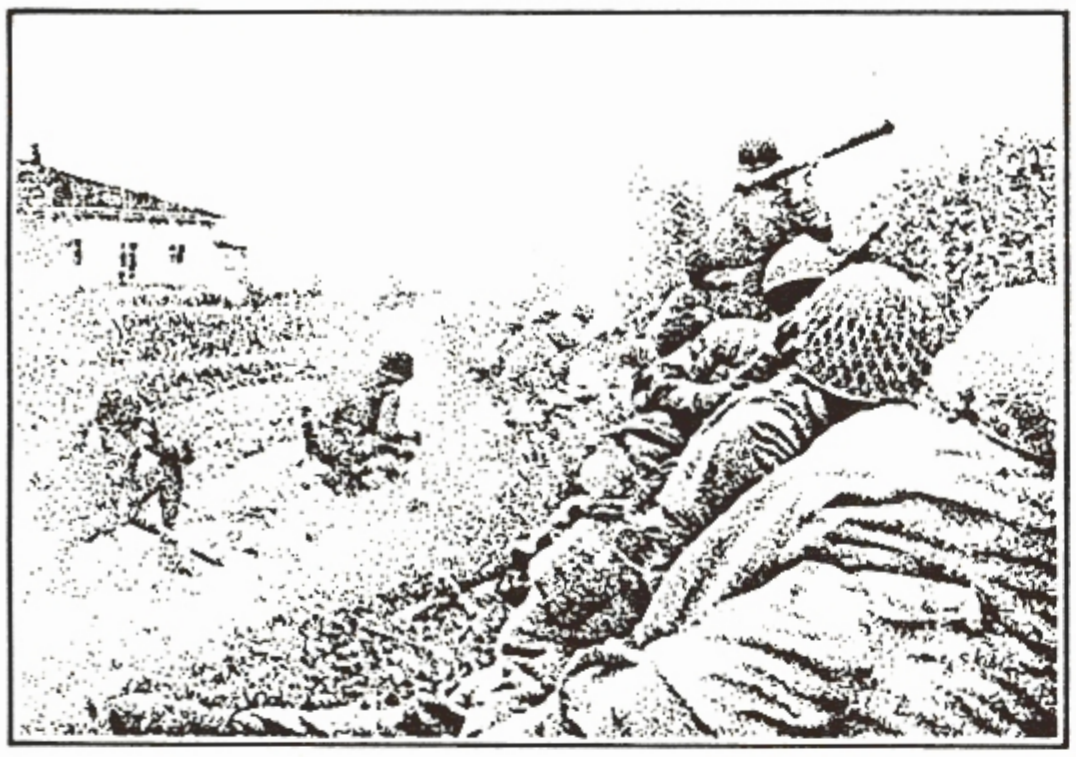
GENERAL Variant Counters

With the second issue of the year (Vol. 25, No. 2), subscribers were treated to a half-sheet of counters (130, mounted and die-cut) intended for use with several variants appearing in The *GENERAL*. These counters included new ones for *TAC AIR, 1776, EMPIRES IN ARMS* and replacement counters for *BULGE '81* and are necessary to play the variants appearing in Vol. 25, No. 2 through Vol. 25, No. 4. These were enclosed as a bonus for **subscribers only**, and readers should note that issues purchased at stores do no contain these counters. Nor will this counter sheet be included when customers order **back issues** of Vol. 25, No. 2. The variant counter sheet may be ordered separately direct from Avalon Hill (4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214) for $3.00; please indicate "GENERAL Vol. 25, No. 2 Counters" on your order form. Usual shipping and handling charges apply.









DARBY'S RANGERS

Reference Notes for ASL

By Steven C. Swann

The concept of American "commando" troops was originated by General George Marshall (U.S. Army Chief of Staff) in the spring of 1942. Initially, it was envisioned that they would take part in British-controlled commando raids against German-occupied Europe. This was seen as a quick method of giving new American soldiers some practical combat experience that they could carry back to their own, regular units. As conceived, this American commando unit was to be battalion-sized and lightly-armed for increased mobility and flexibility.

At the time, British commando units were organized to fit the limitations of their LCA (Landing Craft, Assault) boats. LCA were small craft designed by the British for infantry amphibious use. These had to be small enough to fit an ocean liner's davits, but large enough to carry 35 armed men and its own five-man crew. The vehicle, as designed by the British, had a maximum speed of 10 knots. While slow by American standards, these were quieter, had a lower silhouette, and were bullet-proof to small-arms fire. They were ready in time for Norway and Dunkirk, and were utilized by the British in every seaborne operation afterward.

One British commando platoon could be carried on one LCA. Two LCAs could carry one commando "troop" (equivalent of an American company), while an entire "commando" (a battalion-sized unit) could be borne by a LCA flotilla. General Truscott believed that since American forces would be under British control and using British-built LCAs, the new U.S. force should be organized along British lines. With these plans in hand, authorization from the War Department to form a U.S. commando force was issued on 28 May 1942.

Northern Ireland was selected as the organization point. While in Ireland, the new unit would be under the command of the British Special Services Brigade for training and tactical control. The U.S. 34th Infantry Division (Ireland) would be responsible for administration and supply. American equipment, tactical doctrine and methods were to be used as much as possible.

The man chosen to create the new U.S. commando team was the then-Captain William O. Darby. After having been chosen, Darby was promoted to Major. After being a Major for ten weeks, he was again promoted to Lieutenent-Colonel. He was to hold this rank until the creation of a "Ranger Force" (regiment-sized unit).

The actual name for the special new unit had yet to be decided. Major-General Eisenhower wanted a name other than "Commando", since it was identified so strongly with the British special troops. The name "Rangers" had been carried by irregular American units of various types before, during and after the Revolutionary War. General Truscott thus designated this new unit as the "1st Ranger Battalion".

All officers and enlisted volunteers to the Rangers were interviewed by Darby and a review board of army officers. Officer selection began on 8 June 1942, and that of enlisted personnel on 11 June. On 18 June 1942, the 1st Ranger Battalion was officially activated. The battalion was formed into a headquarters company and six line companies. Each line company had two platoons, with two assault sections and a 60mm mortar section.

On 28 June, the Rangers moved to the Commando depot at Achnacarry, Scotland to begin their British-administered training. Commando training had always been a "live-fire" training course, and thus by 17 July they had already lost one man to drowning and three to wounds by gunfire and grenade. As a result of these exercises, in mid-July British Colonel Charles Vaughan recommended two changes in the Rangers' organization. The first was that the mortar sections be removed from the platoons and placed directly under the control of the company COs. The second was that the M1919A4 .30-caliber MGs (one per assault section) be placed in a battalion pool to be drawn as needed. Instead of MGs, the assault sections would be fitted out with the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). Both his suggestions were accepted and promptly acted upon.

On 1 August, the battalion was moved to the Argyle area, for training with the Royal Navy. During this period, some of the Rangers saw their first combat. For on 1 August also, six officers and 45 enlisted men were attached to Nos. 3 and 4 Commando and the Canadian 2nd Division for the raid on Dieppe. The raid was conducted on 19 August and cost the Rangers two officers and four enlisted men killed (and four enlisted men captured). Because of a running sea battle, not all of the Rangers even made it to the French shore. The Rangers involved in this raid were the first Americans to take part in a land combat action against the Germans. Ironically, despite initial plans, the Dieppe raid was the only operation that the Rangers took part in with the British commandos.

September found the Rangers training at Dundee in Scotland. Here their rigorous courses featured attacks on coastal defenses, pillboxes and anti-aircraft positions. Again the training had its cost: one killed and one wounded by mines.

On 24 September the 1st Ranger Battalion was attached to the U.S. 1st Infantry Division for Operation "Torch", the invasion of French North Africa. For Torch the battalion was authorized 26 officers and 452 enlisted men. These were divided into a HQ company of eight officers and 74 men, overseeing six line companies (three officers and 63 men each). Each line company had a HQ platoon, command section, two mortar sections, two rifle platoons. The battalion had a weapons pool holding .30-caliber air-cooled MGs and bazookas that were to be issued on an "as-needed" basis.

As a unit, the 1st Rangers went into action on 8 November, making a surprise night landing in and north of Arzew, Algeria. Here they quickly neutralized the main coastal defenses and captured the docks at the cost of one Ranger's life. In preparation for this landing, Lt.-Col. Darby had exchanged the 60mm mortars for the heavier 81mm mortars. Since the French soldiers of one of Arzew's forts, *Batterie Superieur*, had decided to resist and the place had to be reduced, the exchange proved to be a good decision.

After the Allies established their beachheads, the Rangers were called upon to fight as conventional infantry. Company E of the Rangers along with the 16th Infantry captured the town of LaMacta, while Company C assisted Combat Team (CT) 18 to take Saint Cloud. Three Rangers were killed in the fight for Saint Cloud, proving that the lightly-armed Rangers should not be used as conventional troops. Their firepower was just not heavy enough for such conventional assaults.

On 11 February 1943, three Ranger companies and elements of the HQ again took part in a commando-style operation. The Rangers made a night raid on Italian front line positions near Station de Sened, Tunisia. At the cost of one dead and 20 wounded, the Rangers killed and wounded 75 of the enemy, destroyed one AT gun and five MGs, and captured 11 members of the 10th Bersaglieri. From February 16th to March 1st, the Rangers fought several conventional actions near Bou Chebka. (Here they captured eight Italians and eight Germans, destroyed three vehicles and captured another three vehicles.)

On the morning of 21 March 1943, the Rangers attacked elements of the Italian Centauro Armored Division at Djebel el Ank pass. They had made a ten-mile night march behind enemy lines, and so outflanked the Italians. The 26th Infantry Regiment assisted by attacking from the west upon hearing of the Ranger attack on the Italians. For this operation, a company of 4.2-inch mortars was attached to provide heavier firepower against the Italian positions. From this point onward, the firepower of the Rangers was to steadily grow as their use as regular troops became more prevalent.

During the period between Djebel el Ank and the Allied landings in Sicily, Darby's Rangers were expanded to three battalions. The 3rd and 4th Ranger Battalions were formed in Africa, to be trained by Lt.-Col. Darby and his men in the field. To help the new formations become established, the men of the experienced 1st Rangers were split up between the three battalions. Companies A and B became the core of the new 3rd Rangers, while Companies E and F formed the base for the 4th Rangers. The Ranger units were kept as three independent battalions with only a "Senior Battalion Commander". But without a regimental HQ or official standing as a regiment, the Ranger officers could have little influence on their own future use. Also with the creation of this Ranger organization, the

83rd Chemical Battalion became am almost permanent attachment to the Rangers. The 83rd Chemical was a 4.2-inch mortar unit commanded by a friend of Darby.

For the Allied landings in Sicily, the 1st and 4th Rangers were designated "Force X" and attached to II Corps. They made an opposed landing at Gela on 10 July 1943. The 3rd Rangers were attached to the 3rd Infantry Division (Reinforced) for the assault on Licata, about 15 miles west of Gela.

The 3rd Rangers would next be the spearhead of General Patton's famous "Reconnaissance in Force" in Sicily. Patton felt that another port would expedite his advance across Sicily. Therefore, the port of Porto Empedocle would be the target of his "Reconnaissance in Force". During the afternoon of 16 July, the 3rd Rangers occupied the town (*see Scenario G8 on this issue's insert*). Until relieved by the 7th Infantry that evening, the Rangers had to fight off several German and Italian counter-attacks. The increased use of armor by the Italians in their counterattacks now convinced Darby that the Ranger force needed more firepower than it had. A cannon company was formed at Corleone near the end of the fighting in Sicily and was ready for action by the time the Rangers had to fight in Italy. It was initially composed of four 75mm guns mounted on halftracks.

The use of Rangers in Italy can be divided into two parts, or phases. The first phase began with the amphibious landing at Maiori on 8 September 1943. Here the 1st and 3rd Rangers seized the Chiunzi Pass in the Lattari Mountains near Salerno (*Scenario T3*). Afterwards, the Rangers moved steadily towards Naples and the fighting along the "Winter Line". The Rangers lost approximately 170 killed and wounded during this time.

In the period immediately before the landings at Anzio, the three Ranger battalions and the units attached to them at last became one unit with its own headquarters. They were designated the 6615th Ranger Force (Provisional). Lt.-Col. Darby was promoted to full Colonel with this reorganization.

The second phase found the 6615th Ranger as a part of the VI Corps' landings at Anzio. Here the Rangers were landed before the main forces. They successfully captured the city's port facilities, destroyed some gun batteries, and cleared the beach area between Anzio and Nettuno. By midnight the VI Corps had landed 36000 men and 3200 vehicles and lost only 13 killed, 97 wounded and 44 missing. One of the major reasons for this landing at Anzio had been to cut off the German units manning the Winter Line and prevent them from moving back into the Alban Hills. As part of this mission, the 6615th Rangers were ordered to take and hold the town of Cisterna (*Scenario G5*) until relieved.

Thus, at 0100 hours on 30 January 1944, the 1st Rangers crossed the LOD (Line of Departure), with the 3rd following 15 minutes later. At 0248 hours, the first cracks began to show in the operation. The communications section of the 3rd Rangers got lost and severed their communications with Ranger HQ. Next the 3rd Rangers lost contact with the 1st Rangers about halfway to Cisterna, and even the 1st became split up in the dark. Already the attacking Rangers had been divided into four groups, since the 4th Rangers never got pass the LOD.

The Corps G2 (Intelligence) had been fooled by the Germans into believing that this area was held by low-quality troops. What the Rangers were in fact walking into was the positions of the elite Hermann Goering Panzer Division. After the 1st and 3rd Rangers had passed through no-man's land, German troops moved in behind them. Thus the 1st and 3rd battalions were unknowingly isolated—and the 4th battalion, HQ company, Gun company and 83rd Chemical battalion were stopped south of Isola Bella. The rising sun of dawn caught the Rangers in the middle of an open field at least 450 yards from Cisterna. The men began running toward town, but found the Germans there waiting for them with tanks and MGs. The Parachute Lehr battalion then arrived to add the firepower of their flakwagons and nebelwerfers to the assault on the trapped Rangers. By the end of the day, it was all over; Darby's Rangers had been destroyed as a fighting force. Of the 767 men of the 1st and 3rd Rangers that took part in the attack on Cisterna, only six made their way back to American lines.

The 6615th Ranger Force was at the end of the line now. The 4th Rangers helped turn back the German counterattacks on the 4th and 19th of February. But in the process it was seriously depleted. After this, the chemical battalion and the Gun company were distributed to other units. All the surviving Rangers with their overseas time in were posted to training assignments in North Carolina. The younger Rangers were transferred to the American-Canadian 1st Special Services Force. Col. Darby was made commanding officer of the 179th Infantry during the counterattacks on Anzio, and was then posted to Washington DC. In early 1945, Col. Darby was the Assistant Divisional Commander of the 10th Mountain Division in northern Italy. On 30 April 1945, he was killed by a German 88mm round near Torbole, Italy. (On 2 May 1945, all German forces in Italy surrendered unconditionally.) President Truman posthumously promoted Darby to Brigadier General on 15 May, the only U.S. Army officer posthumously promoted to star rank during World War II.

Three other Ranger battalions were formed during the war, but were not part of Darby's Rangers. The 2nd and 5th Ranger battalions were trained in Tennessee and shipped over to Europe in time for D-Day (*see Scenario 19*) and the battle for Europe. The 6th Rangers were created, trained and fought in the SouthWest Pacific. Their stories will have to wait for another time.

Fitting Darby's Rangers into ASL

The development of *ASL* characteristics for a specialised unit is a most enjoyable task for any who truly enjoy the game. Actually, the development of such for Darby's Rangers was very easy. The actual squad-platoon-company organization was retained for the life of the Ranger unit. After the 3rd and 4th Rangers were created, the same TO (Table of Organization) was passed on to them. The item of most interest to *ASL* players and scenario designers is the final TO&E that the Rangers would go into combat with. This is shown in *Table 1*.

The HQ Company would include a 10-3 SMC counter that would represent Lt.-Col. Darby himself. For a battalion action that featured one of the other battalion COs, I would recommend using a 10-2 SMC. Using the stated Leadership Generation (LG) number as listed in the *ASL* rulebook (H1.8) for the Americans, the battalion would not actually rate another battalion-level SMC. But, these are the U.S. Rangers, and so could be expected to have exceptional leaders—so I added a 8-1 SMC at the battalion level. The HQ Company itself is divided into two sections: an HQ section and a MG section. All company personnel are not, of course, represented by counters. I felt that the battalion medical and supply personnel should not be represented since the time frame of the usual *ASL* scenario does not permit us to simulate supply or medical problems. The HQ section is therefore represented by two 6-6-7 squads while the MG section shows six 3-4-7 HS manning six medium MGs.

A Ranger battalion had six line companies, all identical in structure. Each line company had an HQ platoon and two assault platoons. The HQ platoon would include the company commander (SMC) and a 3-4-7 HS to represent his staff (along with two mortar sections). The Company CO would be either a 9-1 or 8-1 SMC, chosen by random dr. A dr of "1-3" would rate a 9-1 leader, while anything higher would provide a 8-1.

Each mortar section would be represented by a 3-4-7 HS and a mortar counter of some type. Even though the 60mm M2 mortar was the "official" ordnance of the Rangers, Darby often would use the 81mm mortar for added "punch". If the proper mortar is not known for a historical action, then the selection of the SW should be by random dr. A dr of "1-3" would give the entire Ranger OB 81mm

TABLE 1: Table of Organization

Unit	Manpower*	ASL Equivalent
Battalion:	26/452	
HQ Company	8/74	10-3 SMC
HQ Section	unknown	8-1 SMC 2×6-6-7 MMC
MG Platoon	unknown	6×3-4-7 HS 6 MMGs
6 Line Cos.: (each)	3/66	
Co. HQ Platoon	1/16	8/9-1 SMC**
HQ Section	1/6	3-4-7 HS latest BAZ**
two MTR Section (each)	0/5	3-4-7 HS MTR**
two Assault Platoons (each)	1/25	
Platoon HQ	1/3	
two Assault Sections (each)	0/11	2×6-6-7 MMC

*—Officer/Enlisted
**—see article for explanation

TABLE 2: Standard ASL Ranger Company OB

This would be the *ASL* composition of a single Ranger line company. For actions involving three or four companies, add one battalion-level SMC and one 6-6-7 MMC; for five or six companies, add both battalion SMCs and both 6-6-7 squads.

9-1 or 8-1 SMC
4×6-6-7 MMC
3×3-4-7 HS
2×60mm or 81mm MTRs
BAZ
3-4-7 and MMG (attached from Battalion HQ Company)

TABLE 3: Ranger Capabilities

	North Africa	Sicily	Italy 1st Phase	Italy 2nd Phase
Morale:	Underscore	Normal	Normal	Normal
ELR:	5	5	5	4
SAN:	4	3	2	2
Stealth:	Yes	Yes	No	No

mortars, and a dr of "4-6" would provide 60mm mortars. The 1st Rangers were equipped with 81mm mortars for Operation Torch, and the 3rd used 60mm mortars in Sicily.

The assault platoons are the easiest to match. Since the Rangers used an 11-man squad armed with BARs, this allows us to use the standard 6-6-7 MMC for each assault section. Because Ranger battalions (and the Force itself) did not include organic AT units, the Rangers always received some of the latest bazooka models available. One bazooka counter of the proper type would be needed for every company used in the Ranger OB.

The Rangers as they appeared in North Africa would be the best, in *ASL* terms. Being fresh from their British training and undiluted by replacements, the morale must be considered underlined, and they'd have an ELR of "5". Each company was issued one M1903 Springfield rifle, which was used by the company sniper in 1942. Therefore, the original Rangers would have higher sniper capabilities than most, which would rate them a SAN of "4" at least. These fresh Rangers should be considered both Elite and Stealthy, and receive all the Commando abilities as stated in the *ASL* rulebook (H1.24).

The combat in North Africa took its toll on experienced personnel, as well as the diluting effect when the new battalions were started. Therefore, the Rangers in Sicily would be represented by some decreased abilities. The ELR would remain at "5", but the morale would no longer be considered underlined. This will allow squad quality reduction, as the Rangers were worn down. The SAN would be reduced to "3", but the Rangers would still be both Elite and Stealthy.

Their use in conventional combat was telling on the Ranger abilities by the time of the invasion of the Italian mainland. During training, Ranger officers found that most of the men could not move silently, but the press of events at Anzio did not give the time needed for extra training. For all scenarios set in Italy (first phase), the ELR remains at "5", the morale is not underlined, the SAN would be "2", and while the Rangers remain Elite they would no longer qualify as Stealthy. The only difference that should be made between the two Italian Campaign phases would be that the ELR slips from "5" to "4". (See *Table 3* for a summation.)

With the two previously published scenarios, and the one accompanying this article, it is my hope that an enterprising scenario designer might someday complete the saga of Darby's Rangers for *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*.

BROKEN SWORDS

The Minor Neutral Powers 1939-41

By David Meyler

The neutral powers attacked by Germany between 1939 and 1941 together fielded upwards of three million soldiers. However, armed with inferior weapons, often caught isolated and unprepared, and with leadership that sometimes was less than inspiring, the Germans usually made short of these armies. Yet Footnote A38 in the *ASL Rulebook* somewhat overstates its case. On the tactical level the combat was not necessarily one-sided—high motivation at times making up for what these once-neutral soldiers lacked in modern arms. These early campaigns are unfortunately often neglected in wargaming, but there are many interesting tactical situations—as highlighted by the release of *THE LAST HURRAH*. While superior use of mobile forces gave Germany the strategic advantage and the ultimate outcome was never in doubt, the Germans had some hard tactical lessons to learn along the way. This article provides some characteristics for the neutral armies involved, and some unit organization information for their troops.

The Polish Army:

The Polish Army arose out of the chaos that reigned in Eastern Europe at the end of the First World War. Marshal Josef Pilsudski, who eventually became commander-in-chief, had formed a Polish army of exile under Austrian control during the war to fight the Russians. The newly-independent state had hardly been established when conflict erupted with Bolshevik Russia. The Russians were decisively defeated in 1920, although they had advanced as far west as Warsaw. Meanwhile, a vicious, but undeclared, war continued with the Germans along the Silesian frontier as the Poles attempted to push their borders farther west than established at Versailles.

Pilsudski ran Poland as the leader of a military junta that seized power in the 1926 coup until his death in 1935. While the military maintained control, it was not until 1937 that the Polish Army began a belated modernization program. This was only partially complete when hostilities opened on 1 September 1939. The Poles, nevertheless, were dangerously optimistic. They were expecting the Wehrmacht to advance on a broad front in the style of 1918, and felt confident that the Germans could be delayed until their own mobilization was complete and the French could launch a major offensive in the west. Perhaps their successes in the early '20s contributed to this overconfidence, but the Poles had made two fatal miscalculations. The Germans had no intention of refighting 1918; and the French, apparently, had no intention of fighting at all (their "major offensive" never materialized).

The Poles put up a hard fight, although outclassed tactically and at a great disadvantage strategically. None of their fronts remained stable for more than a few hours, and the Poles generally found that they were taking measures that were too late by the time they could be implemented. With years of bitterness between the Poles and Germans, losses were high. In the 36 days of fighting the Poles lost over 66000 killed.

The Polish infantry regiment was much weaker than its German equivalent in terms of numbers and support weapons. With an establishment strength of 1900 men and officers, the regiment comprised three battalions—each of these with three or four companies, including a HMG company. Battalion-level support weapons consisted of 30 LMG (the Browning M28—a version of the U.S. BAR), 12 HMG (Browning M30) and nine light mortars. At regimental level were six medium mortars, two field guns and nine AT guns.

The pride of the Polish Army, the cavalry, was organized into brigades. Each brigade had three or four cavalry regiments, plus a company of 13 TKS tankettes, an armored car squadron, a cyclist squadron, an ATG platoon, engineers, a rifle battalion and a horse artillery battery (four troops of two guns each). Each regiment had four squadrons and a HMG squadron. Each of these squadrons had three platoons.

The Norwegian Army:

The modern Norwegian Army came into existence when the country declared its independence from Sweden in 1905. As the government considered that defense against a major invader was not possible, not much attention was devoted to the army in official circles. When the Soviet Union invaded neutral Finland, however, the Norwegians did mobilize a sizable force along their northern frontier, but this was disbanded in March 1940 after the Finns signed the armistice with Moscow.

Thus, when the Germans attacked on 8 April 1940, the Norwegian Army was only partly mobilized. In spite of the early loss of Oslo and southern Norway, the Norwegians showed great spirit and withdrew into their mountainous hinterland, joining up with British and French units. The fighting in the north was protracted and resembled a guerrilla war; the difficult terrain and the generally light forces engaged on both sides precluded any major set-piece battles. Thus, although the Norwegians did not capitulate until 9 June, Norwegian losses were less than 1500 killed and wounded.

As for organization, Norway was divided into six districts (or divisions), with headquarters at Halden, Oslo, Kristiansand, Bergen, Trondheim and Harstad. Each district was to mobilize just one field brigade of two regiments, with other units to be raised as required. Some 16 regiments and ancillary units would be available at full mobilization.

Due to the surprise of the German attack, only the 6th brigade at Harstad was fully mobilized. The brigade had two regiments, each with two battalions and a garrison company, plus a battalion of dragoons or cyclists (which served as ski troops in winter) with a motor-machinegun troop, artillery and engineers attached. At full strength, the regiment had 3750 men with 96 LMG (6.5mm Madsen), 36 HMG (Colt-Browning M29) and eight medium mortars. There were no field guns directly available, and no AT guns at all.

The Danish Army:

Since the disastrous war in 1863 with the Prussians over Schleswig-Holstein, the Danish kingdom had adopted a rigidly neutral stance. The "army" consisted of two divisions, Jutland and Sjaelland, named after their home provinces. The latter, based at Copenhagen, had three regiments (1st, 4th and 5th), while the former was headquartered at Viborg and had four (2nd, 3rd, 6th and 7th).

In theory, Danish units were relatively well-equipped. A regiment, about 3000 men, had 256 LMG, 56 HMG, 24 medium mortars, and six AT guns. However, when the Germans struck on 8 April, the Danes just had some 6000 men in arms. No official resistence was put up to the German invasion, but the Danes lost 26 men in the opening skirmishes.

The Dutch Army:

Although some regiments of the Dutch Army have a pedigree dating back to the 1600s, the army of 1940 had its direct roots in the Napoleonic Wars. After the Belgian war of independence, the Dutch essentially stayed out of European power politics. The decade preceding the First World War was the last time a major modernization of the army took place. In 1936, a modernization program was launched, but adequate funding was lacking and most weapons were still of pre-1918 vintage when the storm broke.

The Dutch ordered a full mobilization when the Germans invaded Poland. Unlike the Belgian and French armies, the Dutch had not suffered the terrible losses of the First World War. While the French, and to a lesser extent the Belgians, expected to be attacked—and maybe even expected to lose—the Dutch on the whole thought they would be left alone again. The German invasion of 10 May came as a distinct shock, and this shock was translated into a hostility that the Germans had not expected.

The combination of paratroops and armor quickly knocked the Dutch off balance, although the enemy airborne units in particular suffered very heavy losses. The Dutch actually managed to stabilize the situations, but capitulated after the city of Rotterdam was bombed savagely. Considering the short duration of the campaign—five days—the Dutch losses of 2200 killed are relatively high.

The core of the field army was formed by 48 infantry regiments, supported by five hussar regiments

Minor Neutral Powers:

Nationality	LG	ELR*	SW** LMG	MMG	HMG	.50 HMG	LT. MTR	ATR	DC***
Poland	6	3	—	11	16	22	12	20	3
Norway	7	3	8	11	16	—	—	—	3
Denmark	8	2	4	10	15	—	—	—	—
Holland	5.5	3	9	11	16	—	—	18+	3
Belgium	6	3	—	10	15	—	6	—	3
Yugoslavia	7.5	2	8	10	16	22	—	—	3
Greece	7	3	10	14	18	24	—	—	3

The Poles and Belgians used BARs as LMGs; hence there is no entry for these nationalities in this column.
*—+1 for elite; −1 for 2nd Line; −2 for mobilizing unit
**—+1 for 2nd Line; +3 for mobilizing unit
***—assault engineer squad (or equivalent)
+—20L ATR

and the partially-mechanized light division. Their infantry regiment had three battalions, each of these with three infantry companies and a HMG company. The standard company, following an almost universal pattern, had three (sometimes four) platoons, each of these with three squads. At full strength a regiment had 2691 men of all ranks, 72 LMG (Lewis M20 or 6.5mm Madsen), 36 HMG (Schwarzlose M08/15), six medium mortars, four field guns and four AT guns. Direct support available to a battalion consisted of just 12 HMG and 24 LMG.

The Belgian Army:

The Belgian Army dates from the war of independence against the Dutch during 1830-31. Although the Dutch won the military advantage, they were forced to withdraw when France threw its support behind the Belgians. French influence remained strong, even in the military. The Belgian Army was virtually destroyed in the First World War, and it was rebuilt largely on the French model. Francophiles also made up 90% of the officer class. Whether Flemish-Walloon tension had a detrimental effect of Belgian performance in 1940 is difficult to tell due to the short duration of the campaign; but the Belgian Army fought well throughout.

Also like the French, the Belgians adopted a "Maginot Line" mentality, modernizing the fortress zone around Liege in the 1920s and 1930s. The center-piece was Eban Emael. Its loss on the first day of the German invasion was a hard psychological blow, even though plans had been made to fall back on the Dyle River in any case. Although steadily pushed back, the Belgian infantry surprised the Germans with their tough resistance. Some 5400 Belgian soldiers were killed in the 18 days of fighting.

The Belgian Army totalled 550000 men, a surprisingly high number for a nation with only eight million citizens. The field army consisted of 22 divisions. These were divided between reserve divisions and active divisions, which were larger and better equipped. An active division had three regiments, each of these with three battalions and a heavy weapons battalion, and included some 108 LMG (Browning M30), 52 HMG (Maxim 08), 108 light mortars, nine medium mortars or infantry guns, and six AT guns. Battalions usually consisted of three companies and a HMG company.

Shortly before the war broke out, a program had been begun to increase the mobility of the army. By 10 May, one of the two divisions of the Ardennes Rifle Corps had been equipped with vehicles, as had both light cavalry divisions. Each active division also had a company of light tanks attached for reconnaissance duties.

The Yugoslav Army:

Yugoslavia was another of the new nations created by the Versailles Treaty. Established as a monarchy, the political situation was far from stable by 1940. By 1941, Yugoslavia was virtually surrounded by German allies, and under heavy pressure signed a pact of alliance with Germany in March. However, a group of dissident army officers had already been planning a coup for some time and promptly overthrew the government. The German reaction was an immediate invasion.

On 6 April the Yugoslav Army found itself spread along a frontier of 2300 kilometers. Militarily and politically, the Yugoslavs were not in any position to offer effective resistance. The Germans struck from their bases in Bulgaria on 6 April, while the Hungarians and Italians joined in a few days later. By 13 April, organized resistance was over and four days later Yugoslavia capitulated.

The standing army in Yugoslavia numbered 148000, with full mobilization totalling 1.4 million

Continued on Page 25, Column 1

because of what it portends for the future of the *ASL* system. We're already wondering about what "historical module" should be next. Dieppe? Arnhem? Prokhorovka? Tarawa? If you're an *ASL* buff, you've surely got your own ideas. But first—try *RED BARRICADES*. You may find a whole new dimension of enjoyment.

Charles Kibler
October 1989 ☆

Broken Swords . . . *Cont'd from Page 23*

men. However, on the day of invasion, only 400000 conscripts had been called up. The field army comprised 52 regiments in 16 divisions. The regiments had 2400 men each, 168 machineguns and four field guns.

The Germans in their haste were less than systematic in disarming the Yugoslavs, and up to 300000 men are estimated to have kept their arms—forming a considerable pool for the partisan forces that began operating a few months later. Josip Tito's communist force, the most important, eventually numbered 800000. Although an irregular force, Tito set up a regular army organization for his troop. The smallest unit was a "company" of about 80 men. Nine companies formed a battalion, and three battalions a brigade. Until late 1942, when some British aid began to arrive, the partisans relied on former Yugoslavian army weapons and captured equipment (mostly Italian).

The Greek Army:

The Greeks achieved their independence from the Turks in 1830 after almost ten years of fighting. war with Turkey occurred again in 1897, and from 1912 to 1913 Greece participated in the series of conflicts called the Balkan Wars. The Greeks then became somewhat unwilling participants during the First World War, and fought another war against the Turks in 1920-22 (in which the Greeks were worsted).

The interwar period was not one of political stability either. Premier Venizelos, in power from 1916 to 1932, led an abortive coup in 1935. After this, the monarchy was re-established under King George, but General Mextaxas as prime minister ruled as virtual dictator. When the Italians invaded Albania in October 1940, the full Greek Army was mobilized—totalling some 430000 men. In the mountainous region bordering Albania, the Greeks not only held their own but pushed back the ill-prepared Italians. Nevertheless, neither of the belligerents were adequately prepared for the harsh conditions, and the Greeks suffered 60000 casualties over the winter.

When the German invasion came in April 1941, the Greek Army was not in the best position to oppose it. German mechanized units quickly cut off the Greek forces in Macedonia, forcing their surrender. The remaining forces, with their British allies, retreated south. Here the "Army of Epirus" surrendered on 20 April, and the British began to evacuate the mainland two days later. The Greeks suffered 15700 casualties against the Germans.

The Greeks proved to be more effective in the mountains fighting a guerrilla war, although the partisan forces were split between a number of opposing factions. The communists were the first to organize an effective military force—ELAS—in February 1942 (eventually fielding 25000 men). The British belatedly sponsored a right-wing coalition of monarchists and adherents of the former Metaxas administration—EDES-EKKA—with 5000 fighters. The two factions initially maintained an uneasy alliance, but from October 1943 through February 1944, an all-out civil war broke out between ELAS and EDES-EKKA. The Germans were the main beneficiaries, regaining a foothold in the mountains and using the schism to recruit a large number of anti-communist collaborators.

The formal organization of the Greek Army in 1941 shows the paper strength of an infantry regiment was 1100 men and 58 officers. Support weapons consisted of 36 LMG (Hotchkiss 8mm), eight HMG (St. Etienne M07), four medium mortars and two field or mountain guns. Regiments comprised two battalions, each with three rifle companies and a HMG company. The two cavalry regiments each had four sabre squadrons, a machinegun troop (with 12 HMG) and four mortars. Like the Yugoslav partisans, the various Greek freedom fighter factions were armed with captured or ex-Greek Army weapons, or weapons delivered by the anti-Nazi powers.

Conclusion:

To conclude, the chart on Page 22 provides a more detailed breakdown of the characteristics of the various minor allied forces based on actual performance. It may be used to replace or supplement the information provided in *ASL* for DYO scenarios. It is hoped that this chart might encourage more players to experiment with the play of the Minor Allies, and help guide would-be scenario designers when crafting more tactical problems for we hard-core devotees. ☆



Coming Attractions

RED BARRICADES

Welcome back to the streets of Stalingrad—only this time on a scale and intensity which you've probably never before experienced in *ASL*. *RED BARRICADES* will be the system's tenth module, but its first "historical" one. The centerpiece is a large, two-piece (45"×33") historically accurate map depicting Stalingrad's "Red Barricades" (aka *Barrikady*) Ordnance Factory and surrounding environs. The factory complex alone, exactingly adapted to *ASL* scale from wartime German aerial photographs, spans an area approximately 31 hexes by 16 hexes. The largest structure on the map (the mammoth "Assembly Hall") is about eight-by-five hexes—35 hexes total. Further, the mapsheet's grid features a new, one-inch hex for ease of play in those scenarios with high counter density.

For those dyed-in-the-wool *ASL*ers still choking on the word "mapsheet" from the previous paragraph, allow me a brief digression to allay your immediate, primordial reaction of horror. After much deliberation and hesitation, it was decided that an unmounted mapsheet was the best way to produce a map featuring continuous terrain over a large area. Too, because of the system's frequently critical lines-of-sight, there will be no building ends being cut off due to a bad trim job. Conveniently, an additional benefit of this decision was that it shaved at least $10 off the final retail price.

Besides the map, *RED BARRICADES* features another novelty—*ASL*'s first true Campaign Game. But before I wax prolific on this juicy topic, let me elaborate on the module's other major components, namely:

Two complete counter sheets will be included, completely up to (*ASL*) snuff. You will now have markers for Fortified Building Locations, A-T Ditches, Cellars, Gutted Factories , and Hand-to-Hand Melee. Also included will be the "Perimeter", "Location Control" and "Burnt-Out-Wreck" counters necessary for the Campaign Game, as well as plenty of fresh Russian and German infantry and SW. Two brand-new weapons make their appearance: the Russian *Molotov Projector* (works something like a PIAT) and several *StuIG 33B* (actual counters for the AFV referred to in German Vehicle Note #37).

Several standard scenarios (as opposed to those for the Campaign Game) will be included, along with some 18 (at last count) Special Rules in effect during all *RED BARRICADES* scenarios. Most of these scenarios utilize only a portion of the map, but for those of you impatiently awaiting the reprint of *SL* Scenario 2000 ("Operation Hubertus"), your wildest nightmares of combat in the rubble-strewn streets come true with its heathen offspring, "The Last Bid" (so big, it will probably cover the better part of two scenario cards), this time on the *actual* terrain on which it transpired.

Chapter O brings the dictums for the map's several new terrain types (debris, railway embankments, interior factory walls, storage tanks, single-hex two-story buildings, and culverts), colorfully detailed in the traditional manner. There are further clarifications (i.e., errata) for the existing rules on Fortified Building Locations, Factories, Rooftops and Armored Cupolas. Also included in the *RED BARRICADES* rules is a section on usage of the Russians' newest toy, the aforementioned MOL-P support weapon. Last but certainly not least, spanning three-quarters of Chapter O, is section 11: the "RB Campaign Games".

RED BARRICADES actually features three separate Campaign Games (CG), none of which by the way are related to the proposed *ASL* Chapter I "Campaign Game". Instead, these CG are exclusively designed for play on the module's map and provide the devoted *ASL* gamer (game club?) a series of interrelated scenarios. For instance, Campaign Game I simulates the German effort, from 17 October to 29 October, to take the actual factory complex. Each CG-Day promises a possible CG-scenario, depending on if either (or both) side wishes to attack. The scenario "generated" is intended to simulate the most crucial actions taking place in the *Barrikady* on that day, commencing at the moment with the most potential for a breakthrough. Now for the first time in *ASL* there *is* a "tomorrow". Since surviving units are retained for the next CG scenario, a critical tactical dimension has been simulated: conservation of forces. Gone are the last game-turn, suicidal charges so commonly employed in standard scenarios where you don't have to worry about casualties. The player will frequently find it the "better part of valor" to take a loss on the current day so as to enhance his chances of winning the next.

Besides giving starting forces for each CG and some CG-specific rules and definitions, most of section 11 details a special between-scenario series of steps (known as the "Refit Phase") to "tidy up" the map as well as purchase additional forces for the next scenario of the campaign. For instance, all ongoing melees are resolved, wounded leaders may be evacuated, a side's ELR may be raised (or lowered, God forbid), weather determined, etc. Impatiently awaited by each player will be the step known as "Perimeter Determination", whereby each side stakes claim to the hexes (Strategic Terrain) controlled by it at scenario end, thus largely determining its start line for the next scenario in the campaign. Later, each side *secretly* purchases reinforcements (from a list of historically available units) to supplement their survivors. Instead of buying individual counters as per the standard *ASL* DYO system, however, each player selects his own "Reinforcement Groups". For instance, as the Russian commander you could choose a Guards SMG or Factory Militia company, a T-70 platoon, a Katyusha (OBA) module, or more fortification points (to mention but a few). Since the groups purchased, as well as their actual strength (in terms of MMC, SMC and SW for an infantry company), are unknown to your opponent, the *RED BARRICADES* CG provides a lot of that "Fog of War" so ashamedly missing in most *ASL* scenarios. Imagine the consternation of your tiresome foe when he discovers you've just augmented your OB with a full-strength company of assault engineers with which to burn out those last annoying fortified strongpoints in the southern Foundry Hall!

All in all, I'm quite excited about *RED BARRICADES*. Not only because of the module itself, but

because of what it portends for the future of the *ASL* system. We're already wondering about what "historical module" should be next. Dieppe? Arnhem? Prokhorovka? Tarawa? If you're an *ASL* buff, you've surely got your own ideas. But first—try *RED BARRICADES*. You may find a whole new dimension of enjoyment.

Charles Kibler
October 1989



DESERT WINDS

The Scenarios of WOA, Part I

By Mark C. Nixon

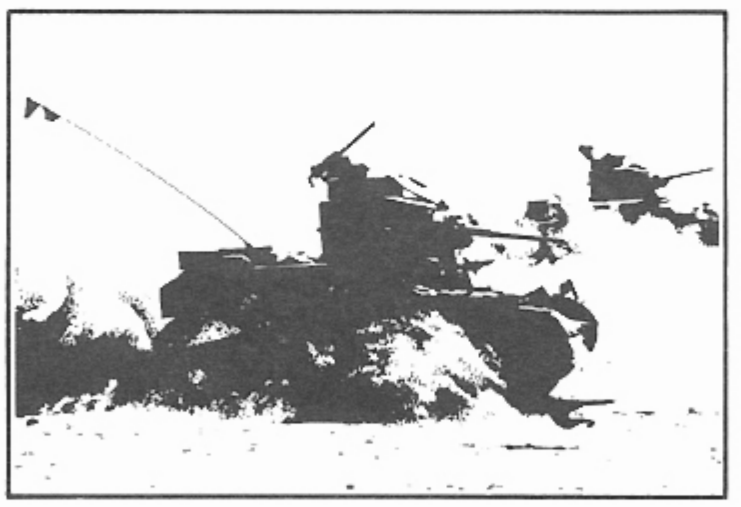
I enjoyed the *WEST OF ALAMEIN* playtest immensely. Oh, not at first, of course. That very first game which David Sisler and I sat down to play in February 1988 was a "Bridgehead Too Wet", and not only did we have a great deal of trouble with the openness of the desert and the new rules (as usual, we worked with word-processed rules) but that scenario initially allowed the Germans to enter play from all four directions; the British were immediately surrounded and hit with Encircling Fire. Well, it's all just part of the program; playtesting is supposed to find such little problems and correct them. As we worked our way through the 11 scenarios of the playtest we found, before too terribly long and before we had driven Mr. McNamara too awfully far into his grave with our incessant haranguing about scenarios with thousands of vehicles and rules which mained our favorite tactics, that we were having a blast playing out in the open desert. Not only are the scenarios all big winners in my book, but *WOA* brought the British, the best written rules chapter yet, and that wonderful "British Vehicle Notes" section. Any one of those would have been worth the price of the entire module.

I tell you that, which might double as an advertisement, so that you will know where I am coming from over the course of the next hour or so during which you will, I hope, read the rest of this article. I like *WEST OF ALAMEIN* a lot! The other thing I think you should be aware of is that I am biased in favor of the attacker. Although I don't believe I can win with any more frequency taking one side or the other, I almost always prefer to have control of the attacking forces. I like to play aggressively, although I'd like to think not recklessly; and I like to play fast without going hypersonic. I regularly play against some who are extremely aggressive and very successful with this style, and have faced some players who move so fast that we end up playing the ancient "move them back so I can shoot at them where they were" game because the units are already six or seven hexes down that road before I can say, "I'll shoot". I don't hit either of those two extremes; but as you read these scenario analyses, bear in mind that if anything I have probably favored the attacker.

I felt it would be best to confess these few points before asking you to read what follows. I'm certainly not infallible; the next several pages ought to prove that. But I do hope you enjoy this study and that you find a few gems which either reveal some new tactic or rule interpretation (or even stir your own creative juices into devising some new approaches to these tactical situations). These pages might seem to be a lengthy account of the eight scenarios, but they are as nothing to what could have been presented. The problem with going on at greater length is that I couldn't write it and most of you would probably lose interest and refuse to read it. But if these words can generate some new insights in your appreciation of *ASL*, I will be absolutely delighted.

The members of the local group here who have crunched my troops over the past years, who have thrown every "sleazy" rule interpretation they could conjure my way (I won't even mention using ESB with Recalled tanks so they'll immobilize and force the crews to abandon them, and then re-entering the tank with another crew), are the indomitable Rick Troha, Bill Sisler and, of course, the suddenly infamous David Sisler. This article is as much due to their efforts as my own.

The ensuing eight accounts of the *WEST OF ALAMEIN* scenarios are all alike in one respect. Not a one of them proposes a "perfect plan". Since I don't believe in them, I don't waste time looking for them. The attack which works once and the defense which *sometimes* proves to be absolutely impregnable will not stand up to the test of repeated playings. I know; I have tried. I have played 243 scenarios in the past two years, and that is what I base this view upon. Your experience might be of more or fewer games than that, but there you have mine. Other than that one common thread and a standard format, I have endeavoured to discuss different topics in each. Don't be misled. The coverage of sniper tactics discussed in the last scenario can apply just as well to every other scenario which contains those sneaky, hidden wonders. And since I have not fooled myself into believing I can touch upon every item of importance in every scenario, all I have done here is highlight those elements of each scenario which I found most interesting or different and suggest an approach or two which might be used to deal with them. I'm not really much concerned with exactly how one certain scenario is best played, but hope that this work might suggest some new angles for you to look at, some different tactics which might improve your play, clears up some ambiguous rule you've struggled with, or at least gives you delight as you read about some of the foolish maneuvers that Nixon fellow tries. Well, he's only a lowly 8-1, after all.



Scenario 35
Blazin' Chariots

Rating: 55% German

Attraction: This is a charge in every sense of the word. Pure armor confrontation—a delightful introduction to the wide-open desert fighting which should be enjoyed by all. Fast play allows plenty of opportunity to experiment with different tactics.

German Advantages: ROF; Armor Leaders; APCR; Stationary.

If you can avoid the temptation to Intensive Fire until it is unavoidable, your guns should give you a better-than-even chance to win. However, because you can expect a high number of shots you must likewise be prepared to suffer a gun breakdown or two, even without calling for those Intensive Fire shots. It is a fair assessment to say that these gun malfunctions—or lack of them—will largely determine the course of the game in as much as the enemy will likely break your line if you've suffered early losses, but will be hard pressed to do so should your guns remain active. This is because of the number of shots you will enjoy at Acquired targets thanks to your stationary vehicles with ROF 2, some of which will be leader-directed. In addition, once the enemy have drawn within effective range, you can unleash your APCR upon them. Notice also that any time your TH# is equal to the Depletion number of your special ammo, you might nearly double your chance of a hit by committing that special ammo, although admittedly at the risk of losing that capability but, in this case, at no greater risk than it ever entails. At least by using it this way you should avoid the dilemma of the gunner who rolled well enough to have effected a hit with normal AP, only to have missed due to trying for the special ammo on a shot with a much higher TH# than D#.

German Disadvantages: Outnumbered; Must Score High DVP to Win; Malfunctions.

"Fear" is probably the best way to sum up the German disadvantages. Fear of losing a few guns, of being overrun, and of not scoring the DVP might accumlate to force the German player into mistakes. Intensive Fire is the most obvious mistake, for although it can win games and is often necessary, there is a time for it and a time to withhold it. Another mistake is premature movement of your tanks. Simply because the British have maneuvered out of the Sun Blindness zone is no reason to abandon positions which afford ample fire opportunities at already Acquired targets. In fact, it would probably never be a good idea to move rather than fire at an already Acquired target (although there must be exceptions, so don't take this as a maxim). The big danger here is that those British need only two turns of movement to break through your line and swarm over your tanks—even only one at a time—with their superior numbers and start smashing them with rear and side shots. They can do this even after coming to a stop on Turn 1 in order to allow themselves shots in their DFPh unmodified by their own motion. At this point, if your guns, your TH rolls and your TK rolls fail you, the British player might already have gained the upper hand. If it is grim enough, I would not even hesitate to start firing off some Intensive Fire shots.

German Defense:

If you set up in hexrow "Z", you are asking for trouble. This is because the British could then sit on the board edge (row "A") and remain in the 25-30 hex range from your guns. At that range, their LL guns gain a +2 TH modifier which effectively cancels their disadvantages of smaller guns and red TH numbers. With the TH chances even, their multiple hits and ability to prey on the German weaker tanks (mainly the MK IIIGs) should swing the odds in their favor. At such ranges, they have no problem firing from outside each tank's Sun Blindness zone, and for every tank they trade, they draw closer to victory. As the German commander, I would rule out the "Z" row entirely.

By setting up in the "X" and "Y" rows, on the other hand, the German is guaranteed targets at the 19-24 hex range; and it is unlikely the enemy would even try to duel with the resultant TH# stacked against them. They are almost certain to charge your positions in this circumstance. Your line should be spread across the board, with tank types equally distributed throughout. The only ones you might plan to move—the MK IIs—should be arranged so that their exit from the line does not leave any gaping holes. Not that the British might go somewhere once behind the line; but if they are going to penetrate it, you will want to avail yourself of *some* close-

range shots, the better to hit and maybe kill them. As for those MK IIs, reasons you might opt to pull them out of the line are to raid the enemy rear (especially effective for running down any crews which might have survived), laying a sD smoke screen to cover any of the MK III or Mk IV tanks that are in trouble, or simply to get them out of the line of fire where they are as much easy DVP for the enemy as any real threat to the British armor.

The Mk IVs should probably fire only HE at long-range motion targets, saving their scarce AP for closer shots once the enemy are acquired. At least their TH numbers are not reduced for ranges beyond 18 hexes as for AP rounds. The HE also does a better job as a collateral attack versus exposed crew members than any AP ever will. The ability of these tanks to fire smoke can also be a blessing and, like their escorting Mk IIIs, their machineguns might prove to be as valuable as their MA, so don't forget to fire at those exposed British crews.

The cream of your tank force is, of course, the five Mk IIIs, particularly those two IIIHs. These will usually contain the armor leaders; their ability to survive beyond the life of their brethern is unquestionable, although some masochistic opponent might actually "gun" for them first, ignoring his advantage versus the IIIGs and forfeiting any gains he might have realized with early kills on these more lightly armored targets. But don't count on that. Put the leaders in the IIIHs. There they will enjoy the most fire opportunities and are afforded greater protection to their crews while exposed. These tanks should be positioned on boards 27 and 26, close to board 28 in order to provide the bulwark of your defense. With a IIIG on the outside flanks and the third in the middle of board 28 with the two Mk IVs, the Germans have a respectible defense which can withstand assault from either flank. The Mk IIs fall into place on the extreme flanks if you intend to raid the enemy rear, or in the center if you'll withdraw them or use them as guns in the line.

The first turn of every game I've seen has been a matter of sitting and firing for the German side. This is the best thing to do no matter whether the enemy are charging your position or stopping to duel at some intermediate range. Remember, because you have avoided the "Z" row and have a formidable line spread across the entire playing area, the enemy cannot just sit at the 25-hex range and duel for if they tried that, some of your tanks would be at the 19-24 range—which would admirably defeat the enemy attempt to equalize the range. Should the British choose to sit and duel, I anticipate a German win at least 75% of the time. Only inordinate bad luck with gun malfunctions and some combination of favorable British and poor German TH and TK rolls might lead to a different conclusion. That is why I expect the British player to try to charge the German line and smash it bit by bit at close range.

This leads into the middle part of the game, Turns 2-4, during which time a wild melee, of the armored sort, will usually occur. Both sides will be tossing in liberal usage of sD; there will likely be a few burning wrecks on the battlefield; and the whole thing, despite occurring in the open desert, can begin to take on a rather macabre appearance—wrecked hulks here and there, flames and smoke billowing from some earlier struggle and several desperate, exhausted former tank crews angling in for that one last chance at that immobilized panzer, while the few remaining tanks on either side still exchange shots and stalk one another amidst the scarred battlefield.

The end game for the German, if it has been close, will be very much the same as that for the Brit. It often comes down to a single kill for either side making the difference between victory or defeat. Should you take that Prep Fire shot at that Stuart, despite three guns already having acquired you; or should you try to roll your sD number and make a getaway, to live and fight until the end of the game? At this stage of the battle, immobilized tanks which have gone long ignored can very often become the focal point of attention as the antagonists turn their gaze back again to those old targets, now holding perhaps the DVP needed to finally secure the win.

British Advantages: Multiple Hits; Numbers; Fluid Attack.

If one hit doesn't kill, how about two tries? Multiple Hits might always seem too few and far between, but it only takes one to register a kill on a tank which otherwise might have continued unscathed. If you consider the fact that it is not too terribly difficult to hit those panzers once you've stopped and Acquired them outside the Sun Blindness zone, the value of your Multiple Hits is a nice advantage to weigh against the enemy's armor leaders and higher ROF. As for the ROF issue itself, your twelve tanks actually are not too far off the German level, especially if the Mk II and Mk IV ROF are not valued as highly as those of your 37LL guns (which is a legitimate assessment). Note too, that for every Mk III you destroy, the enemy must kill two Stuarts in order to maintain the ROF status quo. This two-to-one ratio is a reflection of your advantage in numbers and the German disadvantage in DVP needed for a win. That is, as you trade off Stuarts for Mk IIIs, you draw closer to your DVP goal quicker than does the German, while your ROF potential is depleted by only one per lost tank versus the German loss of two.

But your greatest advantage lies in what some might profess to be your greatest disadvantage—the attack across the open desert. True, there are going to be some losses in that mad dash at the enemy. My approach to such a dilemma, once it has been determined that there is no better course of action, is to see what advantage might be derived from it. In this case, once the inevitable losses have been accepted, it is apparent that the two-turn charge is the very thing that delivers these Stuarts to the point from which they can dominate the game. More will be said on this in the discussion of the attack itself. Suffice it to say now that the British numbers and their relatively fast (two turns) arrival in the midst of the enemy line allows them to exercise control over a situation which would find them with the odds stacked horribly against them were they forced to sit and duel at moderate range.

British Disadvantages: Early Losses; Red TH Numbers; Low CS and sD Numbers.

There will be several tanks lost by the time your first decent opportunity to return fire (your Turn 1 DFPh) rolls around. This is unavoidable; it's part of this scenario which is built in. Save yourself the anguish of worrying about it and plan to pick up the pieces and carry on with whatever is left alive. Believe it or not, this is the way the scenario is supposed to proceed; it's the way the designer imagined it; it's the way it was historically; it's even the way it went during playtesting! Expect to lose four or five tanks to outright kills, Shock, Stun and Immobilization by the end of the German Prep Fire Phase of Turn 1. Never fear, it might even be worse than that. Just continue the game.

Unless you catch the German set up in the "Z" row, you will not be able to overcome your red TH# stigma until you gain the 0-6 hex range. Twist and turn those C4 basic TH number modifications as you like, that is the only other range where your guns will hit equally with any gun in the enemy arsenal. Every place else on the mapboard leaves you at a disadvantage on your hit attempts. The only way to remedy this situation, until you close the range, is against an opponent who keeps his tankers buttoned-up. There are a number of tactics involved here, primarily regarding the range at which you come to a stop on Turn 1. More on this in the next section.

Finally, it may seem trivial, but Crew Survival is very important in this particular action. To illustrate this, consider how many Stuarts would have to be eliminated for a German win if all the crews were to survive—all twelve! That ignores the alternate end of the VC and is far fetched to the extreme in any case. But it does stress the fact that there is nothing much more disconcerting to the enemy than knocking out a tank he thinks is worth seven DVP, only to watch the crew scamper away with two of those hard earned points. The British could use a higher Crew Survival, and should thank their lucky stars whenever a crew makes the great leap to survival. In a similar vein, the low sD number of these tanks means smoke is not a thing which can be expected, as in the case of the better prepared German dischargers. For that matter, the Mk IVs even offer the chance of firing smoke, adding to the overall British woes of comparison.

British Attack:

As stated at the outset, this is going to be a charge across the open desert. But the Stuarts will stop at the end of their Movement Phase. Although it would be perfectly logical to keep them in motion in order to make them more difficult targets for the German gunners, that same motion would also preclude them from any reasonable chance of hitting the enemy in return during their own upcoming defensive fire. Not only that, but they would be Acquired no matter what, yet without coming to a stop could not likewise acquire their counterparts to the west. By firing acquisition shots in their initial Advancing Fire Phase, they will have a very good chance of scoring some hits in Defensive Fire and could even opt to extend that into their subsequent Prep Fire—should you elect to forego movement in Turn 2.

But standing at this range (7-10 hexes from the enemy) is just another way to play into the German's hands. Something must be done to overcome the initial sacrifice of those tankers lost on the mad dash in; their end should not be allowed to pass without some attempt at retribution. There are a few options. Probably the most blatant, in that it somewhat abuses game mechanics, is to try for Excessive Speed in order to gain a few hexes and attain the closer range (0-6 hexes) with the enemy. Because the Stuarts must reach the "S" row in order to achieve a six-hex range to enemy targets in the "X" row, without fighting sun blindness (or reach the "T" row against an enemy in row "Y") this entails an ESB roll equal to "9" or less for row "S" (or "8" for row "T"). Thank heaven these are U.S.-made tanks, or I wouldn't even suggest this tactic as a remote possibility. Immobilization itself is not so bad, but the resultant need to take a TC on all future hits which otherwise fall harmless is devastating. I would avoid this tactic (especially the way I roll ESB) but mention it here as a point of interest. If you find yourself in a desperate spot, ESB might be your best chance.

Despite appearances however, the first turn of the game is not a time for desperation. This scenario would be an injustice if it were. It is a grim situation for the British, true, but they still wield great strength and have at their disposal tactics to secure a win. The first-turn objective is the "Q" row. All tanks which avoid destruction or other harm can reach this position and stop outside the sun blindness zone of a target. Notice that if you are outside a tank's sun blindness zone, that enemy tank would have to change its CA in order to fire at you—assuming that its CA began the game aligned due east. So you gain at least this little bit of added DRM should the Germans hold fire until you have come to a stop. However, there will also be enemy tanks directly ahead which don't have to change CA, so this is no universal relief.

There are also reasons to stop before reaching the "Q" row. If you intend to do battle with your crews

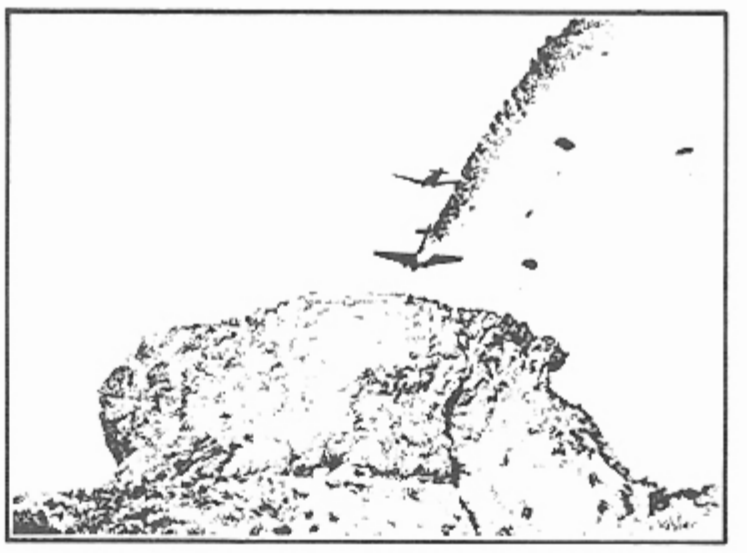
CE, it might pay to stop nine hexes away from the enemy in order to render their machineguns less effective. Carried to the extreme, sitting back at the "K" or "L" row will reduce their MGs to a 4FP attack—but I reject that ploy as yielding too much ground for too little gain. Your second turn's movement would be overly restricted by the resultant need to cover all the ground between "K" and the enemy line. After all, the further away from the enemy MGs, the further away are your own as well. Because the German tanks will have to spin their turrets in many cases, they won't all be able to combine their bow and coaxial machineguns on a single target, and will therefore often take two low odds shots. The Stuart machinegun mix is much better so long as the crew is CE, for the AAMG can add its weight to that of either of the other two (yielding either two 4FP attacks, a 6FP and 2FP, or even two 2FP and a 4FP). Still, this is only a slight advantage, and the positioning of your tanks is the only tactic which allows it to be brought into play. As for whether to be CE or not, I prefer to mix it up. Against a CE enemy, I like to accept the challenge and go for it. If the enemy tankers hide, though, it depends on other factors. Out here with no Sniper around and no opposing infantry, it is simply too tempting to go CE to resist—at least until the two armored forces are at point blank range. Taking a 16FP (+2) attack is too risky, so I button-up at that point, at the latest.

The attack itself must pick on any weak flank in the enemy line. This might be something as subtle as redirecting everyone towards the flank where a German gun malfunctioned on Turn 1. Should a sudden wind kick up, attack the flank which would allow the greatest cover from flaming wrecks and drifting smoke. Should you be so fortunate that the German sets up with a weak side, you don't even have to seriously consider attacking anywhere but there. But if you face a well-dispersed defender and nothing outstanding occurs to help out, I prefer to send six tanks down each board edge, spreading out to attack abreast. A perfectly executed British Turn 1 would end with six tanks in 26Q1-6 and six more in 27Q5-10. Some of these might be adjusted slightly in order to align them outside of sun blindness to a specific target, but this gives the general idea I strive for. This attack forces the German player to delegate his tanks to defending a certain flank. He can't swing his CA back and forth without paying the price in TH DRM. On Turn 2, the remnants of these two attacking groups swing around each flank to envelop the enemy from the northwest and the southwest. This finds the German tanks in the middle facing out, and the Stuarts firing either at close-range targets and enjoying side and rear shots when they score hull hits (unless the panzers pay the price to change their VCA) or the British tanks might even fire over to the other flank in order to gain rear hits on defenders there. In either case, it is now the German who must fight the sun blindness, and his tanks are surrounded and mauled at close range by superior numbers.

That last bit certainly paints a rosy picture, but I have not lost sight of the fact that the British have paid dearly to get to that point. They are playing "catch-up" now, for the Germans have surely scored big and could even have the game well in hand. But overall, I've given them only a slight advantage, for the 16 DVP difference in the Victory Conditions does allow the British to recoup during Turns 2-4 and come back to win. As mentioned previously, it is often a very close game at the end, with desperation taking hold of the battlefield and risky maneuvers surfacing as each side tries for those last few points needed for a win.

Conclusion:

The German might feel a bit smug at the outset as he sits in his tanks and awaits the coming assault. His eyes even gleam a bit as those irreverrent Englishers blister across the open, straight for his 50mm guns. Tank crews calmly slam round after round into the afternoon heat, and still the enemy press on. They stop and fire, then fire again. A few hits are noted and a Mk III bursts into flame. The Mk IIs pack it in and pull out of line. A Mk IV gunner signals he has run out of AP. A Mk III gun overheats; its commander has been foolishly trying to exceed his limits. The message comes, "The enemy have broken through on the left." Lt. Brunner is killed by machinegun fire. Panic sets in all along the line and the scene is one of complete confusion. Enemy tanks are everywhere at once; what ever happened to our cozy little war?



Scenario 36
Rachi Ridge

Rating: 50%-50%

Attraction: In the first published paradrop of the *ASL* system, the Germans drift to earth unopposed—almost. Turns 2 and 3 find them scrambling to regroup in preparation for the expected onslaught, which arrives with typical British aplomb. Fancy the idea of these Fusiliers having a go at this tough assignment; yet they bully their way across undulating and rugged terrain to put the *Fallschirmjaegers* through an ugly ordeal.

German Advantages: High Ground; Time; Morale.

It is tempting to try to put everyone on the board 25 heights and simply dare the enemy forward. Indeed, level 4 is precisely where the 9-2 and both MMGs should be—probably P6 or J6 are the best choices. However, the vagaries of the drop will not always allow such placement, and there is more to be gained by defending in depth and forcing the British to consume as much of their precious little time as possible for each position taken. Even though the scenario card says 10 turns, the enemy have only eight to accomplish their VC and their best weapon, the 9-2 leader, has only seven. They must hustle to clear all level 4 hexes, and you can best compound their problems by showing local strength in key spots scattered all over the battlefield. More specifics on that score later. The key is to use the high ground for the heavy weapons (those few you have) and bottle up the attack elsewhere with squad firepower, which is admittedly hampered with a four-hex normal range. But your final advantage, morale, should allow your troops to stand and fight, even on unequal terms strengthwise. All the while these delaying skirmishes contribute to the deterioration of the British timetable.

German Disadvantages: Scatter; Range; TEM.

This action begins with a shotgun approach to defense. The German player gets only 50% chance of hitting each drop point, and even then each individual parachute counter can drift as many as five hexes—and will likely end up in two half-squads. This deploying process itself can easily deplete the standard compliment of 2-3-8 HS provided with the game, so it's no small problem when one considers the loss of range and firepower inherent in this transformation. There are not enough leaders to ensure that all HS will recombine prior to the British entrance; some units might even miss the battlefield entirely and not be able to return. The SW must be recovered; somebody will likely land on a crag or building and fail a MC; and the enemy Sniper and booby-traps add more misery to this "unopposed" landing. But most of the troops will normally be somewhere in the playing area and will be able to dish out some punishment. The problem with this is that they cannot dish it with a very long spoon. A normal range of four hexes is something of a problem when facing an enemy with a range of five for most of his squads and a minimum of seven for his 11 SW. The German LMGs and MMGs alleviate this somewhat, but still come up short against the British SW which are directed by leadership every bit as effective as their own.

The lack of trees and scarcity of buildings, added to the difficulties of entrenching, more or less force the defense to cling to height advantage, olive groves, crags and Crest status. Because it is the only +2 TEM available over a good part of the battlefield, Crest status in particular will be a valuable tool. But, for the most part, the defense will depend on +1 terrain, an unpleasant prospect but an unavoidable one except where the Sniper and booby trap threats are successfully challenged, which might entail several turns of risk due to the extra +2 DRM on entrenching attempts. Countering that DRM with the 9-2 leader would be the act of a desperate gamer, in my opinion, for as sure as you're sitting while reading these words, he is the one who will take that booby trap, and the Sniper might strike him no matter who is making the actual entrenchment attempt.

German Defense:

The best thing to do here is try for a good set-up, while expecting to settle for making the most of what is left after the drop. The first decision is how to arrange your three wings. If you drop everyone as full squads, there will be two full wings and the third will have only three squads. But the option is open to deploy one or two squads, and this can be used to make the three wings more or less equal in manpower with no additional hazard in the form of injuries. (Notice that were there 14 German squads, as in the initial version of this scenario, there could be four wings if two squads were deployed.) I would try to drop the #1 Wing with the 9-2, five squads and both MMGs, plus maybe the 8-0, in the vicinity of 25J6. Wing #2 includes the 9-1, five squads and two LMGs and heads for 18X5, with the intention of defending some combination of that hill, the X8-P4 wadii, the wall and the 18CC3-25K5 wadii line. Should they actually hit this target, their drift will determine exactly where the defense will be. The third wing is composed of the 8-1, three squads and two LMGs. They want to land around 25Z4 with the intent of slowing any enemy advance from the south. With the north so blocked by wings #1 and #2, a southern attack is likely, so this smallest group might have the toughest job. But this outlines only one possible plan; there are a great many and all will be subject to change as the drop points will *all* survive the E9.12 dr only 12.5% of the time. Unlike the "old" game, there are no tricks available to keep the wings coordinated despite missed drop points, for now a missed drop point entails a totally random pick for the actual landing target.

Well, so much for fantasy. So what do you do when reality strikes in the form of two or three missed drop points? First of all, somebody has to make their way back to the heights of board 25. Second, the 9-2 must be united with the MMGs and located in some defensible terrain, someplace where he has an escape route or rout path, if you will. I think this leader should be run off board 18 if that's where he landed, even at the expense of leaving

behind a few uncombined HS. This helps justify dropping the 8-0 along with him; the 8-0 can stay behind to recombine the HS. The 9-2 is too valuable and so must reach the northern wadii, the 25Y2 village or the board 25 heights before the British arrive. If he were to try to defend the board 18 central wadii or one of the hills on that board, he could be too easily surrounded and eliminated for my taste. The third part of this regrouping concerns the balance of the paras. Their task is to formulate the defense in depth which was discussed in the opening paragraph of this section. They may not be positioned to reach the most ideal locations, but should still be able to plant themselves somewhere from which they can give the attacking British some serious grief. The only exception to this would be those unfortunate few who land too far offboard to do anything more than return onboard (or maybe even don't make it at all) and any poor souls who break upon landing or while trying to dig foxholes and fail to rally.

The optimum placement for the bulk of the defense seems to me to be in the northern half of the board (therefore the espoused drop points above). Any British attack from or across the south has a much longer trek and less favorable terrain to reach the heights of Hill 792. If the north is well defended, the British might even be forced to resort to depending on firepower to knock the defenders off 792 rather than gaining those heights and clearing them by hand. That should prove to be their undoing, for it is a simple enough matter to leave a MMC in 25J7 or some other reverse slope hex where it is safe from enemy fire and will be able to advance onto level 4 on Turn 10 for a win. Any British attacking from the south will have a difficult time negotiating the approaches to Hill 766 while under fire. Don't expect them to make it on time. The reverse slope defense is also a tactic which can work well for a larger number of troops. Hexes such as J7, L7, M8, M7 and P7 are ideal for rally points, hiding, gaining concealment and for making the last stand which challenges the enemy to advance onto the level 4 hexes in the face of deadly fire. Of course, there must be defenders on the front line as well, or the British will simply charge up the slopes unopposed. That cannot be allowed. The endgame should see both sides in the vicinity of Hill 792, each trying to gain final control of the summit.

British Advantages: Sniper; Firepower; Mortars; Booby Traps.

It is fortunate there are booby traps and a "7" Sniper available; the other advantages would likely not be enough to carry the day in this tough battle. The Sniper number means that for every 100 applicable DR, you can expect 5.55 Sniper attacks (100×.1666×.333) compared to your opponent's expected 1.85 attacks. In other words, you should average three times as many Sniper attacks as the German player. The numbers are even a bit more in your favor if you consider that sooner or later you will benefit from an extra Sniper attack or two thanks to random selection ties. But overall, it will mean nothing unless you also employ the wisdom to locate and perhaps even relocate the Sniper counter well. If the Sniper is not within range of the enemy 9-2 leader, I would consider moving it even on a "Sniper-1" dr unless some other valuable target were nearby. Once zeroed in on the 9-2, the Sniper might solve the problem of that hostile −2 DRM for you. Because of this Sniper and the booby traps, you should be ready to take any shot at the enemy which might result in even a PTC. The more of such chances, the more you will benefit.

On their own, of course, the Sniper and booby traps could not do a thing about winning the scenario. These British do possess a tremendous amount of firepower, and will be truly overwhelming anytime they can engage the enemy at a nine- or ten-hex range, simply because the enemy squads cannot even return fire at such range. The big kicker is that 9-2 with the HMG and both MMGs. He can rake all level 4 frontline positions with 2(−1) or 4(−1) fire from 18R9. Anyone in his normal range will be staring down a 24-table attack (counting the squads). With ROF luck, this attack might sweep clean all available targets. Facing return fire from the enemy 9-2 in 25J6, these lead troops should easily withstand the 2(+1) attack he can muster with the two MMGs. Should the enemy 9-2 be at closer range, the British attack would likely run around him to bring combined firepower upon him from several directions at once.

Never underestimate the value of those 51mm mortars. The point will be driven home most significantly should you manage to bring one of them within range of a key enemy strongpoint and lay in a round of smoke. Smoke in the enemy hex completely changes the tactics of assaulting that position. Instead of a −2 DRM for running at it across open ground, the DRM suddenly becomes +2! Even if the position itself cannot be hit, placing smoke in the LOS between the enemy and open ground you must cross might be just the thing to break open an entire flank, or to crack that impregnable outpost. Using smoke tactics with a mild breeze blowing from the west will even grant the bonus of drifting smoke; it is a valuable tool which the German cannot counter or match. Cover your virgin ears!

British Disadvantages: Difficult Terrain; Dispersed VC Area.

At least this is not one of those scenarios in which the defender sits secure in +3 TEM stone buildings. It will be tough enough to work across all the open ground, traverse the wadiis and scramble up the four levels to reach Hill 792 while facing enemy positions in +1 TEM. Still, I believe the rigours could be easily overcome were it not for the fact that hills 766 and 758 must also be secured. The attack almost surely will be split or originate from the south, either of which exact a fearful toll from the cutting edge of the main drive on Hill 792. These British troops should easily enough persevere against the Germans stacked against them if only they can get at them all in time. But those defenders are so strewn about the battlefield, holding objectives as far apart as 19 hexes, that it is dreadfully difficult to go at them all at once. Anything can happen in this system (one of the big reasons why I like it) and a very small force might take Hill 758 from a superior defending force—so that possibility is always present. But it's not something one can expect. The influx of strength such a move would allow the northern assault might be sufficient to assure the success of that group, but the serious commander must then second-guess the likelihood of suffering a complete rebuff in the south. The answer will never be the same, for it depends much on how the enemy land, and is covered in more detail in the following section.

British Attack:

Although much will depend on the nature of the defense, there are a few constants to consider in the attack. First, you must decide whether you will advance the dismantled machineguns or set them up (R9 is my favorite) in preparation for the 9-2 to come in and take control on Turn 4. If the enemy are holding the board 25 ridgeline, I like to use this tactic. If they have yielded that defensive position, by all means move the heavy weapons forward. Remember, even if the R9 position draws return fire, it will be very light due to the range and the stone building, and it is better to have that firepower directed where you are strong rather than against your advancing infantry, who are much more fragile.

Second, the main avenue of the assault must be chosen. My favorite is the north, but I also expect the enemy to defend there the heaviest, especially if playing a past opponent who might have knowledge of my preference. But if the defense is weak there, whether due to lack of familiarity with my choice or a bad drop or because (gasp!) my opponent hasn't read these words, the buildings and wall and wadii afford about the best protection to be found on the battlefield. Unfortunately, if you follow this plan and Hill 758 is also defended, the second attacking force headed for that hill will be entirely on their own, although with possible support from the R9 firebase. If there are more than just a few Germans in this southern area, however, it would probably be best to focus the attack up the center of board 18, through the wadii and the brush. Unless the enemy are not on levels 3 and 4, those board 18 hills will not provide any cover due to the great height advantage of the Germans, so don't count on much here unless R9 and your Sniper can do a number on any such high-level defenders.

However, following the wadii to 18P4 does at least bring you to the center of the board. From this point, it might have to be a footrace to get to either the village or the crags around 25Q4. But enemy dispositions might be such that a bold move is called for. This can happen even on the first turn of your entry too, so watch for it. On the other hand, if resistance is still pinning you down in the wadii, you still have smoke, assault move and advance to try to work your way free without risking FFMO and FFNAM in combination. Unfortunately, a well-placed German might have you nailed in this position, which would suggest that your choice to take this avenue was perhaps an error. It's not an easy piece of ground to traverse, so I would take it only if the enemy could not respond quickly enough to put heavy fire on you in the 18P4 area by Turn 5—about the time you'll be there and trying to exit the wadii.

Any attack from the south might easily end in disaster, due primarily to the lack of cover in the area. A unit on Hill 758 can see every hex on board 18 south of G10 (except F0 which is protected by the cliff); level-3 defenders have nearly as good a view, and even those Germans on level 2 can see almost every hex out there. The wadii in 25GG3-CC3 will not provide any cover to units lucky enough to get to it either. The only attack which will work against a well-defended Hill 758 is one of 9-10 hex range, outside the range of those enemy squads. The best assault on this hill would consist of hitting it with a smoke round or two and rushing it. But if this area is lightly defended, you might try a quick charge up the slopes. Expect to lose some troops, but those who follow might be able to control this southern objective by Turn 5 if you've been lucky against minimal resistance.

With only five leaders I do not recommend splitting the attack into more than two groups. Should the 9-2 remain in 18R9 to dish out some long-range machinegun fire, he will eventually have to move to assist the final assault on Hill 792, so I don't actually consider him leading a third group. For that matter, he might just as easily be needed in the south for the final push on 758. My hope for him is that he and the Sniper eventually subdue the enemy 9-2 and those MMGs, which would allow him to lead his troops forward to the 18S1 building, 25S2 crag or the village as an intermediate step before committing to the final push. The longer he can remain situated in this manner, the more certain you will be that once committed he will head for the location which needs him the most.

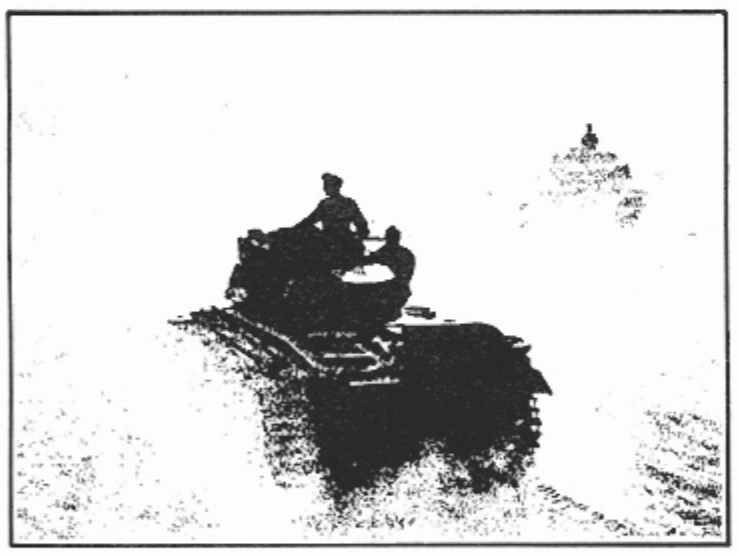
Since the enemy are not onboard at the time you place your Sniper and you don't know where his 9-2 is anyway, Hill 792 seems like the ideal spot to locate the counter. Even if all wings miss this area, someone is bound to head for it; the Sniper, in all likelihood, will hit whoever makes the most progress. Another approach might be to watch

where the wing originally targeted for that hill ends up; bank on it containing the 9-2, and position the Sniper to strike there. Whatever Sniper tactic you employ, a little planning of this sort will go a long way. I wouldn't hesitate to move him with my SAN of "7"; just make sure you have a legally better spot to move him for you must still meet the placement requirements of A14.2.

The finale comes on Turn 10 in this one. I wouldn't expect to ascend the heights before that turn. If you have forced the Germans to adopt a reverse-slope defense and can gain some concealment prior to moving onto the summit, your cause will be greatly enhanced. But you can't always count on that extra bit of security and might need to move onto the summit with plans of advancing into the enemy on the west slope. That tactic, at least, will tie them up such that they shouldn't be able to escape your melee grasp to advance back up themselves. There will also be those games in which the final struggle is on the summit itself or, worse yet, even on the eastern slopes. These are more desperate times for the British, but not nearly so desperate as that of the commander whose attack has languished and finds that he must rely on firepower to knock the Germans off the heights. As mentioned earlier, a single German MMC able to advance back up to one of the level 4 victory hexes is all that is needed to pull out a win in this case. But you British commanders might take heart yet, for the Sniper lurks nearby and might oblige you with an unexpected win. I've seen it happen more than once or twice. So long as there is hope, I'd hang in there and give it my best.

Conclusion:

The Fusiliers push the attack even to the point of running across the open upon occasion. The defenders are overwhelmed in several locations and still the attack proceeds up the hills. A round or two of smoke whistles in and signals the final assault upon the peaks. The Fallschirmjaegers consider their comrades and the magnitude of the attack and know, most of them, that their way is crashing to an end this day.



Scenario 37
Khamsin

Rating: 50%-50%

Attraction: Yet another first for the desert, a combined-arms battle featuring new terrain, new entrenchments and a bizarre sort of climate. British and German forces struggle to even find one another. The "wide-open" spaces have turned into a close quarters arena with a maximum range of but ten hexes. The whole confrontation might best be described as a "massive, multi-hex melee."

British Advantages: Grant Tanks; Superior Infantry.

Those two Grants are undoubtably the backbone of the defense. Most everything else should go into protecting their flanks, trying to force the German straight onto their guns. A hull-down Grant, with its frontal turret armor of "11", is all but impregnable to every enemy gun except the Marder. The bow 75mm gun won't be able to fire from such a position, but it might be swung around to cover a flank or even left facing down the anticipated German attempts to charge up onto a hillock as a means of overcoming the HD problem. The German player might feel a bit reluctant to do this if he knows the move will bring another 75mm gun into play. For that matter, even the side armor of these Grants is as good as the frontal armor of the German panzers; these are truly outstanding vehicles in this situation.

Protecting the flanks of the two Grants is a bit of a problem with all those enemy tanks out there, able to move about with some amount of ease due to the storm. The Crusaders, the Stuart and the 40L AT gun certainly help, but it is the infantry who must carry the lion's share of this load. They are able to contribute in this manner largely due to the protection of the storm, but also because they possess eight AFV-killing weapons in addition to their CC abilities. If the German is overly aggressive with his halftracks, he might dig himself a hole very deep in DVP—one from which he might not escape. His tanks are also susceptible to these eight SW and must be leery of CC situations. Because of the storm, infantry in "Khamsin" are able to waltz right up to enemy armor with surprising immunity to fire; CC will be high on the priority list of tank killing means for both sides.

British Disadvantages: Encirclement/Rout; Mobility.

By Turn 3, there might be Germans on all sides, totally enveloping your positions. Once in this situation, you may not be able to rout and you will come under the influence of Encirclement in choice locations. There will also be enemy troops and tanks intermixed with your troops by this time and the whole mangled brawl does a fair job of nailing you down in your positions. There may be a tendency for the defenders to grow frustrated and even panicky. They must rely on their morale and the cover provided by the storm to see them through several turns of this kind of action. That little matter is complicated by the fact that they cannot be content with defending themselves; they must also stave off disaster for the Grants as well. Any British who break in the middle and latter stages of the game might be lost for good with their rout denied by surrounding Germans. The enemy, on the other hand, will usually still be able to rout, although fear of losing this ability might preclude them from taking too great a risk themselves.

British Defense:

There are three basic defenses worth considering, and all are viewed here from the perspective of locating the sangars and tanks (since the infantry go in those sangars anyway). The easiest defense to establish is the attempt to hold all three hillock summits. This is probably not the best idea because it makes the enemy's job a relatively simple matter of steamrolling them one at a time. However, it does play upon the fact that the 8½ turns puts some pressure on the Germans, and they might have to split their force to take all three summits. None of these will be pushovers either, for there will be three sangars adjacent to each summit hex. That's right: the British avoid the temptation to place a sangar on the summit, and instead make it a much more defensible spot by guarding all around it. Any Germans who want to ascend that rise must move adjacent to all three sangars, or nullify them in advance. In this defense, I like the ATG in 28DD9 or even 27Z1, although the latter is a bit exposed. But the big problem with this defense is that there is no coordination between British armor and infantry. The obvious place for the armor in this deployment is right in the center, around 27CC1—but this is a terrible spot. The infantry are not situated to protect the tanks and I expect them to be caught by side and rear shots at close range by Turns 3 and 4. The alternative is to place the tanks individually around each summit and hope that this dispersal gives the Germans more trouble. More likely, it will merely lead to the loss of all British armor. I don't much care for this defense.

Much better is to pick one spot and defend it with everything. Try sangars in 28oY5, Y7, Z8, oAA6, oBB4, oBB7, BB9, oCC6, oDD7 and oDD9. The ATG and sangar go in 28BB2, and the tanks spread out behind the hillock from 28BB3 to EE8. The Crusaders are formidable enough in HD positions thanks to their superior turret armor, small size, ROF, Multiple Hits and "T" guns. But they are vulnerable to an infantry attack, so don't stick them out on a limb or the enemy will simply walk up to them and CC them into oblivion. This defense is best to use against an opponent who has developed an appreciation for coming across the southern edge in order to avoid attacking into the Heavy Wind (F11.761). It allows the tanks to assume their positions on their turn of entry and forces the Germans to attack through the entire infantry contingent in order to get to summit 28oBB6. But it gives away the other two summits without a fight, allows the enemy attack to concentrate on one target, and leaves the right flank somewhat up in the air to an attack directly across the north edge. Some of these problems might be amended by relocating the ATG into the center rear of the action and by placing the AFVs further northwest behind the hillock with the sangars spread out a bit more to protect them. This might be the best defense against an unknown opponent; it has been the defense of choice in the games I have seen. An obvious alternate is to do very much the same thing around summit 27oAA4. But that is where the enemy will usually be headed from the start, and it takes the British armor until their Turn 2 to get there; the Mk IIIs will arrive first. Just to throw a monkey-wrench into things, either of these defenses might stick a single sangar out onto one of the vacant summit hexes. The single defender inside might well tie up an inordinate number of the enemy for several turns, and could be a small risk that will yield great benefit.

The third option I want to review is the most interesting in my opinion. It is based on the assumption that the Germans will need to use their infantry to gain the upper hand against the British tanks. If we can expect them to try to come in for some CC action, what is the best way to prepare for it? I think the best thing to do is to park the tanks on top of "sangared" infantry. Picture sangars in 28oY8, oZ3, oZ5, BB3, oBB5, oBB8, oCC7, DD5 and EE8, with the ATG in sangar in 28FF5. The Grants are in 28oAA7 and oCC7, and the Crusaders in 28oZ5 and EE8. The Stuart might be in 28oZ3 to help cover the right flank. Should the German attack come across the north instead of the south, these armor locations would swing around 90-degrees to the right in order to face the coming assault head-on. With infantry in the hex with this armor, we see the benefits of combined arms. The infantry help keep out enemy infantry and the armor helps keep away the panzers. The very presence of these tanks also forces the German infantry to pass PAATC before they can enter CC. The big benefit is that once in CC, the infantry gives the German a positive DRM on their CCV attack. For the final version of this defense, consider placing the tanks in between the sangars and advancing the infantry out underneath them. Now there is more than a single squad under each tank; their cover is as good as that of the sangar; and the enemy must worry about entering CC with anything less than several squads of their own. I would hesitate to place any concealed infantry in these hexes, for their −2 Ambush DRM will be nullified by the +2 for vehicle, possibly

another +1 for BU, and could also suffer positive modifiers for the condition of the infantry in the hex. Don't forget you can always drop concealment prior to any Ambush rolls if it is apparent you would be at a disadvantage on these rolls. Such a decision would be most appropriate of the British, opting to stand up and fight like men instead of slinking into battle.

Just a word of caution about any ideas of counter-attack. There will probably be times when you are sure the best thing to do is run off into the enemy rear and wreck all his halftracks. Just think of all those points! Well, that opportunity might happen, but I think it unlikely. The halftracks will usually be in motion, you must consider the dust and your own motion as well as the small targets, and weight these against the detriment to your summit defense any armored departures will entail. For that matter, only the Stuart is fast enough to catch the halftracks. Let's imagine you can spare it and send it on a hunt for points. It catches the halftracks by surprise, but still must rolls "eyes" to hit an adjacent motion halftrack (+2 motion, +1 small target, +1 dust, +4 for Case C). Should it hit it, the TK# is "11", and that should bring four or six points. But at what risk does it run this halftrack gauntlet? The in-motion HT cannot make a TK attempt since Motion status is a form of halved firepower, but it could shoot at the exposed crew of the Stuart. Probably better, it could first roll a Motion attempt in order to align its VCA with an escape avenue outside the CA of the Stuart. Should the Stuart elect to Bounding Fire, that would free the halftrack to make another free CA spin in Final Fire rather than return fire in order to face yet another direction. The halftracks could also swarm the tank; a "3" or "4" TK number versus its rear armor might actually do it in. But the most likely event will see the halftracks run away to the protective cover of the German tanks and the Marder.

A counterattack by the entire armored force, however, will be something worthwhile upon occasion. But I advise against it until such time as the enemy advance has been halted. Best to secure the defense before taking up the attack yourself. Should the German falter, it would be wise to hit back before he recovers his composure. Just make sure it's not a premature move on your part. Sending a few tanks out into the fray, away from the protection of the infantry, would be the easiest way to lose a won-game. Sending them out to maul the last few survivors of an already crushed opponent, though, would be a great way to end a winner and put the enemy out of their misery.

German Advantages: Leaders; Firepower; Overrun; Weather.

I'll pick the side with the two −2 leaders on the attack nearly every day. All three armor leaders should probably go in the Mk IIIs, but once in awhile it might be productive to fool your opponent and put one in a halftrack. Coupled with a squad and LMG, this makes for a 16(−1) (or even −2) overrun attack from an unexpected source. Very good for finishing off broken positions, as well as for pulling adjacent to hexes in which you placed an AFV with enemy infantry and blasting away with 20(−1) fire in your DFPh. But the 9-2 infantry leader is your best unit, able to encourage most any troops to enter CC with enemy AFVs, and usually helping to dispose of them once there.

The overwhelming thing about the German firepower is the many AFV machineguns. Some 88 factors here, which can be driven up to the enemy lines and wielded immediately to compensate for the lack of any great amount of infantry firepower. Add the two 75mm guns, the IFE from the Mk IIs and even some 50mm fire, and it is obvious there is plenty of punch in this armored force—maybe enough to win without the infantry if only it weren't for the undeniable deterioration of the panzers as the British guns begin to take their toll. And the tanks won't simply stand and fire either. Because they must pave the way for the foot soldiers to move in and do the final clean-up, some of the panzers will be needed to overrun British infantry. Again, it is the power of the machineguns which makes overruns by the Mk IIIs and Mk IV a "16" table attack, and even the Mk IIs are on the "12" table. The halftracks are only a "6" table attack on their own, but reach the "16" table with a squad and LMG loaded, as mentioned above. These attacks will usually be the key to taking any position you want. Once overrun, your own troops can move up adjacent for an advance in to occupy the hex. To speed up this process against already broken enemy infantry, don't forget that your halftrack passengers which do not fire can unload in the enemy hex itself. Pulling this maneuver in a hex containing Good Order enemy infantry, however, can run the gamut from "act of desperation" to "brilliant move".

Were it not for the unusual weather, this would be a much different battle. As it is, the heavy dust provides excellent cover for both infantry forces as well as some added protection for the armor. It certainly brings the effective range of heavy weapons to a pittance. On that score, it must be considered a heavy German advantage, for it would be difficult to imagine the infantry and halftracks traversing all that open ground intact without the swirling dust. As much as that outright screening, this amount of dust permits the Germans to pick and choose their point of attack. Even if they have lined up on one side and decide to switch to the other, they will be able to make the change without taking undue fire, thanks to the fact that they can maneuver outside of enemy LOS. They must do the attacking, and there is no FFMO to worry about; it is replaced by a +1 TEM for every two hexes of range (FRU). Close Combat is what the German player wants, and it is what he usually gets thanks to the storm.

German Disadvantages: Tough DVP Criteria; Brittle Infantry Force.

I avoided discussing the DVP in the British section so I could cover it here. It's fairly obvious that the British would like to score an insurmountable number of DVP and force the Germans to adopt a reckless demeanor in their attempts to recoup the lost points. It is the German who is stuck with the dilemma of taking those three summit hexes at minimal cost in DVP. To do it he must arrange a series of trade-offs, taking enemy positions one by one with maximum force thrown at each one in order to preserve his force. His losses are certain to be higher though on the run in, so he must overwhelm the enemy in order to take them prisoner whenever possible. This is where Encirclement and surrounding them comes in handy. Without proper use of these advantages to gain extra prisoner points, I fear the German is trusting too much to luck in a fairly equal armor and infantry slugfest.

Despite the wonderful leadership and morale, the scant six 4-6-8s might turn out to be your doom. I believe it would take incredible luck for the British to take them all out before the end of the game, but should they manage to KIA the 9-2, or keep him broken for several turns, the squads might have too much trouble maintaining good order, and with a few of them out of the action over several turns, the remainder may not be able to carry on for the win. The unfortunate part of this is that those squads are needed badly so you can't hide them either. The game can come down to your last remaining squad or half-squad making the final assault on the last summit or on the last enemy tank, trying to get in and score the telling DVP. It's that kind of supreme effort needed from the infantry this time around.

German Attack:

The easiest bit of terrain to cover is in the north, but the flank of choice is the south. This is because an attack from the south and southwest will keep the Heavy Wind from your eyes. If you proceed around the east of summit 27oAA4 to hit the enemy in the southeast, it will be their eyes taking the abuse from that wind. Notice that the British will likely not place anyone west of the "Y" row, in order to deny you any freedom of movement from your massive platoon on Turn 1. Since the maximum LOS is ten hexes and the platoon can reach only the "N" row on the first turn, you will see units only as far west as the "W" row. Anyone hiddden in 28U6 will be placed onboard only if you move within six hexes of it (F11.601), which can't happen until Turn 2 at the earliest.

I don't intend to spend a great deal of time on the deployment of the platoon. There are many ways to arrange it and I'm not 100% happy with any configuration I have found. Just one item to consider is the 13MP maximum speed which allows the platoon to traverse one hammada, with tanks only, without slowing. The halftracks in the rear float back and forth along the line to avoid moving even adjacent to hammada, for moving there would slow progress or chance immobilization. Notice that with the six Mk IIIs in the front line and the other four tanks floating directly behind them, it is possible to skirt around a hammada and scrub hex here and there. When the front row splits to go around such a hex, the tanks are still adjacent to tanks in their rear who are adjacent to both parts of the front line. Then the front line closes ranks and the second line splits around the same hex. The halftracks, of course, must string out two hexes away, but they will eventually have to move adjacent to hammada sooner or later. In the end, there is no truly outstanding deployment I can recommend. I've never seen the British set up everyone beyond the "CC" row, but if they did you would not see them until your Turn 3 movement. They could also be strung out behind the hillocks as far west as 28V0 and you wouldn't be able to see their sangared positions. But I think the reason this defense has never been tried is obvious; it gives away too much for very little gain in time.

By Turn 2 the attack will reach hexrow S and begin to engage the westernmost sangars and any tanks which have ventured out that far. If the enemy are defending the 28oBB6 hillock all the way out to V0, your choice is either to swing around it to the southeast, or move immediately and attack that western outpost with superior force. Remember, anybody who moves directly on the enemy will be in position on Turn 2 at long range, and Turn 3 at close range. Anyone you send around a flank to hit the enemy from the southeast or northeast will not be in position until Turn 4 at the earliest. My choice attack is to crash into the enemy north or south board edge flank with the bulk of my panzers backed by three or four squads with the 9-2, while the remainder swing around the other flank to hit the British from that end. By the time we all are firing, some of the enemy will be taking Encirclement and their rout will be impaired or even non-existant. The two forces continue to chew into the enemy, advancing toward one another in a heavy CC and Overrun-style attack.

A good alternative is to hit with everything you've got at one point. Such a "sledgehammer" should overwhelm the point of attack. Although it concedes the advantages of a two-pronged attack, it can be very effective against a British linear defense, since the enemy on the far side of the line will pay a high-dust DRM to engage you, and so can be mostly ignored while you concentrate all your firepower on closer targets. In this manner, the dust allows you the advantage of dealing with the enemy bit by bit despite their concentrated deployment.

Keep the Marder at long-range, 10 hexes, from the nearest enemy tank. With this weapon protecting the halftracks, and the Mk IIIs up front protect-

ing it, you have something of a leap-frog type attack. The enemy tank will probably fire at the more certain targets—those Mk IIIs—rather than fight the dust in a shot at the Marder. The Marder fires first in your Fire Phase. As soon as it hits a target, you should have a kill. This frees the Mk IIIs to leap ahead and engage the next closest enemy. In a typical turn, some of them will fire and some will move up. One or two each might be Overrunning, and once you've worked into the enemy in this fashion, even the halftracks will be able to come forward and lend their AAMG fire to the cleaning-up process.

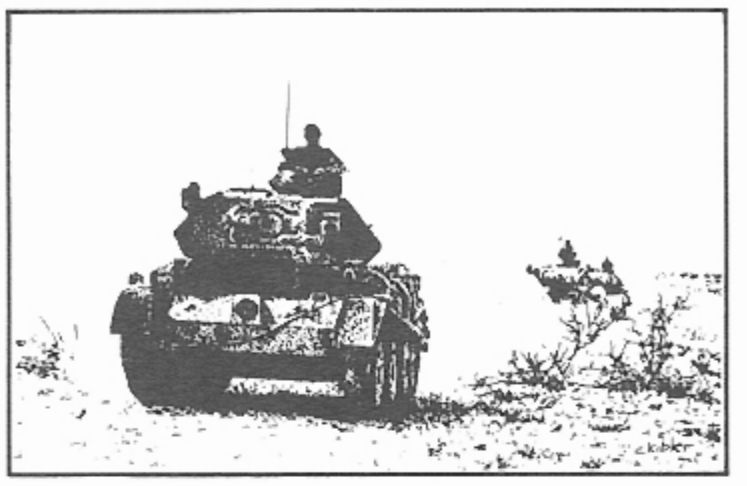
The infantry should unload on Turn 2, at least some of them. You might leave a couple aboard for later Overruns, and any detached with a flanking maneuver will naturally still be loaded as well. But those destined to participate in the main push will find themselves unloaded around midboard. This may seem a strange place to unload, but I prefer it for several reasons. They can move as fast on foot as the halftracks can in this heavy dust—actually faster with the Advance Phase included. They are less vulnerable to elimination on foot; there is no halftrack to blow-up around them. And believe me, with loaded infantry the halftracks are the most valuable pieces onboard; the one with the 9-2 aboard is worth 11 points. The points for the halftracks themselves are not something I want to give away, so they will not be exposed to enemy fire so freely. Later on, when things are busier, perhaps they might dash in for some action. At the start, however, there are too many underemployed British guns out there for my taste.

I think a turn or two of armored dueling might be in order if conditions are favorable, but no more than two turns. On Turn 5 at the latest, the final drive must commence in earnest. Overrun the infantry, or even simply drive into their hex if you are out of MP. They won't be able to fire at your infantry, Mk IIs and halftracks which follow. If the enemy tanks are CE, try overrunning them with a panzer which has malfunctioned MA (or even one with functioning MA if you feel like showing him you mean business). Suppose you are facing down a Crusader which has one of your Mk IIIs Acquired. As soon as that Acquired tank tries to move it will get popped. Maybe it would be best to Prep Fire in an attempt to take out the Crusader. Should that fail, how about using other tanks to charge the enemy in an attempt to draw up adjacent to him and pound him with bounding fire? No matter what happens, I bet the Crusader will lose his Acquistion on the first tank. Or how about forming up a platoon on the spot with two Mk IIIs and a Mark II, charging the Mk II into the Crusader's hex, stopping and bounding firing the Mk IIIs at the Crusader point blank. The Mk IIIs have a better chance of hitting the Crusader than it has of hitting the Mk II. At lot to think about here.

This line of thought could go on but I think the point has been made that this wide-open, mobile battle leaves a very great deal of room for the attacker (and the defender as well) to try some tactics that would ordinarily be considered ludicrous. The cover provided by heavy dust is the reason for it. Like imposing the parameters of night upon the gamer, heavy dust forces each player to operate with his learned tactics and accepted maxims ("never rush a HMG in the open . . . ") modified by a few simple rules which, for all intents and purposes, make it very nearly an entirely different game.

Conclusion:

The British cling to their sangars and the protection of the tanks, while to the west shadowy forms of the enemy drift into view. By the time they see them, it is almost too late. The wind whips dust through every pore of one's skin; do the enemy feel it too? They come on as though they don't, and it is soon forgotten as the immediacy of defending oneself leaps up to take precedence over the mindless worries of the infantryman. The afternoon becomes one of fighting closer to the enemy than discretion would dictate. Seen at close proximity, it is evident the dust clings to the enemy as well. We suffer the elements together; they permeate our lives and cover our fallen comrades as one.



Scenario 38
Escape from Derna

Rating: 60% pro-German

Attraction: This is desert fighting in as vast an arena as we'll see in these eight scenarios. The few German defenders cling tenaciously to their scant cover as a virtual parade of British vehicles comes at them. Vehicle Dust makes its first appearance, and coupled with Intense Heat Haze, the defending AT guns often find their shots going astray in between the long-range, in-motion targets and crafty placement of the attacker's smoke.

German Advantages: 37L AT Guns; Open Terrain.

The two advantages work hand-in-hand. The British will have a devil of a time coming across all that open ground in the face of those three 37L guns. (The original playtest version had four of those guns!) Every fire phase all three fire; the average number of non-Intensive Fire shots from these will be six. The six 20L guns of the armored cars and the ten SWs also make life hazardous for the enemy infantry and unarmored/lightly-armored vehicles; but it will be the ATGs which control the enemy tanks. If they can be destroyed, the PSWs should then command the freedom of movement needed to disrupt the enemy and prevent him from exiting enough DVP. That does assume, however, that the British 88s and the portee can also be silenced.

German Disadvantages: Isolated; Heavy Weapons.

I think the Germans are forced to defend in a series of isolated pockets either two, three or four in number. If more than three, there are not enough leaders to go around and I will call that spreading it thin. There is too much ground and too little cover for the Germans to spread out and try to defend a line, or even anything resembling a line. They must cluster around the three leaders; I would even try to get the AT guns in the same general area as a leader and potential ad hoc crews. What this deployment results in, however, is a few small clusters which will be so spread out that they will have difficulty protecting one another. The enemy will be able to concentrate on the one of their choice while remaining far from the others. Some Germans will be forced to set out in the open in order to bring aid to the threatened flank. In this manner, the British will themselves gain some advantage from the open terrain, listed in the preceding section as a German advantage.

For all the decent weapons in the German arsenal, they lack any which offer exceptional killing power. Even the 37Ls can't guarantee a kill against "0" armor or unarmored targets ("9" and "8" TK numbers respectively). Against the frontal armor of the A13s the TK number is a mere "6" at a 3-18 hex range. These numbers aren't all that bad, but compare them to the British 88's TK number versus the PSW armor of but "1" (12) or the British 40L's against the same target (9), and it is evident the Germans are at a distinct disadvantage in the killing power game. I think this weakness is fairly well offset at first by the high ROF of the German guns, but those AC breakdown numbers of "11" bode ill for their staying power. Also, if the three ATGs actually take their average six shots per fire phase, one of them should break down in the first three turns, but only after or during a stretch of 36 shots! Maybe not a great deal to cheer about for the British after all.

German Defense:

First thought is to put some infantry in the overlays. The sand and deir offer some protection true, but the hillock on board 27 doesn't help too much unless the British come straight at it so that you can keep it between you and them. Otherwise, the hillock is either outflanked to the north or too far from the action should the enemy head for 26U10 to exit. Its main purpose seems to be to protect the road and to provide a haven for those armored cars until such time as they sally forth to some great purpose. But I want to concentrate my troops more than by splitting them between these three outposts. Therefore, in order to guard both the 26U10 exit area and the road/northern route, I like placing foxholed troops northeast of the sand, and troops in sangars in the 28FF9-26DD1 area. This group at the intersection of the road and the German set up line covers not only the road but also the northern board edge and the left flank of their comrades to the southwest. One ATG goes in 26oR7, and the other two go in the sangar complex at the junction of the four boards—the "Four Corners" defense.

It is tough to resist convention and not place troops in the sand, deir and hillock; I didn't like it this way the first time either. But I wouldn't recommend it here without good reason. During the playtest, the British attack usually skirted across the west and pushed for an exit at 26U10 (although it was board 27 then and the exit hex was P10). Defenders in the deir and on the hillock were too easily left out as that type of action developed. With the northernmost defenders situated at the four corners, however, they were able to hit any attacker with fire and are only a turn's movement away from reaching the extreme flank on either side. The AT guns have close support from both the infantry and a leader apiece for rally purposes. The foxhole group, adjacent to the sand, provides stiff resistance to any British thrust at that exit area and are still situated in potential Bog hexes. Their foxholes lend a +2 TEM instead of the +1 TEM they would supply if placed in the sand, and the +4 Overrun protection is very tough for the British to overcome.

One of the nicest little coups allowed by this deployment is the HMG in 28GG9, on the road. From here, it can either roll a TH as far away as 28Q1, or can place a Firelane marker in that hex. I doubt any CE AFV or any soft-skinned vehicles will chance to run down that avenue of table "4" attacks. Of course, with two ATGs at the four corners, it might be asking too much to expect the British to come straight down the road. But this at least starts the HMG in a threatening location, from which it can easily enough back into a sangar or foxhole you have spared from the southwestern group. With a leader helping, the HMG could be run down the road to 28Z5 for an advance to Z4, where it will command a great deal of respect from any British on Turn 2 attempting to use the 25oW4-Q1 road. Can the HMG place a Firelane out to 25oX? How about a "2" residual in W4 after the initial 6FP attack? How about combining with a squad for a table "8" attack on the first target

to enter the bridge (hex 25oT2) and leaving a "4" residual in that key hex? Don't forget the ROF too! Well, this all sounds great, but I wouldn't run the HMG out on a limb like this. The initial value of this intimidation would backfire miserably should the British manage to knock out this overextended position. The HMG and leader are simply too valuable throughout the course of the entire game to risk them in such a foolhardy move. That's not to say it will never work; but you are nothing but a "gambler" if you try it. One A13 might be all it takes to run in and overrun you with an "8-1" attack. If that attack fails, it will then shoot off its sD6 in your hex and you can forget that commanding view of the road.

My 37L AT guns will be firing right from the start, unless I've tried to pull a fast one and hidden one in 26E9 or 29AA9. But it would only be on a rare day (or maybe versus Fish) that I'd be willing to do that. The chance for surprise is really not worth forfeiting all the extra shots I might have taken right from the "get-go". Side and rear shots are not all that much better than frontal ones against what the enemy has to offer, so I'll take the greater number of average shots over a smaller number of choice ones. I fully expect to break three AT guns in this scenario, unless the enemy does them in outright. But I also expect to repair at least one, and to score as many Critical Hits as Breakdowns. Not that CHs are all that great here, for the ensuing drifting smoke can provide the British with some excellent cover. The infantry will serve as ad hoc crews whenever needed. The added risk of a Breakdown is as nothing compared to leaving the gun idle. Intensive Fire, however, will be used only in desperation to stop an overrun or at the end of the game.

The armored cars will enter and remain in Motion behind the board 27 hillock. They are the reserve, and will remain in this area until the enemy commits to the attack—probably on Turn 3. From this area, they can move onto the road and charge right through to the 25oQ6-S4 area if the enemy deployment has left an opening. The fire they might put on the overstacked shellhole hex could be enough to win the game. It all depends on how much is there, and how well the British player has protected the ridgeline against this outrageous German tactic. But normally, the armored cars will stay at long range from the British guns, in Motion, and shrouded by vehicle dust and their own sDs. Use of those sDs and the vehicle dust might also come in handy for covering one of your own AT guns or infantry groups which finds itself in trouble. These thinly armored vehicles simply can't take much abuse from the enemy 40L guns; and forget about challenging the 88s on anything but the To Hit table.

Once the enemy drive is in progress, these ACs can make a quick strike at the trucks, Bren carriers and infantry. This, along with some occasional duelling with an outnumbered A13 here or there, will be the primary function of your armored cars. Their best chance are on the IFT versus unescorted infantry and trucks, although I wouldn't hesitate to use them to Overrun those juicy targets as well. Use them to bring Encirclement upon the British and to surround them and void any rout possibilities. The better opponent will protect himself against this, but if the opportunity presents itself, be ready for it.

Expect the final turn or two to be a mad rush of British DVP headed for a fast exit. This is the time when your armored cars or even the infantry might be able to lash out at an unprepared foe as he packs everything in to make good his escape. If you have anything left for this final counterattack, it will probably be the winning difference. Try to establish a firelane across the edge of the board the enemy must traverse on that last turn. Drive your armored cars into the closest exit hexes his infantry can reach. They won't get off the board because they can't enter your hex during movement. Even a well-placed smoke round or two and some vehicle dust might bring a win by virtue of forcing the enemy to expend too many MP/MF to make it off the playing area. Of course, you can also directly attack the enemy and, catching them with their imposing armor in motion, rip up those last few trucks and lightly-armored vehicles. "It ain't over till it's over, but you can't lose if you've won."

British Advantages: 88s; Vehicle Dust; Smoke; Small Targets.

If you can unlimber them, the 88s command as much respect in this scenario as any weapon in any other situation (at least until we see the Crocodile and the AVRE in action). Nothing else on board even approaches their "13" TK and "16" IFT numbers. These are the only guns which pay no C4 penalty beyond 12 hexes. They stand a fair chance of shelling the German infantry into submission, and can easily dispose of the armored cars if only they can hit them. They also are the best way to retaliate against those enemy 37L AT guns. These big guns will attract much fire from the Germans, might not even make it through the shellhole hex in the first place, and if you do decide to fire from a limbered situation their performance will be curtailed.

Vehicle dust and smoke will be the keys to succuss in this encounter. You have 24 vehicles to make dust, seven with sDs and five guns to fire smoke. I would even put the 9-1 armor leader in the A13 MkII CS, and make every effort to keep this valuable asset in the game. In addition, there will be some blazing wrecks before too long. Coupled with the non-burning wrecks, there will eventually be a fair amount of cover on this desert battlefield, although some of it at your own expense. Fortunately, many of your vehicles are small targets and will also be in motion almost continuously. This is a game of avoiding hits, for once they have scored on your lighter vehicles, the Germans will usually get the kill.

British Disadvantages: Organization; Shellhole; HE; Tough VC.

I think the toughest obstacle to overcome is the imposing number of vehicle types headed up the escarpment road. There are twelve different types which somehow have to figure out how they will line up and carry the infantry and guns through the shellhole and up to level 4 and there attack the enemy. This is not a situation one would walk into with a casual frame of mind. It involves reading some vehicle notes, checking out the Bog rules, refreshing your memory on the MP costs for fully-tracked vehicles, armored cars and trucks, and lastly for formulating a plan of attack which might easily prove useless by the fortunes encountered in the shellhole hex. The information is all contained in the rules; I won't waste time re-hashing it here. My preference is to approach the whole operation from the point of view that some of the vehicles will bog and some of the other vehicles can help push them out. The most valuable of the "boggers" are the two Quad Fiat tractors towing the 88 Art. I'd like to use the Mk VIB to help push here, but since that AFV is the best in my arsenal for Overruns (the only one which can claim the "16" table), I might hedge that bet and leave behind an A13. Since the 9-1 armor leader in an assisting AFV can (as per the 1989 Errata) modify the unbogging attempts, it might pay to place him in whatever assisting vehicle will be left behind to help, thus yielding a −2 drm for each unbogging attempt. With this combination, one vehicle per turn of your choice will be freed of bog, guaranteed! The carriers can push the 15-cwt trucks but not the 30-cwt ones, so it's best to normally place the bulk of the infantry, leaders and SW in the lighter trucks. They are also small targets, move faster and may (or may not) fool your opponent who may want to shoot at the potentially bigger prizes (the 30-cwt trucks) thanks to the wonderful innovation in SSR4.

Despite the potential of the 88s, you will be in a major hurting way if they don't make it up the hill and unhook. There is not much else in the British column which can dish out any HE fire. Without the 88s in action, the enemy are free to concentrate on other targets—a nice fringe benefit for them. And since there are nearly three times as many British VP available as they must exit, one might think the Germans need all the help they can get. On the other hand, anyone familiar with the way these scenarios are play-balanced ought to realize that if we start with about 150 DVP and must exit 50, there will probably be about 100 DVP worth of losses and units which cannot exit for various other reasons. For the British, it is a matter of getting out with whatever can make it.

British Attack:

The attack will be as much a flight as an attempt to wage war. The hope is to prevent it from turning into a rout. If the enemy's fire can be screened by smoke, dust, intense heat haze and Motion, so much the better than fighting them. The only clear approach is to create a turmoil of smoke and dust in the 28M2-P0 area to cover the establishment of the 88s in the 28N0 area, or maybe even some spot further to the southeast if a timid enough enemy set-up allows. From that point on, you can deal with any target you like; the 88s will dominate. But the initial hurdle is that shellhole, and it is quite a stumbling block.

The decision of whether or not to send through some tanks before the bulk of the trucks hit that shellhole hex is not as clear cut as it might seem at first glance. You have to face up to the fact that any vehicles which reach the top of the escarpment are really little more than targets the first two turns. The best thing to do about this is to make them more difficult to hit with some smoke and vehicle dust. My favorite lead tank to set-up in 25oU6 is the MkVIB. I expect this low-ground pressure vehicle to traverse the shellhole, reach 25oW2, turn around and enter W3 where it will attempt to fire its sD and end the turn in motion. If successful, there will be vehicle dust in W2 and white dispersed Smoke in W3 which will drift into V2 and U2 at the start of Advancing Fire. The A13s which follow will benefit greatly from this much cover, and pull along the road from U3 to W4 and X3-X2, all firing their sDs when they reach these destinations. They also remain in motion. With a 41% chance of making the sD6 roll, you numbers hounds know there ought to be three dispersed Smoke counters placed by your smoke dischargers. With two drifting smoke hexes for each of these, plus a few vehicle dust counters, the German selection of targets should be severely limited. (Notice that confusion with the vehicle dust counters is easily avoided if you adopt the practice of always pointing the "V" of the dust depiction toward the vehicle which created it, as though the dust were actually billowing out from it.

The next vehicles through, the Quad FATs towing the 88s, will move up to level 4 only if they will be shielded by smoke and dust. Otherwise, they remain in motion in W6 to await a healthier environment on Turn 2. They couldn't reach the top and unload the guns this turn anyway, at least not within decent range of the Germans, and the main thing is to have them through the shellhole. Naturally enough, you might expect one or both of them to bog with their total +3 DRM. They both make it through only 52% of the time, so it would prove wise to follow them up with a vehicle capable of assisting on the unbogging attempt(s) to follow. Since they should both bog only 7% of the time, I think one pushing AFV is enough. On Turn 2, these 88s plan to find the most appropriate spot to

set up shop for some heavy lecturing to the Germans—lecturing of the HE sort. The very best locations are probably 28W2 and 28X0. From here they can see the entire battlefield except a few hexes behind the other hillock, and they receive the +1 TEM from the hillock sheltering them. But it would be risky for the A13s to create a smoke screen this close to the enemy, and without that smoke the Quad FATs would be sitting ducks out here. Now, if the Germans are holding back by the hillock, you have no worries. But I expect them to be closer than that, and so think it rare that you will make it to this hillock with trucks towing the most potent weapons in the game.

More likely you will be able to move these guns up to about 28N0, as mentioned above. I'd try to situate them in the 13-18 hex range from the enemy concentrations, but remain 17 hexes away from the HMG. Here, you are beyond their squad range and every SW is halved (or too far away as in the case of the 50mm mortars). Even if you opt to Area fire at the foxholes, how many 8(+2) attacks can the enemy pass? With a depletion number of "8", I'd make sure it is used only on the 37L ATGs or the HMG. If your infantry is having trouble getting forward and the 88s are taking fire, try using the 51mm mortars to lay flanking smoke around the 88s. This can curtail the enemy fire without disrupting the channel of fire coming from the guns themselves.

Back at the shellhole, the line continues to plunge through, with first the Portee and then the trucks. The rear consists of the carriers and the armored car. The carriers are not there because I have no appreciation of their value (on the contrary, I love these vehicles) but because part of their role is to push any bogged down 15-cwt trucks out. In the closing stages of the scenario, when things are hectic in the mad dash to victory and most of the British tanks are long gone, I expect these carriers to pose a very real and dangerous threat to the Germans. They are so small and seemingly impotent to the uninitiated that they might slip through and drive off board with their 20 DVP. They might overrun for a 4(−1) in open ground. They can stir up vehicle dust and throw crew smoke. They can drive into an enemy hex, unload and TPBF in the Advance Fire Phase, followed by CC. Or maybe they will drive through your kex to leave vehicle dust there when they stop adjacent and unload in preparation for an advance, after automatically recombining with another carrier crew, for some CC activity. I think these vehicles are incredibly adroit on the battlefield and offer a great package of tactical options to the astute British player.

The armored car, on the other hand, is a vehicle which demands very little respect. It will bog down on a roll of "8" or more (a 41% chance). That's why it is in the rear, where it won't slow important vehicles. The best thing might be for it to immobilize in the shellhole and decrease the VC by a point. But it does provide at least ATR protection in the rear, and might hang back with the 88s just in case those German armored cars breakout and make a run at the guns. At the very end, the Marmon-Herrington car can make a run for the exit and, at the very least, draw fire.

The Portee and the A13 MkII CS tank both should set up to compliment the 88s. I like the 9-1 armor leader in the CS tank so he can help it hit the most threatening target every turn (usually one of the 37Ls). The Portee will keep the German armored cars honest, freeing the 88s to consume their HE shells. Once the trucks start breaking out from the shellhole, you will have to decide on the focus of your attack and head that way immediately. This need for expediency is due to the fact that the infantry will not exit on the trucks. If anyone wants to try doing that, please feel free to experiment. I learned my lesson the hard way over several games (play the scenario "Sunday of the Dead" in this issue and you'll have an even better opportunity to learn this) and am here to profess that the infantry must unload and run on their own feet or die in the trucks. It's as simple as that. They will have a long way to go, but can expect help from the 88s' covering fire, heat haze, vehicle dust, smoke and their own return fire as they draw nearer to the enemy. They will also gain some advantage from wrecked trucks which have gone ahead and met their doom. Some might even have caught fire and spread a +2 DRM screen across three hexes for you.

You can expect your DVP to come from a few tanks, quite a few empty trucks, some carriers and probably only a miserly squad or two. If the tanks and the carriers don't make it, I doubt you will reach the DVP level needed. Should the Portee or an 88 make it off, it was probably a rout. I can't imagine winning without using these weapons; and if you use them it will be nearly impossible to load them back up and still get them off in time. Of course, the Portee might have remained loaded; but if it's deployed, notice that any truck, except the Portee itself, might hook it up for a quick exit.

Conclusions:

Heat waves shimmer as the desert sun cooks the defenders in their hastily prepared positions. Out of sight to the north, the enemy are frantically manhandling their vehicles past an engineering blunder of monumental scope, telltale sign of the panic they've seen more and more in recent weeks. Forced to commit to the battle piecemeal, the attack commences nonetheless. The anti-tank guns crack and the dust and smoke swirl. Soon the deeper pounding of 88s announces new dangers for the defenders. There are never enough defenders. Never enough guns; never enough soldiers.

Mr. Nixon's in-depth look at the scenarios of WEST OF ALAMEIN will conclude next issue with "Desert Sands", as he turns to the last four scenarios of the newest module.

☆

REACHING THE WORLD

The Latest News In Competitive Gaming

Area News

For Today ... and Tomorrow

BY DONALD S. BURDICK

There's a lot of news to report this time, so I'll get right to it. First an update on the *BATTLE OF THE BULGE* ladder competition that I wrote of last time. The Burdick-Garbutt match was decided in favor of Burdick when Garbutt's Allies surrendered. The other game is still undecided (with the roles reversed), but the tiebreaker system guarantees me a successful title defense. The Grant-Malaska match on Rung #2 is well underway. The winner of that match will challenge me for the title in the second round of games. Dale Garbutt will then occupy the third position on the ladder for the second round. His opponent will depend on whether any others join the ladder in time to participate in the first round.

A ladder system for *STALINGRAD* is in the final stages of formation. By the time this column appears, the *STALINGRAD* ladder will definitely be in place with David Kopp, the current AREA champion, in the top spot. Other Round 1 positions will be determined within the month, based upon the overall AREA ratings of the participants. Likely players include myself, Steven Sutton, Kevin McCarthy and John Grant. Verified AREA members who would like to join the *STALINGRAD* ladder competition should write immediately to Don Greenwood at Avalon Hill. Participation in the ladder tournament does not require a game-specific AREA membership for *STALINGRAD*.

The next ladder system to form will almost certainly be for *WATERLOO*. The current champion, Kevin McCarthy, is definitely interested in establishing a *WATERLOO* ladder. Although the formation process is not as far along at this time as it is for *STALINGRAD*, the *WATERLOO* ladder tournament could easily be ready to begin by the time this column see print. Consequently, again you should write Don Greenwood immediately if you have any interest in participating in a postal *WATERLOO* ladder.

There have been some other post-tournament title matches in various other games represented in the AREA Championship. Joe Beard is defending his *AFRIKA KORPS* title in a two-game match with Dale Garbutt. A third game will be used as a tiebreaker if necessary. The *ANZIO* tournament was eventually won by Tom Oleson. He and I then had a one-game title match, which I won playing the Allies. We are currently engaged in a rematch with the sides reversed; he has me on the ropes and will probably regain the title. Bruce Remburg won the *PANZERBLITZ* tournament and has already successfully defended his title in a match against Tom Oleson; he is currently participating in a two-game match with Kevin Kinsel. The *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* tournament was won by Pat Flory; Pat has since successfully defended his title in a match with Dale Garbutt.

The *D-DAY* tournament is the only one of the original AREA Championships not yet completed. The Final Round consists of a two-game match between Kevin McCarthy and myself. The two games are in Week 12 and Week 15, and recent action on the mapboards has been intense. When the smoke clears, it may be possible to predict a winner—but for now the outcome in both games is very much in doubt.

For each of these games, the possibility exists to establish a ladder system also. A potential organization for *D-DAY* has been extensively discussed. It seems likely that a *D-DAY* ladder will be set up as soon as the Final Round is completed. Discussions of a preliminary nature have been initiated for ladders in *ANZIO* and *PANZERBLITZ*. Any AREA member who is interested in seeing these processes go forward is encouraged to write to either Don Greenwood or me (1112 Huntsman Drive, Durham, NC 27713).

Lastly, should any of the readership have news that may be of interest to the membership of the AREA, please drop me a line. With your help, I hope for this to become a forum for the AREA in The *GENERAL*.



Squad Leader Clinic

MAN VERSUS TANK

By Jon Mishcon

Throughout World War II men, armed with hand weapons, were forced to engage attacking tanks at point-blank range. The task was daunting. Tanks were designed to be impervious to all rifle-caliber weapons and to shrapnel. Nonetheless, brave men were repeatedly able to overcome AFVs. I recall a photo of a much-decorated instructor showing combat troops how he was able to destroy multiple tanks in close action. This article is a brief overview of the inherent tools that individuals used to defeat tanks, and how they are reflected in *ASL*. (I'll deal with ranged light AT weapons in another article.)

First, a quick overview of how tanks cope with attacking infantry. The whole business of melee is generally bad for tankers, so they work to keep assaulting men at a distance. Naturally the tank's superior mobility and ranged fire give it the edge here. Once infantry can close, then the tank's foremost weakness is limited visibility. *ASL* reflects this by always giving the attacking infantryfirst ''shot'' in CC. If the tank can survive this CC, it has a few weapons it can bring to bear at close range (and some it can't). The main gun is simply worthless; once inside ten yards, you'd literally have to hit the target smack on with the round. Forget it. Any bow-mounted weapons (MGs or other) are almost equally valueless. Pivoting the tank is so cumbersome that almost any man can dart away. This leaves you with the turret-mounted MGs (AA, front and possibly rear and/or independent), ''pistol ports'', and close-defense weapons.

Turret-top AAMGs are a mixed blessing. They swivel rapidly and don't require any movement of the tank or turret. However, everyone who has seen a John Wayne movie knows that the open turret is a natural target for every incoming grenade in creation. *ASL* nicely reflects this by allowing AAMGs to be used in CC, but penalizing the OT or CE AFV. Generally speaking, we never use AAMGs unless there is a Hero riding the tank.

Coaxial, rear and independent turret MGs are the mainstay of tank defense. Some of the early Russian tanks have such potent MG fire that, if they survive the initial CC attack, the tank has a good chance of taking out the infantry. The reason that independent and rear turret MGs tended to disappear was that the value of such guns was far outweighed by the number of men required to man them. Tankers found it better just to keep their distance rather than carry those extra MGs.

Pistol ports are just what you might think. A small hole, usually with a sliding cover, that allows a crewman to fire a small-caliber weapon out of the tank. As one can imagine, the accuracy of such fire leaves a lot to be desired. The inherent weakness of the armor in that location was felt to be such a liability that pistol ports quickly faded from use.

Close defense weapons are the modification of the inherent smoke mortar that, in some tanks, allows the weapon to fire a short-range grenade. The shrapnel could be quite lethal to anyone around the tank. Naturally, the major drawback of this weapon was its lack of discrimination. Any supporting infantry suffered equally.

And the best defense a tank has is supporting infantry. By covering the tank's flanks, friendly infantry make any attempt to actually clamber onto the tank most difficult. *ASL* reflects this by modifying any CC against a tank that has infantry in close support.

The last defense a tank has is simply to stay tough to hit. Staying in Motion may reduce the effectiveness of the tank's MGs, but certainly also makes it much tougher to catch. This also shows up in the *ASL* modifiers.

Having reviewed the tank's defenses, we turn to the attacking infantry. First, you have to get your infantry into the hex with the tank. Before any assault by infantry can be made, they must summon up the ''moxie'' to actually go toe-to-toe with the monster. *ASL* requires, quite properly, a Task Check for a ''normal'' infantry unit (not SMC, Fanatic or Berserk) to enter an AFV's location. This is often the greatest impediment to the destruction of the tank. Failure to pass the PAATC causes the infantry unit to become pinned. One must count on having half your infantry not make the PAATC.

Once in the hex, the attacking infantry is pretty much forced to use high explosives. Bottled gasoline (''Molotov cocktails'') set a tank alight, but the inherent risk of carting around such a fragile device makes this a weapon of Home Guard units. Explosives can be mines, grenades, or even loose plastic explosive. The British actually issued cloth bags (the No. 82, of Gammon, grenade), equipped with an all-ways fuse, that could be used against tanks by stuffing it with plastic explosive. As every UK paratrooper was issued sticks of plastique, the bags became a kind of freeform antitank grenade.

The best kind of explosive against tanks is a shaped-charge device. This kind of weapon was reviewed in an earlier article (Vol. 24, No. 6) but, in brief, the shape of the explosive in the device focuses the force of the detonation in one direction.

Nice for blowing a hole through tough plate. It is also important to recall that once adjacent to the tank, the attackers need not try to overcome the thick frontal armor. Engine grills and drive wheels, as well as the lighter-armored flank and rear, were all fair game.

Keeping the explosives in contact with the tank surface was another problem. The Germans were able to jam mines under the turret of some early Russian models. The Germans also issued magnetic AT mines that combined the best aspects of shaped-charge weapons with a device that stuck to the target. The Japanese simply mounted explosives on a pole that was thrust against the side of a tank and detonated by the bearer. Often very tough on the guy carrying the pole. Most of the time there are plenty of nooks to wedge the explosive in place. *ASL* reflects this all by just saying that some assaults are failures.

The bottom line is that a single squad, with a morale of "7", has about 50% chance of passing the PAATC. Then, if it enters the hex, about a one-third chance of immobilizing or destroying the AFV. That means if you decide to run up to a tank in order to destroy it, the tank is going to get all the defensive fire it can muster, and then any surviving infantry squad has but a 16% chance of doing something nasty to the tank. How can players improve these odds?

What works best depends on the situation and the nationality. Our standard tricks include:

When in doubt, take cover. There is almost no reason why some squads shouldn't gain Concealment and the stay concealed. There are three benefits from this. First, the likelihood of Ambushing (A11.4) the tank is great; +3 drm is common for the tank and Concealed infantry has at least a −2 drm. If you do ambush the tank, that gives you an additional −1 DRM in CC. failure to ambush still allows the infantry the first pop (A11.34). Second, any defensive fire is halved versus Concealed units, even in CC. Last, the tank is likely to concentrate its defensive fire against your leader. If three units are Concealed, picking out your leader(s) is tough. Don't forget you can take Assault Movement and remain concealed (if in cover).

Go with units most likely to win. Squads always over HS; "8" morale over "7"; assault engineers or fanatic if you got 'em. Recall that a fanatic squad is immune to PAATC; that means your kill chances just doubled. Always use more than one SMC whenever possible. You may not have a fanatic squad, but you probably have two leaders. Using multiple SMC can be critical. A single leader has no better than one chance in 36 of affecting the tank. Two SMCs have a base chance of 1-in-12 *and* now leadership may be applied (A11.5 and A11.51). That means a −2 leader with a hero has a better than 40% chance of whacking the AFV—and no PAATC.

Street-fighting when there is no street! Every player using tanks works hard to avoid those neat traps where there is a road with buildings on both sides. Many maneuver attempts to get around these pinch points force the tank in VBM. Every AFV attacked in VBM is automatically subject to the penalties of street-fighting if attacked by infantry in the hex being bypassed (A11.8). Look closely at those edge hexes.

Smoke 'em if you got 'em. If you must run up to a tank, then you must do so with a number of units. Often the tank commander will allow the first squad to run up in order to fire upon any leaders or Concealed units held back. If you do get adjacent, always try for smoke. Smoke not only impedes tha tank's defensive fire, but may allow Concealed units to move adjacent without loss of Concealment. This tactic really works well for those units that have a smoke dr of "2" or more.

Give them the wave. Human wave attacks for the Russians (and Banzai charges for the Japanese) are frequently overlooked. The 8MF is nice, but immunity to PAATC is nicer (A25.231).

Rule B13.7 makes it pretty clear that there is no reason not to declare ATMM use for *every* CC attack in which their use is allowed. I always shudder whenever I see German players forget to call for their use in late-war scenarios.

Last ditch. If it looks like the attacker is going to try and slip off the map, the defender is well advised to sit on the exit hex. Try and dig foxholes *in the open* alongside obstacles near the exit edge. Better yet, if the exit is a road, you plant yourself right on it. The gambit here is the forced Overrun. If the exit is a road, then the attacker must plan to spend 25% of his MP just to overrun you. If the overrun doesn't affect you, then you get a reaction shot.

Players will find a new scenario ("Soldiers of Destruction") on the insert that will allow them to try some of the ideas noted herein. The next installment will carry our thoughts on it, as usual. By then, you'll have had plenty of opportunities to test our suggestions for facing down tanks with soldiers.

This note continues the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of this column (Vol. 25, No. 3 in this case). The intent is to provide the *ASL* player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

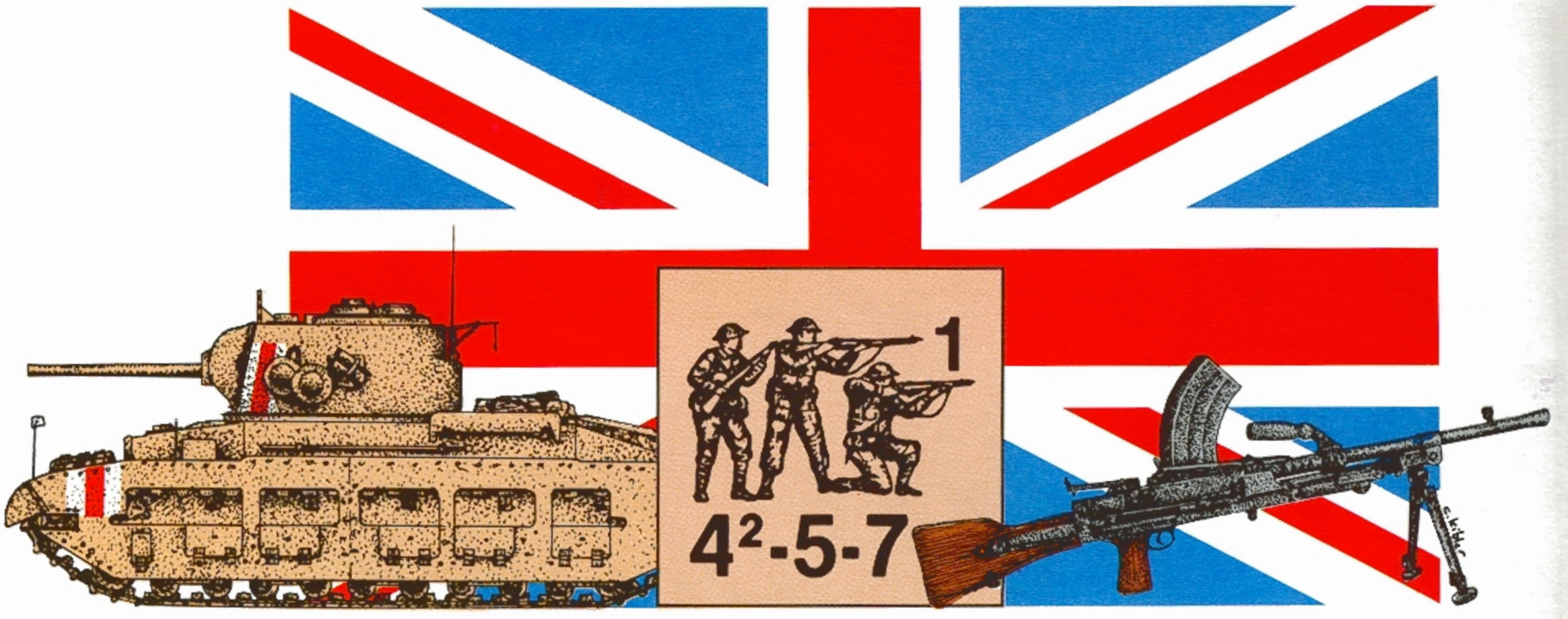
After Action Report— First Crisis at AG North

GERMAN: In 4I4, facing H4 and H3: one SPW 251/1 with 37L ATG and crew, the 8-1 leader, two 4-6-7 squads, one LMG and one DC. In hex 5Q6, facing R5/R6: another SPW 251/1, the 9-1, two squads with LMG and DC. Place one Pzkpfw IIIG in 4O9 (facing P8/P9), one in 4Q3 (with armor leader, facing R2/R3) and one in 4Q4 (R3/R4).

RUSSIAN: All vehicles to enter line abreast across most of the east edge of Board 4.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: Moving the tanks, without infantry support, into the face of combined German infantry, guns and tanks is almost sure disaster. I don't care how strong you think you are, the Germans will chew up the Russians. Take your time. Move up that infantry. Look for isolated enemy tanks or guns that you can confront with your KVs. Don't forget the Commissar (A25.22) and Human Wave rules. You don't have to commit to exiting off Board 4 or 5 till you see his AA gun unlimbered. When you do, make your run for the exit first send off an infantry assault to draw fire. Then trundle forward the KVs. Last, send out the BT-7s.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: I like to drop the AA gun in 4C7. Unlimber ASAP. You can't take a chance he'll move to overwhelm your best gun. Leaders get the DCs. Try to knock out a T-26S quickly. That may force him to tie up another tank for platoon movement. Finally, if he stays in motion, don't be afraid to move right up with your tanks and shoot to immobilize his.



TOMMY ATKINS AT WAR

The British in ASL

By Charles Markuss

The long-awaited *WEST OF ALAMEIN* provides a welcome revision of *COD* and yet more variety for the epic *ASL* game system. We British have eagerly anticipated *WOA*'s release in the way that American players looked forward to the appearance of *YANKS*. For those readers who have yet to convert their hard-earned cash into "Tommies" (or have already done so, but not opened the box), a review of this latest module follows in which some explanations will be attempted for those rules and capabilities peculiar to the British. In addition, some well-worn myths about the "Tommy" of World War 2 will be simultaneously debunked, and his strengths and weaknesses examined in the context of a rather sweeping observation made by Hitler about the British soldier shortly after Dunkirk:

> *The British soldier has retained the characteristics which he had in World War I. Very brave and tenacious in defense, unskilled in attack, wretchedly commanded. Weapons and equipment are of the highest order, but the overall organization is bad.*
> cited by A. Mollo in *The Armed Forces of World War II*, p. 61

Readers will hopefully be able to judge the accuracy of this statement from what follows, but George Parrish's beautiful artwork captures the British spirit perfectly. Whereas the GIs on the *YANKS* box-art have been surprised by an enemy flank attack, the "Tommies" on the *WOA* lid are triumphantly advancing in a set-piece battle. The first lieutenant is (typically) armed only with a wristwatch and a revolver, while the NCO brandishes a "tommy-gun", followed by a bren gunner and the rest of the lads with bayonets fixed to their Lee-Enfields. A Matilda II, sporting disruptive camouflage, provides more than just moral support (as the burning Italian M13/40 shows). Outgeneraled by O'Connor and technically outclassed by the "Queen of the Battlefield", the often suicidal courage of the Italian soldiers did not prevent their defeat. Only Rommel's arrival would humble "Tommy" in the desert war.

INFANTRY

The most obvious change from *CRESCENDO OF DOOM* is the squad counter artwork for the British; those static poses have gone and "Tommy" is now doing something more energetic than standing about waiting for the tea to brew. Apart from those useful smoke-grenade exponents and the revised crew counter graphics, the major changes to the multi-man counters are the substitution for the 6-3-8 airborne squads by the deadlier 6-4-8s and the "promotion" of the Gurkhas to Elite status. The *ASL* rulebook reveals other changes too, like Tommy's immunity to Cowering (except for the poorer quality troops); Stealth advantages for the ANZACs and Gurkhas; that helpful +1 drm in nocturnal recon attempts to "spot" enemy defenders. The first of these changes reflects Tommy's stoicism (more on this later), while the last simulates the British flair for "recce" and night patrols. The cool-headed Britons also score well on the "Heat of Battle" drm, being less likely to go "berserk" and more likely to become "heroic" than most other nationalities, although these traits are all (of course) stereotypes to a large degree. A notable omission from *ASL/WOA* is *COD*'s automatic motorcycle experience for British leaders—a nice rule I thought simulating British Army requirements that all officers be competent motorcyclists.

Historically, British officers have a poor reputation, based on the 1914-18 "lions led by donkeys" stories—themselves rather sweeping generalizations. All armies have their share of idiots, of course, but the evidence suggests that British officers were far from incompetent. If many senior officers were mediocre, staff work became at least adequate after a poor start. Unfortunately, pre-war theories envisaged only a minor and supportive role for the British Army (even when the obsession with colonial defense began to wane) and Germany was supposed to be defeated by naval blockade, British bombers, and the French Army—a modified re-run of the 1914-18 war. In keeping with this perception, the BEF of 1940 was composed largely of reservists, while that of 1914 had contained the cream of Britain's soldiers. When this strategy proved illusory in 1940 and the Army had to be expanded rapidly for its new and greater role, there were insufficient trained officers. The absence of meaningful pre-war exercises compounded matters, and during the war there was an understandable reluctance among commanders to release their brightest subordinates for Staff College courses. On a tactical level there were similar shortcomings, allowing old doctrines and inadequate officers to linger on. Moreover, many pre-war officers preferred polo matches, fox-hunting and pig-sticking to studying their profession seriously. The "public school" (roughly equivalent to an American private school) education received by most pre-war officers encouraged the admiration of heroic amateurism and a hostility towards any hint of professionalism except, perhaps, in the care of horses. Technology was heretical. The different counter art for the 6+1, 10-2 and 10-3 leaders depict smartly-dressed officers carrying nothing more lethal than a cane and bring to mind the more eccentric breed in the British Army who believed in adopting a deliberately conspicuous profile; for example, a certain Lt-Colonel at Arnhem who (as an ex-Master of the Iraqi Royal Exodus Hunt) used his copper hunting-horn to rally his men, and a Major—also at Arnhem—who led his men into battle while wearing a bowler-hat and carrying a battered umbrella for (as he later claimed) identification purposes.

This attitude was particularly common in the cavalry regiments (which had fought their badly-managed mechanization tooth and nail), their playboy officers being "selected" by private income and class rather than by merit since Army pay alone was insufficient for their equine-oriented lifestyle or their fancy "tinsel" uniforms. To some extent, this financial hurdle still exists today, certainly in the Household Cavalry regiments that foreign tourists love to photograph. To this, the " . . . most mentally inept, unprofessional and reactionary group in the British Army", the bulk of the wartime AFVs were entrusted. Men such as these were unwilling to fight, let alone socialize, with "inferior" regiments and humans—an attitude not found even in the medieval Anglo-Welsh armies. Inconvenient orders were disputed in France; command was exercised more by conference than by obedience in the new 8th Army; and to General Hobart's chagrin, the 7th Armoured Division's officers preferred polo to combat training. Small wonder there was often a mindless insistence on futile and suicidally inappropriate tactics until the Germans bloodily removed them from command (but unfortunately, some were still there during Normandy).

Luckily, however, the artillery and infantry branches were less infected by this mental malaise and most junior British officers were at least as good as their allies (if usually not quite up to the German standards). This is reflected in the game's British "Leader Generation Number" of "5", the best in *ASL* after that of the German. The quality of these leaders was due as much to social factors as changes in recruitment; there has always been a reluctance among the British self-styled "upper classes" to follow technical or commercial vocations, and soldiering has always been more socially acceptable than in, say, the USA. Social trends therefore placed public school types, the sons of professional soldiers and other natural leaders, into the armed forces—especially into "glamorous" combat formations rather than into "grubby" support formations. While such men often found it difficult to adjust to life in the armored formations of World War 2, and were not renowned for their tactical brilliance, they at least knew how to care for, motivate, and lead their men.

In 1939, this social group supplied 84% of aspiring officers (40% of these from "military" families), but wartime samples showed a fall to only 25% when demand exceeded the supply (the equivalent figures of self-recruitment by such military families were 29% in 1933 for Germany and 23% in 1935 for the US). A less elitist approach had to be adopted in the war (as it had in 1916-18) and therefore well-educated "middle class" men comprised the bulk of the officer corps. German selection procedures, including extensive psychological assessments, were copied with great success; officer quality was also enhanced by the many NCO platoon commanders of 1939 (sergeant majors) who were also commissioned. Some of these rose to command regiments or battalions by 1945, and even some privates were commissioned in the field for outstanding bravery or initiative. Under the "Canloan" scheme of October 1943, 673 Canadian officers were also provided for British units in the ETO and PTO (of whom 465 became casualties). Despite the fact that the officer casualty rates were higher for World War 2 than for the First World War, the need for so many officers was largely self-inflicted. By 1943, it was unthinkable to have mere NCOs commanding platoons, and there was a glut of senior commanders due to over-promotion (the USA had similar problems). By contrast, the Germans used their officers more economically and efficiently, delegating much more responsibility out of sheer necessity (giving, for instance, their NCOs responsibilities equivalent to Allied junior officers). The superior German "LG" number reflects this nicely.

The best British squads still have a range of only five hexes, although "home-grown" Britons (at least) were famous for their marksmanship. Pumping out lots of lead is all very well, but it helps if some of this actually *hits* the target. Tommy's firearms training was a legacy of his traditional and primary role as Imperial Policeman in situations where every shot had to count when confronting hordes of unfriendly chaps. But range factors in *ASL* reflect more than just shooting skill. Unfortunately there was also another legacy from the colonial wars which militated against tactical efficiency—the Regimental System of organization used by the British Army. This type of structure was coupled with recruitment based on regional lines to supply the far reaches of the Empire with troops, one battalion remaining at home refitting while the other served overseas, and then vice versa. The "Regiment", or more precisely a battalion therein, gave Tommy a home (often the best he ever had), a sense of belonging with its emphasis on unique and regional differences, a focus for his loyalty, and a boost to his morale when things got bad—the honor and success of the Regiment meant a lot.

But regimental customs, traditions and jargon could also make it difficult for newcomers to fit into what was essentially an army organized into separate and distinct tribes. This fostering of cliques often undermined the cohesion of larger formations (or even regiments receiving a large influx of replacements). Regimentalism bred suspicion and mistrust (or even hatred on occasion) of other regiments or services within the British Army (which still persist to this day in its milder aspects). One modern source describes it as " . . . an unprofessional coalition of arms and services" and as " . . . a number of loosely coordinated social groups which mirror the views of the society from which they derive their attitudes to military problems" (Bidwell & Graham, *Firepower*, 1982). The traditional regional pattern of recruitment still used by most regiments reinforced this insular outlook during the war, as did the increasingly multi-national character of the British Army; the British soldier of all ranks traditionally looked down on Indian Army service, referring to its troops as "frontier soldiers". Although wartime necessities eroded regional recruitment somewhat and provided a greater mix of personnel within regiments, its members still thought in terms of "regiment" rather than "division"; as a result, battlefield coordination of armor, infantry and artillery was poor until quite late in the war. At its worse, different types of units often fought their own bizarre little private wars against a fully-integrated foe . . . with predictable results. Successive defeats merely prolonged the suspicions, and it took time for Tommy to learn to fight in larger, division-sized formations with others alongside. Only after Normandy was full coordination achieved, although the Canadians and ANZACs had managed this much earlier.

Moreover, the Regiment's paternalistic environment stifled personal initiative (especially amongst the less-educated, pre-war regulars) in comparison with German and American troops. Although ANZAC, Canadian and other Commonwealth troops were less inhibited, Indian troops were sometimes treated like children by patronizing British officers. Consequently, Tommy (like his Soviet counterpart) was usually hard to dislodge when defending, but combat performance deteriorated when leaders became casualties (statistical analysis later revealed that the Canadians were the least likely to surrender among "British" troops). Tommy Atkins expected his leaders to lead, and in the attack he went to ground if he became leaderless (commandos, paratroops and similar types excluded). In contrast, German troops were *expected* (let alone encouraged) to display high levels of personal initiative, and U.S. troops though often poorly led by "90-day wonders" tended to do likewise. This British weakness was evident in situations where forceful or formal leadership was absent or impractical; despite facing German infiltration tactics as early as 1918, most British line troops never developed effective countermeasures and were far less willing to adopt such tactics themselves than German, Japanese or Soviet troops. The closest the British got to infiltration tactics were their nightly raids and patrols, which invariably involved returning to their own lines by daylight rather than remaining behind the enemy's to cause trouble. Infiltration tactics were second-nature to the Germans, as were sudden and rapid counterattacks to retake lost positions. British counterattacks were slower, more deliberate and less cost-effective.

Such lack of imagination and flexibility were reinforced by other factors. Until 1938, imperial policing was regarded as the British Army's first priority and another European war was deemed unlikely. Thus, preparation for the latter was bottom of the list, and training and equipment reflected this outlook. There was a tradition of public sentiment against continental doctrines of military efficiency; war was regarded more as an obscene art-form than as a science. Army maneuvers were similarly unrealistic, and memories of the 1914-18 slaughter bred caution since officers had nightmares about similar losses amid Britain's dwindling manpower resources. Tactics were therefore "safe", unimaginative, relatively predictable, and so (ironically) expensive in lives. The low British range factors also simulate a tendency to do things "by the book" since pre-war training was no real preparation for fighting a first-rate mechanized army. Although the 1937 "Infantry Training Manual" did modernize tactics a little and allow commanders more discretion, throughout the war there was general dissatisfaction with the adequacy of British training for the realities of combat. During the war years there was still the emphasis on a "correct solution" to a tactical problem drawn from a choice of various "drills". These drills were intended to be merely a wartime teaching aid to foster greater tactical awareness, but inexperienced junior officers came to regard them as ends in themselves and applied them far more rigidly than the battlefield demanded. They were not a success, especially in an attack where flexibility, imagination and rapid decision-making were paramount. British training was essentially prescriptive in character, fostering a methodical, set-piece approach to combat. To the British, all problems were categorized into types, whereas the Germans saw each as essentially unique. General Auchinleck admitted, "we were not as well trained as the Germans—a fault of our prewar training. We don't really train for war in peacetime England—we play at it."

Tommy's good morale factors appear to contradict the fact that the majority of the troops rarely felt the lust for revenge or the blind hatred for the enemy that motivated other victims of Axis aggression. However, the Pacific theater was something of an exception, while Polish and Free French and other "refugee" contingents in the British Army were understandably less philosophical or dispassionate. In theory, Tommy Atkins could go for 400 Combat Days (680 calendar days) before breaking down psychologically (the American GI, some 200-240 Combat Days) according to separate wartime studies. This is reflected in *ASL* in the different morale values. There are four main reasons for the difference between US and British morale values. Firstly, the environment: due to geographical proximity, the Axis threat was more immediate and real to Tommy and his family than for the average GI.

Secondly, the two armies used a different selection process for the combat soldiers; the British method lay somewhere between the two extremes represented by German and American practice, respectively. The Germans deliberately gave their combat units a much greater proportion of high-quality personnel of all ranks, whereas the U.S. Army consciously diverted the cream of their intake (in most cases) away from combat units—especially the infantry—into the more technically-oriented branches where reward and promotion often came easier. The British therefore got a better cross-section of the available personnel into their combat units, especially into those with distinguished histories.

Thirdly, the British rotated their front-line formations more frequently than did the U.S. Army, and had superior psychiatric treatment available (to detect, prevent and cure breakdowns) based on their experience with the 1914-18 "shell-shock" cases. Experience showed that this medical back-up was far more effective than short-lived and unsuccessful attempts to "toughen" troops by visits to slaughterhouses, indoctrination, and endless marches.

Fourth, Britain's social structure and long military tradition made civilians more readily adaptable to military life and discipline than their American cousins. This writer does not believe, as has been

suggested previously, that European troops were necessarily more accustomed to physical hardship than the GIs. Even if this were the case, it would not in itself make Europeans better soldiers, since socio-economic origins are less relevent to combat performance than training, leadership, discipline and tactics.

In comparing Allied and German practice, rewards and punishments are illuminating, for while the Germans were among the most fair and egalitarian in rewarding *exceptional* courage when combined with *personal initiative* (heroism alone was not qualification for a medal), they were also much more ruthless towards "cowards" and deserters—an estimated 5302 were executed between 1939 and 1945 (compared with only 22 in the 1914-18 war). The British and Americans, on the other hand, were amongst the most humane; only one GI was executed for desertion and, despite Churchill's protests, the British Army refused to reintroduce the death penalty for these offenses after it had abolished them (in 1930) because the 1914-18 experiences—when 266 executions took place for desertion—"cast doubts upon its effectiveness". In effect, the British Army over-reacted and replaced the iron fist with a velvet glove; the harshest sentence imposed was three years imprisonment, but a mere six months was more common. Partly for this reason, the British had an average 4% desertion rate in the army throughout the war, the bulk being infantrymen. This compares with an average of only .79% for the German Army. By the way, Allied desertion rates were highest in the bloody, stactic "sideshow" fought in Italy. For British soldiers at least, this official leniency allowed them to "unofficially" transfer from a unit by deserting and letting themselves be rounded-up for reassignment to understrength formations on a random basis. With so many units below strength by 1944, such replacements were gratefully received without too many questions, enabling the Tommy to find a unit to his liking by empirical methods, and it was apparently quite wide-spread later in the war (especially in Italy).

Britain's 1939-45 army casualties totalled 126734 killed and 239575 wounded (about 25% of the 1914-18 losses). However, Canadian, Indian and New Zealand contingents were proportionally harder hit due to their smaller non-combatant sections (their support services being largely provided by British personnel within the Britiah Army structure onto which the Commomwealth units were grafted). In Normandy and Italy, casualty rates approached those of 1914-18 on occasions, and as the war dragged on the shortage of infantry could be alleviated only partly (as in the U.S. Army) by using hastily-trained men and by disbanding some armored or artillery formations. A reduction in the overall percentage of non-combatant personnel within units, along the German and Russian lines, was not attempted, so British combat units steadily fell in strength. The better British and Commonwealth formations naturally tended to be over-used, losing their elan, the men becoming tired and resentful. The lowering of the British ELR in 1945 encapsulates this fact, and "war-weariness" generally.

INFANTRY WEAPONS

Britain's financial, industrial and human resources were very limited compared to her major allies, and her massive investments in the USA and elsewhere had to be liquidated to pay for the war long before Pearl Harbor. The war left Britain almost bankrupt, costing some 25% of her national wealth, and ran her aging railways and industrial plants into the ground. With between 33 and 50% of the war effort devoted to bombing Germany, and most of the rest devoted to the naval war, the British Army was low on the list of priorities for men and material. Moreover, a large slice (about 12 divisions worth) of Army resources went into AA defenses. By 1944, only 61% of British munitions were home-produced (compared to initial near self-sufficiency). Small wonder that "economy" and "conservation" became bywords in human and material expenditures in the Army. Bren gunners were taught to fire single shots whenever possible; British mortars had low official rates of fire; British paratroops carried no second, back-up parachute until 1950 (which did nothing to encourage volunteers).

The firepower of British infantry sections (squads) in *ASL* is "low", not just because of the reliance on rifles, but for organizational reasons as well. Until 1943 each British squad at full strength had only eight men; ten thereafter. This compares with a normative nine in the Soviet squad, ten (later nine) in the German, eleven in the French, twelve in the U.S. and up to thirteen in the Japanese and U.S. Marine Corps. The small size of British infantry formations was mirrored in the larger units too, for their infantry company TO&E was one of the smallest of any participant in the war; at full strength in 1939, it contained 129 men if there were four platoons (but usually there were only three with 100 men). By 1944, each company had 125-127 men. By comparison, a U.S. infantry division's companies had between 193 and 223 men, a U.S. armored division's between 178 and 251; the German company ranged 191-200 before 1944, and 161 thereafter. While a Soviet SMG company had only 78-100 men (but more firepower), their rifle companies had 143 men; the French 190, the Italian 158 and the Japanese between 114 and 265 (the latter based on contradictory data).

Nor is this the whole story. British rifle battalions were far more poorly equipped with organic support weapons than their foreign equivalents, as the "Support Allotment Chart" shows. The following table illustrates the serious deficiencies

Weapon:	Brit	USA	Germany	USSR	Italy	Japan
Lt. Mortar	12/9	9	9/-	9/6	18	27-36
Medium Mortar	2/6	6	6	6/9	—	2*
Heavy Mortar	**	—	-/4	—	—	—
MMG & HMG	—	14	12	12/9	8	8
.50 cal. HMG	—	6	—	—	—	—

Numbers separated by "/" denote initial and late-war totals.
*=sometimes present
**=mortar battalions (only) had eight after 1941

British MMGs were not organic below divisional level until late in the war, being kept in specialist MG battalions (with 36 or 48 MMGs apiece) which had little direct contact with ordinary infantry; this did little to improve tactical efficiency. The MMGs were doled out to lower formations as "required", and for defense this usually sufficed—but in fluid situations or in attack they were rarely in the right place in meaningful numbers when needed. By 1944, the MG companies were detached to brigades, but there were never enough of them.

Ironically, even in 1914-18 the Canadians and Germans had used a much more generous MG allocation than the "specialist" British. But the lesson was ignored, another instance where new weapons of apparently dubious value had been placed into a specialist corps because no established branch of the British Army would accept them. This quaint legacy of the First World War ensured, in the case of MG battalions, that the troops therein were technicians first—soldiers second—and infantrymen only a poor third. Hopefully, this will explain the rather odd British MMG and HMG allocations in the *ASL* tables, with such variations for defense, attack or neither. While the early eight-man squad was probably not seriously disadvantaged in combat with larger enemy squads (it did, after all, usually contain a LMG), the deficiencies in organic MGs was another matter completely at company level and above. In this respect, at least, Hitler's observation about "bad" British organization was justified.

It has become fashionable to dismiss all British equipment as inferior, impractical or obsolete—but this is another generalization. Certainly the British did rely on rifles for far too long (due to economy, conservatism, massive stocks, and especially lots of old ammunition), but even the Germans were predominately rifle-equipped even late in the war because the demand for automatic weapons exceeded supply. The British failure to provide their troops with something like the M1 Garand was due not only to conservatism but also to excessively-severe specifications which no contemporary prototypes under evaluation could have met, and the reluctance to discard millions of rounds of incompatible rimmed cartridges. The demands of wartime production extinguished any hopes of introducing such a weapon.

The Boys ATR was "ludicrously inadequate" against European tanks, having been designed for the defense of the Egyptian border after the Italian-Abyssinian war. It also reflected a General Staff obsession with infantry-held anti-tank weapons from 1927 onwards (the same year the lance was formally declared obsolete) and it was rushed into service despite its shortcomings. Apart from the vicious recoil, the noise made the wearing of ear-plugs mandatory, and the original steel-cored bullet had to be replaced with one of tungsten-carbide to render the weapon even remotely effective. The 1937 training leaflet recommended practice against tanks moving at 15-25 mph at up to 500 yards away—highly optimistic in the extreme. By 1943, nearly 69000—more than any other type of ATR—had been made, even though " . . . a good crossbow would have been just as useful and far cheaper."

But perhaps the main British technical weakness in infantry weaponry lay in mortars, as there was no inter-war research into mortar design, or into the effects of rain on ignition efficiency. The 2-inch mortar, of 1918 vintage, lacked punch (like all mortars of this caliber). Possessing a theoretical rate of fire of 20-30 rpm, great skill was needed by the user if ammunition was not to be wasted. Although it could, in theory, be fired point-blank (an unwise procedure), it had poor range compared to most foreign equivalents:

Nationality	Caliber	Range (yards)
British	2-inch (51mm)	500
French	50mm	503
German	50mm	569
Italian	45mm	586
Japanese	50mm	711
Polish	46mm	875
Soviet	50mm	875
French	60mm	1860
American	60mm	1985

It was the same story with the British 3-inch mortar; initially it could reach only 1600 yards while the German and Italian 81mm mortars could reach 2625 and 4429 yards, respectively. The 3-incher's range was eventually increased to 2790 yards, although some crews improved even on this by the unorthodox use of captured ammunition. When the 4.2-inch mortar was introduced to improve the reach of British mortars, only 4100 yards could be obtained—by which time the Germans already had in service their copies of the Soviet 120mm mortar with a range of 6500 yards, a heavier bomb, and a lower overall weight.

More successful weaponry in the British arsenal included the Bren LMG, probably the best of its kind at the time, and this modified Czech design was already in pre-war service (as well as being more plentiful than has sometimes been suggested). The British SW Allotment Chart confirms this. Produced by a single factory in Britain that was never bombed by the Luftwaffe, over 30000 existed by mid-1940 with production increasing from 300 weekly in 1938 to over 1000 per week by 1943. Canadian factories also made them, eventually accounting for over 60% of the total output. Australian firms made them too, while most Indian

troops used the comparable Vickers-Berthier LMG. As a result, production kept pace with demand and losses (except just after Dunkirk). The inferior Besal, hurriedly designed as a substitute, was never needed. Indeed, the U.S. Army would have done well to adopt the Bren instead of the ghastly BAR, for it had many features superior to the German MG34 and MG42 LMGs.

Another reasonably good, if unpopular, British weapon was the PIAT; it was safer to use than (if not as powerful as) the *panzerfaust*, and was also capable of being fired from inside hard cover, unlike any foreign equivalent. Given the choice of no back-blast or the ability to fire at lower elevations, I'd take the former every time (even if a bungled recocking attempt ran the risk of a hernia or a strained back). The PIAT can also be fired by any SMC; with other SCW, only Hero counters can do so.

ORDNANCE

British ordnance was the same mixture of "the Good, the Bad and the Ugly" found in all armies. Pre-war development of artillery had, however, suffered from financial stringency, large stocks of 1918-vintage equipment and the excessive influence of those officers responsible for colonial defense. The latter, for example, delayed the introduction of HE to replace the traditional (and inferior) shrapnel despite a concensus of technical opinion against them. From the early 1920s on, there was a growing emphasis on AT artillery, and even new field guns had to be capable of "self-protection" from AFVs, so there was little inter-war reserach in heavy artillery since it was deemed to be superfluous to requirements.

The few designs sanctioned had very long development times due to the financial climate, and bulk production before 1936 was impossible. The 25-pounder field gun, for instance, was first mooted about 1925, but no detailed specifications emerged until 1936, and production only began in February 1940. When war seemed inevitable, this process became more frantic, to the extent that the 5.5-inch gun-howitzer (based on a 1939 General Staff requirement) was ready for trials the same year. But the first carriages were too light for the weapon mounted, and production of a new, stronger, welded version was not cleared until April 1941. Speed in development, therefore, left bugs which caused unexpected delays. Due to high safety factors (insisted on by Parliament), British ordnance tended to be cumbersome by foreign standards, especially concerning weight. Some safety tolerances were, however, relaxed during the war to speed production, conserve scarce materials and boost ballistic performance; but balanced against this was the need to use inferior metals in British shells for strategic reasons, necessitating thicker shell walls to preserve strength at the expense of the explosive filling. (The resultant weight increase also partly explains the poor range of British mortars.)

The 2-pounder AT gun and its tank-mounted equivalent are often singled out for criticism for failing to penetrate German face-hardened armor at 300 yards. But this was due to its uncapped AP ammunition rather than any inherent weakness in the gun design itself. By the time that Armor-Piercing Capped, Ballistic-Cap ammunition (APCBC, which did not shatter on impact) was available, German armor thicknesses had increased to the extent that the 2-pounder was fit only for recon vehicles and for use against Japan. This delay in producing effective ammunition again exemplifies the pre-war British contempt for technologists. Due to production problems, even uncapped AP shot was scarce during the 1940 French campaign. Even worse, no AFV (Technical) Branch to examine captured enemy AFVs was set up by GHQ until November 1941; so when the British captured a German PzKfw IV in April 1941, nobody bothered to inspect it until March 1942—when its face-hardened armor was finally discovered. The U.S. 37mm AT had, theoretically, less penetration than the 2-pounder, but at least it had a shatter-proof APC projectile.

There is no official explanation for the absence of 2-pounder HE ammunition for so long, but the reasons are not elusive. With so much pre-war doctrine in the hands of military theorists with little practical experience of tactical or technical problems, it appears that MGs alone were considered sufficient to deal with enemy AT guns and other "soft" targets; Liddell-Hart wrote about such guns being "smothered" by one-man tankettes armed with MGs. This optimism and the obsession with countering the threat posed by the tank conspired to give the 2-pounder only AP shot, even though an HE round had been developed as early as 1935. It was also more than just coincidence that this emphasis on AT capability came at the very time the guns themselves (and the responsibility for AT defense in the British Army) passed from the infantry to the artillery during 1938-1940. Even when HE finally became available, there were still problems because the small explosive filling gave poor lethality, and this probably also explains why the British never issued 37mm HE in the desert campaign.

Late in the war light armor mounting the (by then) puny 2-pounder presented crews with the difficult choice of either retaining the "Littlejohn Adaptor" to fire APCNR (omitted from *ASL* in the interests of simplicity) or removing the adaptor so that HE could be fired. As it was hardly sensible for crews to unbutton and remove the adaptor each time HE was required, some recon troops kept the adaptors on some armored cars and left it off others. Others simply fired APCNR without the adaptor in place despite the inferior performance that this caused.

To complete the picture of the 2-pounder, the towed version, while having a 360° traverse, was complicated and difficult to mass produce. Its weight impaired manhandling (but then, AT guns survived by concealment rather than mobility). In the hands of resolute crews, its small size did allow it to destroy AFVs with daring close-range flank or rear shots (provided that it could be deployed in suitable terrain). And this is how the 2-pounder was supposed to have been used. The ANZACs were especially good at these tactics. The 2-pounder saw out the Pacific campaigns as an AT gun because it was easier to manhandle than its successor; but officially it should have been phased out to ease the logistical burden.

The story of the 6-pounder is one of delay caused by the urgent need to replace all the 2-pounders lost in France rather than disrupt existing production and introduce a new gun at a critical time. It eventually arrived in the desert (not a moment too soon) to counter the new enemy AFVs; but again, HE ammunition only came later and its lethality was poor compared to the 75mm's HE round as well as being scarcer. There were also problems with HE premature detonations, according to documents dated as late as April 1944—due mainly to the incompatibility of certain HE fuses with 6-pounder tubes mounting muzzle-brakes.

The 17-pounder AT gun is a success story—almost. Available in good time (for a change) to deal with the late-war enemy AFVs, HE ammunition was again overlooked for over a year and, as with all high-velocity weapons, effect was inferior to lower-velocity guns because the shell walls have to be made thicker at the expense of the explosive charge. It was also a beast of a gun to conceal or manhandle, to the extent that a prototype motorized version (similar to the post-war Soviet 85mm gun) was built, albeit not put into production.

Another gun of excellent quality was the celebrated 25-pounder, which made a passable AT gun in the desert for want of anything better. Its special turntable, an ingenious feature, permitted rapid traverse by a single crewman and greatly enhanced its AT capability, but its 60-second set-up and three-minute limber-up times along with a lowish rate of fire (due to the two-piece ammunition) were inferior to "pure" AT guns. The gun's curved trajectory also rendered it less accurate in the AT role, and it lacked killing-power against fortifications compared to 105mm artillery, although it had good range for a field gun.

The 5.5-inch gun-howitzer was another work-horse weapon when its carriage was perfected, although its reputation suffered a short set-back in Italy when premature shell detonations caused many burst barrels. The 3.7-inch AA gun (first mooted about 1920 but not produced until 1938) was a lost opportunity to field a British version of the German 88mm gun, albeit less mobile if a bit more powerful. In the hands of Heavy AA batteries in Burma, it did wonderfully against the Japanese due to its air-burst capability. The obsolete 3-inch 20cwt. AA gun was also potentially an excellent AT gun, but never used as such in anger. The larger British guns were not particularly new or good (save the Anglo-U.S. 7.2-inch Mark VI howitzer, which arrived only late in the war).

The British were also poorly equipped in SP artillery because development had ceased in the early 1930s in favor of conventional, towed artillery—thanks to conservatism and poorly defined doctrines. The 2-pounder and 6-pounder portees, as well as the Deacon and the Bishop, were clumsy, vulnerable, and inefficient improvisations. The Sexton, while more efficient, was under-gunned for its size and weight. The Archer got a mixed reception; M10 crews in Italy disliked the thin armor, rearward facing gun and limited traverse, describing it as "quite useless" after initial impressions.

But the real flaw in British artillery practice was an organizational blunder imposed in 1938 (by bureaucrats, not soldiers) whereby field artillery regiments (each of which was equivalent to two U.S. battalions in the number of guns contained) were reorganized into two batteries of 12 guns apiece in the interests of economy and technical convenience. Tactical considerations were ignored. Because the basic role of these regiments was to support the infantry brigades containing three battalions, there were problems dividing the two batteries into three without disrupting administration and fire control. This defect, of anonymous parenthood, was remedied (by reverting to three eight-gun batteries) after Dunkirk—although not overnight, with one source claiming that it lingered on until 1942 in the desert.

As to personnel, British (and American) artillery formations probably contained the cream of their respective land forces, and in this branch at least were both numerically and qualitatively superior to their German counterparts. If British ordnance was of mixed quality, it was well handled most of the time, although AT guns were rarely used as imaginatively as German weapons. (Ironically, the tactic of deliberately luring enemy armor onto a hidden screen of AT guns was first used by the British at Tobruk in April 1941, after which they forgot the trick; Rommel did not.) With a shortage of heavy artillery for much of the war, and with the RAF indifferent towards tactical ground support for the first half of the war due to an obsession with their bombing crusade against Germany, there was over-reliance on field artillery for both fire support and AT defense initially. Not only was it overworked, it was also spread too thinly to provide more than token support until well into desert campaign. However, the British corrected these shortcomings brilliantly.

The "ace" up the British sleeve was the combination of Forward Observers with a revolutionary form of fire control based on radio intercommunication. FOs had generally been only junior

officers, but the British put *senior* officers up front to make rapid decisions and issue appropriate *orders* for the supportive fire of up to an entire corps if necessary, without having to make time-consuming requests for permission. A call for regimental support could be answered in just 60 seconds, and divisional support in just three minutes, once the system was perfected. To represent this in *ASL* would probably destroy playability, but the revised OBA rules and tables do now give the British an edge over other nationalities, and rightly so. The system was devised by Colonel H.J. Parham, commanding a field artillery regiment in Belgium in 1940, where he used the system unofficially and experimentally against German armor. With Parham's help, Brigadier S. Kirkham then devised a simple drill enabling the FO to have control of the regiment's firepower within three to four minutes. The system demanded good radio communication, but was ingeniously simple; every gun that could reach and bear on target would fire as soon and as rapidly as possible. Speed and weight of bombardment to provide hammer-blows in emergencies mattered more than its accuracy. After a near disaster during a demonstration for the top brass, this centralized fire control was first used at the second battle of Alamein, and came into general use in 1943 (by which time the artillery was no longer spread thinly all over the desert but concentrated at divisional level or above). The system was the most advanced in the world at the time, being far more flexible than even German methods; the U.S. Army was quick to adopt it, although their Forward Observers were still junior in rank. By comparison, Soviet artillery methods resembled those of the British in 1916-18.

ARMOR

Although all nations produced their share of expensive junk (the inevitable fate of all weapon systems eventually), for most of the war British tank design was a national scandal. Britain's Technical Liaison Officer in Detroit wrote " . . . little of the labour and materials expended on the 25,000 British-built tanks helped to win the war." Without the U.S. tank arsenal to fall back on, the Empire would never have struck back. The growing dominance of U.S.-built tanks is shown by the following: of the equipment issued to British tank regiments in NorthWest Europe in 1944, 32 (maximum) were Shermans, 12 Churchill/AVRE, nine Cromwells. In 1945 the figures were: 25 (maximum) Shermans, 11 Churchill/AVRE, eight Cromwell, and four Comets. Even this is not the whole story, since it ignores the Stuarts found in all regimental headquarters, and the fact that the majority of tanks used by British forces in Italy and the PTO were American-built, and that three Churchill regiments were disbanded before VE-Day due to heavy losses.

The reasons for the British tank fiasco are many and varied, and cannot be discussed in any great detail here. Firstly, as the pioneers of the tank and the victors in the Great War, the British rested on their laurels and allowed their tank-producing infrastructure to decay in the locust years before World War 2. Little equipment was still being made by specialist firms, and only one major privately owned (i.e., non-government controlled) tank manufacturer—Vickers-Armstrong—remained since AFVs were uncommercial propositions in peacetime. Consequently, neither prestige nor profit could be made by producing them, and the business (such as it was) attracted little design talent. So, when rearmament began, many heavy engineering and automotive concerns became designer/producers in order to restore the lost capacity despite their inherent unsuitability. Most had inadequate design facilities and fairly idle plants of patchy quality. Contracts to build tanks were often awarded on the basis of how to lift ailing firms out of the economic doldrums into which many had sunk during the Depression. The automotive industry in Britain, for example, could in no way be compared to its American counterpart; it was smaller, less efficient and traditionally more concerned with aesthetics than significant innovation. The heavy engineering firms (e.g., railway workshops and the like) had little if any experience of vehicle mass production.

Secondly, with pre-war research and development severely curtailed financially, there was a deliberate preference for light tanks and armored cars, individually cheaper to build and operate, at the expense of more combat-worthy vehicles. The former were also easier to transport and ideal for colonial "peace-keeping", so they got priority. As few Britons expected or relished an involvement in a major European war, heavier tanks to cross the trenches, shell-holes and wire of another Great War were given scant attention.

Thirdly, there was a vicious spiral of demand caused by the dearth of pre-war prototypes and the lack of any coherent design policy, coupled with an over-reliance on the French Army and its industrial base in Britain's hurried war plans. And when France fell, the British haste to rearm became so frantic that quantity was allowed to totally suppress quality for a critical time. This led to the mass-production of untried designs like the Covenanter, Crusader and Churchill. Their components performed well enough in bench-tests, but not under combat conditions when assembled together. The deficiency was particularly acute in power units and transmissions (the heart of any AFV) and, until the arrival of the GMC diesel and Rolls-Royce Meteor, underpowered commercial engines had to suffice. Because optimistic re-armament forecasts could not be met, technological corners were cut, with lamentable results. For instance, over 1700 Covenanters alone were built, a machine best described as "junk".

Fourthly, direction and requirements were muddled. There was hesitancy, at first, in choosing between French-built heavy tanks and the lighter, more-agile German machines to copy. Only the defeat in France finally crystallized official opinion in favor of the latter to meet future requirements. To compound matters, the responsibility for the development and production of tanks was transferred from the War Office to the new Ministry of Supply shortly before the fighting began, depriving the soldiers of all technical advice and control of specification policies. Consequently, the military could now only ask for what the Ministry of Supply could (or would) deliver—an abrupt reversal of previous and normal practice. The Tank Board, created to help formulate policy and liaise between the War Office and the Ministry of Supply, had powers only of recommendation; its ever-changing membership had, mostly, very little interest in or knowledge of tank design. Only user criticism and the bitter experiences of the battlefields gradually freed tank R&D from the jealous clutches of the Ministry of Supply; but it was 1943 before any real progress was made and more battleworthy tanks left the factories in significant numbers. With weak overall control of specifications, with most tank manufacturers unskilled at adapting or redesigning existing models, and with the obsession for quantity at any price well into 1941, there was considerable delay in converting user criticism or requests for improvements into reality, and this was never properly resolved.

For an industrialist or bureaucrat far from the bloody reality of the battlefields, it was anathema to introduce improvements just when production of the current model was placed in high gear; the large number of Churchill and Cromwell versions is not so much a chronology of steady improvements as a long series of vehicles belatedly "re-worked" to approximately acceptable standards of mobility, reliability, firepower and protection. The lower usage numbers for AFV-produced smoke on the earlier Churchill and Valentine models reflects the patchy execution of these and other modifications, about which no complete records appear to have survived. The rather conservative approach to design and production meant that new features (like sloped and welded armor) were only adopted much later than in most other countries because few builders had either the expertise or the necessary equipment. Making the hull front of the Comet nearly vertical just for the sake of incorporating a bow MG beggars understanding so late in the war; one wonders if British tank designers knew that tanks like the T-34 or the Panther even existed.

Fifthly, tank design was hampered by initially severe AFV size and weight limitations. The latter were based on available engineering equipment (of 1918 vintage) in Britain which was slowly replaced, and which could accommodate only light AFVs. When it came to size, the British AFVs had to be rail-transportable since the dense British railway network promised quicker, cheaper and easier transport than the island's road network. Unfortunately, Britain paid the price as the pioneer of railways with very tight height and (especially) width restrictions through tunnels, bridges and between multiple tracks—limiting the dimensions of tanks and their turret rings (so that problems arose when upgunning became imperative). Whereas the loading guage width of Western Europe is 10 feet, four inches and North America's is 10 feet, nine inches, in Britain it is only eight feet, ten inches overall—even though all these areas save Ireland share the same rail track guage of four feet, 8.5 inches. Thus, Churchill tanks without their side air-intakes could just barely be accommodated, as could the taller Grants and Shermans on special low-slung flatcars, but the Cromwell and the Comet could not unless protruding equipment was first removed. Ironically, the rail transportation of tanks was, in practice, largely confined to machines leaving the factory for overseas or storage; those already adopted by formations usually went by road (on tank transporters) for greater flexibility and convenience. From March 1942 road movement became the rule for all new tanks except during the D-Day build-up. Freed of these unnecessary restrictions, the British produced the 11-foot wide Centurian, a copy of the Panther which just missed war-time service and which, progressively upgunned and uparmored, outclassed all opposition for the next two decades.

Sixthly, AFV firepower was of less concern to the tank builders than to the men who used them; production statistics seemed to matter more to the former group. Thus, lack of foresight rendered the earlier tanks, especially, incapable of being quickly and easily upgunned. For example, the turret rings (which limit the size and power of the main armament) of the Matilda II and the Valentine were only 50 inches in diameter, compared to the 54.25 inches in the Churchill, 57.2 inches in the Cromwell, 64 inches in the Comet, 66.75 inches in the Challenger, and the generous 69 inches in the Sherman and 74 inches in the Centurian. Thus, when the soldiers outflanked the Ministry of Supply and got extra 6-pounders produced for their use, there were no vehicles immediately available in which to mount them because the only serious contender, the Valentine, had been redesigned prior to production with a smaller turret. The original turret design was probably unacceptable (nobody appears to know the official reason) because the 2-pounder barrel overhung the hull front—a feature that most contemporary designers except the Soviets avoided at all costs. The Churchill too was originally conceived as a mounting for various weapons, including the 6-pounder, but this was not permitted until 1941. The result: a twelve-month delay in improving gunpower at a heavy cost in lives and machines.

The ever-changing specifications usually put gun-

power low on the list of priorities. Until 1942 the role of tanks and AT guns was to defeat enemy armor; hence the issue of AP shot only. But the folly of this over-specialization was obvious by late 1941 from experiences in the desert, and a flood of request for HE followed. As good AP and HE performance are largely mutually exclusive, much official soul-searching followed before the British embraced the "dual purpose" American 75mm type weapon as standard one year later. Official requirements in February 1943 called for the majority of tanks to carry this gun, but by March this was lowered to only 30%—with 50% of the AFVs having 6- or 17-pounders and the rest close support howitzers. By May 1944, however, the proportions had been changed again to 65%, 25% and 10% respectively. Montgomery's unfortunate signature of a telegram stated that ". . . the 75mm gun is all we require" was, alas, taken too literally. In effect, this was an over-reaction to the bad ol' AP-shot days, and the bad ol' "dual-purpose" days followed.

Seventhly, there was inter-department rivalry, non-cooperation, stupidity and official inertia of the worst sort. Three examples will suffice:

The Cromwell could have been in service by 1942 but for the fact that Leyland Motors, who accepted "parentage" of the project, argued tenaciously in a prolonged dispute for the installation of their own (modified) version of the obsolete Liberty engine rather than the superior Rolls Royce Meteor. When the Meteor was finally forced through, this adaptation of the Merlin engine caused Rolls Royce problems; and so the two industrialists agreed, over lunch, to exchange their respective engine programs. This enabled Rolls Royce to retain their aero engine specialism, and Rover their tank engines. Rover eventually developed the Meteor from the Merlin, but the resultant chaos that this arrangement brought kept the Cromwell out of the war until Normandy, by which time it was barely superior to the old 75mm Sherman.

Then there was the British 75mm gun; precious resources were squandered also on this inferior version of the American weapon. Based on a re-bored 6-pounder, it had numerous teething troubles. Special firing trials for the British 75mm gun were held as late as October 1944 after user criticism; and the troops preferred the U.S. version—especially the mounting, side-opening breech and electric firing system.

And the 17-pounder. Farsighted (and desperate) British soldiers finally got this mounted in the Sherman, but the bureaucrats had been asked to do this as early as July 1942. Instead of the 200 that the Army wanted, due to official resistance only a handful were available initially—and only 20-25% of regimental strength consisted of "Fireflies" in Normandy. The Challenger, of course, was a poor substitute due to its inferior armor and a tendency to shed its tracks, thanks to an unfortunate combination of rear sprockets, excessive track and hull length, its high speed and Christie suspension. Another major drawback was its poor ammunition storage. It carried only 48 rounds for the 17-pounder (whereas the Firefly had up to 78), and in the Challenger most rounds were fairly inaccessibly stored in the hull front and odd corners of the turret. The tank's *second* loader probably spent most of his time fishing these out of their nooks and crannies, and this explains why its ROF in *ASL* is so low. As for the de-rated 17-pounder in the Comet, its AT performance was seriously compromised by the absence of APDS ammunition. It was little consolation that the gun's HE round and accuracy were both superb.

Eighthly, and last, the British engaged in over-experimentation and the production of "dead-end" types that wasted design and production resources, the former activity due in part to the unpleasant experiences caused by the mass-production of tanks straight off the drawing board earlier in the war. Examples of this wastage include the Tetrarch, TOG I and II (an enlarged version of the French Char B, but even uglier), the Centaur, Valiant (the end of the Valentine line, with a hull front like the Soviet IS-3 and usual 75mm "pea-shooter" armament), the Challenger, Avenger (a lower-slung Challenger), Tortoise (a super-heavy SPG with the mobility of Fort Knox), and the Black Prince (a widened Churchill with 17-pounder)—none of which gave the British Army a battleworthy AFV akin to the Soviet T-34 family.

With hindsight it is easy to criticize, of course, but no British tank of the war succeeded in combining such good qualities as the Soviet "Snow King" (the German nickname for the T-34). The Matilda II, for example, was a contemporary vehicle and Britain's best tank when the war began. It had good armor, but even here the British erred; inadequate testing had fostered the delusion that it could resist the German 88mm gun above 440 yards range (in fact, the vehicle was vulnerable to it at over 2000 yards). The Matilda's small turret ring prevented upgunning with a more versatile weapon, and even the CS versions were more smoke-layers than HE support weapons (because the HE round was of poor quality and scarce). This left a single MG to deal with "soft" targets. Nor was the Matilda II designed for the rigors of mobile warfare; rather it was an assault tank to be used only for short periods between lengthy spells of maintenance and preparation. Its steering clutches were not nearly rugged enough; it also had a high ground pressure. It was not particularly reliable, although its pre-Dunkirk crews (mechanically better trained than those later) did much to save its reputation. Matildas were difficult to mass produce, and were probably the most expensive British tanks to see combat in the war. Not exactly good value.

The British AFVs have low rates of fire in *ASL* not just because of their relative small turret rings (which made for cramped fighting compartments), but also because official doctrine emphasized accuracy, ammunition conservation, and crew safety—all of which conspired to keep ROF low. Inadequate testing under field conditions meant that while rapid gun-laying was theoretically possible through the use of special shoulder-rests for tank gunners operating 2- and 6-pounder weapons, the device was actually very tiring to use in action and detrimental to performance. Initially the British practiced firing on the move, but German tanks in the desert (which fired while stationary) soon showed this to be a waste of ammunition, tanks and crews. The British appear to have made little use of the gyrostabilizers fitted into their U.S.-built AFVs, but say they were excellent for producing "spraying fire" (indicating a marked lack of faith in their ability to improve gun accuracy).

In *ASL*, the reliability of British AFVs is justifiably lower than the U.S. vehicles. Even improved types like the Valentine, the debugged Churchill and the Cromwell demanded more maintenance than Shermans. The mechanical reliability of the (in this respect) superb Czech 38(t) and of the American vehicles in general is better than the British and Soviet vehicles with good reason; the 30(t) needed just 30 minutes of daily maintenance and the Sherman about an hour (though it often got by on less). In comparison, the Crusader, Grant and Valentine required about 3.25 hours. But the real *prima donnas* among Allied tanks were the Covenanter, the Churchill and the early Soviet KVs; the two British tanks required four hours of daily attention if mechanical tantrums were to be minimized, while the latter's engine had to be lubricated after just one-to-two hours of running.

Initially, British mechanical reliability was very poor, and in 1940 75% of the British tanks left in France were lost through mechanical breakdown. In the early desert battles, this figure was still at 60%, compared to losses through breakdown and ditching of 60-63% at the Battle of Cambrai in 1917! The early Churchill's battle debut was considerably delayed due to the evil reputation it had gained for poor reliability even in the cooler European environment, and there was great reluctance at first to send it to the desert front. The Crusader's inherent mechanical flaws were worsened by poor workmanship, while two British tanks—the wretched Covenanter and the light Tanks Marks I-VI—shared an unfortunate tendency to "reverse-steer" (i.e., turn in the opposite direction than that intended) under certain conditions. The latter were also dangerously top-heavy. In comparing the American Sherman with British tanks from a mechanical standpoint, only the latters' offroad mobility was superior; the Churchill in particular often surprised the enemy by appearing unexpectedly in apparently "tank-proof" terrain like the Tunisian hills or the muddy Reichswald. The Sherman needed good roads to be really effective.

Having discussed the bad side of British tank technology at such length, the good points also deserve mention for the sake of balance. British tanks when penetrated did at least burn more slowly than German or U.S. tanks, giving the survivors more time to bail-out. The Churchill would "brew up" 60% of the time, but gave its crew about ten seconds to escape before the flames reached the crew compartment (whereas the Sherman almost always caught fire and gave its crew just 3-5 seconds to get out). The British, in fact, nicknamed the Sherman the "Ronson", while the Germans preferred to call them "Tommy-cookers". Wet-stowage Shermans, moreover, comprised only 7.7% of those supplied to the Britain, and not all of them saw action.

There were exceptions to the rule regarding British "crew-friendliness" of their AFVs however. Some Mark VIC light tanks (already vulnerable enough) went to France without armament, having their turret fronts covered with plywood to plug the holes and their crews armed with pistols and rifles (some met the panzers still in this condition). Some early Crusaders had armor of inferior quality, while some Cromwells also suffered from sub-standard armor (made by an inexperienced manufacturer), but the latter batch thankfully never saw action. It should again be stressed that while pressures on scarce materials forced reduction in the non-ferrous metal content of British plate, strict production controls avoided a fall in quality.

The mounting of the 17-pounder is also something of a success story, and it enabled the British to deal more effectively with German armor (most of which was concentrated against them in Normandy) than the U.S. Army's less-potent AFVs. It is also one aspect of tank warfare that the British can be very self-righteous about, since the United States had ignored Britain's offer of 200 17-pounder barrels per month if Uncle Sam would build his own Firefly turrets. This proposal was rejected on purely nationalistic grounds with specious arguments, and the "Not Invented Here" policy of the U.S. Army cost innumerable Allied lives. In fact, the U.S. Army subsequently twice requested Fireflies from the British, but none arrived in time to see combat in U.S. hands. Unofficially, however, British Fireflies (and Crocodiles) were sometimes dispatched to support U.S. units in combat.

Other successes include the "Funnies". The British excelled in specialized armor, notably assault vehicles like the Crocodile, the Crab, the DD tank, a host of bridgelayers, and the ARVE. Again, the U.S. army was offered equal shares of all the "Funnies", but took only the DD tanks on the grounds of crew unfamiliarity with British equipment—and suffered accordingly on D-Day.

Britain also produced thousands of nimble, low-slung recce vehicles which were used with great dash and success by the Army and RAF in all theaters. If British tanks were usually undergunned, British AC were not and carried welded armor from an early date. However, the massive AEC was essentially road-bound due to its bulk, unsynchronized gearbox, and leaf-spring suspension (revealing the truck ancestry of its chassis); it possessed "great potential for blocking the roadway." Technical development of wheeled AFVs was not really spectacular, though the Daimler vehicles were something of an exception and the supply of these superb vehicles never met the demand. As a result, the inferior Humber scout and armored cars were produced as substitutes, even though they barely met official specifications due to their commercial chassis. Most British wheeled AFVs suffered from this problem as long as they were regarded as "tanks on wheels", but once the General Staff lost interest in light tanks after Dunkirk (because tougher vehicles to resist the expected German invasion were needed) wheeled AFVs gradually usurped the reconnaissance role. These AFVs could sacrifice armament and armor for accomodation, speed and range, and the British enthusiasm for them reflects not only their lower cost but also the greater need for fresh information by senior British commanders (who were far from happy to let their subordinates run the war up front without the sort of interference that German generals were famous for). Too, the British infatuation with ACs and scouts must be rooted, to some extent, in their tradition of horsemanship and elan.

The only serious omission from the British armored arsenal was a good APC, and they relied far more on their poorly-protected carriers (with their small load-carrying capacity) than on U.S. half-tracks. In the case of recce units, at least, carriers were used more as "battle taxis", with their crews dismounting at first opportunity and using walkie-talkies in preference to remaining in their vehicles any longer than was absolutely necessary. Players tempted to fire their 2-inch mortars from inside their vulnerable carriers might like to remember this. On the other hand, most British trucks were generally reliable if not sparkling performers; again they were mostly commercial adaptations rather than purpose-built war vehicles. However, the new desert terrain rules show that they were far better suited for desert conditions than their foreign equivalents. In North Africa at least, the U.S. Jeep had a poor reputation for reliability since many British soldiers drove them much too fast and overloaded them.

Many vehicles included in *COD* have been omitted from *WEST OF ALAMEIN* for historical reasons as well as to keep the cost down as much as possible. The Light Tanks Marks I-VIB are all pretty much similar in game terms (all were death-traps in real life), so a "generic" Mark VIB counter suffices. The Medium Tank Mark II saw little action, which was just as well for its unfortunate crewmen, as did the M8 Greyhound, the Centaur Dozer, and the Valentine DD. It is doubtful that the Staghound II, Valentine X or Sherman III(L) ever saw combat, and these have made way for more deserving inclusions like the Lloyd Carrier, the Carrier India pattern, the Valentine III/V, the Rolls Royce armored car, the Humber LRC and the Priest Kangaroo. Pressures on counter mix, however, forced out others such as the Churchill AVRE bridgelayer, the Churchill "LT" reworked to roughly Mark III/VIII standards (but with inferior, 8AF, turret armor), and the Centurian I (which would have been fun for hypothetical DYO situations).

British handling of armor suffered for too long from a lack of commanders who really understood how to use it properly, a symptom of the long-overdue and unpopular mechanization of the cavalry from 1937 onwards. The fact was that pre-war interest in tanks was seen by most officers as freakish and fanatic. There was a dearth of pre-war exercises (some of which bordered on farce), and a shortage of available land in Britain for even wartime exercises due to agricultural demands caused by the U-boat blockade. When British generals in the desert admitted that their own forces were " . . . still largely an army of amateurs fighting professionals," it was as much an admission of the poor handling of armored formations as an indictment of their small-unit tactics. The performance of British armor was not helped by organizational blunders; in late 1941, divisions in North Africa were reorganized into brigade-sized units with only weak tank strength and artillery support. They were then doled out along the front and expected to accomplish all that their larger predecessors had failed to do against an enemy who believed in concentration of force. The Germans just gobbled them up in detail. Inspired by the exploits of Lawrence in Arabia and the sometimes wild and vague theories of Liddell-Hart, British commanders chose to fight a sort of mechanized guerrilla warfare and so dispersed their armor, grossly over-estimating the dangers that concentration would face from air attack. They practiced "mobility" for its own sake by driving about endlessly to no useful purpose and to the detriment of the vehicles concerned ("swanning about" in British slang). When the armor was re-organized on a divisional basis, it was for much of the war a tank-heavy TO&E with inadequate infantry support and hence, inadequate flexibility.

The separation of tanks and regiments into "infantry" and "cruiser" types, each with its own tactical doctrines, did nothing to improve things. Cooperation between these two branches was often lacking because the cavalry and RTR (*Royal Tank Regiment*) units shared a mutual dislike dating back to the Great War; this rift took time and the deeds of a greater enemy to heal. Further, each separate role was executed in a rather rigid manner, while the different performance characteristics of the vehicles concerned caused headaches for the commanders much like the early mixtures of T-34s and KVs did in the Red Army. The "I" tanks downgraded mobility, surprise and maneuver while the cruiser tank crews had been led to believe that speed was a substitute for thinner armor. Reassured by official statements that thier 2-pounders could pierce German armor below 500-yard range, each would trundle or charge (respectively) unsupported into enemy killing grounds with their pennants flying—like French medieval knights, and just as slow to learn the lessons of war. Even in Normandy, where common sense should have prevailed and where the British could afford to lose six tanks for every panzer destroyed, many British units would "charge" PzKpfw IVs. Fortunately, there were neither the numbers (before Second Alamein at least) nor suitable cover for similar heroics in the desert.

Temperamentally, the British were probably better suited than the Americans for the bloody attrition of the Normandy battlefields (and also possessed, initially, more tanks on D-Day for this very purpose) and the British did at least systematically destroy the German armor embroiled there as planned—albeit at terrible cost. The self-sacrifice of the British, Canadian and Polish tankers allowed Patton's forces to race across France relatively unopposed once they had broken out. This fact often seems forgotten. Events after the breakout showed that men like Horrocks, Roberts and even the ultra-cautious Montgomery could handle armor with the skill shown by O'Connor in the desert battles, by Patton and by most German field commanders.

THE DESERT BATTLEGROUND

Since *WEST OF ALAMEIN* is a desert war game, a short comment on the area is appropriate. No combatants really foresaw the problems caused to mechanized warfare by millions of tons of natural abrasives (which tanks ingested at the rate of about one pound per five miles travelled), but thanks to Major-General Hobart, commanding the Mobile Division Egypt in 1939, the British were better equipped than the Italians. However, the latter adapted quickly, if not as fast as the Germans. Acclimatization could be an expensive process; the British 44th Recce Regiment, for instance, wrote off (i.e., ruined) about 70 motorcycles in the process in September 1942 and had to virtually "relearn" how to drive its carriers in the soft sand.

The desert is no billiard table either, as the *WOA* boards and overlays show. The rocks, wadis, salt marshes and other dubious geographical delights to movement were augmented by mines in their thousands, to the extent that 20-33% of all tank casualties there were lost to mines (compared to only about 16% in NW Europe). The "gentler" terrain placed scant cover at a premium, together with any advantages to be gained from the sun's position, movement, dust, heat haze, smoke and mist. Shallow hills and depressions gave the lower-slung British, Italian and German vehicles an advantage over their taller U.S. counterparts when it came to exploiting precious hull-down positions. To compensate for the general lack of cover, early British armor there sported "disruptive" paint schemes like the Matilda on the *WOA* box lid, although the British later returned to more orthodox camouflage painting.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that "Tommy Atkins" and his Commonwealth and refugee comrades had problems, but they also had some strengths—tough, dogged, and prepared to "muddle through", often sustained by a wry and cynical sense of humor. Equipped with a mix of good and bad weapons, Tommy was eventually capable of taking on his opponents on more or less equal terms once his confidence (dented by earlier defeats) was restored. The traditionally small, neglected Army was greatly expanded to play a far more vital role than most people had foreseen. Never as professional as the German, nor as well equipped as the American, the British Army was not decisive in itself and could never have been mistaken for a more genteel version of the Red Army. But it made an important contribution to victory despite its handicaps by taking some of the heat off Britain's allies at critical moments for many years. It also inflicted some stunning defeats on all its enemies, particularly on the Italians in the early desert battles and in Burma where it gave the Japanese their worst drubbing in any of their land campaigns. As a result, Tommy Atkins is a worthy opponent for your cardboard Germans, Italians and the other Axis troops yet to enter the arena. So when your AFVs go forth to support that "thin Khaki line", may they always pass safely "Through Mud and Blood to the Green Fields Beyond" (as the Royal Tank Regiment's motto so eloquently advocates).



DESERT SANDS

The Scenarios of WOA, Part II

By Mark C. Nixon

In the last issue, Mr. Nixon considered the first four scenarios of WEST OF ALAMEIN and shared his insights into tactics with us. In this, the second part of his evaluation of these newest challenges for the dedicated ASL buff, he turns his attention to the last four found in that module—#39-#42.



Scenario 39
Turning the Tables

Rating: 55% German

Attraction: A heavily armed force of Germans plunge into sand, mines and wire. British defenders are frozen in their tracks as Stukas dive to the attack. The steady drumming of the Bofors has sent more than one to an earthy grave, but the guns are in danger from the ground this time as enemy sappers guide the assault through, coming out of the setting sun.

British Advantages: Wire, Mines, Sand, Entrenchments, 40L Guns

If I told you to set up a defense including 315 mine factors, my guess is your response would be similar to mine . . . "No thanks; let's play *ASL* instead." But here, the mines are all Known, and the enemy also has sappers. With ten turns available, they will be able to work through the mines, although the inconvenience in doing so will be a cornerstone of your defense. Complementing the mines, the wire and sand pose added trouble for attacking infantry and vehicles alike. Notice that even the best route for the halftracks still involves three Bog checks, perhaps making your selection of hexes to boresight quite easy. Everybody can fit into the entrenchments, and the sand provides a nice haven from the 150mm Stuka bombs, since it halves their resolution (F7.4: bombs are ordnance by definition). Those 40L guns will destroy any of the German armor in LOS, giving the AA gun plenty of time to engage enemy infantry as the vehicles hide. Naturally, the AA gun must deal with the Stukas—a matter to be covered later.

British Disadvantages: Static, Leadership, Dispersed, Sunblindness

One telling aspect of the advantages listed above is that, other than the 40L guns, these are all fixed pieces of terrain; they are not weapons you might use aggressively against the enemy. My own preference would be to trade in some of that static paraphenalia for some added hitting power, as it is much easier to adjust the defense when composed of mobile elements capable of exerting influenece beyond their own hex. The fortifications, once set, are inflexible. The enemy might work around them or through them and, of course, you cannot make any changes to them then. A faulty set-up here, or one which the Germans negotiate early, will result in a lost game most of the time. This is magnified by the inability of your infantry to make bold adjustments due to the strength of those Stukas and enemy machineguns, coupled with the need to defend across the entire battlefield. With only three leaders, it is difficult to split the force between the north and south sand patches, and the single −1 leadership DRM to be shared by 13 squads must surely make this the poorest-led group of British ever. As if all this were not enough to convince you to choose to play the German side, there is also sunblindness to contend with.

British Defense:

Remember that all the fortifications set up HIP (A12.33), except for the Known minefields. Coupled with the fact that all your troops are concealed (in addition to the 10 dummy counters in your OB), you do have some chance of deceiving the German player into attacking the wrong portion of your defense. The other basic concept to remember is to make sure both guns are HIP so the Stukas can't simply fly in and drop their bombs on them, and to set up your infantry so any strafing runs will hit only one occupied hex.

Stringing the mines across the entire area can be useful, or using all three to block the southern edge might be good as well. My favorite is to use them to block the center, where it is most likely the AFVs want to go: 28T4-26T7, 28U5-26U8 and 28V4-26oV7. Put wire in 28O6-O10 and 26Q1-U3. The HMG goes in a foxhole in 26oP5 and can move to a trench in 26O6 if the Germans move for the wire to the north. The HIP ATG is in 26oN5 and the AA gun is in 26oO4. The guns will remain HIP until the Stukas attack; at some point, if the aircraft are playing timid, I might even expose some infantry in order to invite an airstrike. I plan for the HMG and the AA gun to deal with the planes. Should the first strikes not be at the guns or the HMG, the bombs will probably not fall and so I should get first chance to take out a plane. The MMG in a trench in 26M1 is a risk I'm willing to take during the opening set-up because he can lay down a firelane to 26Y1 and have tremendous impact on any German entry in that area. Since the sunblindness does not affect a firelane, nor does Light Dust, this is the best way to inhibit enemy movement when looking into the sun. The Stukas might move on this MMG, but cannot do so until after their infantry have entered, and even should the MMG attract their attention, so much the better as my AA fire will then spring into play. The sooner the Stukas attack and drop their bombs on mediocre targets, the happier I will be—for I can continue to fire on them. If they can be chased away, my full attention can then zero in on the ground fighting.

The rest of the infantry are dispersed in the southern sand area in three-point clusters (such as 26oW7, oV5, oU7) in order to lessen the impact of strafing. The northern sand area might contain nothing but dummy concealment counters, for the guns and machineguns can bring fire upon the area, and the wire in the O-hexrow slows any attack across that region. The three-hex deep minefield promises little for the Germans, and my guns are trained on it. A halftrack traversing the northern sand area must take a minimum of seven Bog rolls, and will also take some anti-tank fire. A German attack across the south would be welcome indeed, for although my own losses would be great, I wouldn't expect the enemy to fight through my strength and still be able to exit 22 DVP. If he can do that, then he deserves to win.

But I won't leave the north without defenders every time. For one thing, you can play mental games by altering the number of dummy concealments in that sector. If playing a concealment "counter" (you know, one of those fellows who count your concealments in order to deduce where the real troops are), you might leave exactly ten counters in the north. He'll think they're all concealments and will be caught in a trap of his own making when they turn out to be real troops. Or, you might try the same tactic, but leave a few troops there as well. Once he has uncovered a couple of dummy stacks, he'll probably assume the rest are dummies too. But guess who will be joining the ranks of the dummies!

Yet another thing I like about concentrating in the south is that the enemy who attacks across the north can then be fired at out of sunblindness. While that may seem like small compensation for the fact that the enemy are at long range and even beyond range of much of my firepower, they will also have to send troops to contain my infantry or face a counterattack around the west side of the minefields to the 28oX1 area. Naturally, any containment force itself becomes a target for my troops. I don't expect some 22 DVP of German infantry to exit the playing area. There will be some AFV bogs, and hopefully an immobilization or two. My two guns will take out any vehicles they engage, if only the Stukas and the 10-2 directed HMGs don't strike down my crews first.

There are certainly other set-ups which will work well. This one just happens to be my favorite. I'd rather not commit a large number of squads on one flank containing only one leader, and so prefer the above attempt to deal with the entire board from a single area, hedging the bet somewhat with a few squads in the north backed by no leader at all. Putting troops in both the north and the south would be a viable alternative, but defending only in the north won't work because the south is so well screened by the high dunes in that region. Even throwing all the mines and wire into the south won't stop the Germans unless they are covered by firepower. Finally, don't forget that you can buck convention and stick a cluster of entrenchments out in the open, or string a system of trenches and sangars which will be interconnected, between fortified locations. For those who enjoy a little experimenting and the process of devising a truly remarkable fixed defensive position, this scenario should be a real jewel.

German Advantages: Stukas, Machineguns, 10-2 Leader

The Stukas might be used in a number of ways. Most obvious, and the way I tried at first, is to bring them on immediately and start ripping up the best available targets. But the British will grow wise to that and begin to keep their AA gun HIP and the HMG concealed. The German response, then, is to withhold the planes as a threat until the British reveal something worthwhile. If that 150mm bomb can be dropped on the AA gun, HMG or ATG, the infantry will have an improved chance to score a win. The beauty of this is that, since the Stuka will pin

its target with its initial MG burst in a point attack (at the very least), the targeted AA gun will be able to throw out only a "4" table attack instead of an "8", and won't have ROF. Should it or the HMG be lucky enough to nail the plane, I bet the second one will win through. I'd much rather have one Stuka around with no more AA gun to face for the rest of the game than have both Stukas left with no bombs and the AA gun cracking away at them on whim.

And what is it that will force the British to reveal their heavy hitters? The 10-2 directing two HMGs and a MMG ought to do it. Once established in a spot like 28oEE5 or 26oDD6, this firegroup can annihilate (or at least scare away) anything in its path—freeing the remainder of the German infantry to proceed forward. The heavy MG group then advances to a new position. Before long, the British must retaliate with fire from the AA gun and the HMG. If they don't, they will lose their squads; and when they do, the Stukas will dive in for the kill. The machineguns also prohibit British north-south movement and add to the overall greater range of German weaponry. This is another example of the Germans successfully engaging their enemy beyond effective range of return fire. The machineguns and leaders are what make it work here, enhanced nicely by the sunblindness at times.

German Disadvantages: Tough VC, Difficult Terrain

Part of the problem with exiting 22 DVP is that the 31 DVP of infantry will not make it alone. Some of them will certainly fall, and that means that some of the vehicles will need to exit the mapboard. Those vehicles are all flimsy, and you cannot expect them to stand up to any 40L fire. They must even beware the British MGs, ATRs and mortars. It will prove tough enough to work these AFVs through all the Bog hexes and minefields, even without hostile fire to bother them. So the attack might be hampered by the need to screen these vehicles from the enemy, at least until the locations of the guns are known. It still won't be a cake-walk, but at least your infantry can engage the British equally without the danger of that dread #9 TK eliminating six of your valuable DVP at a single blow.

The only other bit of difficulty you will encounter, beyond failure of the Stukas, is the exposure and delay of crossing all that open ground and sand. The trouble for the vehicles is worse than it is for the infantry, but the foot soldiers will pay dearly for any moving in the open and will be slowed by sand and wire—and often channeled where they'd rather not go by the minefields.

German Attack:

There is a very good reason for this being a ten-turn scenario. It is because the Germans need that much time to discover the layout of the British positions, to poke and probe into it, to work around the mines and wire, to pinpoint the emplaced guns before sending in the Stukas, AFVs and CC teams. Call it reconnaissance; call it caution. Call it what you will. The force the German marches into this battle is built around the ability of the Stukas to deliver a telling blow at a critical location at the right moment. Their failure to land a bomb on target because you took a chance on a concealed unit might cost you the game. If you run the AFVs out into the open and the 40L guns fry them, you might want to re-read Chapters C and D. If you put the 10-2 leader anywhere but with the two HMGs, set and ready to rip apart any target in sight, perhaps there is yet time to dust off the copy of *RAIL BARON*.

Ten turns give you enough time to move onto the battlefield in a cautious manner, establish a MG base in a secure spot (such as 26oDD6 or 28oEE5) with the 10-2, and begin to surge forward in a dispersed formation with the squads. If the 10-2 steps into a boresighted location, he might have to be moved. To guard against a boresight/9-1 combination wrecking him, make sure you advance concealed into position. Don't barge in during movement in Turn 1 in the hope of firing off an Advancing Fire shot at long range. Even the boresighted shot rolls a Light Dust die. In your Defensive Fire Phase, you will reassemble the machineguns in order to blast the enemy in Turn 2 Prep Fire, or will leave them DM should the British choose to slink away from your threat. When you force them to start moving, they will be abandoning not only their entrenchments but also the three-hex cluster defense, and will find themselves presenting multiple targets for a strafing attack. But, as I've mentioned, it may not yet be time to unleash the terror from the skies. Wait for a great target—not just a good one—and always attack from outside CA of the AA gun.

As one might expect, the real work will be in the hands of the seven or eight squads who must advance toward the British positions. They are the ones who will do any mine/wire clearing. They are the ones who bring forward the LMGs and their own inherent firepower which, together, must hold the British at bay when it is time to move the 10-2 closer. They are the ones who will force the majority of the enemy to drop their concealment in favor of providing additional targets for the 10-2. They must come out of the sun, so that even running in the open (which I don't recommend as a steady diet for victory) they are taking only even fire, plus the Dust dr.

By far, my favorite spot to attack is the southern area. This region provides some interesting LOS with all the dunes thereabout. It is shielded from any northern British by both the dunes (inclusing SD1) and the range, but will prove difficult for the vehicles to cross because they must enter the southwest corner to avoid close-range fire in the 16V1 area. The center is the best path for the vehicles, but in my estimation it is too open for the infantry. The north is a compromise, far from any southern British units yet more open than the south itself. Any of the three might be taken, and which will probably depend on the enemy's minefield and infantry deployement. But whatever the defense, I think the attack must proceed with the hope of clearing a path through the center for the vehicles. An attack in the south might hook slightly north to the pass at 26V9, with sappers to clear that area, while the balance of the attack continues eastward. In like fashion, a northern attack can slip a few sappers south into the 28X4 pass to do the same. Don't forget to enter the minefields with trailbreak counters and use all the modifiers at your disposal from the B24.7 to roll clearance. Should the attack not allow you to clear these central blockages, your vehicles will have to take their chances in the sand. If the British have not blocked the center, you must expect it to be heavily boresighted and should proceed through that area only after finding out otherwise or silencing the enemy's heavier weaponry.

Once located, the AA gun is the primary target for the Stukas. I wouldn't hesitate to use both bombs on it if needed. The crew will be pinned by the first MG attack, so chances are good that one of the bombs will hit with results. Even better, the 10-2 might take out the crew or the assault might sweep right through their position. Such luck would be ideal, but I think playing for the Stuka attack on the gun is about the best policy. At least, that is something you can plan for as opposed to an event that might just "happen". However you do it, once the AA gun is taken out, the Stukas are then relatively free—and might turn on the HMG to eliminate their last worry, although striking the ATG would be great for freeing up the armor, and screaming down on the poor bloody infantry can help out your own infantry. Throughout, the ability of those Stukas to pin everybody they attack with point attacks will prove perhaps the greatest virtue. With the right kind of luck, imagine what a single Stuka might do to the best stack the British muster; with a pin every turn, that stack might never leave its starting hex. If you can catch the HMG out of position, it might be worth pinning it every turn just to keep it out of the battle.

But the sand muffles those bombs down to the "12" column with a +1 for Emplacement. The bombs might fall to no effect. What should you do? My advice is to simply proceed with the infantry assault. The failure of the bombing is not a reason to assume your attack itself is failing, throw caution to the wind and charge forward with the armor. Far from it, that would be the certain path to failure. These well-led troops can still win. They still derive certain advantages from the air cover, bombs or no bombs. For one, the enemy must decide every Prep Fire Phase whether he will fire his AA and HMG, or save them for use during the Movement Phase against those strafing planes. The very threat of the airstrike infringes on your opponent's options. The turn he marks his HMG for Opportunity Fire might be the turn you break its manning infantry with defensive fire. On the other hand, the turn the HMG prep fires might be the turn a Stuka ends the MG's game life.

Once you have taken out those two 40L guns, or if you can find a useful location out of their LOS, you can finally bring out the PzJgs for some added firepower at the British infantry. You should still keep them outside normal range of the enemy SW, but that should not be too terribly difficult since, by the time the 40Ls are gone, your infantry should have already silenced several of those bothersome ATRs, mortars and LMGs. The 47Ls of these German AFVs might not seem like much at first, but once they start cranking in some ROF and scoring some hits, the "4" attack results will be most welcome. I would not bring the halftracks forward unless you are near the endgame and desperate. These vehicles are better used for driving offboard with their 12 DVP (or maybe even more once loaded) than for any offensive action. But they need to be creeping forward throughout the game at every possibility, because they must face several Bog checks and will need an opportunity to free themselves should they bog down. The PzJgs can't help push the HTs, but you might want to use one HT to push the other in a situation where you need them both and the chance of bogging two is no more detrimental than having one stuck. Just the fortunes of war.

The end rush to get offboard in the final turns should, if you have done your job and encountered good fortune (you must always be lucky to win . . . no matter what scenario, no matter what game), be a matter of walking and driving. I don't expect that there will be any British left after ten turns of fighting. The only question is whether you still have 22 DVP to exit. If you should have extra units but there are still British in the way, try being a bit more aggressive next time. Better to put those defenders to the test while there are still a few turns to go than to throw all your hopes into one last charge. When the enemy know you absolutely have to exit a certain place on a certain turn, you know they will be throwing out those firelanes across your path and putting extra residual fire in the key hexes you must cross. This is too much advantage to give away to them. The defender will know he can Intensive Fire and risk Sustained Fire. They will use every FPF opportunity, knowing there is no tomorrow. Had you gone at them like this on Turn 8 instead of 10, there would be another turn to face and they would be reluctant to commit all these desperate shots. Plus, if they break your troops on Turn 8, you might still bring them back for more of the same on Turns 9 and 10. Troops broken on Turn 10, however, are out of the picture (almost always)!

Conclusion:

As expected, the Germans come out of the sun. The sappers are soon at work on the mines and wire of the overconfident British. One of the AA batteries prematurely fires into the minefield, and almost immediately the Stukas are screaming out of the late afternoon sky. Bombs and heavy machinegun fire, sand and dust, foreign troops in a foreign land. The pressure is too much to bear and, for the first time in the minds of some, it is time to depart to the rear.



Scenario 40
Fort McGregor

Rating: 60% German

Attraction: This idea of a night assault on prepared defenses might prove the best way to get into Fort McGregor; but there can be no doubt that the attack is expected, what with the introductory bombardment. Like as not, the shells will not clear a convenient swath through the wire and it will be up to the infantry, again, to find a path. Sixteen machineguns rip the night, and at times the starshells light the area as though it were daytime. There will be no sanctuary for the weary.

British Advantages: Entrenchments, Wire, HMG

I don't see much for the British to cheer about in the meager force they are allocated in this scenario. If the beneficial TEM of the foxholes and sangars don't allow them to survive some of the potent German firepower, and if the wire doesn't slow the enemy at least a turn or two, there will be slim chance of any British victory here. The key seems to be to break some of those enemy squads early and then keep them broken. As in all Night scenarios, it is very difficult to do any serious routing with it limited to one hex at a time via Low Crawl and with DM status so much more difficult to cast aside. The awful fact is that the German can still slink away one hex at a time, whereas broken British squads might not even be able to rout at all since they are surrounded by the enemy. Still, the entrenchments should allow the defenders to hang in there longer than they otherwise might and trade blows with the encroaching enemy. Of course, the entrenchments are necessary to survive the bombardment—that goes without saying—and this encounter will prove a useful study of the various layouts possible with a combination of such earthworks and the hillock. In case you haven't noticed, this was the section detailing the British Advantages! Pray for massive ROF with the HMG.

British Disadvantages: Firepower, Surrounded

If the three mortars were all used to fire HE in one Fire Phase, they should be able to get off about five rounds with their ROF—or about 10FP on the IFT. This brings the British total to 74 firepower factors if the HS are able to use their inherent fire (which would mean that the mortars are being manned by full squads . . . as well as all other SW for that matter). But the Germans wield 124 firepower factors. Use the mortars to fire IR, the Germans suddenly possess twice the firepower of the defenders. It's the kind of overwhelming ratio which normally dictates a fall-back defense; only here, that obviously won't work. The British are going to take a beating, and that's without any heavy destruction from the pre-game bombardment. (I find that bombardments are rarely harmful, but are sometimes a real nuisance.) This time there is no place to run, for the "fort" is surrounded. The implication is that there will be times when rout is impossible, and that some positions will become Encircled. Indeed, it will be a common enough practice of those devious opponents you've come to know and love, to actually illuminate their own positions so that your broken troops will be sure to see them and, therefore, not rout toward them. In this manner, you will have a very tough time getting the broken troops to the leaders for rally; and when you combine large stacks to overcome that dilemma, those stacks will come under encircling fire. It's just one thing after another inside Fort McGregor.

British Defense:

The British might choose to congregate everyone around the hillock summits themselves, but I won't spend much time here on this strategy. That would play right into the Germans' hands, allowing them to run the attack however they desire, with yourself as little more than a casual observer until such time as the enemy come within three hexes (the NVR) of your constricted defense. Instead I want to demonstrate a defense which might involve a bit more risk, but which also provides capacity to bring greater harm upon the Germans before they get so close.

The first thing to do is re-read those Night rules. That might seem no easy task, but there are a few tricks involved in setting up the defense. Make sure you take the Dummy counters in addition to concealing all your troops. Don't forget to set up three-squad equivalents HIP, and all leaders and SW HIP (page E26, Clarifications for E1.2). Because of SSR 4, some of the entrenchments will not be set up HIP, although they normally would even in a daylight scenario. When that pre-game bombardment hits, remember that only units which break/reduce/wound lose their concealment/HIP status. Units taking MC and PTC do not otherwise lose such status because there are no enemy units in LOS.

That's about it for the significant rules; the rest of the defense hinges on how you will apply your knowledge of the game as a whole. The one thing I'd like to avoid, or at least curtail, as the British is the effect of those enemy attempts at Encirclement. This determination was born during our initial playtest games, back when the Germans were not required to take the summit hexes to win. We recorded several playings in which the Germans won simply by moving to the fort's perimeter and blasting away at the British, using the power of their machineguns to force Encirclement upon them in location after location. With enemy units on all sides, the British could not rout and often had trouble enough just moving out of the Encirclement. Of course, that will no longer win the game, but I haven't forgotten the lesson and still expect to suffer at the hands of all those machineguns. To combat this, I will stay off the summit hexes themselves and use entrenched locations adjacent to the hillock to prevent the enemy even seeing me from encircling positions as much as possible. Foxholes in 28oY2, 28Z2, 27oX10 and 27W10 are the choice locations to illustrate this principle. Notice that the entrenched squads in 28ZZ2 and 27W10 cannot be encircled at all unless the enemy have gained the hillock itself. Squads on the hillock can be seen from slightly less than a 240° field of fire, which at least affords some advantage over a total 360 (which is what they would face were they established on the summit hexes). Also, by not positioning these foxholes on the summit, you have denied their protective cover to the enemy who are, after all, the ones who must climb up there. You don't have to go there yourself, and might realize some advantage in the form of a broken German or two when they do move up there in the face of your fire.

Another feature of the defense is the use of outposts, designed to initiate the process of revealing those bothersome Cloaking counters as the enemy advance. Remember that as soon as "a Gunflash is placed due to an attack vs an enemy unit" (E1.91), you can start trying starshells. The attack which frees your starshells will usually be one against a Cloaking counter, and I advise taking the first chance offered. Once a few starshells light up the night, the attackers will be forced to follow a more predictable and stoppable pattern. The outposts themselves might only contain a HS apiece, for you cannot afford a great deal out here in the fringes of the fort. Alternatively, an outer system of entrenchments (27T7, 27Z4, 27CC6, 28T4, 28X6 and 28CC4, which equates to the fort perimeter) provides an interesting study of the effects of Wire, Night and Firelanes. With an LMG in all but one of these locations (probably 28X6 would be best to leave without an LMG since it is within normal squad range of two other entrenchments), we can throw firelanes along the entire perimeter. Of course, the firelanes are effective only to illuminated locations, so that problem must be addressed with some heavy illumination. But that's what the 51mm mortars are for. Imagine the troubles those Germans will have crossing the wire with the added worry of a firelane in their path.

But the wire might have been cleared by that pre-game bombardment and those outposts will also attract the hostile attention of the assault. It might be argued that any effort spent on reducing the perimeter defense is effort deflected away from the summit defense itself, but we all know the end result of KIA'd British defenders, no matter where they are, is the toughest end of the German VC. So the perimeter defense is something to consider, maybe even in part, but I don't recommend its use in full. I might use it with a couple of HIP units in order to protect the occupants from the probing German advance. They still might be broken by the bombardment, but somebody has to be out there to slow the enemy; it might as well be somebody who can hurt them on the wire where they are most vulnerable.

Because the Germans are headed for the summit hexes and the adjacent hexes are a bit shielded, 28oY2 or 27oX10 will be the key hex to defend. If you decide to set up the HMG in order to take advantage of the special firelane provisions of E1.71, it will have to go in a level 0 location such as 28Z2 or 27W10. In 28Z2, for example, a firelane out to 27GG9 might do a fine job of curtailing enemy movement across that flank, and the HMG is still in position to be withdrawn back up the hillock to man the close-in defense of the summit. However, because of the hillock and the relatively short effective range of the machinegun in this situation, this kind of firelane will not be nearly as devastating as it can be in other night scenarios.

The balance of the entrenchments I would string around the summit hexes, on one side only, between 28oY2 and 27oX10, in order to link them—and also pick some choice spots like 28X3, 27Y2 and 27AA8 which are shielded by the hillock in part and might present some troubles for the attacking Germans. I would not start anyone in the sangars because of their heightened vulnerability to the bombardment. As the enemy attack unfolds, I expect them to come at me from either three or four directions at once. I will pick the flank which appears weakest in an attempt to eliminate the threat from that direction. This approach, if successful, can also yield the advantage of lessening their capability to encircle

my positions. Since acquisition for the mortars will always be removed at the end of each player turn when the starshells disappear and illumination is all lost, squads will be used to fire the mortars. This allows the HS to use their inherent firepower—which is no small matter with the addition of eight FP to the otherwise pathetic total. I might even recombine these HS in order to gain the extra range of full squads.

The end of the game will probably be a last desperate attempt to either take out enough Germans to secure a win on CVP, or avoid the German accomplishing the same result. Fighting for control of the summit will probably not be the final determinant, although without that feature in the VC the aggressor's task would have been a bit too easy. Your best strategy is to make the enemy pay for taking the summits, but preserve your troops whenever possible. Make the German wreck himself in coming after you in your foxholes. Withdraw whenever facing down a stack of enemy troops. Don't light the enemy with starshells if doing so will prevent your broken units from routing in the direction you want.

German Advantages: Leadership, Machineguns, Encirclement, Night

Not only are the three leaders with DRM superior to their British counterparts, but the total of six leaders makes this one of the best-led groups we've ever seen. Every three German squads have a leader to guide them through the night. And these six will not find themselves with an idle moment as they hustle to direct the fire of ten MGs in addition to those squads. They will be able to position themselves in carefully selected spots covering 360° of the battlefield thanks to the night attack and limited visibility of three hexes. As discussed in the British section, this will allow ample opportunity for Encirclement. Each of these groups need feel no excessive risk as all are accompanied by at least one leader (and usually two) to bring back any of the troops who fail a MC. In fact, I can't fault a single item in the German arsenal for their attack on the fort.

German Disadvantages: Time, High VP Requirement

Now that I've said the *Fallschirmjaeger* look so strong that maybe they cannot be stopped, how can there be any disadvantages to consider? Well, they will get into the fort and tear up the British alright. The only matter to be settled is whether they do in enough of them fast enough without suffering prohibitive casualties themselves due to carelessness. One thing which might hurt the German is the enemy sniper with its SAN of "6". (By the way, that is not a distinct British advantage because of the nearly as effective German SAN of "5".) But the Germans can also lose because you spend too much time getting in close, or fail to avail yourself of the benefits of Encirclement, or rush into an HMG with an untimely display of unending ROF, or simply for being too cautious or too bold. You must score a lot of VP in a short period of time; the British can win by preserving a mere ten VP worth of troops, give or take any extra prisoner points, or by blowing away a few of your stacks and amassing more points than you can possibly score. The latter is unlikely, but exemplifies the fact that you can't simply charge into Fort McGregor headfirst. A little thought and planning will go a long way here.

German Attack:

I've already harped a good deal on the avenue of approach—all four directions at once, or from at least three well-spread angles. With ten MGs blasting away from as far off as eight hexes, you might encircle as many as four locations in a single Fire Phase. That is probably more than will be presented, so you get an idea of the impact of this tactic. Even more important than that, however, is the aforementioned detriment to British routing which your attack imposes. While your broken troops will be free to crawl away from the British, the enemy broken will often find they are denied even that small escape. You will find it worthwhile illuminating your own locations at times to inconvenience the British in this manner, and their three leaders will never manage to keep all the squads in Good Order.

The composition of this attacking force will usually be six Cloaking counters packed with the 18 squads, six leaders and ten SW. On occasion, it might prove beneficial to throw out a Cloaking counter with a single HS, but I'd rather not do it here. I'll send out 12 Dummy Cloaking counters this time, but make sure that they don't step within the NVR of any potential British positions until the real troops are ready (because I can't afford to have the British shooting off those starshells due to my own carelessness). The main assault on the wire hits on Turn 2 and is led by Dummy Cloaking counters. Should the first of these actually get into wire (or the hex where my bombardment cleared a Wire counter), it will be followed by the cloaked real troops, moving into the very same hex. The thinking here is that if the British didn't shoot at the first attempt, maybe they can't shoot at this hex. It's at least some protection, and a definite improvement over barging in with the real squads first or wasting time outside the wire. You might mix this up by sending in two Dummy Cloaking counters separately and then bringing in the squads. But the point is that the Dummies are used to reconnoiter a passage through the perimeter and once inside the fort are not worth a very great deal anyway, so you don't lose much by following their path with more of the same. Sooner or later the British player will shoot, and then the starshells will come out, and then your troops who have yet to move can elect to Assault Move should that be prudent. The attack on the wire is merely designed to get you in as close as you can with as much as possible quickly, not to keep sending in squads to a slaughter once the place is illuminated.

The shortcoming of this plan is that it wastes a turn. It might be smarter to run right into the wire in this same manner on Turn 1, hitting the nearest portions immediately. In this case, however, there is greater risk that your squads will be hung up on the wire itself—no pretty sight. The advantage is that everyone will probably start shooting off starshells on Turn 1 instead of Turn 2 as above, which gives you an extra turn to engage the surrounded enemy. With the time constraint and the tough VP requirements, that might be the little extra that you need to secure a win, despite the fact that it also leaves your own force more exposed and less coordinated.

I personally prefer the first method because I have great confidence in the strength of this German force. I feel that they can take out enough British troops even if they don't get into the wire until Turn 2, and that their efforts to score victory points will actually be enhanced by taking the extra time to get as far as possible at lower risk to themselves. In any case, the bet is hedged by the fact that their entrance into Wire is a sequential procedure, with some troops already there and some yet to move. Only the moving units are at risk, and if the British fire all their starshells at once (which they have to do on the first player turn of usage) the rest of my troops will know where they can and cannot move freely. But the real key to scoring points lies in taking as many prisoners as possible, while trying to convince your own squads not to lay down their arms as well. A slightly cautious approach, then, will help prevent your squads running into a location where they might be broken and captured before you can bring in relief. The other end of that spectrum is the use of most of your strength to break the enemy and hold off his remaining troops while several of your squads move in to capture the broken foe. Surrender here will only occur as part of CC, and the way you force that against broken troops is by moving adjacent and keeping the broken unit surrounded so it cannot Low Crawl away from you. Then you move in during APh and take them prisoner in CC. A totally different sequence than taking prisoners in daylight, but just as effective once you've mastered it.

The endgame should see you mixing it up at close hand with the British in and around the summit hex area itself, scrambling for those last few VP. You might have left a few squads out a bit from the main action in order to continue to ensure that you could pump in more encircling fire from relatively secure firebases; but more likely the German will have everybody inside pounding away at point-blank range. Once the enemy HMG was pinpointed, you threw everything you had at it, so that weapon should have been silent for several turns already. If you have captured it, surely you were smart enough not to fire it. Notice that even if the enemy is currently pinned, firing a captured SW still brings a sniper attack since such an attack does not necessarily signify fire from the sniper himself (or themselves), and the Sniper counter is not moved on the occasion of such an attack. If it comes to CC, your squad-to-squad advantage still brings victory in short order, so the enemy will continue to try to back away from you. If you negotiated the wire and those initial British shots without taking more than several losses, and if no one (like the enemy sniper) manages to nail your 9-2, it's "attrition time" and you should be able to grind away at the enemy until there aren't any left.

Conclusion:

Mortar fire hits the isolated little hillock, its defenders shielding their eyes from the blasts so as to be able to see when the enemy comes in on the heels of the barrage. Some of the wire will surely be pierced by this devilry, and the attack can be expected from all directions. The barrage lifts and the Vickers is made ready. Rounds of IR are brought forth by the mortar crews and the little game of cat-and-mouse begins. Motionless Tommies can feel the enemy grouping out in the dark. There will be an end to this maddening waiting game soon enough, when the madness of fire and death envelops the scene once again.



Scenario 41
A Bridgehead Too Wet

Rating: 55% British

Attraction: A little rain; a little open desert. A wealth of British weapons trained upon the onrushing enemy who, in turn, hammer the trenches with 100mm artillery. A fleeting armor duel runs its brief course, and all that remains are the infantry, struggling with one another yet again, long after the guns

and the tanks have consumed their ammo stores and broken down.

British Advantages: Infantry, Support Weapons, Trenches, OBA

It is a rare day when the defender of trenches can boast 17 squads against only 21 attacking squads who must cross open ground to win. Of course, the Germans bring other strength into this fray, but their infantry cannot hurt you on their own. Your support weapons will keep the seven enemy halftracks away; 16 SW able to knock out those halftracks make for a quick lesson to be learned by any disrespectful German who doubts the capabilities of those MGs, ATRs and MTRs. Let him come into range and try his luck! If this situation could be reduced to an affair without tanks, I would give the British a 90% rating for victory. Their infantry in the trenches are that tough. And, as we have seen at Fort McGregor, the trenches are what reduce the German OBA from a straight 20FP to a "20(+4)", which is why I am able to list the British 70mm OBA as an advantage. That 70mm might even be brought in as Harassing Fire if the enemy squads/halftracks are nicely grouped. Any targets you catch within the two inner rings of Harassing Fire will take two attacks (unlike a full concentration FFE, which units not in the exact center can exit after only one attack). Also, the British have the very best Battery Access deck in the game system, better even than the Americans and better by far than the Germans; so they ought to enjoy more FFE than the enemy. (I say, "ought to"—so don't write me when you draw two red cards on the first game turn.)

British Disadvantages: Mobility, Anti-Tank Capability

Expect to have trouble getting leaders matched up with broken units. Your troops won't break easily, but once they do can provide a real headache as you twist and turn to bring them back. Your alternatives at set-up are to combine in large stacks (which would be nice for rally purposes but a poor choice for surviving enemy fire) or to disperse everyone in order to minimize the number of troops broken by any effective attacks (which, naturally, will be difficult to rally once broken). In the latter case, if it comes to routing across the desert or moving a leader to rally the shaken Tommies, the rain will lend welcome cover. But there may be no relief from the panzers. Your 57L gun is really about all the hope you have of evening the score with the Mk III and Mk IV tanks. Six 40L guns might do a number on the enemy frontal armor if you get lucky with ROF, multiple hits or even Intensive Fire, but they also might do as well in a counterattack. At least, that way they would draw fire away from the 57L as they move out to flank the panzers, and thus help keep the big gun in action.

British Defense:

Consider three types of defense. One concentrates the trenches in as tight a cluster as possible, given the restrictions of SSR2. This defense finds the required two trenches on one of the outside boards, say in 27AA10 and 27Z9, and all the others grouped as tightly as they can be around the 26AA10 area. Those two trenches on board 27 might not even contain any troops at all, in which case they'd probably be as far from the Germans as allowed (in 27DD3 and 27DD4). In this defense, the tanks also congregate around the 26AA10 area because their TEM, hindrance and (eventually) wrecks will supply added cover to fill in the gaps between the trenches. Maybe even some blazing wrecks will supply additional cover. Although I won't go into much detail with this arrangement, it is a wokable defense which enjoys the benefits one might expect from such close support between infantry and armor. The leaders are as accessible as they can be to the troops, and if only the German OBA doesn't dance on everyone's heads too long and if the enemy fails to realize any great advantage from Encircling this cluster, there will be real hell to pay when their infantry try to pry the British out of this stance.

The other end of the defensive spectrum is to spread the British out so completely that the FFE cannot hit more than one hex of themat once. Even the tanks are dispersed in this set-up. In fact, it is the tanks—not the infantry—which I would locate in scrub terrain. This way they will remain concealed even as the enemy brings on his tanks, which are certain to lead the attack. If your tanks are in 27Z1, 27AA7, 27DD9, 26Z7, 26BB8, 28AA2 and 28DD9, the closest they will get on Turn 1 is 13 hexes away (discounting ESB). In between these tanks, the trenches are arranged so a normal concentration FFE hits no more than one target. When the panzers try to APh fire at your Valentines, they will of course be rolling improbable hit attempts and might as well save their breath, for they cannot hit your concealed tanks unless they fire HE on the Area Target Type. If they opt to fire on the Vehicle Target Type in their following DFPh, it will be at a minimum of 13-hex range ("9" TH for the 75Ls and "8" TH for the 50Ls), but with a total +5 DRM (+2 for the rain, +2 concealed, +1 small target). Add another +1 if the Germans are buttoned up; and if they aren't, bring down the 70mm FFE on them. The panzer crews must roll a "4" original DR to hit with a CE Mk IV ("5" with that −1 armor leader) and snake-eyes are required for a buttoned Mk III to score a hit. These numbers don't improve with repetition as we are accustomed, because the targets remain concealed and no acquisition is gained. It gives one a lot to think about, although I'd actually prefer not sitting here in my Valentine waiting for those hits which will eventually come. But this tactic might buy some time. At least it might spare your tanks and force a discouraged German to move in closer on Turn 2 rather than waste more time trying to roll "3-5" with his CE tanks, a matter of great worry for anyone who ever faced down hostile FFE. The longer your tanks are a force onboard, the more the German must be concerned about what they will do to his halftracks, which will probably be entering on Turns 2/3. He cannot let your guns prey on those targets, so your concealment play might buy extended life for the tanks as the panzers start up and move in on Turn 2.

The beauty is that concealed tanks have two options, in addition to the "option" of doing nothing. They could fire at the panzers if conditions seem right; or they could roll for Motion status. Notice that these two options are always available for the Vals, but the option to remain concealed only works if they set up in scrub. I think firing away at the panzers is about as straightforward as anything could be, and would argue that it will also probably signal the end for all seven Vals (another straightforward matter). Going for Motion is a favorite of mine, for you might leave behind the 57L to singlehandedly challenge the panzers head-on while the rest of your tanks head out in a flanking action, maybe three on a flank (remember my discussion of "Blazin' Chariots") to counterattack the enemy side armor. Staying in motion and at a 13-hex range, if possible, these small targets will cause the German great concern not only for the weak side armor of his tanks, but for the vulnerability of his soon-to-enter halftracks and infantry as well. I expect him to react against this threat, which should afford the 57L some shots at turret side armor for several turns longer than normal. Tying up the tanks in this manner also keeps them further away from your infantry an extra turn or two, which is welcome relief from those potent panzer machineguns.

Back at the trenches, the widely dispersed infantry try to maintain their concealment for as long as possible. When the Axis tide finally begins to lap around the fringe of your outposts, your troops will fall—on that you can depend. But the Germans will have trouble moving from trench to trench, and you will be able to bring fire upon them from the remaining isolated pockets of resistance. It will be much more difficult for the enemy to capture seven widely dispersed trenches than to capture seven clustered all together, although the trade-off is that your own troops have suffered more for their isolation from the four leaders.

Finally, the third British defense possible tries to find a happy medium between the first two. Spread the trenches out from 27CC8 to 28BB3, with a hex separating each of them. The tanks go in the scrub again. The best place to put the leaders is in the rear trenches, so that the frontline troops can rout back to them when they break. Since this is a "compromise" defense, you can expect to suffer some of the problems of the other two—as well as enjoy some of the benefits. You might want to try firing a few of the tanks off right away while keeping the others concealed. I bet the German player will then gang up on the ones which fire, the easy targets. This will lose the tanks which fire, while prolonging the lives of those that remain concealed. I think that is a valid tactic, for I'd rather get into the middle game with some functioning AFVs than have the whole armor confrontation resolved and find myself with no tanks left versus a German tank or two free to tromp on my infantry.

German Advantages: Tanks, Rain, Attacker's Prerogative

Your Mk IV and Mk III tanks outclass the Valentines, even though it is you who must move in on the attack. The frontal armor of these two tank forces are comparatively small, but the German guns are substantially superior. Add to that their ability to hit better at 13+ hex range, APCR ammo, the 9-1 armor leader, the pre-game bombardment which might be fortunate enough to eliminate a Valentine (or at least cause some immobilization), and the fact that it will be the German crews who dare CE status and not the British (due to the contrast between the machinegun strengths of the two groups and of the two OBA), and you have the makings of a tank battle which should end with you driving the only tanks on the field. The British do have multiple hits to cheer them, and they might even manage to shroud a tank or two behind so much flame and wreckage from their eliminated AFVs that you will have difficulty nailing those last few. But that's where your "Attacker's Prerogative" allows you to maneuver around the battlefield, aided by the screening rain, until you attain new fields of fire. The infantry/halftrack force also benefits from these advantages, for without them they would not be able to pick their avenue of approach and would not be covered from the enemy infantry on their run toward the trenches. This "Attacker's Prerogative" idea is probably something which every attacker in every scenario might boast to some degree, but here, with three boards to play with and a defender who is nailed down in his trenches and your troops screened nicely by the rain, you can pick the point where your attack will hit and actually get there with enough to win. Without these advantages at your disposal to assist you in overcoming the openness of the desert, that is one blow that would otherwise never land I fear.

German Disadvantages: Casualty DVP, Open Desert, Dispersal

That old fear of winning the battle by taking the trenches but losing the war because your losses were double that of the "vanquished" should prove your greatest quandry. One way to play the game is to rush straight in at the British with everything you've got and hope to blow them away. The other end of the offensive range is to lay back at a safe range

and throw in every form of HE at hand. The first method will probably take the trenches, and the second will probably score more DVP than the British—but neither will likely win the game. The open desert must be crossed, but it must be done in a dispersed formation or the poor infantry will never get there; neither will the halftracks. The following section details some points of the attack, but the key to it all lies in how you move across all that desert without leaving behind all your valuables. That you must move dispersed we can all agree, I believe, and it is a regrettable truth that this dissipates your firepower. In my book that is less an evil than tossing out my squads in stacks for FFE to obliterate, or herding my halftracks together in an open invitation for demonstration of the effects of Harassing Fire on open-top vehicles. I've done that in the past, and suggest you try it if you haven't been a lucky receipient to date. Once will be enough. The last thing I do will be to assail these Brits with my halftracks. Letting the enemy destroy these vehicles is the surest way to jump behind the eight-ball of DVP. The infantry and the tanks shouldn't be expected to compensate for the loss of these points . . . that is simply asking too much.

German Attack:

As advertised earlier, the tanks lead the way and will be used for the first half of the game or so to take out those seven Valentines. Highest priority must be placed on the Val VIII, for its 57L gun with a "15" TK number can wreck your armor of "6" and "8" readily. If the British player sticks it out in front, I would concentrate all three Mk IVs on it, CE, at a range of no less than 13 hexes. Since the Valentines are all small targets, you will trade even THs with the 57L at 13-24 hexes, and will be one DRM better than the 40Ls with your 75Ls while your 50Ls remain even. So I'd go CE in order to gain the upper hand here. It's much less likely the British will follow suit and face down all your MGs and the 100mm OBA, so you might wind up hitting much more often than the British at the risk of taking a sniper, 70mm OBA and some sporadic MG and infantry fire.

But you can button up when the FFE approaches, and I would enter some infantry on Turn 1 also; the sniper might find them instead of the tanks. These troops aren't here just to draw that sniper fire, but want to move toward the trenches immediately. There will not be a great deal to fear at this range from the enemy, and moving singly the squads will close the gap quickly. If you really want to worry about the sniper "4" versus your CE tanks, use the tactic of entering the tanks with a HS Rider apiece. The loaded HS provides an extra random selection target in each hex with the tanks; and if you manage to unload them, they will move between the tanks and the sniper counter to establish a sniper screen of protective half-squads. But I don't really think the SAN of "4" is worth this much commitment of manpower. I would like to use the tanks to transport full squads forward, but am not willing to spend the MP required to unload them, and refuse to force them to bail out. So the infantry will advance on foot.

Group #3 will be halftracks with a small number of squads loaded, and will not enter until Turn 3 (maybe even Turn 4). The only things I really want out of these are that they not disintegrate at the whim of the British, and the two HMGs in the SPW 251/sMG—one mounted in the vehicle and the other (the AAMG) dismounted as an HMG. Oh sure, the mortar and the 37L and the 18FP of the other AAMGs might come in handy, but first priority is preservation of the 45 DVP these halftracks represent. That's only three DVP less than all five of my tanks (with the armor leader), in case you haven't compared them. I would have to take out all seven Valentines without a panzer loss, a total of 49 DVP (counting all seven tank crews), to exceed the loss of these halftracks. I hope this hasn't been too terribly tedious, but feel the point worth a bit of extrapolation.

The final note on your sniper is that you might want to use it to absorb the British sniper. If so, position it in the line between where your tanks will end Turn 1 and the British sniper, and make sure you enter at least one personnel unit (CE crews aren't "personnel") to activate your sniper, both as potential target and for use against the British.

If the British try to keep their tanks concealed, as was discussed above, your course of action should be determined by the arrival turn of your halftracks. If they are entering on Turn 2 or Turn 3, you need to resolve the tank battle in a hurry and should move in for the kill. Understand, this attack is not a taking-on of the entire British line, for if they are concealed then they are spread out such that you can hit one flank or the other with superior numbers. With the range closed, the British will have to drop concealment in order to fire at you, and this is the very process which will allow you to hit them, and also permits Acquisition to be gained at last. Were they to try to retain concealment, they would start losing tanks without any chance of return fire, so I think that tactic unlikely. They have already gotten what they wanted out of the concealment when you were forced to move on Turn 2 in lieu of Prep Fire. With close range action, both sides will be rolling some quite potent TK numbers.

If the halftracks are not entering until Turn 4, I would be tempted to remain at long range and pop away at the concealed Valentines for a turn. Any of them you can manage to hit will lose their concealment, and at least then will be reasonable targets. Another option along this same line of thinking is to leave the halftracks offboard until even Turn 5 or later. In fact, this might be the smartest move of all, although it would probably pay to bring in at least the SPW 251/sMG in order to utilize its two HMGs. One benefit of such a tactic is that any British attempt to break out the Valentines into your rear will arrive in that area (*may* arrive, that is) only to find those elusive halftracks have declined combat. The British, in this instance, will have paid a price for moving their tanks and be unable to cash the check of their compensation.

With or without the halftracks, the infantry must be working their way eastward. Like your tanks, which should be separated only by enough hexes to preclude normal FFE hitting more than one of them, your infantry ought to advance across a wide front to minimize the effects and spread that 70mm OBA. However, it probably would not be a good idea to spread out across the entire playing area with everyone at once, so the infantry might try coming on in waves. Since there are 21 squads, how about sending in three waves of seven squads in each of the first three turns? Seven squads separated by three hexes cover a good deal of ground, so this kind of attack still consumes a full board-width of terrain, and I would definitely pick either board 27 or 28 for the attack, distaining 26 in the center. The leaders don't come on until Turns 2/3 and are also spread out at first. As they advance to the east, they will be picking up the broken pieces of the infantry which went down before them. With six leaders available to embolden these dis-spirited troops there is no need to gather together in large stacks for rally, which would only attract additional fire. None of these leaders are so valuable for fire direction that they can afford to leave broken troops behind in this engagement, for you will need every squad you can get up close in order to take those trenches away from the British.

I hope to enter the end game (Turn 8-10) with a tank or two in service facing no Valentines, roughly equal numbers of squads with the British, and my halftrack force intact because I hid them from the Vals, and late enough for the enemy OBA to have depleted itself. If the British still have a tank advantage or a substantial infantry edge, I will have to use the halftracks aggressively to try and compensate. But I'd much rather use them from a distance while my infantry moves in for the win. This would allow the halftracks to help, while preventing their loss which, as detailed earlier, might be too many lost DVP for me to handle. One of the tricks of the trade which favors the infantry in their assault on the trenches is the 100mm FFE planted on the defenders there. Even if it doesn't break them, it adds a +1 DRM to their fire (which will hurt them more than it hurts me shooting into it because they already have a +2 TEM, whereas I have nothing—the rain DRM being equal). Of course, if the rain stops I might be in big trouble, but this could actually improve my chances of dropping smoke onto the enemy. Viewed from the vantage point of its effect on smoke, the rain might actually be considered detrimental to my attack. But we all have had plenty of experiences in which smoke might have won a game for us, yet failed to land for one reason or another. True, smoke late in the game might be a real winner, but the universal screening of mist is what allows the attack to reach far enough into the east to bring a chance to take those seven trenches.

The end of the game should be a lot of CC. Those British squads are very tough and may refuse to break despite all your firepower directed at them. Once you're in the trenches, you will have at least gained a haven from which to organize, stack and launch the next series of assaults upon the other trenches. In a close game, you may have to rush in the vehicles to help get your squads into close combat. That is, the tanks or, shudder, the halftracks enter the enemy hex to keep them from shooting at your infantry who run up adjacent. It's probably just as well that the halftracks cannot enter a trench hex to try this tactic. The regretable thing about doing this, however, is that the vehicle in the CC hex will allow the British to attack sequentially. But it may be the only way to get your troops there.

Remember that a MC failure on that pre-game bombardment which rolls Original Doubles causes Casualty Reduction (C1.82). This simple little rule could eliminate the British 9-1 and everybody stacked with him. Never overlook the slightest rule that might bring you an advantage.

Conclusion:

The panzers tear into an overmatched contingent of Valentines. Artillery from both sides adds its roar to the turmult, and the defenders huddle in their trenches. Through it all, somehow, miraculously, come the enemy infantry. The defenders grit their teeth and edge up to their posts; if they can cross the open, we can mow them down. But what do those guys eat for breakfast, anyway?



Scenario 42
Point of No Return

Rating: 50%-50%

Attraction: The New Zealanders have blundered into a trap of the sort an astute *ASL* fanatic knows only in his worst nightmare. He faces down a 10-3 leader, three other −1 leaders, six guns, fifteen SW, seventeen squads, and a pre-registered 80mm OBA. His force is badly split into three groups, and his six Valentines are exposed and in motion. The German will hit hard on Turn 1 with only the hope of Light Dust between life and death for the lead group of New Zealanders.

British Advantages: Mortars, Smoke, Reinforcements

I might have listed open terrain as an advantage, since the Germans must cross a great deal of it. But it also contributes greatly to the demise of your westernmost group and inhibits mobility between the eastern defenders, so it warrants no clear advantage for either side. Of the five mortars, you should have opportunity to use four, with that one in the western detachment probably clattering to the ground when its possessing half-squad bites the dust. In the absence of any outstanding MG fire, these mortars will be expected to supply much-needed HE as well as fulfill their primary function of landing smoke in some choice enemy positions. The six Valentines can fire off their sM; the FFE could even lay smoke and at least causes a +1 Hindrance per hex due to the Light Dust conditions; Vehicle Dust adds yet more confusion; and the whole thing is compounded by the mild breeze and drifting smoke. Should the Germans also lay in some smoke and stir up the dust with their vehicles, this battlefield will turn into one big mess. Certain parts of it will favor the attacker, but your ability to hit the German 50L ATGs (and hopefully their 10-3) with smoke is an outstanding advantage. This kind of cover will also allow some movement of your dispersed squads without suffering the FFMO modifier, and help you to concentrate enough force in the esatern end of board 25 to hold the victory hexes located there long enough for your reinforcements to arrive. Those troops you receive on Turns 4 and 5 must bring the victory, for you won't achieve it with what starts the scenario onboard.

British Disadvantages: Dispersed, TEM, Time

That these troops are dispersed and command very little beneficial TEM are game terms which define "exposure". They are very much exposed to the enemy, and will suffer much as they wrangle with this dilemma. The process by which the Germans direct heavy fire at them in order to break them, keep them under the effects of DM, double break them to cause Casualty Reduction, and force interdiction NMCs upon them is abetted by the ten turns available to effect their total demise. If the New Zealanders hang around for such abuse, there will not be any of them left after just five or six turns and the game will end ell before the ten-turn deadline. And yet, the defenders cannot all hide, or the assault will be upon them in an instant. There are Germans within a short skip-and-a-jump of the victory hexes, so some defenders must show themselves in order to prevent unacceptable free movement. Sure enough, these defenders will draw enemy fire, which at least precludes the firing units from moving that turn.

British Defense:

I don't expect to be able to hold hex 27oI5, although I do intend to make the German pay for taking it. I have an advantage in armor, but will probably lose that advantage on the first turn unless the German is unlucky with his guns. Still, I shouldn't lose all six Valentines; and the other six vehicles, believe it or not, will be plenty for the panzers to worry about. With the exposure of my force weighing heavy on any scheme I might want to try, the inevitable conclusion is that my starting positions can only be chosen with preservation foremost in mind. To that end, I will try to protect the western troops by dispersing them even more in an attempt to provide the German so many targets that maybe some few of them will escape to the east. By starting two of the squads in this group deployed as HS and setting up the two leaders in their own hexes, the German sees 14 separate targets. I am not at all concerned about the loss of my ability to strike back at the German, for his force is all protected by crest status and I have practically no chance of harming them no matter what. Besides, if I put the 9-1 with a squad and LMG (my best attack), the 10-3 would simply rip them up. Notice that the best troops here must set up in the S5 area so that when the Rout Phase comes they will be able to run away from both the Germans in the wadii and other enemy troops seen in the 25K6 region. Broken New Zealanders in the area southwest of S5 would not be able to rout very far to the east due to their LOS to 25K6, and troops broken to the northwest will have farther to rout and, therefore, less chance of survival.

Remember that the leaders are not as restricted as the MMC and tanks, and so are free to set up adjacent to such units, and you can also start in the sangar hexes so long as you are not actually in the sangars themselves. Try placing Valentines in S1, S3 and U4; squads in S5, S7, T8 and U7; leaders in S6 and T6; and half-squads in S10, U1, V2, V5 and V8. Should your illustrious opponent actually expend a MP/MF in LOS of any Valentine fortunate enough to survive his Prep Fire, by all means roll for your sM. A Motion attempt might let you change your VCA, but you can always take that free spin if you hold fire (C3.22). Of course, any sM smoke you place now will not last long, but will drift and provide some welcome negation of Interdiction when you rout. The obvious impact of your CA spin is that during your own Movement Phase, a Valentine taking flight to the east which begins its movement already faced in that direction will be trailed by a vehicle dust counter interrupting the LOS between the tank and the enemy to the rear. As soon as the tank moves, it gets this extra +2 DRM cover and is immediately able to take a free TCA spin for entering the new hex, and can try another sM to provide added cover for either itself or some other tank or infantry unit. Once protected by some of this kind of smoke and dust, I would not hesitate to pop out the crew and throw around some vehicular smoke grenades as well. Used to full effect, these tanks might get your overextended infantry out of this jam yet—at least in part.

Before leaving this group to their fate, be warned that the tactic of deploying into HS might afford some protection (how many German commanders want to waste their firepower on a mere half-squad) but also might hasten their deterioration. This is because a broken squad routing through three hexes which require Interdiction NMC rolls only three times, while two broken HS routing through the same path will roll six times. So there might be a problem once the HS do break, although it will be tougher for the Germans to break two HS than one squad in the first place.

Be prepared for the worst (total loss) of the lead group. Should that occur, which is unlikely without at least some loss and inconvenience for the enemy, the only place you can look for help is to the troops east of the hillock. Their 9-2, the mortars and the vehicles might be able to salvage something from the remnants headed their way—or at least provide them some covering fire and smoke. I would start all the infantry I could behind the hillock so that they will be out of enemy LOS. The Portees, too, should be screened and set up in the far southeast corner with the carriers. Keep in mind that any known unit which begins at the edge of the hillock in, say, E6 or F4 might attract that pre-registered FFE on Turn 1. Likelihood that this is where that pre-reg hex is will be high, because the German player wants to go after the 9-2 (your single most valuable piece). By showing only concealed units, you might convince the German to withhold his OBA rather than chance loss of that automatic black draw on an additional draw of red (for lack of a known target in the blast area). The only single hex of real importance at set up in this region is 27C6. This is where I would locate the 9-2, squad, LMG and ATR. This hex is out of LOS from all possible German starting locations, so they will begin concealed, and can throw two FP on hex 25H4 modified by the −2 leader (and a total of −4 should the German consider rushing the crags). This bit of protection might become very important should the German gain extraordinary ROF on his initial Prep Fire and nullify other defenders around the crags.

Another option with this contingent is to form up on the northeastern corner of board 27 with the intent to move onto board 25, probably into the wadii, with extended wadii movement toward the crags themselves as the goal. I don't favor this approach, for it leaves these squads over-exposed to the enemy in the 25K6 area and sacrifices the hillock. Also, it will deny the carriers and portees their rightful infantry protection and yield the region around the hillock—which just happens to be the best piece of terrain for these vehicles to contest. Back there, at least they can hide from those awful 50L ATGs and concentrate on the German vehicles and infantry, which they are much better prepared to fight. Nevertheless, I might put a unit or two in that northeast corner and try to slide them over to the wadii. The 9-2 would attract a very great deal of attention, and his addition to the crag defense might do much more than compensate for his absence at the hillock. But the Germans will probably be able to hit anyone there with a 12(-1) attack (always plus the Light Dust of course) and I really don't feel like exposing the 9-2 to that, especially since he would then have to rout to the southeast if he breaks and take Interdiction or leave himself exposed to DM fire by Low Crawling. A squad or a couple of HS might try this trick, but not my 9-2 leader, despite the fact that the fire he draws will greatly benefit the 9-1 and his group at the crags. I'm not one to risk something as valuable as my only 9-2 for this. The final trick here would be to designate a HS as possessing the hidden radio. He might then slide into the wadii unmolested. If you could pull off this maneuver, it would be a real coup because the radio over there would probably stick around a lot longer than over by the hillock; and since it can't be used until Turn 3 anyway, what do you lose by trying this once?

The most troublesome group to deploy is on board 25. I'd like to suggest locations which afford some TEM and also allow avenues of rout should things turn nasty. But I can't, for I don't see any available. The smartest thing may be to set up as far east as possible, but that would allow the enemy to come forward toward the crags too easily; and should your troops rout at that point, they would be moving away from the crags which they must defend. For these reasons, I will put them in the front lines and trust to their morale, the Light Dust and my own luck. Squads go in H3, H5, F4 with LMG, and D6 with ATR, the 9-1 in F4, HS with the mortar in D2, and the Valentines are in C1, A2 and A6. The tanks will try for the same kind of smoke and free VCA change (for the one in C1) as the western group on board 27. Their ability to generate such smoke might be what it takes to get some assistance over from board 27. But all three of them will plunge into the wadii—and lower levels for the one starting in A6. That one tank can get to E7 on Turn 1 and will be welcome relief in the crag area when it emerges on Turn 2. If these tanks had some way to fire their sM before the Prep Fire Phase, I would locate them in the front line and use them to cover my infantry; what are three tanks when we're looking at potential loss of squads? But they can do nothing until

after that devastating enemy fire, so they set up to try and save themselves. Even should catastrophe strike and the Germans take the crags early, that will probably mean that their entire board 25 commitment went after those crags and my western troops therefore made out much better than had some Germans been in the 25U1 area to complete the annihilation of that group. But I really expect the enemy to sit in their trenches and pound away at me for several turns. Were they to come across the open while my strength was even partially intact, the price they pay would be too high for them to hold the crags against the counterattack of my Turn 4/5 reinforcements.

The end of the game should be determined by how well the German 10-3 is utlized and by how effective the New Zealander reinforcements are. The Germans have plenty of time to do whatever they want with the attack, and I can't see a New Zealander victory if all we do is delay. We will have to go for the kill, and take out as many enemy squads as possible.

German Advantages: 10-3, 50L ATGs, Initial Prep Fire, OBA

"Plenty-of-punch" is what the Germans have. When have you ever seen a scenario begin with one side blasting away with everything it has at an opponent sitting in the open? The Germans not only command the firepower to hand the New Zealanders a solid thrashing, but the latter are standing flat-footed and leaning into the punch. The biggest problem your initial Prep Fire will tender must surely be how best to split all that FP in order to bring misfortune down upon the most enemy units as possible. That some of them will break is a foregone conclusion. The question is how many and can some be eliminated outright? The OBA with its pre-registered hex is something you might decide to hold in reserve; there will be enough destruction without consuming that automatic black draw on this first game turn. My opinion is that it would be better spent on a later turn when the assault eastward will welcome the extra cover while most of your troops are moving.

German Disadvantages: Armor, Rally

While the Valentines might be able to stand up to the panzers (and even the 50Ls), or at least can hide from the ATGs after Game Turn 1, the German tanks will not take much from the 40L guns of the New Zealanders. The IB and IIFs have no business dueling with the Vals, and should instead occupy their time with the enemy infantry; and the IIIG alone will not be a match for more than one Valentine at a time. The enemy tanks must be handled by your ATGs which, regrettably, might be shrouded in smoke and are, at least unable to respond once the enemy leave their LOS. The carriers and portees would be fine targets for your tanks, but those double-small target carriers will usually be in motion, and if you try to square-off against the portees with their 3ROF 40L guns with nothing but armor, you are inviting disaster. (Your 10-3 is the guy for the attack on the portees.) Still, it will be best to use the armor as aggressively as discretion will allow in order to preserve your infantry in their attack across the desert. The squads will face some amount of exposure to enemy fire, and some will undoubtably break. The problem with this is that you will need to leave behind some leaders to bring back those who have grown disenchanted with this little war. The 10-3 is too busy leading the attack, as is the 9-1 to the northeast. One of the leaders on board 25 is commanding the radio, and the reinforcements are not immediately available. It doesn't add up to a paucity of leaders, but the broken men are scattered across the desert and those leaders simply can't rally them all immediately. Nine leaders for 25.5 squads is a fine ratio, but attempts to deal with the fallen will leave the Germans all over this contested area east of Sidi Rezegh.

German Attack:

The details of set-up are brutal. I have to put the 10-3 with three squads, a MMG an a LMG in crest status in 27Y2. Behind him, the 9-1 with three squads and three LMGs go in Z2, the 8-0 with three squads and two ATRs in AA3 and the HS with the 50mm MTR is in BB3. The Mk III and Mk IIs go in these same hexes at crest status; the SdKfz is IN the wadii in BB4 and the ATG is in Z1. Notice that this is only five hexes of non-HIP units. The New Zealand player will not be able to locate his sniper in this region, for I will be sure to set up at least six hexes of non-HIP units on board 25. This avoids the tiresome routine of protecting the 10-3 with a screen of HS and other units, saving my manpower and taking advantage of the split set up of my forces. The two panzer IBs will fulfill the requirements of the 21st Panzer Division set-up by starting in 25M9 and M10. There, they not only help meet my need for six occupied hexes in order to attract the enemy sniper as far away from my 10-3 as possible, but they also do a fine job securing the northern flank with some added machinegun fire. They might even eventually sweep down onto board 29 and run around the enemy flank to harass their reinforcements and try to jam their crag defense with some encircling fire. My infantry in this area, except perhaps the 8-0 with the phones, all go in the K6 area. This concentration might invite a hostile FFE, but I'd much rather see it hit me here in these trenches than on board 27 where I hope to display some of the finest open field running seen since the Berlin Olympics.

The brutal part begins now. Prep Fire should see the end of some Valentines and some enemy infantry. Always remember to fire off the units closest to the sniper first. That way, if he strikes you down, chances are better that he is hitting units which have already fired. For example, if you fire a 4(+1) attack which called in the enemy sniper to KIA your 10-3 leader, that 20(-3) attack will never land. Had you rolled that big attack first, you would have at least gotten one potent attack out of the leader. But here you have guarded against the initial blow from the New Zealand sniper. The enemy might move the sniper counter at first opportunity, but note that he cannot move it over the 10-3 group unless the "within six hexes of at least six hexes" criteria can be met. Once your advance forces you to spread out into more hexes in this area, the old "sniper bait" tactic of scattering around a few HS will have to be used. I don't want to overdo this sniper thing here, for a rather lengthy piece should eventually be written to cover the ins and outs of this very important part of the game.

Primary targets at first are the 9-1 and Valentines in the lead group of the enemy, the Valentines and anyone around the crags in the board 25 cluster and, of course, the 9-2 and any portees which my opponent was careless enough to leave exposed. I'll put the 8-0 with the field phone off in some remote scrub hex where he can stay HIP the whole game without fear of some stray enemy bullets or FFE rounds finding him. Were I to string the entrenchments along the hexrow from 25K6 and 25U1, I might be tempted to hide him in O4 or P3; but there is little to gain in doing this at risk of losing my OBA, so this will not be adopted as common practice. I really want to pick the crags for my pre-registered hex, for I anticipate an enemy concentration there as soon as they are able. Even should that not materialize, my ability to toss smoke into the area at a moment's notice might spell the difference between a mad rush which brings a win and one which buries me in the dust of battle. I know hex 27oI5 would also make a fine spot to pre-register (and something like 27oF5 might be even better still), but I expect to take that area with my 10-3 and the panzers with relative ease compared to what the crags might require.

So the New Zealanders take it on the chin in the early going and will be lucky to extricate anything at all from their lead group. I will try to keep them from grabbing that 37L gun, for I intend to use it myself. Sooner or later I will try hooking up some guns and towing them eastwards in order to lay in some additional HE with 3ROF weapons. This is one of those rare *WOA* scenarios which doesn't require me to heed my DVP losses/gains, so I will not be too concerned as the casualties rise. I will simply ensure that every risk I run, every step I take *[sounds like a song to me]*, is worth the price. This scenario offers "immediate" victory (which I happen to like in VC very much), so the probability I will take an early risk is substantially higher than if the game had to consume all ten turns. There will be a very high probability some risk of this sort might be taken on Turns 5/6, after I've had ample time to rip up the enemy, yet prior to the appearance of his reinforcements at the crag area.

The machineguns will shreak, the artillery will pound, and the panzers will crash into the enemy lines. My reinforcements will hit the scene scant minutes before those of my opponent. When these do, they will be the impetus to carry my troops over the summit of 27oI5 and into the crags of board 25. If they can't accomplish it by Turn 6, the task will be made much more difficult by the arrival of fresh New Zealand troops from the east. But I don't expect to win on Turn 6, although that would be nice. Instead, I am ready for a fight to the very last turn as the enemy continues to pour more and more squads into the crag area. He will be better able to bring back his broken units—for their rout avenue back to the wadii and underneath vehicles he will have pulled into the area (hopefully, most are wrecks by now) beats my own path back to the trenches by several hexes, and has better cover to boot. If my 10-3 makes it through the battle to the south and still lives to swing up here to the crag assault, he should be able to carry the day. I won't hesitate to throw my own tanks directly into the attack at this point, using them for overrun, machinegun fire, sD smoke placement, armored assault, or just to run in and provide some hindrance and TEM DRM. Turns 8-10 of this one will see some wild attacks if I am desperate enough, for there is no tomorrow.

Conclusion:

Although none may survive, that band of New Zealand troops out in the van take as much fire as men and tanks can, buying time for their bewildered comrades to find cover and devise an impromptu battleplan. The Germans come on brandishing an overwhelming presentation of firepower, certain to awe the defenders and crush them when they dare resist. But to do it, the hunter must become the hunted—and the open desert proves its treachery to any who challenge its mystery.

CONCLUSION

A brief review of this treatment of the eight scenarios of *WEST OF ALAMEIN* reveals that I have rated four pro-German, three Even, and only one pro-British. I've called them as I saw them; had I clung to my sentimental favorite, the British would have fared better—but at the cost of what I perceive to be accuracy. As mentioned at the outset, I'll still choose to attack no matter what the odds are, if given a preference. But I don't think we have to base our final judgement of any given scenario on whether it is, or is not, "perfectly" balanced. I'm all for playing scenarios which truly do favor one side over the other. There is a great deal of excitement to be had when facing overwhelming odds, or even playing with the odds stacked slightly against you. One of the beautiful things about *ASL* is that the tremen-

dous number of scenarios available now and the many more which continue to come our way allow ample opportunity for players to own and enjoy scenarios which are balanced and scenarios which seem lop-sided, as well as scenarios which hit all the points between. This is sufficient justification for a "Six Came Back" (has anyone ever won with the US) *[Ed.—Yes.]* and "The Final Battle" (show me a Russian winner and I'll show you a man who is playing against his kid brother). While I may make snide remarks about them, it is still challenging to play these just to see if the overwhelming odds can be overcome. If I'm going to play "Six Came Back", I'll buck my preference and choose to defend—just to see if I can find the combination which finally brings victory. (But it's still your turn to be the Americans, Dave, so don't get any ideas!)

The *WEST OF ALAMEIN* scenarios are probably the most tightly balanced group we've seen in any module yet. They are unique in that, which I neither hold against them nor brandish here as final evidence of their worth. I have enjoyed playing them and plan to continue doing so. That, in my estimation, is the proof of their success. They will continue to be played regularly. We have now seen the desert (which hung about this game system like some "bogey man" ever since it was first mentioned back in the days of the "old" game) and we have played it and now we know it well. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to actually enjoy the desert game. This has been the biggest surprise of my gaming life, and I am thrilled to be at liberty here to publically print this note of thanks to The Avalon Hill Game Company, and particularly to Bob McNamara who brought the desert into my gaming room. As one of those old lines of advertising might have said about this game: "Bob is going to make a killing selling shovels to all the owners of *WEST OF ALAMEIN* so they can get the sand out of their hobby rooms."





Squad Leader Clinic

MORTARS

By Jon Mishcon

Mortars are some of the most powerful pieces given to the *ASL* player. Properly used, they can dramatically alter play-balance. While medium mortars may be used as a lesser form of artillery, and light mortars are often found acting as erstaz MGs, Joe Suchar and I favor taking advantage of their special capabilities. This article will briefly review mortars, their usage in World War II, the *ASL* treatment, and how we use mortars in our games.

Mortars are usually muzzle-loading smoothbore firing tubes. The firing pin in most mortars is fixed to the base. Drop in the shell through the open bore; it slides down, hits the pin and BANG, off it goes. A heavy baseplate generally holds the tube in place. Altering the leg length changes the angle of flight and range. While there exist examples of trigger-fired, rifled or breech-loaded weapons, all mortars share a very high trajectory and relative inaccuracy. Given the obvious advantages of accurate, breech-loaded, rifled direct-fire weapons, why do mortars continue to find favor?

First and foremost is their relative light weight and portability. Most mortars easily disassemble into base plate, bipod and firing tube. They can be carried in a cart or light vehicles, or even back-packed, into locations no other weapon can reach. Rooftops and dense forest or jungle are mortar terrain. More complex direct-fire weapons can be disassembled, but only by experienced crews with considerable free time.

Secondly, the very high trajectory means that the rounds tend to fall directly on top of the target. Accounts of mortar use in the hedgerows of Normandy tell of units that thought they were protected behind the huge mounds of dirt and hedge falling victim to mortar fire dropping on them. These units were protected, but only from direct-fire weapons. Also, a mortar's high-trajectory fire enables a simple pit or high wall to provide plenty of cover for its crew—whereas a direct-fire gun must be positioned higher and more exposed.

Third, almost anyone can "spot" for mortars. By calling out range adjustments, mortar fire can be directed from almost any elevation you can smuggle a half-squad into. Of course, a trained artillery observer *can* call down mortar fire—you just don't require his services.

Fourth, mortars are cheap to build and maintain. They lack any form of recoil arrangement (they usually transmit the force of the shot directly into the ground). Often the only mechanism that requires any adjustment is the height/angle of the legs for ranging purposes. There were even Soviet mortars that simplified this into two fixed angles and adjusted range by ports that bled off the propellant gases. Direct-fire weapons, with their recoil-absorbing mechanisms and moving firing pins, are much more likely, round for round, to jam.

Fifth, mortars tend to have a high rate of fire. Generally speaking, you can fire just as fast as you can drop rounds down the tube. This means a battery of mortars can put far more metal on target, in a given amount of time, than any comparable breech-loaded artillery piece.

Last, the unspun mortar rounds fly *silently*. The "chugging" sound of artillery that alerts troops to "incoming" shells does not apply to most mortar fire. Your first warning of mortar attack is often the explosion of the first round. Particularly deadly against advancing troops.

Nevertheless, mortars do have some notable disadvantages. Their short, unrifled tubes means poor accuracy and short range. The light weight of a mortar tube also limits the power of the projectile's propellant, or greatly diminishes its explosive power. In World War II night fighting, the round often trailed a burning "finger" as it lifted away from its firing tube. This meant that, at night, mortar locations were quickly exposed.

All combatants in World War II used mortars. Many nationalities started the war with a light, front-line mortar in service. Really no more than a glorified grenade-launcher, the limited punch and range of these weapons meant that troops preferred the power of a MG to hauling around the equal weight of a small "meatball thrower". The U.S. continued to use its excellent 60mm mortar throughout the war, as its range (45 hexes) was quite good. Additionally, airborne troops took advantage of a mortar's light weight by using slimmed down versions for local fire support.

The mainstay, however, was the medium 76-82mm mortars. Known as "vest-pocket artillery", this weapon gave the line battalion commander a dedicated indirect fire weapon. This form of fire support supplemented, rather than replaced, regular artillery. Often the mortar teams were placed close behind the front line so as to allow mortar fire both defensively and offensively. All the major combatants represented in *ASL* to date had their own version of this weapon. The Russian tube was par-

ticularly designed so as to be able to use German rounds while the German tubes would find the Russian-made rounds too small. The ammo of the U.S., French and Italian 81mm mortars was completely interchangeable.

As World War II progressed the impotence of mortar fire, relative to real artillery, and the need to deliver "special ammunition", drew attention. In order to effectively deliver smoke and, with increasing frequency, potent HE fire the "heavy" mortars became more common. The best known example was the Soviet 120mm tube. However, given the additional weight of the weapon (200+ pounds) and range, these weapons really fall into the category of light artillery. Most *ASL* scenarios will find these weapons either as OBA or in "overrun" situations.

ASL is generally faithful to all of the above points. Mortars are always indirect fire weapons that require use of the Area Target Type. Any good order personnel unit may be designated as a spotter in any adjacent hex. Mortars can be manpacked into crags, and graveyards, and even onto rooftops. The rate of fire of most mortars is quite high (generally "2" or "3") and the breakdown number is often "12". As mortars in *ASL* are always firing Area Fire, this means the breakdown number is particularly good on a round-for-round basis. Light mortars are treated, for portage purposes, as infantry support weapons, and even the medium mortar becomes a SW when dismantled.

How do Joe and I play the mortars? Our prime rule is to never (well, almost never) risk mortars in enemy LOS. Far better to accept a lower ROF and risk a HS than to expose the mortar to enemy fire. Offensively, the range considerations usually obviate play with medium or heavy mortars on board. When we do get medium mortars, we usually bring them in dismantled. Move behind any high ground, set up for fire while putting a spotter into position, and the use the mortar for smoke and recce fire.

SMOKE is perhaps the single most important offensive use of mortars. Mortars are the only weapons in the game that can fire multiple SMOKE rounds in one Prep Fire Phase. Remember that firing SMOKE requires use of the Area Target Type (C3.33) and that only mortars can retain ROF when using this target type. *[Ed. Note: Allowing mortars to have this special capability was an inadvertent oversight by the designers. It was originally intended that mortars be treated the same as all other Guns in this respect, and we intended to "fix" this in the '89 Errata. Indeed, questions received through the mail asking if mortars can be used in the above-mentioned manner have been answered in the negative. However, this capability has proven so popular and pervasive that we reconsidered and let the rule stand as is.]* Additionally, mortars that were designed for "chemical" use often have high SMOKE numbers. This means one mortar is often more valuable for SMOKE application than two or three other weapons. If you're playing the Americans, always think of WP. Even stout defenders often begin to think of pulling out when their fire is impeded by SMOKE and they themselves are subjected to repeated MCs.

"Recee" fire is another good use of mortars. Shoot at the trees you think might contain hidden guns. As Indirect Fire, a mortar gets −1 for Air Bursts and drops the gunshield benefit by one. This is particularly nasty when the defensive setup options are limited. Note again the benefit of retaining ROF while using the Area Target Type.

Another cute trick is to bring a mortar onto the ground level within two-hex range of a level-3 gun position. Mortars and AA guns are the only weapons that can reach upward at close range.

More commonly, players will find they get mortars when they are on the defensive. Here is where mortars are at their best. Use A12.34 to set up hidden next to a prominent elevation, preferably behind an obstruction and in a foxhole. Now take a good look at the board. Are there choke-points anywhere? Perhaps a road beside a cliff, or a woods-road? Prime targets for "denial" fire. Denial fire is our version of interdiction (no, not firing on broken units). Pick a hex you can see that you figure the enemy will have to move into. By firing at the hex before it is occupied, you gain Area Target Acquisition. Often the simple existence of this convinces the opposing player to move into another location. Very valuable when there is a deep, key road junction. Enemy moving through the woods? Hitting the leading woods hex(es) is doubly intimidating because of Air Bursts. As long as your spotter can see the hex he can stay concealed while your MTR remains hidden.

Anti-tank fire is also the realm of mortars. Take a good look at the numbers. In the early years of the war, the lightly armored AFVs are vulnerable to shock or immobilization from fire—even from light mortars. In later years, medium tanks are still vulnerable to 80+mm mortars, with a 16% chance of immobilization, automatic shock, or even a kill.

Included are revisions of two more of the original *SQUAD LEADER* scenarios wherein mortars play a prominent role. Experiment with some of the ideas and suggestions above.

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of the column (Vol. 25, No. 6 in this case). The intent is to present the *ASL* player with one of numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement, and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenario, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

After Action Report—Soldiers of Destruction

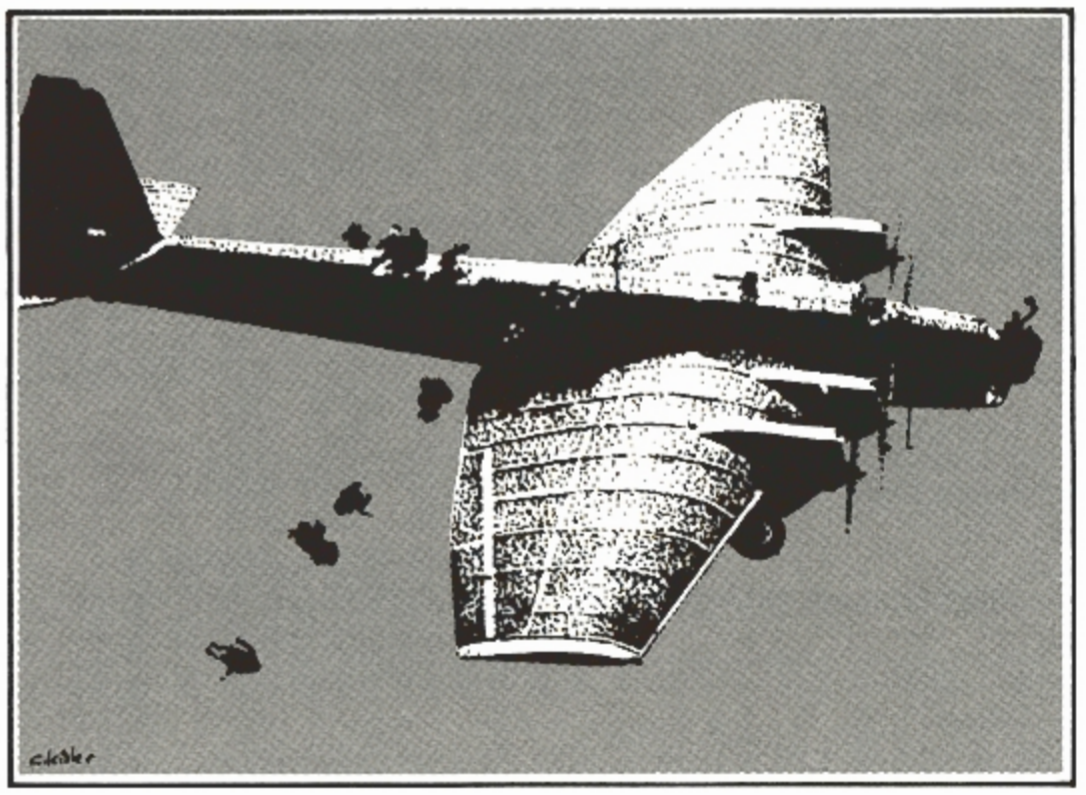
GERMAN: 9-2 and two 6-5-8s and LMG in 6Q4, another6-5-8 in 6R9. Place the 8-1 and two squads with an LMG in 4T9. Place the PzJg III/IV in 4Y10 (CA: X9/Y9) and the JgdPz V in 6Y10 (CA: X9/Y9). Both tanks start CE.

RUSSIAN: Put one T-34, the 8-1 leader and three squads in 6I10. Place another T-34 with the 8-0 and three squads in 6I9. Then put one T-34 each in 6I8 and 6I7, with two 6-2-8s in 6I4.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: First you must grab control of building 6N4. At the same time, try a strong drive down along the board edge around Q10. At some point before reaching 6V9, divert across to 6X5. Crossing the road will be costly, but your tanks can run off from here. Don't try to fight; it's always better to run around with your superior mobility. If you must fight, you want the T-34s to pound the German infantry while your own infantry threatens his tanks. You can certainly swarm over one enemy tank, but you have to figure on losing at least one of yours too.

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: You can confront the Russians frontally with your Jagdpanther. Make sure you stay beyond 12 hexes when you move, and always cover your side. Try to get both your AFVs together so he doesn't just swarm all over one of them. You must use your ability to maneuver to fullest. What you are attempting to do is use your range advantage. Best bet is to use your infantry to beat his infantry. The same with your tanks. Again, it is a matter of quality versus quantity.

☆



DESANTNIKI

Reference Notes for ASL

By Steven C. Swann

It is one of the strange paradoxes of military history that the country which first developed the use of military parachute forces suffered from a marked inability to properly employ them. This nation was, of course, the Soviet Union. At the end of World War I, two of the defeated nations began researching new ways of employing their treaty-limited military strength. These two countries were Germany, and Soviet Russia. They both looked at the carnage that had been caused by positional warfare, and both independently decided that another war could be governed by the use of maneuver elements to prevent the staggering losses that were common during the war past.

Germany's research and military theories led their high command to adopt combined arms elements of armor, motorized infantry and artillery to exploit the breaches made by conventional infantry divisions. The use of the air force, especially in the ground support role, was developed to augment the ground forces. Late in the '30s, the Wehrmacht decided to develop a parachute force after witnessing a military demonstration hosted by the Soviet Union. The early history of World War II has shown how well Germany learned its lessons.

After the Russian Revolution, there arose in the Soviet power structure men that had the ability and foresight to plan and implement a combined-arms organization for their fledgling Red Army. They also realized that airborne forces could play a significant role in any war of maneuver. The Soviet theories of maneuver warfare were, in part, laid down in the writings of Mikhail Frunze during the early 1920s. In these, he rejected the entire concept of defensive positional war and presented bold new approaches involving maneuver, constant activity and offense. Even though Frunze died in 1925, his work led other Soviet military leaders in their efforts to modernize and develop a new Soviet army and air force.

In 1929, the Soviet military establishment embraced the theory of the "Deep Battle", which proposed that a battle should encompass not only the tactical and operational areas of an opponent, but the rear elements also. This "rear battle" would disrupt communications, command and logistical operations as an aid to the defeat of forward enemy combat units. What was needed to implement these theories, however, was a technological base. This lack of technology was the primary weak point in Soviet military plans (and was one of the main objectives of the five-year plan of the early 1930s). So it was that an effort to develop unique, "low-tech" efforts of carrying the war into the "rear" of the enemy came about.

Research and experimentation conducted in 1929-30 resulted in indications that large-scale dropping of troops behind enemy lines from the air was feasible. During the same period, other military agencies had begun development of equipment adaptable to airborne use (including domestic-produced parachutes in April 1930). The proponents of the "Deep Battle" seized upon these and lobbied for concentration on this revolutionary tactic. On 2 August 1930, an airborne operation was conducted to test landing techniques during manuevers in the Moscow Military District. During the operation, two detachments of 12 men were paradropped in the rear of the opposing forces to perform a diversionary operation by attacking its headquarters. The exercise was repeated in September by an 11-man detachment who were to seize documents from a divisional headquarters. Both tests were highly successful, and a mandate to conduct more extensive tests in 1931 was given by the Red Army command.

The first "motorized airlanding" detachment was actually created in the Leningrad Military District in March 1931. This early detachment comprised a rifle company (with attached sapper, communications and light vehicle platoons) and a heavy bomber aviation squadron. Equipment included two 76mm guns, two T-27 tankettes, and numerous light and heavy machineguns. In June, a 46-man parachute detachment was added to the TO&E. The 1st Aviation Brigade was born, and began practicing the concepts of a combined-arms airborne force. During August and September, the brigade trained in both the Leningrad and Ukraine regions, making several successful airdrops and airlandings.

Based on these, the *Revoensovet* (Revolutionary Military Soviet) ordered the creation of four aviation landing detachments in January 1932. There was to be one landing detachment in each of the Leningrad, Belorussian, Ukrainian and Moscow military districts. It was at this point in the progress that the limitations of Russian industry raised its ugly head. The Red Army just did not have the aircraft and equipment to raise these four forces. Only the 3rd Motorized Airborne Landing Detachment (Leningrad District) was actually filled out and equipped. The detachment had one parachute battalion of two companies and an airlanding group of one rifle company and one artillery battery. A parachute platoon of 30 men was raised by the Ukrainian District.

During 1932, three important directives were issued for airborne operations. First, Tukhachevsky stressed that the operational and tactical mission of an airborne operation must be deep enough in an enemy's rear to affect operations of the entire corps or army under attack. Second, the Chief of Airborne Forces also argued that separate airborne forces should be created that could operate in close coordination with other aviation units in attacks on enemy rear areas. The third decision was that an aviation park of aircraft suited for airborne operations would have to be developed and built. It was decreed that some TB-1 and TB-3 bombers could be converted for airborne use immediately, but these aircraft were already in short supply and only a few would actually be converted.

On 11 December 1932, the *Revoensovet* once again ordered the creation of new airborne units; but these were to be brigade-sized. The Volga Military District was added to the list of districts that were to have airborne forces. The 3rd Motorized Airborne Landing Detachment at Leningrad was transformed into the 3rd Airborne Brigade, a combined-arms unit of one parachute battalion, one mechanized battalion, and one artillery battalion. The other military districts established landing detachments similar in organization to the original Leningrad detachment. Also, each rifle corps and division was authorized a parachute battalion in its own TO&E for use as special purpose troops. By the beginning of 1934, the Soviet Airborne Forces numbered some 10000 men; the structure included one airborne brigade, four airlanding detachments, and some 29 independent parachute battalions.

This airborne structure was to remain the same until 1936. The major cause of the slowdown in Soviet development of airborne forces was the lack of equipment, notably aircraft. Also, radios were found to be unreliable, and caused command problems in the control of units spread wide over the countryside. The manpower was available, but technology would not catch up before Hitler invaded. Two types of theoretical airborne assault were studied by the Soviet High Command during this period. One was carried out on the tactical level, and consisted of a company or battalion drop. The other was operational, and involved either regiments or full brigades. The Soviets were to excel in the tactical, but fail in the operational use, of airborne forces.

The Red Army maneuvers of 1935 were held in the Kiev Military District, and observers from Germany and several other nations were invited. The successful wargame was operational in size and included two parachute and two airlanding rifle regiments. The German observers were so impressed that the Luftwaffe immediately began an airborne program. Like the Russians, they were looking at maneuver warfare as the successor to positional warfare. By 1938, the Germans had developed an airborne force in secret under the command of Kurt Student. As we know, German airborne tactics and techniques were to be wildly successful in a number of theaters.

On the other hand, British observers were not greatly impressed and saw little future for airborne forces (until they saw them in action in the invasions of the Low Countries in 1940 and Crete in 1941). Like the British, the Americans saw nothing in this revolutionary weapon, and did not even begin to

study the possibilities seriously until 1940. The French would come to create two parachute companies, and this small force was overwhelmed during the 1940 debacle. Italy's military establishment had experimented with airborne units in 1928, and even had a company of trained parachutists, but then let its interest fade until the opening days of World War 2.

The years 1938 through 1940 were the years of crisis for the Soviet military establishment. For this was the period of Stalin's infamous purges, which caught many who had developed the Red Army. The final result was to limit the abilities of the Red Army by pushing politically reliable officers into command positions at the expense of the innovative and daring. Unfortunately, these political creatures did not have the experience nor knowledge necessary for high command. So it was that, during this period, the Red Army—along with the airborne units—continued to grow in quantity, but decline in quality.

In 1938, the existing airborne units were used as the core in development of six airborne brigades of 3000 men each. The 3rd Airborne Brigade at Leningrad became the 201st Airborne Brigade. During 1939, an additional three airlanding regiments were formed in the Moscow Military District. And in 1939, the airborne was committed to battle—albeit, they walked into combat. In the 1939 conflict with Japan at Khalkhin-Gol, the 212th (Far East) Airborne Brigade was used in a ground assault role in the battle for Mount Fui. With the outbreak of the 1939 Soviet-Finnish War (the so-called "Winter War"), two other airborne brigades received their initiation into combat. The 201st (Leningrad) Airborne Brigade operated under the 15th Army, while the 204th (Kiev) was placed in 15th Army reserve until the final stages of the war.

The first real airdrop of Soviet paratroopers came during the Soviet occupation of Rumanian Bessarabia in 1940. Here the 201st, 204th and 214th (Belorussian) brigades dropped well in advance of the Soviet ground forces. While there was no combat to speak of, their mission was to prevent destruction of strategic locations and materials and to secure the cities of Bolgrad and Izmail. The airborne units succeeded in all aspects, and were viewed highly by the Soviet high command and by Stalin after the operation.

In 1940, taking lessons learned by their experiences of 1939 and 1940 to heart, the airborne units were again reorganized. With all eyes turned toward the storm clouds over Europe, the expansion was to be made to upgrade to a wartime footing. Each airborne brigade would include two parachute battalions, two glider battalions, and an airlanding contingent of two battalions, plus tanks and artillery. Each brigade had 3000 men, 11 AFVs and four field guns, as well as attached recon, sapper, medical and support platoons for each. The airborne forces grew again in March/April 1941 with the creation of five airborne corps (see Table 1), using the brigades as a core. Each corps was to field 10419 men, 50 AFVs, 18 artillery guns and 18 heavy mortars. As always, the specter of deficient technology visited the Soviet efforts. The planned radio signals companies were never fielded because of a lack of radio equipment. The tank battalions that should have had 50 T-37s never were at full strength (later the tank battalions would be reduced to a TO&E of 32 AFVs). Numbering over 100000 men in five corps, the Soviet airborne forces could have been a force to be reckoned with; but without planes to transport them, they would soon sink down to being but well-trained infantrymen.

22 June 1941: the day that the dictators had been steered to by events. German infantry divisions crossed the Soviet Union's western borders. Panzer formations and motorized infantry moved forward to encircle massive Soviet pockets. The two proponents of maneuver warfare had clashed at last. Ironically, the Soviet command was caught by surprise and paralysed in the first few days of the German offensive. Red Army units were ordered forward into untenable positions; others were sent forward in piecemeal fashion. Even the airborne units were thrown into the fighting to act as motorized infantry. Every theory for a war of maneuver was seemingly forgotten.

The first Soviet airborne unit to join combat was the 5th Airborne Corps of the Baltic District. This formation had been in the field for training exercises and joined with the 21st Mechanized Corps, transferring later to the 27th Army. After taking heavy casualties south of Daugavpils, the corps was ordered back to Moscow on 15 August 1941. Meanwhile, the 4th Airborne Corps was thrown in in an attempt to hold back the German AG Centre advance along the Berezina River. When the Germans forced this line, the corps joined the Soviet 13th Army in the defense of Smolensk. Meanwhile, the 214th Brigade of the 4th Airborne Corps was separated and eliminated as a fighting formation in the cauldron at Minsk.

In the south, the 1st Airborne Corps attempted to stand before the German AG South during its drive to Kiev. Here the Soviet 5th and 6th armies were reinforced by the 2nd and 3rd Airborne corps, which were thrown into the futile defense of Kiev. The 1st and 2nd brigades were completely destroyed and written off. The 3rd Airborne, encicled at Konotop, managed to fight its way out to the east, with great casualties. (In November, the 3rd would be reorganized as the 87th Rifle Division; later it was designated as the 13th Guards, earning its battle honors in the defense of Stalingrad.)

By August, only the 4th and 5th Airborne corps retained any semblance of fighting order. In September, all airborne forces were pulled from the front lines and placed directly under the command of STAVKA. At this time, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Airborne were reconstituted, and five new airborne corps (6th through 10th) were created. The battalion TO&E for all parachute units were strengthened from 458 to 678 men. But, due to the number of Soviet aircraft caught on the ground by the Germans, the Red Air Force was sadly depleted. STAVKA set about collecting and protecting all the suitable aircraft that could be located; it was realized that to be deployed as intended, these aircraft would be vital in the future.

On the night of 14 December 1941, Soviet airborne forces finally gave the Germans a taste of what they had been dropping on other countries since April 1940. STAVKA ordered the Soviet 30th Army and 1st Shock Army to drive the German 3rd and 4th Panzer divisions back from the northern approaches to Moscow. Should they retreat, the Germans would have to pass through the village of Teryaeva Sloboda. One battalion of the 214th Airborne Brigade (4th Corps) dropped behind the German lines at the village west of Moscow. Their mission was tactical—destroy bridges, interdict the road, and generally create confusion along the German route of retreat. For 15 days, the Soviet paratroopers harassed the Germans before joining up with advancing Soviet forces.

Encouraged by the success of the mid-December drop, another was planned for the Medyn area in January. This drop was to occur along the junction of the German 20th and 57th armies, and added a new twist to Soviet techniques. Here one battalion of the 201st Brigade was to parachute into the area and secure a landing site for an airlanding rifle regiment. This they did successfully, and one battalion of the 250th Rifle Regiment landed before winter weather closed in to prevent further reinforcement. And, on the nights of 18 through 22 January, the rest of the 201st Airborne made several drops in the Zhelan'ye area west of Moscow along the Moscow-Warsaw highway. Their goal was to reinforce the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, operating west of the main German defensive lines. Together, the paratroopers and cavalry were to assist the Soviet 43rd and 49th armies in their westward push. Tactically, the airdrop was a complete success and the two formations operated together for the next several months.

Most of the combat history related thus far centers around the Moscow area because of the size of the airborne units employed. But there were airborne operations along the southern fronts as well. On 13 December, STAVKA ordered the 44th Army and Black Sea fleet to reoccupy the Kerch Peninsula of the Crimea. As part of this operation, a small group from the 2nd Airborne Corps was to drop onto the area known as the Arabat Spit, a narrow neck of land across from Feodosia. Under extreme weather conditions, the paratroopers jumped in on the night of 31 December. In heavy winds, the small battalion was scattered across several kilometers. After spending several hours reassembling, the paratroopers began their long trek towards their target, the small town of Ak Monai. By early on 1 January, the battalion had occupied the town and set up defensive positions. Meanwhile, the Soviet 44th Army made its landing at Feodosia, and the 51st landed at Kerch. With enemy units on three sides, the German commander pulled his Rumanian and German units back, allowing the paratroopers to be relieved without combat occurring.

Even more common were the raids, conducted independent of any offensive or counterattack, designed to keep the enemy off balance. More than ten small airdrops were made by the 204th Brigade in July 1941. Here in the Ukraine these paratroopers were used to raid behind the German lines. Small units were dropped to strike at headquarters and logistical facilities. In one such, on 22 September, a 23-man unit staged an airborne raid on a German communications center near Odessa. This raid disrupted enemy communications to such an extent that two Rumanian divisions were pulled back from the siege of Sevastopol and Odessa to secure the area. This reduction gave the Soviets time for the evacuation of the Odessa garrison.

Airdrops were being made also to partisan units organizing behind the German lines, and often included Soviet paratroopers who were to lead or create new partisan bands. Against extensive German air patrols, courageous Russian pilots in inferior aircraft would fly on dark nights to reinforce and resupply the paratroopers and partisans behind enemy lines. Tactically, the Soviets were teaching the world a new airborne lesson—how to use airborne forces to support resistance behind the lines. One lesson, however, would apply to both the Soviets and the Germans: the Russian winter. The same first winter which caused such German misery prevented many of the Soviet airborne operations from being as succeesful as they might.

STAVKA was ambitious in its planning for the February counteroffensive. Without taking into account the fatigue of its units, the state of equipment and supplies, and the lack of suitable aircraft, the high command prepared plans for a major assault, with the objective being no less than the envelopment of an entire German army corps. As part of this grand scheme, the entire 4th Airborne Corps was to drop behind enemy lines to shut the "back door" in the encirclement. Due to the lack of enough suitable aircraft, the corps had to be dropped piecemeal over several nights. The inexperienced pilots and the weather caused the troops that were eventually dropped to be scattered over a 20-kilometer area of frozen ground. After the initial drop, surprise was lost for those units transported on later nights. Worse, the paratroopers had been assigned too many missions. The counteroffensive was a disaster, with only some of those paratroopers dropped managing to escape to the Russian lines.

From this beginning, the next six months saw the Soviet paratroopers become a constant thorn in the

German rear areas. From company-sized drops up to a drop by two airborne brigades, the *Desantniki* were to make numerous attacks deep in German territory. In a strategic or operational sense, these drops by the reconsitituted 4th Airborne were not a success; but in the tactical sense, a few thousand Soviet paratroopers managed to tie down five enemy infantry divisions and two panzer divisions for four months. Survivors of these drops either made their way back to Russian lines, or joined local bands of partisans.

In the summer of 1942, the Germans made a major offensive effort in southern Russia. To aid in this critical situation, STAVKA ordered all ten airborne corps converted in Guards rifle divisions. That this help was sorely needed is shown by the fact that nine of the former airborne formations fought in Stalingrad as Guards. Still, Stalin and the Soviet high command foresaw the utility of paratrooper formations to replace those chewed up at Stalingrad, and another eight airborne corps were authorized in the fall of 1942. In December 1942, these airborne corps were increased in size and labeled Guards Airborne Divisions.

In what was becoming standard practice, STAVKA deployed all ten of the new Guards Airborne divisions on the northwestern front in February 1943. Here they fought in a ground role with the 1st Shock Army and the 68th Army at Staraya Russia and Demyansk, with only limited airdrops employed. Next, during April and May, all of the airborne divisions were transferred south in response to the German threat in the Kursk region. Seven of the divisions went to the Central Front, while the remaining three (the 1st, 7th and 10th) divisions joined the 37th and 52nd armies at Kharkov. Two of the airborne divisions made notable contributions in the battle. The 4th Guards Airborne conducted a successful defense against the panzer elements of the German 9th Army at Ponyri; and the 8th Guards Airborne assisted in the victory over the 4th Panzer Army at Prokhorovka.

Following the German defeat at Kursk, the Guards Airborne divisions remained in a ground role when ordered to join in the pursuit of the retreating enemy to the Dneipr River. Meanwhile, behind the lines of combat, STAVKA raised an additional 20 airborne brigades and began their training. Most of the brigades were used to form six new Guards Airborne divisions (11th through 16th) in September 1943. Three of the new brigades, those not so used, were earmarked as assault forces for the next operational jump.

By 22 September, units of the Soviet 40th Army had secured small bridgeheads across the Dneipr. To strengthen these, elements of the 1st, 3rd and 5th Guards Airborne brigades were ordered to drop behind German defenses along the Dneipr River bend. By attacking from the rear simultaneously with units forcing the river from the east, it was hoped that Soviet armor could be ferried across rapidly after the bridgehead had been expanded. As before, this operational airdrop failed. Beyond repeating the mistakes made in early 1942, Soviet intelligence had failed to note that the Germans had strengthened the defenses in the area with various panzer and infantry formations. This increase in the defenses was not discovered by the Russians until after the staged airdrops had begun.

A preview of what would happen to the US 82nd and 101st in Normandy occurred. Lead elements of the 3rd Airborne Brigade dropped directly over elements of the 19th Panzer Division. Most of the small parachute units were not able to reassemble enough men to accomplish their mission; and the ones that did were soon under attack by the Germans. Some of the scattered paratroopers simply faded into the hills and forests to join partisan bands and continue to harass the Germans. Most were killed or captured. Without the element of surprise, and in the face of strong ground formations, the Soviet paratroopers had been doomed to failure. It was the second and last attempt by the Russians to employ airborne forces in a mass operation.

Following the failure at the Dneipr River, the original ten Guards Airborne divisions all fought in the Ukraine during 1944. These ten became part of the 4th Guards Army and the 5th Army. The 4th Guards Army defeated the Rumanian forces facing them and pushed into Hungary dring the summer and autumn of 1944. Meanwhile, in January 1944, the 11th through 16th Guards Airborne were redesignated as Guards rifle divisions and formed the 37th Guards Corps. The 37th took part in the battles to liberate Karelia from the Finns in 1944.

In the late summer of 1944, STAVKA again authorized creation of airborne units to replace those now serving as ground infantry. This year would see the largest levy to date. In August Stalin approved the raising of the 37th, 38th and 39th Guards Airborne corps. With these three corps, the first Soviet airborne army was created in October 1944. As always, the pressing need for fresh ground troops would destroy this airborne formation before it could be used in any airdrop. In December 1944, the separate Airborne Army was reorganized into the 9th Guards Army. In deference to its elite nature, the 9th Guards Army was not committed to a defensive line, but was held back for use in an offensive exploitation role.

Even though there would not be any further large airborne units created during the remainder of the war, creation of brigade-sized parachute units continued. These brigades totaled 3345 men each, with six 76mm guns, eight 45mm guns, 28 37mm AT guns, and numerous machineguns and antitank rifles. While wartime realities demanded that the

TABLE 1: Table of Organization—Soviet Airborne Corps, 1941

Unit	ASL Equivalent
3 Brigades (each)	
HQ Company	
Brigade Artillery	6×76mm ART 12×45mm ART 6×82mm MTR
Recon Company	113 Bicycles
AA Company	various 6mm, 7mm and 12mm AA Guns
Signal Company	4×Radio (never formed)
Mobile Equip Company	15×Motorcycle
Tank Battalion	50×T-37 (later reduced to 32)
Long Range Recon Platoon	4×RSB
4×Parachute Battalion	(see Table 2 below)

TABLE 2: Table of Organization—Soviet Parachute Battalion, 1941

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
HQ Company		
HQ Staff	37	9-1 SMC 8-0 SMC 3×4-5-8 MMC
Signal Platoon		Radio (never implemented)
Mortar Company	22	4×2-2-8 Crew 4×82mm MTR
Weapons Company		
		8-1 SMC
Demo Platoon	34	3×4-5-8 MMC 6×DC
MG Platoon	25	4×2-4-8 HS 4×HMG
FT Platoon	32	3×4-5-8 MMC 3×FT
3 Rifle Cos. (each)	176	
HQ Platoon		8-1 SMC 8-0 SMC 4-5-8 MMC 2×LMG 2×ATR 50mm MTR
MG Section		2×2-4-8 HS 2×MMG
3 Rifle Platoons (each)		3×4-5-8

TABLE 3: Table of Organization—Soviet Parachute Battalion, 1940

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
HQ Company		
HQ Staff & Starting Co.	123	9-1 SMC 8-0 SMC 6×4-5-8 MMC LMG MMG 50mm MTR
3 Rifle Cos. (each)	141	
HQ Platoon		8-1 SMC 8-0 SMC 2×LMG
Control Squad	12	6-2-8 MMC
3 Rifle Platoons (each)	38	3×4-5-8 MMC
Mortar Platoon		2×2-2-8 Crew 2×50mm MTR

major airborne units be used in ground roles, several small tactical and diversionary airborne operations were performed during the long months of 1945.

Fitting the Desantniki into ASL

The Soviet airborne forces were the Soviet elite. These men, usually volunteers, received better training, equipment, pay and leadership. Because of their training and leadership, the morale of the paratroopers was uniformly high. The leadership was particularly noteworthy. Even though the purges of the late 1930s stifled many of the lower-echelon officers of the rifle units, some small amount of intiative remained and was encouraged among the airborne units. It was this independence that would allow small numbers of men to inflict such confusion in the German rear during raids and larger operations. While the airborne forces never had much in the way of heavy weapons, the Soviet command did outfit them with more light infantry weapons than the normal Red Army squad had.

Because Soviet paratroopers were elite troops, I have chosen the 4-5-8 MMC as a good representation for the squad. Since these troops were trained to operate independently and in small groups on a regular basis, these should have the ability to deploy (A1.31) under the guidance of a leader in the Rally Phase. The morale of these exceptionally well-trained (for the Soviets) troops does not fit in the ELR Chart (as given in H1.28). Like their brothers the world over, the Soviet paratroopers were high in courage and eager to fight. Combined with their training, I would recommend that for the 7/41 throgh 6/42 columns the Russian paratroopers be given an ELR of "4", and given "5" ELR for the remainder of the war. For the 7/44 and 1945 columns, it should also be noted that their morale should be *underlined.*

Two Tables of Organization have been included with this article. The first, showing the 1941 Parachute Battalion, should be used for any scenario involving normal Soviet parachute forces. The second, the 1940 Parachute Battalion, would serve as a guide in establishing any of the 29 independent parachute battalions and brigades that were assigned to various divisions and fronts during the war. (As in my previous articles, SMCs of each unit are listed in the battalion and company HQ sections; exact assignment will have to be made after reference to your historical sources for the scenario being designed.)

As can be seen, the organization of the 1941 Parachute Battalion (Table 2) is much more complex than that of the 1940 battalion (Table 3). After the fighting in Mongolia and Finland, the Soviet High Command reorganized and strengthened the parachute battalions. More squad weapons and men were added to each battalion. The HQ Company now included the staff, medical, supply and clerical personnel that are associated with any headquarters. The staff officers are represented by the 9-1 and 8-0 SMCs; and as all personnel were trained for combat, three 4-5-8s have been included in the HQ Company. In 1941, the mortars were taken from the parachute companies and reformed into a mortar company under the direct control of the battalion CO. As the mortar calibre was also increased, four 82mm mortars and four 2-2-8 crews make up the 1941 Mortar Company.

In 1941 too, a Weapons Company makes its appearance with additional squad weapons. Actually, this is not a regular Weapons Company as the U.S. or British Army would think of such. Instead, there were three separate platoons, all under the battalion CO's direct control. For simplicity's sake, since this is confusing, we will label these three separate units the "Weapons Company". It includes machinegun, demolitions, and flamethrower platoons, and the company commander is represented as an 8-1 SMC. The demolitions platoon is outfitted with three 4-5-8 MMC and six DCs (two per squad). The MG platoon will encompass four HMGs with HS to man them. The FT platoon consists of three 4-5-8 and three flamethrowers.

Each of the three parachute rifle companies included a MG section in 1941. The company leadership is an 8-1 and an 8-0, with a 4-5-8 to show the HQ personnel. A company weapons pool of two LMGs, two ATRs and one 50mm MTR is shown in the HQ platoon as well. These weapons would be distributed as the company commander saw fit. Where the battalion CO controlled the HMGs, the company CO had at his disposal two MMGs and their crews.

The 1940 Parachute Battalion was a smaller unit, having a manpower of 546 men. It had what was known as a "starting unit" and a headquarters company at the battalion level. The "starting unit" is similar to a combat HQ that would drop into an area ahead of the main HQ staff. (It may be easier for those used to the American paratrooper history to think of it as a "temporary HQ".) For the Soviet paratroopers of this period, I have selected a 9-1 SMC as battalion commander, with an 8-0 SMC assistant. Each of the three rifle companies includes a Company HQ, a mortar platoon, and a "Control" squad. The mortar platoon is equipped with two 50mm MTRs and has two 2-4-8 HS to man them. The Control squad would be a politically reliable squad that would act much as American MPs would, with the added duty of assisting the company commander in the direction of his platoons. These men were equipped with sub-machineguns exclusively; therefore, a 6-2-8 MMC will be used to represent these political troops. Each of the three parachute platoons will be composed of three 4-5-8 squad counters still.

The Parachute Corps TO&E (Table 1) should be used in any situation where an airborne force fought as part of a ground army or front. This would be the only instance where the parachute motorized and mechanized elements would be able to fight with its own infantry. In any scenario dealing with airdropped Soviet paratroopers, use Table 2 or Table 3 as a reference. Remember that only two actions, that at Zhealan'ye and at the Dneipr River, were of operational level. All other scenarios featuring Soviet paratroopers should have Russian forces of no more than battalion size.

For any scenario set during the 1941-42 Winter Counter-offensive, players should incoporate the weather into their design. For December 1941, Ground Snow (E3.72) and Extreme Winter (E3.74) rules should be in effect. For scenarios in January and February, institute Deep Snow (E3.73) and Snow Drifts (E3.75) should be placed. For any other scenario, players should determine the weather as per the usual procedure (E3.) for the appropriate month. As the vast majority of Soviet airdrops were made at night, invoke the Night (E1.) rules.

As a final note for scenario designers, the Soviet paratroopers committed to the Dneipr River battle were lightly armed and equipped with limited supplies. In any action depicting this operation, the Soviet paratroopers should not receive the −1 Entrenching DRM. Any scenario dated after the initial day of the airdrop should also force the Soviet units to be governed by Ammo Shortage (A19.131).

The use of Soviet parachute formations in *ASL* has not before been considered. In fact, I hadn't realized until recently that the Soviet Union even conducted combat airdrops, much less pioneered the military use of parachute forces. Even in a world built around wargames, the possibility of learning something new will always be with we players. As with my other articles on light infantry forces, a scenario has been provided. Readers are urged to try the accompanying scenario highlighting one of the many successful tactical drops, this one at night in the depth of winter, made by the *Desantniki*.



Squad Leader Clinic

MASSED ARMOR ASSAULT

By Jon Mishcon

We feel that the best possible use of *ASL* is the ability of the system to recreate, on a very small scale, many of the problems that beset the commanders of World War II. Not to say this game system is a "simulation" (players have much too much knowledge and control), but rather an "artful copy".

The bitter lesson of World War I was that massed infantry assaults could not prevail against defending machine guns. Many of the weapons and tactics of World War II were in direct response to the failure of World War I armies. One of the best new weapons to arise was the "tank". This article, and scenario, reviews early World War II armored assault tactics and makes some suggestions for their use in play. A rather good test of *ASL*'s ability to force players into reviewing armor play.

There were essentially two schools of thought about armor tactics in the 1930s. The first treated armor as if it were high-tech Napoleonic cavalry. Light, fast tanks (Hussars, if you will) for scouting and screening; heavy, slower vehicles (Life Guards) for assisting infantry assaults. Given the indelible lessons of World War I, special consideration was given to crossing trenches and breaching fortifications. Many United Kingdom tacticians were strong proponents of this concept. This group did not consider the natural outgrowth of the technology of World War I as applied to armor—that is, the rapid-firing anti-tank gun. Small numbers of tanks were easy prey to hidden guns. While examples of these infantry-support tanks were to be found throughout World War II, the concept quickly fell into disrepute.

The second group of armor theoreticians proposed the massed armor assault. Large groups of tanks, acting with the support of dive bombers, would be able to overcome isolated anti-tank weapons and create breakthroughs. This, in fact, was the basis for the early German successes. Only as the war progressed did the vulnerability of the tank, without supporting infantry, become evident. As the infantry gained effective light AT weapons, and overcame "tank fright", unsupported tanks were to become as vulnerable as had been the earlier waves of infantry during WWI. Expensive lessons that led to the concept of "combined arms".

The tactical deployment of these early massed tank attacks tended to follow along different lines, depending upon the country of origin. The Germans tried to divide the assault into three waves. The first wave was normally composed of the medium tanks, usually in battalion strength. Their mission was to crash into and through the front-line defenses. In addition to exposing defenders, the initial tank "wedge" was to penetrate to the artillery positions behind the front line. The second wave was often made up of the heavier or support tanks. Often this second wave was the second battalion of the same panzer regiment. This wave, which often was accompanied by the mission commander, gave covering fire for the first wave, destroyed exposed AT guns, and hoped to open a hole wide enough for the safe passage of the third-wave troops. The third wave was usually infantry, whose job was to advance to positions to hold open the breakthrough and mop up any remaining defenders.

The Russians, given the limited independence of their subordinate commanders, often simply pointed a tank unit in a given direction, named an objective, and off the tanks went. Early tank units were frequently mixes of various AFVs and, so it was hoped, they all supported one another as they drove on. One positive aspect of the Russian approach was the reduced dependence on leadership. No thought was required by the local commanders. One could assume that either the assault would drive to its objective, or be destroyed in the attempt.

However, this simple approach had the unfortunate effect of slowly separating the faster tanks from the slower on a long approach run. One element, rarely considered in board games, is that the small "fast" tanks often had poor cross-country performance. Bouncing along in a light tank tended to muddle your brains, while the heavier tank's ride was much smoother. In fact, after a trek across open terrain, the T-34s tended to arrive on the battlefield first, followed by the light tanks, and only later did the heavy tanks show up. On the combat field, or on roads, light tanks were still "faster", but mixing of vehicle types was such a problem that the Russians were later to use only "pure" tank formations. Note that in this case, "pure" refers to tank chassis; the armament could still differ from tank to tank, although this was still unusual because of Soviet supply difficulties. Additionally, the early Russian tanks, and those of many Western countries other than the Germans, were handcuffed together by the lack of radios.

Beyond consideration of the type of massed tank assault organization lies the tactical approach. German commanders recognized five different kinds

of attack: a frontal assault, essentially running head-on into the foe; the wing attack, which sought to strike one side of the defenders' front line; the flank attack, which hoped to take the front-line defenders from the side; an envelopment assault, which looked to strike at the rear of the defense; and finally, the encirclement, which hoped to avoid the defenders altogether and drive into the rear areas.

The scenario, "Land Leviathans", included with this clinic will give one player the joy, and pain, of controlling a powerful pure armor task force whose composition is that of the early Russian tactic and whose mission is, hopefully, to attempt to encircle the defenders. You have a number of tough early choices.

First you must decide if you want to accept the Russian model of mixed tank types, or try to force the troops into a semblance of the German model of tank "waves". If you decide to mix tank types, the tanks will be able to support one another. This can be critical as some of the tanks are very vulnerable to deliberate immobilization fire and infantry assault. Regretfully, you will find that your speed of assault will be quite slow. If you instead decide to keep the fast and slow tanks in separate groups, then your slow elements will be no slower than before. However, similar tank types do tend to have the same weaknesses and the various elements may become isolated.

Second, you must decide how to conduct your attack. Your mission might be encirclement, but the likelihood of avoiding the defender entirely in this scenario is nil. So, first consider the frontal assault. You can drive straight down the road on Board 3. The advantage of so doing is that you can come to grips with the defender while he is still spread out. Additionally, this is the fastest route. The disadvantage is that the narrow frontage means that your units may be spread out in a line. You could find yourself beset from both flanks.

Next is the wing, or flank, assault. On the *ASL* scale these two tend to blend together. By advancing in strength across either Board 4 (open terrain) or Board 2 (hills and a road), while leaving a small support/feint group behind on Board 3 to insure the defender stays spread out, you can try to expose his flanks while covering your own. This is not as fast as a frontal assault, but can develop rather quickly and is much less vulnerable. The disadvantages are the difficulty in insuring that the two groups are mutually supportive and in deciding who belongs to which group.

Lastly, you could try for the envelopment. This tends to require that one group moves down Board 4 while the other advances along Board 2. While it is unlikely that either group will reach the board edge in sufficient strength to win the scenario, the group that gets there first can turn and attack the remaining defenders in the rear. Naturally, this is the slowest attack of all and always isolates one assault group from the other.

Our recommendations?

Well, to tell the truth, we think that each has its own merits if executed properly. Which brings us to the heart of this article. If you decide to accept the Russian model of mixed tank types, then a frontal assault can be quite acceptable. As your tank formations tend to be slow, you must be careful not just to string along the road. Use bypass movement to pass through the town. You have the time to use your heavier weapons to blow away any exposed defenders. Further, by staying bunched together, you will tend to have multiple shots on any unit that attempts to close upon your flank. What we try to accomplish is to "leapfrog" forward by keeping the rear platoons in Motion and stopping the advanced troops. This minimizes the risk of throwing a track and gives you lots of time to shoot. The groups then switch roles. We have tried to channel the frontal assault onto one of the other boards, but there never seems to be enough time to exit. The KV-2 should always be in the middle of the formation to minimize any possible incoming Immobilization fire. As much as possible, everyone should initially be in platoons of three vehicles so that if one tank is lost, the rest may continue to move without a die roll.

If you prefer the German method, then go for the flank/wing or envelopment attack.

If we choose the flanking maneuver, we like to throw the T-34 plus a BT, perhaps followed later by the KV, onto the ridge line of hill 522. The rest of the tanks go forward in platoons of similar units down either Board 2 or 4. The fire from the ridge line suppresses German movement and prevents the defender from shifting everything over to the threatened flank. The advancing troops can't take a lot of time to shoot, but your guys on the ridge can shoot all day. Keeping the maneuver element close to the edge of the board insures that one flank is secure. The trick here is knowing when, or if, to move the support team off the ridge. We recommend that the support platoon be two vehicles; that the KV operate independently (since it has a radio), and that the advancing elements be three tank troops—for the reasons stated above.

The envelopment is surely the most difficult tactic. We select the vehicles with the best cross-country movement for advancing across Board 4. The slower AFVs, plus your armored car, move along the road and ridge line of Board 2. What you want to happen is to have the BTs and T-34 get into position to strike at the rear of hills 534 and 547, thus allowing your vehicles on Board 2 a chance to exit. Your best bet is to mix two- and three-tank troops, for you will surely need to roll for independent movement.

Our testers found this scenario to be well balanced. The likelihood of success depends more on skill of execution than on luck. Albeit a heavy dose of bad luck can sink any plan, the Russians in GEN-Q have more powerful guns, units with almost invulnerable armor, and the ability to take notable losses and still win. We hope you enjoy the accompanying scenario.

These notes continue the series of commentaries in the Clinic pertaining to the scenarios published with the previous installment of this column (in this case, with Vol. 26, No. 1). The intent is to provide the *ASL* player with one of the numerous possibilities for defensive setup, attacker initial placement and basic tactical approaches for both. Having had several months to examine your own approaches to our Clinic scenarios, the reader can now compare his findings with our summation.

After Action Report—
The St. Goar Assault

GERMAN: Place Wire in 2X5, 2V5, 2U6, 2R6, 3P9 and 3E10. In the 2nd floor of 1E4 goes an 8-1, a 4-6-7, one 4-4-7, a HMG and MMG. In 1C1 the StuG III facing 1B1/1C2. In 1F6 goes two 4-4-7s and two LMGs. 1CC5 has the 81mm MTR with crew, a foxhole, and an Opel Blitz. In the 2nd floor of 1BB4, 8-1, 4-6-7, 4-4-7, 2-3-7, HMG and MMG. Two LMGs manned by a 8-3-8 and a 4-4-7 in 1Y8. A 4-4-7 and foxhole in each of 3M10, 3L9, 3K10 and 3J9. A 4-6-7 and foxhole in each: 3N9, 3I10, 3H9 and 3G10. In 3F9 place a 4-6-7 and a LMG. On the 2nd floor of 3N2, place the 9-1, two 4-6-7 and a MMG and LMG. In 3O1, 2-3-7 with 50mm MTR. In 3N1, the 6+1 and a 2-4-7. In 3N1, 2nd floor, the last 2-4-7.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: Obviously, boards 2 and 3 are the easiest to assault as you only have to seal off one edge. Nonetheless, I prefer to land on Board 1. If you decide to go for the end boards, I suggest that on Turn 1 you land three squads at the junction of boards 1 and 2, and three squads at the junction of boards 4 and 3 so as to leave the German in doubt as to your final intention. If you decide to go for Board 1, go for either end of it with everybody. Flamethrower and HS always lands first. Time is incredibly short, so go . . . go . . . go!

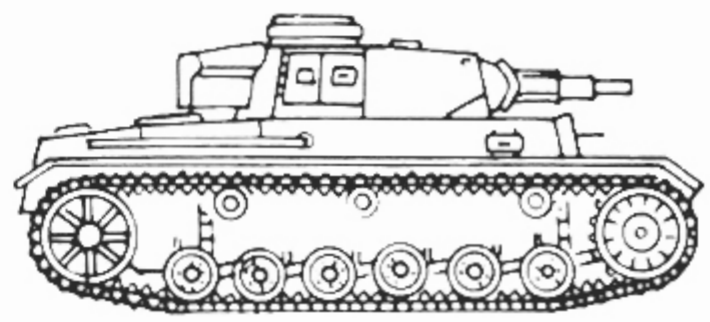
DEFENDER'S TACTICS: You must decide on Turn 2 where you will reinforce. Move units toward the edge of the board you think the U.S. player will try for. If it looks like the U.S. player is gunning for Board 1, use the Advance Phase of Turn 2 to link up some of the squads at the water's edge so that more guys can move out on Turn 3. When you see the American is getting stronger, pull back. Remember, he has to come to you. Don't forget that fire lanes work great through Smoke and fog.

The Road to Wiltz

AMERICAN: Set up one AT mine in each of 2S8, 2S1, 2Q1, 202, 2K2, 2I2 and 2E3. Then place Wire in 2U2 and 2O1. An M7 goes in 2O8, facing P7/P8; the M10 in 2O5 (VCA O6/N7; TCA P5/P4). With the M10 place 8-1, 6-6-6, DC and Baz. In 2O1, under the Wire, place 9-1, two 6-6-6, Baz and MMG and ?. In 2L1, the roadblock faces hexside M2. In 2J6, put four ?. In 2H0, 105 ART (H1/I1) with 2-2-7. In 3T4, one ?, 7-0 with two 7-4-7s, 3-3-7, two DC and the FT. In 3R5, put an ATG (facing S6/S5) with crew. In 3P2, another ATG (Q3/Q2) with crew. In hex 3O1 goes an 81mm MTR (P1/P0) with two 2-2-7s. In 3N2, one ? over 9-2, 6-6-6, two MMG. In the 2nd floor of 3N1, put an 8-0 under a ?. In 3N0, the other 81mm MTR (O1/O0) with 2-2-7. 3M1: ? over 8-1 and 3-3-7. In 3J2 facing K3/K2, an 105mm ART with crew.

ATTACKER'S TACTICS: The road may look enticing, but the U.S. player can bottle you up in a long column for turn after turn. You must immediately advance some MGs onto the heights of Hill 538 while your StuGs maneuver to go around Hill 621 away from the road. You are so strong that you can easily afford to throw away a bunch of HS, and even a tank or two, in recce. When possible, go *behind* the defenders. Your goal is to have tanks and infantry on Board 3 by Turn 7. The only way to do this is to stay mounted and roll AFVs through the 2M8 gap. However, at least two or three AFVs are needed to help clear the road so that your trucks can drive forward. Consider putting one JgdPz IV up onto the third level for long-range fire support (at the very least, the U.S. player will have to use some mortar fire to smoke it).

DEFENDER'S TACTICS: You'd like to hold all the Germans on Board 2 for seven turns. Against an aggressive German player, this is unlikely. You can hope to prevent the German infantry, trucks, and any supporting AFVs that advance along the road from reaching Board 3 before Turn 9. The German force is so strong that even if you play the fallback defense, he'll be able to swamp any defensive position. Keep falling back so that the German must come onto your guns. Carefully tape out the LOS from the second story building. Use your mortars to protect your Board 2 defensive positions. Figure on losing everything that sets up on Board 2 if that lets your reinforcing armor get into position. If the German does throw his unsupported armor onto Board 3 before your armor arrives, use your engineers to counterattack.



WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE

The Axis Minor Allies, 1941-1945

By David Meyler

In the realm of power politics, it is easy to look upon the smaller nations as mere pawns of their larger, more powerful neighbors. And, while some major powers often do look on their smaller neighbors in this light, reality can be surprisingly different. Small countries have their own political agendas, and it is sometimes difficult to determine who is using who. This was frequently the case between Germany and its "allies" during the Second World War.

Although there was certainly no doubt about who the senior partner was, even the direct threat of military action by the Germans was not always enough to get their allies to toe the line. The Finns, in a well-known example, used the German attack on Russia as a means of regaining the territories lost during the Winter War (the Finns called their 1941-44 conflict the "Continuation War"); and when these territories were reoccupied after the first few months of fighting, the Finns—no matter how much Berlin cajoled or pleaded—refused to move further. But even in the Balkans, where Germany could and did directly bully its neighbors, its allies were more than just puppets. Regional disputes often took precedence over Germany's anti-Communist "crusade" in Russia, limiting the overall effectiveness of these allies. The Hungarians, Bulgarians and Rumanians could fight well at times; unfortunately for the Germans, this was most often when they were fighting each other.

In general, these nations suffered from similar military shortcomings as the minor Anglo-French allies and neutrals: lack of heavy artillery, automatic weapons, motorized transport, aircraft and modern communications . . . in short, a general lack of the hardware to fight a major conflict. Even the Finns, generally recognized as tenacious soldiers, never really made up for a serious shortfall in heavy artillery, AFVs and transport. But, as highlighted in *PARTISAN*, these nationalities can be intriguing and challenging to play. This article provides some characteristics for the minor German allies, and some unit organization information for their troops.

The Rumanian Army:

It is perhaps more than a little ironic that Rumania became Germany's most important ally on the Eastern Front. The Rumanians not only fought against Germany in the First World War, but were threatened by pro-German Hungary and Bulgaria, both of which made territorial claims on Rumania. Although the Rumanians had a treaty with France and Britain, the influence of those nations in the Balkans was minimal. When the Soviet Union occupied the provinces of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina by force, Rumania found itself isolated. To avoid complete annihilation, Rumania made an accord with Germany in 1940, although this meant giving up half of Transylvania to the Hungarians and a strip of territory to Bulgaria.

Pre-war French influence in terms of tactics and organization on the Rumanian Army was distinct in the early months, although German influence became more pronounced as the war progressed. (This was more or less the pattern of all Germany's satellite armies.) In September 1940, 18000 German instructors arrived in Rumania to transform its large but obsolete army into a modern mechanized force. The Rumanian Army was scaled down to one million men, but when the invasion of Russia came the mechanization program was far from complete. The main focus had been in anti-tank and small unit tactics. Rumanian infantry and armor leaders tended to favor the changes, but the artillery arm considered French techniques superior.

The forces available were organized into three armies comprising 11 corps. There were 21 infantry divisions (three were disbanded due to the territorial concessions to the Hungarians and Soviets), six reserve divisions, the Guards Division and an independent Guards brigade, a frontier division and four mountain brigades. The elite mountain brigades were later labelled divisions, although their TO&E did not change. Rumanian mobile forces comprised two armored divisions, an armored brigade, and nine cavalry brigades. In support were seven artillery regiments.

A typical Rumanian division had three regiments at the start of the war with Russia (although this was later scaled down to two as a result of losses), with a field artillery regiment, a howitzer regiment, a machinegun company, an ATG company, an engineer battalion and a reconnaissance battalion attached. Early war strength was approximately 17500 men. An infantry regiment had three battalions, each with three rifle companies and a HMG company, plus a cavalry troop, mortar company and ATG company. A mountain brigade had 12000 men, in two infantry regiments, an artillery regiment and a cavalry squadron; support for these consisted of 24 75mm and 100mm guns and twelve 37mm AT guns. Artillery was the main weakness, with just 52 guns in a division—a mix of 100mm howitzers and 75mm field guns. ATG support was another critical weakness, with each regiment fielding only six 37mm guns, while the divisional ATG company had a further twelve 47mm guns. The mountain corps that was formed was generally equipped with modern Skoda guns, while the regular infantry had to make do with surplus First World War and some captured French or Polish ordnance.

The pride of the army was the cavalry. This was divided into two forces: the *Rosiori* and the *Calarasi*, the former regular troops and the latter recruited from among the wealthy landowners. Six regiments of *Calarasi* provided the divisional and corps recon forces. A cavalry brigade had three regiments and a horse artillery regiment. Three brigades at the start of the war each had one regiment transported in half-tracks. The cavalry brigades were later designated as divisions, but organization did not change radically. Although a cavalry brigade had only 6000 men with 16 75mm field guns and nine 37mm ATG, its mobility made it the most effective Rumanian unit committed to the Russian Front.

The single armored regiment in 1939 was combined with a motorized infantry regiment to create the Rumanian 1st Armored Division. It was later built up on the German model, with two motorized regiments and an armored regiment and a motorized artillery regiment. Pre-war Czech tanks were used (the Skoda LT vz 35), but most were lost eventually around Stalingrad. German-supplied Pz38s and PzKw IVs were generally used as replacements.

The Rumanian aristocracy played the dominant role in the Royal Rumanian Army. Officers were frequently accompanied by a large retinue of servants. When losses mounted after the first months of the war, rather than promote experienced men up from the ranks, the Rumanian General Staff brought in inexperienced and inadequately trained officers, but of the required social standing. This led to a distinct decline in the level of leadership in Rumanian units after the winter of 1941/42. It was practically unknown, for example, for an officer to lie down beside a common trooper to correct his aim. The bravery of the officer corps could not be criticized, however. Until the debacle of 1944, the German opinion of the Rumanian soldier was generally positive: modest in his needs, resourceful in the field, and capable of tough fighting.

The bulk of the Rumanian Army was used for security purposes in the rear areas. Nevertheless, the Rumanian contingent on the Eastern Front was the largest of Germany's allies, eventually totalling more than 250000 men. Three motorized divisions, and the 3rd and 4th Armies participated in the opening campaign under the control of the German 11th Army. The Rumanians pushed into the southern Ukraine, but by December 1941 had suffered 130000 killed and wounded. As a result, ill-prepared rear area formations were often required to hold the front line during the winter months that followed.

And these losses meant a reduction in unit strength. The typical division in 1942 had two regiments, each with three battalions, plus a recon battalion (equipped with VW jeeps, horses and bicycles), a cavalry squadron, two artillery regiments (three batteries each) and one ATG platoon of six guns (mostly 37mm). From October 1942, the Germans supplied another six 75mm ATGs to each Rumanian division to alleviate the critical lack of anti-tank capability.

The Soviet offensive of November 1942 at Stalingrad was initially concentrated against the Rumanians, which the Russians correctly assessed as the weak link in the enemy line. Nevertheless, the Rumanians fought back bitterly. Three generals were killed at Stalingrad leading bayonet charges! But, outnumbered nine-to-one, the Rumanian forces were overwhelmed. In six weeks, they suffered 173000 casualties. The Royal Rumanian Army never recovered.

The 3rd and 4th Armies were pulled back for home defense; but as the Soviets approached the Rumanian frontier in the summer of 1944, anti-German members of the government, including King Michael himself, were in secret negotiations with the Russians. In August 1944, a coup overthrew the pro-German Antonescu and the Rumanian forces joined the Russians. Some 540000 Rumanians participated in this last phase of the war, seeing action in Transylvania (some bitter fighting with the Hungarians), Slovakia, Austria and Moravia. Casualties were 170000 men killed and wounded.

The Hungarian Army:

Hungary had been among the losers of the First World War, which meant that there were scores to settle in the Second. A previous ally—in the form of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—of Germany, Hungary was one of the first small nations to join the Axis bloc. Hungary annexed Ruthenia and southern Slovakia in October 1939, picked up a piece of Transylvania in 1940, and participated whole-heartedly in the invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941. Thus, the royal government, under the regency of Admiral Horthy, had achieved its aims of regaining all the so-called "lost territories"—but only at the expense of alienating most of its neighbors.

At least one German author has called the Hungarian Army the worst trained, organized and equipped of all the Balkan armies. And this view is not completely without support. Although the Hungarian kingdom looked upon itself as a suc-

cessor to the Austro-Hungarian empire, by the Treaty of Triano (1920) it was virtually stripped of the means to defend itself. The state was allowed a standing army of only 35000 and, like Germany, was not permitted to have tanks, heavy artillery or an air force. The Hungarians got around some of the restrictions through a covert system of conscription, but the country only began to openly re-arm in 1939. Hungary had had close relations with Italy during the 1920s and '30s, and it is not surprising that Italian influence was evident in its armed forces.

The basic field unit was the *dandar*, or light division, similar to the Italian two-regiment division with a first-line regiment and a reserve infantry regiment (each with three battalions). The division also had a two-battalion artillery regiment with 24 guns, a cavalry troop and an AA company. Regimental support weapons consisted of 38 ATR and 40 ATG (mostly 37mm, with some Belgian-made 47mm). Three divisions made up a corps (there were nine in 1939), each of which was to have a motorized infantry battalion attached. These battalions, however, were actually mounted on bicycles. Most of the army was not fully motorized until 1944.

While more or less homogenous at the start of the war, as losses mounted the army became a multi-ethnic force. It included Rumanians from Transylvania, Slovaks, Ukrainians from Ruthenia, Serbs and Hungarians; thus, the army faced all the same old problems of command and organization that had plagued the Imperial Army in 1914.

The most effective force in the Hungarian organization was the Ninth Army; this comprised three light divisions, the "Rapid Corps", two motorized rifle brigades, two mountain brigades and three frontier brigades. The "Rapid Corps" comprised the 1st and 2nd Brigades (each with three motorized infantry battalions, two cyclist battalions, one recon battalion and a motorized artillery group) and the 1st Cavalry Brigade (two cavalry regiments, two cyclist battalions and the 1st Cavalry Motorized Artillery). Transport was mostly horse-drawn or on bicycle, and armored equipment consisted of but 65 Italian Ansaldo tanks and 95 Toldi light tanks (a licenced Swedish model).

Only the elite "Rapid Corps", with the 1st Mountain and 8th Frontier brigades (about 40000) men, participated in the opening attack on the Soviet Union. Hungary had no particular quarrel with Russia, but Horthy felt obligated to support the Germans. In support of the German 17th Army, the unit advanced 1000 kilometers and participated in the battle of the Uman. The German command was generally impressed with the performance of these Hungarian units, but the already-strained relations between the Hungarians and Rumanians only worsened. After Uman, the Germans had to prevent the Hungarians from attacking into the town of Nikolayev because Rumanian units were there. By December, the Hungarians had lost 26000 men, nine out of every ten tanks, and 1000 other vehicles (either due to combat or the Ukrainian mud). The "Rapid Corps" was then withdrawn to refit.

In its place five of the recently created "security" divisions were committed. These were brigade-sized units, of about 6000 men, with two reserve regiments supported by just one battery of artillery and one squadron of cavalry. Grouped under the 8th Corps (which the Hungarians took to calling the "Dead Army"), the force was largely responsible for guarding communications in northeastern Ukrainia against partisans. But sometimes they were committed to the front line (such as the 108th Security Division, which took heavy losses near Kharkov in early 1942). The Hungarian units were not generally implicated in massacres of civilians in the rear areas; indeed, their officers objected to German massacres of Jews and when possible acted to prevent them.

The 2nd Hungarian Army was formed in the spring of 1942 when the Germans requested more troops from their allies; nine light divisions and the newly created 1st Armored Division (with one armored and one motorized infantry regiment, plus three artillery, one ATG, one engineer and one recon battalion). As of October 1942, a recon battalion of cyclists, cavalry and light armor was also attached to each light division in Russia. The armored division had been formed out of the two motorized brigades, and was equipped with 83 LT vz 38s, two Toldis and 22 PzKpfw Is. These AFVs were certainly no match for the T-34s, but the Hungarians later acquired some PzIIIs and PzIVs; and while there was a kernel of experienced cadre, the bulk of the personnel had only eight weeks training. By 1944, Hungarian armored divisions more or less followed the German organization, but these were equipped with Hungarian-made Turan I and II (licensed versions of the Czech LT vz 35 and 38). Eight assault-gun battalions were raised, two equipped with the Hungarian Zrinyi AG and the remainder with StuG IIIs. The 7th Battalion distinguished itself by destroying 67 Russian T-34s at Arad on the Rumanian-Hungarian border in late 1944.

At the end of 1942, the Hungarian contingent in Russia held the front near Voronezh. Manpower shortages were so severe that the average battalion was required to hold a front 3.5 kilometers long. The Soviet offensive of January, crossing the frozen Don, smashed the 2nd Army. Similar to the Rumanians, there was a critical lack of AT guns and weaponry. The Hungarians took some 148000 casualties, and thereafter saw little front-line service. The Hungarians refused to participate in the suppression of the Warsaw uprising in 1944; and in October of that year, the Hungarians signed a provisional cease-fire with the Soviet Union.

The Germans, however, with the lesson of Rumania still before them, launched a coup and put in place a pro-German puppet government. Hungarian forces fought on under German control, seeing action in Vienna, Breslau, Kustrin and on the Oder. After the coup, however, desertion was widespread and there was little will to fight—although considerable resistance was put up against Rumanian units participating in the Russian invasion of Hungary.

Perhaps the most bizarre unit in the Hungarian Army was its parachute force, raised in April 1941 despite the fact that Hungary had no transport aircraft. This company was eventually expanded to a regiment, and in the final stages of the war became the *Szent Laszlo* Parachute Division (1st Para Battalion, 1st and 2nd Elite Infantry Training regiments, 1st and 2nd Armored Training regiments, 1st and 2nd Recon Training regiments, two river defense battalions and an AA battalion). It apparently was only used as conventional infantry, and fought with some distinction until it surrendered to the British in Austria in May 1945.

The Slovakian and Croatian Armies:

In 1939, the people of Slovakia were given the choice of becoming an "independent" state or becoming part of Hungary. The first course was chosen, and exploiting the anti-Czech sentiment there, a small pro-German army was established. In fact, in organization, equipment and personnel, it was virtually a recreation of the disbanded Czechoslovakian Army in miniature.

While only three divisions strong, the Slovak Army initially maintained the high professional standards of the former Czech army. This, in part, was a result of the Slovak practice of rapid rotation of units from the home army to units serving in Russia. (Before mid-1943, these units are best represented as first-line German squads, rather than the Axis Minor ones.) By mid-1943, however, due to heavy losses, morale virtually collapsed. By August 1944, all Slovak combat units (many men had gone over to join the anti-Nazi movement which staged a major uprising), were disarmed and thereafter used as construction troops.

But, throughout the first part of the war, the Slovaks served well. The 1st and 3rd divisions participated in the invasion of Poland, taking back those territories occupied by the Poles in 1938 (which had been Poland's payoff for acquiescence to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia). And the 1st and 2nd (with a mobile brigade each) participated in the opening of *Barbarossa*. In August 1941, the two infantry divisions, which due to their lack of mobility had been largely used for security, were withdrawn and reorganized into the 10000-man "Mobile Division" (the tank battalion was equipped with the Czech LT vz 38, as might be expected) and the 6000-man Security Division. This latter unit served in the Ukraine, while the Mobile Division was virtually destroyed near Krasnodar covering the German retreat from the Caucasus after Stalingrad.

Even before the Germans had completely overrun Yugoslavia, Croatia declared itself independent on 10 April 1941—and promptly aligned herself with the Axis. By 1942, it had raised an army of six divisions, comprising some 46 battalions. There were two types of units: mountain rifle brigades (two regiments and two battalions of artillery) and rifle brigades. Various anti-partisan units were also created, called *Ustashi* battalions, which were later to be attached to regular divisions. Late in the war, the remnants of all these forces were to form one combat-ready division—the Croatian "Storm" Division.

The Bugarian Army:

The Bulgarians were perhaps the most overt in pursuing their own interests, considering that they never did declare war on the Soviet Union. Bulgaria, which owed its independence from the Turks to Russian intervention, was always pro-Russian in sympathy. They even had their own Czar; but also, somehow they always seemed to end up on the side fighting against their fellow Slavs. In 1940, for instance, Germany was the dominant force in the Balkans, and if Bulgaria was to achieve its territorial objectives (she had claims against Greece, Yugoslavia and Rumania), its leaders felt they had to align with Berlin.

Minor Axis Powers:

Nationality	LG	ELR*	SW** LMG	MMG	HMG	LT. MTR	ATR	DC***
Rumania	6	3	7	11	16	8	9	3
Hungary	7	3	9	12	18	10	—	3
Bulgaria	7	2	7	10	16	8	—	3
Slovakia	6	3	6	10	15	8	10	3
Croatia	7	2	8	10	16	—	—	—
Finland	8	4	5	9	13	9	6+	1

*—+1 for elite; −1 for 2nd Line
**—+1 for 2nd Line
***—assault engineer squad (or equivalent)
+—20L ATR

The German opinion of the Bulgarian soldier was generally fair, but the army itself was chronically short of motorized transport. By 1944, the Bulgarian Army had 21 divisions of infantry and two of cavalry, with an armored brigade equipped with German PzKpfw IIIs (hardly a prime combat vehicle at this stage in the war). Bulgarian forces served in an anti-partisan role in those territories annexed from Greece and Yugoslavia. But, during the invasion of Greece, seven combat divisions had been under German command in western Macedonia and in Serbia.

In mid-1944 Czar Boris III died, and by mid-August the Red Army was approaching Bulgaria's borders. The bulk of the population had been, and remained, pro-Russian and it was only a relatively small military clique at the top (who remembered the close Bulgarian-German ties of the First World War) who supported the alliance with Germany. A coup smoothly removed these elements from power and the new government quickly became allied with Russia in September. It was not quite overnight, but the former Royal Guard regiments very rapidly became the "People's Liberation Brigades".

The 1st, 2nd and 4th Bulgarian armies fought alongside the Russians right up to the final days of the war. Their principle task seems to have been to prevent the escape of German units in Greece. There was some hard fighting in all this; the Bulgarians lost 31910 killed, wounded and missing between September 1944 and May 1945.

The Finnish Army:

No account of Germany's allies would be complete without touching on the Finns. A Finnish unit was raised and fought under German command against the Russians in the First World War, and German influence (especially in the military realm) remained strong in the country after it gained its independence in 1918. In 1939, the standard Finnish division had about 15000 men, 250 submachine guns, and 116 machineguns—organized into three infantry regiments (of three battalions each). In support was a weak artillery regiment (36 guns of mixed calibre) and a recon unit comprising a mounted squadron, a motorcycle company and a SMG battalion. The Frontier Guards were the elite of these. And there were five tank companies with a total of 59 Vickers and Renault light tanks. Only the 4th Company of these saw action in the Winter War, however.

In May 1940, the Finnish Army was expanded to 16 divisions, although the 1939 triangular organization was retained. However, each division was given but one regular regiment, while the other two would be added upon mobilization. As well, there was a cavalry brigade (used as ski troops during the winter) which was mechanized, and two Jaeger brigades transported by trucks and bicycles. Each of these brigades had four battalions, and can be considered elite units in terms of *ASL*. Captured Soviet eqipment and supplies from Germany greatly strengthened the AT and field artillery support. Armored forces were also expanded to three battalions, using captured T-26s, T-37s and T-38s. In 1943, the armored forces of Finland were reorganized into an armored division with two tank brigades (with about 150 T-26s), and assault gun brigade (with BT-42s and StuG IIIs), and an attached Jaeger brigade. Finally, it should be noted that a Swedish volunteer battalion fought with the Finns, as did a number of Estonians (3000 of which formed the 200th Infantry Regiment in 1941).

Despite being "comrades in arms", the Finns never made formal alliance with Germany. Prior to and during *Barbarossa*, Mannerheim made it quite clear that the Finnish Army would not advance beyond its original pre-Winter War frontier, although a battalion of Finns served with the SS in the Ukraine between 1942 and 1943 (after which they returned to Finland). The Finns had, by late 1941, attained all they wanted from the war—despite Hitler's promises of turning over Leningrad and the entire Kola peninsula to them after Germany's victory.

The long period of inactivity between late 1941 and the massive Russian offensive that opened on 9 June 1944 apparently had not helped Finnish morale. The army of 1944, although better equipped with artillery and AT guns, was not greatly different from that of 1940. Meanwhile, Soviet forces had much improved. The Finns were caught by surprise and, faced with overwhelming numbers, some reseve units even panicked. The T-26s of the armored division were no match for the 800+ T-34s and assault guns that spearheaded the Soviet drive. Driven back, the Finns eventually stabilized the front, more or less along the 1940 frontier, helped by a German assault gun brigade and emergency supplies of some 9000 panzerfausts and 5000 panzerschrecks. The Russians showed little interest in pushing further into Finland, knowing that the fierce resistance which had halted them would only grow in intensity as they penetrated the hinterland. By the time the two nations agreed to a cease-fire, the Finns had lost some 65000 men killed and wounded in the "Continuation War".

By terms of the agreement, German units were obligated to leave the country as expeditiously as possible. The Finns basically were content to leave the Germans alone, but a foolish German attempt to seize the naval base at Sursaari was vigorously repulsed. Meanwhile, the rather independent Finnish General Siilasvuo, who was "escorting" the German 20th Mountain Corps to Norway, found the Germans were not moving fast enough; the result was a hard fight near the border town of Tornio on the Swedish frontier. With that, Finland's role in the war came to an end, and she set about the task of rebuilding.

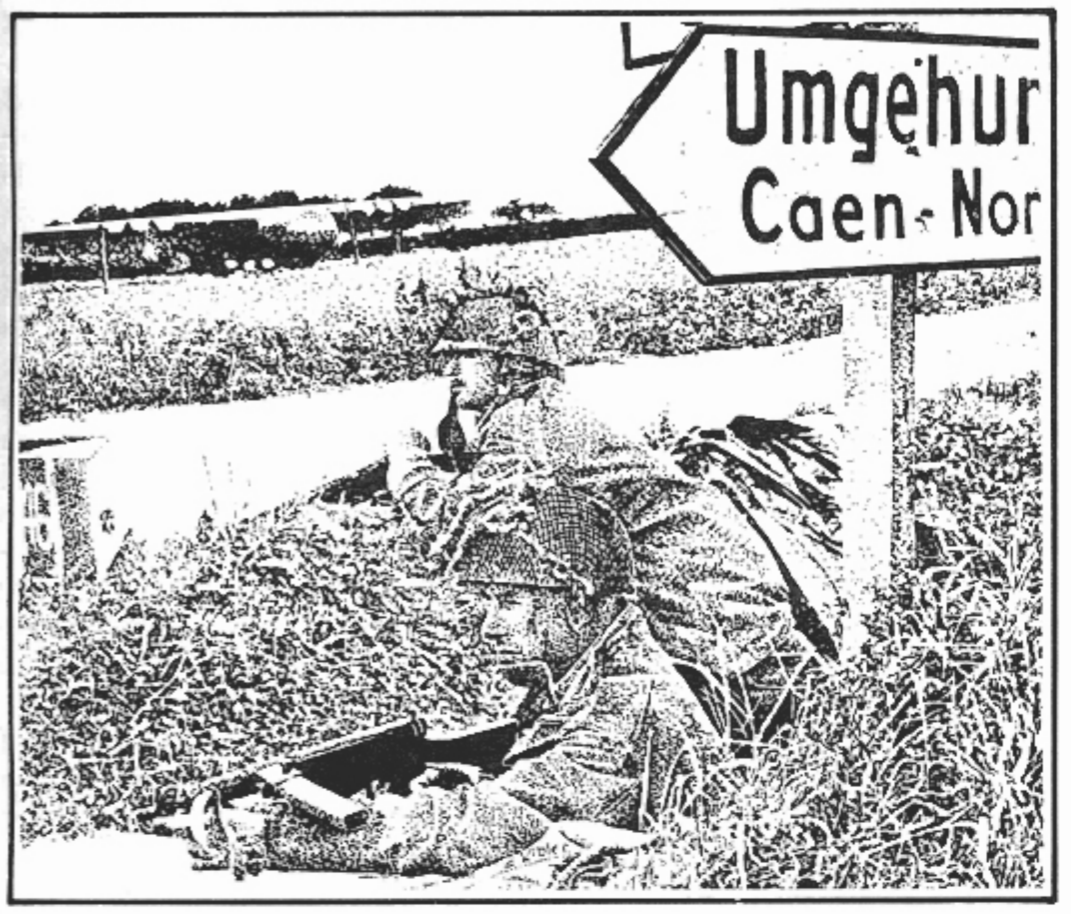


SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING

Titles Listed: 99 **Total Responses: 286**

Rank:	Title	Pub	Rank Times Last Time	On List	Freq. Ratio
1.	Advanced SL	AH	1	24	5.4
2.	TP: Stalingrad	AH	5	5	4.2
3.	Third Reich	AH	3	4	2.5
4.	Diplomacy	AH	8	25	2.3
5.	Civilization	AH	4	4	2.2
6.	Red Barricades	AH	—	1	2.1
7.	Squad Leader	AH	16	53	1.9
8.	Panzer Leader	AH	—	1	1.8
9.	Air Force	AH	7	2	1.6
10.	Afrika Korps	AH	—	1	1.5
11.	Russian Campaign	AH	15	2	1.5
12.	Up Front	AH	14	11	1.4
13.	MBT	AH	—	1	1.3
14.	Gettysburg '88	AH	13	6	1.2
15.	PanzerBlitz	AH	—	1	1.2
16.	B-17	AH	—	1	1.1
17.	Magic Realm	AH	18	2	1.1
18.	VITP	AH	11	2	1.0
19.	War & Peace	AH	—	1	1.0
20.	WS&IM	AH	6	2	1.0

Despite the paucity of the imput from our readership (due, no doubt, to the pace of publication of the periodical), the voting seemed more concentrated this time. A number of venerable favorites *(AFRIKA KORPS, B-17, PANZERBLITZ, PANZER LEADER, WAR & PEACE)* return to the listing. A couple of new "hits" *(RED BARRICADES* and *MBT)* also make their presence felt. *TURNING POINT: STALINGRAD*, which had already made a strong showing, jumped up in this informal "popularity poll"—due to the recent coverage in these pages. I suspect that it, and several other 1989/90 releases, will continue to compete with the "classics" for space on wargaming tables, and continue to appear here frequently.



RED DEVILS

Reference Notes for ASL

By Steven C. Swann

In April 1940, German forces launched a combined air- and seaborne invasion of Norway, involving the first combat use of air-dropped and air-landed infantry in World War II. Oslo, the capital, was taken by air-landing infantry coming down under fire at the Fornebu airfield. The 3rd Company of Fallschirmjager Regiment 1 made a successful drop at Stavanger and, with the assistance of follow-up air-landed troops of the 193rd Infantry Regiment, overcame the small Norwegian garrison. On the same day, the 4th Company made its first drop at the Vordingborg Bridge which connects the islands of Falster and Zeeland in Denmark; the capture of this bridge made possible the quick capture of Copenhagen by sea-landed troops.

On 10 May, two great moments in history occurred. In the early morning hours, Germany unleashed its *blitzkreig* against France and the Low Countries. Figuring prominently in the offensive were a series of paradrops and air-landing operations—most famous the airborne assault on Eban-Emael. A few hours after the fall of that fortress, the second great moment occurred across the English Channel, when Winston Churchill became Britain's wartime Prime Minister. Indomitable in his resolve, Churchill intended to challenge Nazi Germany and even carry the war to that "evil empire" despite Britain's isolation and limited resources. In July, Churchill authorized the formation of the British Combined Operations Command, instrumental in initiating commando-type raids against the German-occupied continent. The new command promptly commenced plans, at the prodding of Churchill, for creation of parachute units. From this humble beginning, the infamous *Roten Teufeln* (as the Germans came to label them) arose.

The concept of using parachutes was not new to the British; their military pilots had been using them since 1918. The parachuting of supplies to ground troops was in widespread use by 1917 on the Western Front. The first British air-landing of infantry was made in 1923 in Iraq. And in 1936, the British Army had observers at the Minsk wargames conducted by the Soviet Army. Here they witnessed the first mass air-drop of some 1500 troops (and even a three-ton tank) under combat conditions. But the British were not impressed, and their observers concluded that there was no real military use for airborne forces.

Yet the idea of dropping raiding parties behind German lines appealed to the imaginative Churchill. So, on 9 July 1940, the first British troops began training as parachutists, even as the design and development of their specialized equipment was in its initial stages. The first to attend the "parachute school" were B and C Troops of No. 2 Commando. Their first live jump was made from a Whitley bomber four days after they began training—on 13 July. These first jumps were made from bombers in which the tail gun was removed and a narrow jump ramp installed in the rear; but this proved so cramped that the equipment-laden men could hardly move and the procedure too slow to provide a tight drop pattern. So, as an experiment, a hole was cut in the floor of the fuselage and the troops ordered to drop out of this vertically. The design allowed a ten-man stick (one bomber load) to exit in just over ten seconds, and was adopted; the floor-exit method would be used in all British-built transport aircraft afterward. (Although, after they obtained some US-built Dakotas, some British units jumped from the side-door like their American counterparts.)

Training continued through the summer until a student died when his chute failed to open. At this point, all actual jump training was suspended until a new harness was developed to provide better assurance that the chute would actually open. Experiments also saw the use of "static lines" initiated as the standard method when training resumed. By the end of August, all men of No. 2 Commando were jump-certified (except for the 15 too injured to carry on).

British jump training was rigorous. The course began with two weeks of physical endurance exercises for all ranks. Only if a man could endure this would he be posted to the jump school at Ringway, which course also was two weeks long and consisted mostly of live jumps under various conditions. There was but one sure way of failing the course, and that was to refuse to jump—even one time. Before receiving his wings, a trooper could decline them and be posted back to his unit; but after receiving the wings, any refusal to jump was an offense subject to court-martial. Soldiers from many of the European Allies would pass through Ringway, including contingents from Czechoslovakia, Poland (enough, in fact, to form the 1st Polish Parachute Brigade), Norway, France, Belgium, Holland and even some German refugees.

With the first awarding of jump wings, the fledgling formation was formally organized into the Central Landing Establishment with three elements: the Parachute Squadron, a Glider Squadron, and a Technical Development Unit. The Glider unit began its work from scratch (there was not a single glider in all Britain at this time) in August. Because the RAF, under heavy strain during the "Battle of Britain", needed every plane and had few available for air-landing or supplying troops, the use of gliders offered an inexpensive, practical solution. It was a tactical procedure in which the British would become proficient, even after circumstances allowed greater use of aircraft in their airborne operations.

The Technical Development Unit leaped into its job as well. All equipment that was necessary had to be designed and produced by the British themselves. Literally everything was devised from the ground up. Innovation and adaptation were the order of the day. The helmets were copies of captured German ones; old bomb casings were used as containers to drop the heavy weapons. Special valises were designed that would carry the rifles and LMGs of the paratroopers, to be attached by an ankle strap that would allow the weapons to be near at hand when he landed. The Sten SMG was modified to be carried inside the chest straps of the re-designed harness. Large pockets were added to the smocks so that pistols and magazines could be placed for immediate use.

On 21 November, the Parachute and Glider squadrons lost their separate identities when they were reformed as the No. 11 SAS (Special Air Service) Battalion. *[Not to be confused with the "Detachment L, SAS" of Captain David Sterling, which gained fame in the desert fighting of North Africa.]* In late January 1941, volunteers were requested for the first planned British raid behind enemy lines. Even though every man of the unit volunteered, only 50 were selected for what was to be the first British airborne attack. The men selected, formed into "X Troop", left England on 7 February for Malta, first stop on their historic journey.

On 10 February, X Troop, No. 11 SAS were in planes on the final approach flight to Italy for Operation Colossus, a raid to destroy the Tragino Aqueduct south of Salerno. Five of the planes made a perfect drop of their cargo, but the sixth dropped its parachutists in a nearby valley. After some time spent linking up, at a half-hour after midnight the explosives were set off. The destruction of the aqueduct was complete. The raiders now began a fifty-mile march to the west coast for rendezvous with a British submarine. But fate was not to let these pioneers see England until after the war. Just a few miles from their pick-up point on the coast, the group was captured by Italian policemen. Yet, despite the loss of the entire force, as a first raid the operation was thought to be a great success by the British High Command and Churchill.

On 20 May 1941, the final stage of evolution of the "Red Devils" began. On this date, the German Fliegerdivision 7 made its bloody invasion of Crete, eventually defeating a larger force. On May 27th, Churchill ordered the creation of British airborne

divisions modeled on the German organization. It is ironic that the same air assault which convinced Hitler that there was no further practical use for parachute forces provided the incentive to Churchill and the British Army to greatly expand theirs.

Meanwhile, by this point the Technical Development Branch had two glider designs ready to be put into production. The first, known as the Horsa, was a 25-seat glider with a total cargo capacity of three tons. The second, and larger, was the Hamilcar, with a seating capacity of 40 and a payload of seven tons; the Hamilcar was specifically designed to carry vehicles, ordnance, and even light tanks into combat.

In September 1941, No. 11 SAS formally became the 1st Parachute Brigade. The parachute brigades which would follow adopted the standard British Army organization as much as possible. Each consisted of three parachute battalions per brigade, a battalion being made up of 600-800 men. Most parachute battalions had three companies, plus a headquarters company; a few had a fourth company. Their weaponry was composed of light arms, the heaviest squad weapon being the 3" mortar. Glider companies occasionally had a few medium machine-guns, depending on the planned operation.

In October, the raising of the 1st Airborne Division was authorized, using the 1st Parachute Brigade as a core. It was to have two parachute brigades and a glider-borne Air-Landing (A/L) Brigade, as well as support elements (also using gliders). Divisional manpower would eventually stand at 12148 men and officers. Units for the glider brigade were not volunteers, but line battalions that were selected for glider training. (As such, their organization would remain almost the same as when they were line formations.) A reconnaissance company and an AT troop was added to fill out the brigade. This 1st A/L Brigade would be composed of the 1st battalion of the Border Regiment, 2nd battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment, 2nd battalion of the Oxford and Bucks, and the 1st battalion of the Royal Ulster Rifles. (Throughout, British military designations are used, so it may be helpful to any reader not familiar with these to review the section on British terms found on Page H49 of the *ASL* rulebook.)

At the same time these battalions were being trained, a call went out for volunteers to be glider pilots. It should be noted that British glider pilots were drawn from the ranks of the army instead of the air force, as common with other nations. A British glider pilot was expected to function as an infantryman when not flying the glider, and would fight as part of the unit he was transporting after landing. Once the area was secured, he would join with other surviving pilots to form the "Glider Pilots" regiment. By the end of 1941, the first Glider Pilot regiment was an official part of the Royal Army Air Corps.

The artillery component of a British airborne division was composed of a light A/L Artillery Regiment, made up of three troops of 75mm pack howitzers. Each troop was assigned six of these American-made guns and a complement of Jeeps for towing. The artillery component also included two AT troops (using the British six-pounder) and a single AA troop (20mm or 40mm light AA guns). The airborne divisional recon regiment was allocated by squadron to each brigade. These squadrons had jeeps, motorcycles, and a few seven-ton Tetrarch tanks. (Thoughts on the latter were mixed. The 6th Airborne took its AFVs into combat in both Operation Overlord and Operation Varsity; at Arnhem, the 1st Airborne did not.)

A squadron of Royal Engineers was assigned to each parachute brigade; a glider brigade had an attached Engineer company. Each brigade also carried a Field Ambulance unit of nine officers and about 100 enlisted, although a glider-borne brigade's was slightly larger and included motor vehicles. All other components of the division were to be glider capable, to be transported in behind the advancing line units.

Following the success of X Troop in Italy, another raid was quickly planned to take advantage of the unique capabilities of the paratroops. Near Bruneval in France the Germans had established the latest in their radar stations, using the new "Wurzburg" equipment. British scientists were eager to examine the workings of this system, and Lord Mountbatten decided to oblige. He determined that a company of parachutists, landed inland, would be best capable of performing this mission. They were to be assisted by a Royal Navy boat party for pick-up, with a small commando unit to provide beach support. The unit selected for the drop was C Company, 2nd Parachute Battalion; they came down in France on the night of 27 February 1942. Even though they made a scattered drop, the paratroopers were able to capture and disassemble portions of the radar equipment. Coming under heavy fire from German reinforcements, the paras began their retreat to the beach with the booty. By 0215, they were awaiting their sea transport, but it was running late due to a heavy fog. After suffering some casualties from plunging fire from the cliff tops above, their ride finally arrived. Under cover of fire from the commandos, the paratroopers embarked. By dawn, all were safely at sea on their way home.

The following month, a massive effort to expand the British airborne arm began. The training schools started to take entire battalions into the training schedule at one time. Many of these brought their own time-honored traditions with them. For example, the Camerons, who formed the 5th (Scottish) Parachute Battalion, were able to convince authorities to allow their bagpipers to remain with them on their jumps. In July 1942, the 2nd Parachute Brigade was able to form. And in mid-'42, General Browning gave the airborne its own tradition when he selected a red beret as the official headgear for all airborne personnel. The winged horse Pegasus, with Bellerphon mounted, was chosen as the shoulder patch.

As autumn approached, the officers of the 1st Parachute Brigade of the 1st Airborne Division were ordered to complete their training and prepare their men for combat in the desert. Operation Torch, the allied invasion of western North Africa, occurred on 8 November. Elements of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade left England by air transport on 9 November, en route for Algiers. This advance party included two companies, the HQ company and a mortar platoon. (The remaining units of the 1st Brigade were transported to Africa by ship.) On 12 November, this small contingent of 360 were dropped over the airfield near Bone in Algeria. But both the German and Allied commands wanted the strategic airfield, and both had planned to seize the field by airdrop. The troopers of the 3rd Battalion actually arrived over the place a few minutes before the German Fallschirmjagers in their Junkers. Seeing that the British had beaten them to the jump and realizing that this would give the enemy time to organize a defense, the German commander wisely decided that it was too late for them to make the attempt and aborted the mission. If both had arrived at the same time, then the world's first (and only) in-air battle between paratroops might have occurred. The rest of the 1st Parachute Brigade landed in Algiers on the 12th and moved to the front on foot.

Meanwhile, on 17 November, a glider-borne assault was launched aimed at the Norsk Hydro plant in Norway. For this mission, the men were selected from parachute engineers of the 9th Field Company and 261st Field Park Company. Their mission was to destroy the plant near Vemork, where the Germans were collecting "heavy water", which could be used in the production of a then-theoretical atomic bomb. But unlike the earlier raid in Italy, this one failed. And whereas the Italians imprisoned the captured paratroopers, the Germans executed all the raiders.

After their relief at the Bone airfield, the 3rd Battalion rejoined the rest of the 1st Parachute Brigade at Maison Blanche in Algeria. On 16 November, the 1st Battalion was to make its first jump, to capture the road junction and airfield at Beja. The area was occupied by French colonial Senegalese, who were so impressed with the British paratroopers that the raid was a bloodless coup; indeed, the Senegalese agreed to cooperate with the British battalion. On the night of the 23rd, a joint attack by paratroopers and Senegalese was carried out on an Italian laager near Gue Hill. Finding no tanks as expected, the attackers continued on, coming upon a mixed German-Italian MG unit. In the confused charge and resulting hand-to-hand combat, the British and French units carried the hill, capturing or killing all the defenders.

Finally, on 29 November, after the successes of its two brother battalions, the 2nd was slated to make its first combat jump near a small village known as Pont-du-Fahs in Tunisia. Their objective was to seize an airfield near Depienne before the autumn rains turned the countryside to mud. Finding the airfield abandoned, the 2nd Battalion marched on through the night and neared the Oudna airfield just outside Tunis. It appeared that the British paratroopers had won the race for Tunis, but their viewpoint was limited. Unknown to them, the Axis had launched its own offensive and succeeded in pushing back elements of the British 1st Army. Now the paratroopers were cut-off over fifty miles from the nearest friendly unit.

Withdrawing, fighting, ambushing pursuers, and withdrawing again, the 2nd Parachute Battalion fought its way westward toward the Allied lines. Moving in small parties, and leaving the wounded behind, the British slowly made their way. Finally, beginning on 3 December, the remaining troops reached American lines around Medjez el Dab. Only 180 paratroopers (less than 25% of the battalion) had survived to rejoin the brigade.

For the rest of the action in North Africa, the 1st Parachute Brigade was destined to fight as regular infantry. It was in the Bou Arada sector that their heroic actions earned the British paratroopers the German nickname "Red Devils". In April, the 2nd Parachute Brigade and the 1st A/L Brigade joined the 1st Para Brigade, bringing the entire 1st Division together again—although two of the glider battalions had been left in England to help form the 6th Airborne Division. A few weeks later, the 1st Airborne was strengthened with the addition of the 4th Parachute Brigade, which had received its training in Egypt. A polyglot unit, some of the men in the 4th had fought at El Alamein with the "Desert Rats", some were from the 156th Para Battalion that had trained in India, and some had served with the 50th Indian Parachute Brigade in Burma. By the end of the campaign in North Africa, some 1700 paratroopers of the 1st Airborne Division had been killed, wounded or captured.

The next mission assigned the airborne troops was part of Operation Husky, the Allied invasion of Sicily. Here at last they were to lead the effort and be the first troops ashore. Elements of the US 82nd Airborne were to parachute west of the British forces near Gela, while the 1st British A/L Brigade would make a glider assault on the Ponte Grande bridge which commanded the approaches to Syracuse. Even as the former 2nd South Staffords moved to secure the bridge and consolidate its defenses, the 1st Battalion was to make a diversionary attack on the city itself.

The run-in to the target was a disaster. Poor visibility from the quarter-moon and high dust raised by the wind caused most of the inexperienced glider pilots to release from their tugs too early. Of the 145 gliders that left the African airfields, only 52

of them made landfall over Sicily, and they so scattered that only 12 landed anywhere near the Landing Zones (LZ). At the Ponte Grande bridge, only one glider with 14 men of the South Staffords landed to make the assault. Surprisingly, they captured it and disarmed demolition charges. As the night wore on, more of the glider troops were able to make their way to the position and add to the defense. By morning, there were seven officers and 80 other ranks manning the bridge's defensive works. For most of the day (*Scenario 53*), these few withstood the constant artillery shelling and sporadic counter-attacks. At approximately 1500 hours, with only 15 unwounded and low on ammunition, their positions were overrun by superior German forces. But the sacrifice had not been in vain. At 1530, leading elements of the advancing British 17th Infantry Brigade recaptured the bridge before the enemy could destroy it.

With the Allies firmly planted ashore, the 1st Airborne was prepared for a second attack, this time by the 1st Parachute Brigade. Between Syracuse and Catania the coast road runs across a wide plain. At the north end of this plain the road crosses the river Simeto at Primosole Bridge just a few miles from Catania. Here the 1st Para Brigade was to be dropped to capture the bridge and three hills south of it. On 13 July 1943, the battalions boarded their Dakotas in Africa for the flight across the sea. After passing Malta, as they approached the Sicilian coast, the AA guns of the massed Allied invasion fleet opened fire on the 116 aircraft, thinking them enemy bombers. Two were shot down and nine so damaged they turned back. The mistake broke up the air formations just as they were crossing the coastline. And the German and Italian gunners had their chance to add to the carnage. Another 37 transports were shot down and ten more forced to turn back. After all this, the pilots were in a state of total confusion, and the paratroopers were ordered out all across the countryside. Of the 1900 men of the 1st Parachute Brigade, less than 260 ever reached the site of the bridge.

And there, there were other devils awaiting the Red Devils—the 1400 ''Green Devils'' of Fallschirmjager Regiment 3, also dropping at the bridge. Here on the plains of Sicily was the first battle ever fought between two opposing elite parachute formations dropping into battle. Initially, the British captured the lightly defended bridge and set up their defenses (three AT guns, two 3″ mortars, some LMGs and a MMG). The Germans, reinforced by tanks and SP guns, attacked the bridge at dawn and forced the British back to the south. Meanwhile, some isolated British paratroopers had made contact with the British 4th Armoured, rushing to support the men at the bridge. For the next two days, the German paratroop regiment halted the British advance along the coast by holding the bridge at Primosole; it was only after the British committed divisional forces with overwhelming support that the Germans were forced to retreat.

As in Africa, for the rest of the Sicily operations the British airborne would operate as line infantry. During the course of the campaign, the 1st Airborne lost 454 dead, 240 wounded and 102 missing (the ratio of two dead for each wounded indicates the nature of the operations they undertook). At the end of August, the entire 1st Airborne Division was concentrated in Africa again for rest, refit and training. The invasion of mainland Italy was approaching, and the commanders of the division expected jump orders—but in vain.

On 3 September 1943, two divisions—the Canadian 1st and the British 5th—landed near Reggio. The American 5th Army, made up of both American and British formations, went ashore on the beaches of the Gulf of Salerno on the 9th. That same day, the 1st Airborne arrived by ship in the harbor of Taranto. The only casualties suffered by the division in the invasion of Italy was to the 6th Parachute (Royal Welch) Battalion when their ship hit a mine.

Moving up from the toe of the boot, the soldiers of the 1st Airborne Division were destined to fight as regular infantry for most of their brief stay in Italy. In November, the 1st and 4th Parachute Brigades and the 1st A/L Brigade were pulled from the line and shipped back to England. At this same time, the 2nd Parachute Brigade was given independent status and *supposedly* placed in a stand-by condition ready to undertake any airborne missions that might arise.

In fact, the 2nd Parachute Brigade (the 4th, 5th and 6th battalions) was assigned to the 2nd New Zealand Division under General Freyberg (of Crete fame). With the New Zealanders, the 2nd Para Brigade would spend all their combat time in Italy as ''foot sloggers''. Only one small combat jump was conducted. Three officers and 57 men made a raid behind German lines in 1 June 1944. Their objective was to block the German supply line between Rome and a portion of the Gothic Line. This they did successfully for over a week. At the end of June, the 2nd was assigned to the 1st Airborne Task Force, a composite unit made up of American and British paratroopers and U.S. glider infantry. It was to be responsible for the air assault portion of Operation Dragoon, the invasion of southern France.

While the men of the 1st Airborne Division were seasoned in Africa and Italy, another airborne division was being formed in England—the 6th Airborne. On 3 May 1943, the orders were issued that created the new airborne division under the command of Major-General Richard Gale. This division was to receive contingents from across the world-wide empire (including the entire 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion). The artillery of the 6th was equipped with American 75mm pack howitzers, and the recon elements were given MG-armed jeeps.

Fully a year before the operation, the units of the 6th Airborne began their training for specific D-Day objectives. In some of the more desolate areas of Scotland the men practiced and trained for Operation Pegasus, the seizure of the bridges over the River Orne and the Caen Canal on the eastern flank of what was to be Sword Beach. Their mission: to secure and protect the flank of the British 3rd Division and to prevent German reinforcements from arriving from the east.

Together, the two British airborne divisions made up the British 1st Airborne Corps. While similar, there were some small differences in structure, but these were mostly in the support services. One philosophical difference between their commanders is worth noting—while the 6th Airborne would carry its few tanks into combat in gliders, the 1st did not. Independent companies were formed in both divisions; known as ''Pathfinders'', their job was to drop first, and then use lights and radios to guide the combat paratroopers and gliders to the landing sites. After the near disastrous jumps in Sicily, the need for such was plain.

In the early minutes of 6 June 1944, the men of the 6th Airborne Division came down in the Normandy region of France. Their orders were to seize the bridges and coastal guns emplaced from Ouistreham, all along the River Orne and Caen Canal, to the city of Caen. In this 24-mile square area over 10000 British airborne troops would land, fight and suffer for the next 13 weeks. The area was also the junction point of the German 7th and 15th Armies. The brigades of the 6th Airborne were organized into three combat groups, with the following breakdown on D-Day:

Divisional Troops: Recce Regiment, 53rd A/L Light Artillery Regiment, 249th Royal Engineer Field Company, and Divisional HQ

Pathfinders: 22nd Independent Parachute Company

3rd Parachute Brigade: 8th and 9th Parachute Battalions, 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, 211th A/L Light Artillery Troop, 3rd A/L AT Troop, 3rd Para Squadron Royal Engineers, and 224th Para Field Ambulance

5th Parachute Brigade: 7th and 12th and 13th Parachute Battalions, 212th A/L Light Artillery Troop, 4th A/L AT Troop, 591st Para Squadron Royal Engineers, and 225th Para Field Ambulance

6th Air-Landing Brigade: 1st Bn. Royal Ulster Rifles, 2nd Bn. Oxfords & Bucks, 12th Bn. Devrons, 2nd A/L Light AA Troop, and 195th A/L Field Ambulance

Coup-de-Main: two platoons from Companies B and D, 2nd Oxford & Bucks, along with a detachment from 249th Royal Engineer Field Company

The 5th Brigade was assigned the task of taking all the bridges over the Caen Canal and the River Orne at Benouville and Ranville, and along the River Dives. The special volunteer Coup-de-Main party was to land even before the paratroopers, able to fight within seconds of touching down. Capturing key bridges, these men had the honor of being the first Allied soldiers to fight the enemy as part of ''Overlord'' (the bridge over the canal would later be renamed ''Pegasus Bridge'' in their honor; *see Scenario G11 on this issue's insert*). Parachute formations were dropped east of this party to provide cover. The 7th Para Battalion moved towards the bridges as soon as their equipment was gathered to bolter the defense. Meanwhile, the 12th Para Battalion occupied the village of Le Bas de Ranville and surrounding areas; the 13th came down under heavy mortar fire, and finally cleared all German defenders from Ranville itself. Some of the paratroopers were landed in open fields nearby and began clearing them of obstacles for the impeding arrival of the gliders. Later that night, the glider troops of the 6th A/L Brigade landed near Ranville as reinforcements. A second wave of gliders brought in the heavier equipment of the division.

The 3rd Brigade had objectives nearer the coast, between Ranville and Ouistreham. Here a battery of coastal guns (the Merville Battery) was thought to have heavy-caliber weapons that could play havoc with the landings on Sword. The area also had three major roads and a railroad that had to be blocked. The 9th Para Battalion drew the assignment of neutralizing the Merville Battery, but after suffering heavy casualties found that the guns had not been installed. The 1st Canadian Para battalion landed near Varaville and commenced setting up defenses following the natural line of a swamp. The 8th Para dropped to attack the three bridges over the Dives near Bures and Troarn. Because they were widely scattered, only small groups were able to attack in the first minutes, but all the objectives were taken.

Around 1300 hours, the weary glider and paratroops at Benouville were relieved by No. 1 Commando, five hours before regular troops could reach them. That afternoon the rest of the division's heavy equipment landed by glider (including the tanks and carriers of the Recce Regiment). Even though the 6th Airborne Division was supposed to replaced by line units soon after D-Day, it was 13 weeks later that the men were all finally out of the battle. The British airborne had done such a fine job, that Montgomery insisted on keeping them in their defensive positions so he could use the extra infantry in his attacks to take Caen. During this three-month period, the only relief for the airborne troopers came from small Commando formations, the Belgian and Dutch infantry brigades, and elements of the 52nd (Lowland) Division which arrived by ship.

For the rest of its time in France, the 6th Airborne fought its way along the coast towards the Seine. For much of this time, it operated in conjunction with the 1st and 4th Commando brigades,

Dutch and Belgian units equipped by the British, and French Forces of the Interior (FFI). In September, the 6th Airborne was returned to England for rest, refit and re-training. Casualties for its stay in France amounted to 821 KIA, 2709 WIA and 927 MIA.

While the 6th was fighting in Normandy, the British 2nd Parachute Brigade also arrived in France. In August, the 1st Airborne Task Force formed in Italy made its air assault on southern France as part of Operation Dragoon. The 2nd Brigade's job was to drop in and capture the village of Le Muy behind the southern coast to block German reinforcements. Here, as before, the paratroopers were scattered across 20 miles of countryside. By the time the brigade had been gathered, it was the afternoon of the invasion. Finally, with the assistance of the U.S. 550th Glider Infantry, the assault on the village was carried out. As soon as the invasion forces were firmly ashore, the 2nd Parachute Brigade was withdrawn to Italy.

Operation Market-Garden was next on Montgomery's agenda. This air attack on Arnhem, in Holland, was supposed to anchor the far end of an ambitious ground attack that would open a path into Germany itself. The operation, its successes by the American paratroopers and disaster that befell the British, has been the subject of countless books and games, and there is no need to cover it in detail here. In summation, it can be said that SHAEF planned too much, based on too little information, and discounted what they did have. The Allied airlift capacity was not enough to deliver all the troops at one time, and this cost them the element of surprise and made them dependent on the weather. Finally, there was but one road that led to Arnhem, and this meant that an entire British Corps destined to relieve the paratroopers would be attacking on a one-tank front. Suffice to say that this action saw the 1st Airborne Division almost completely destroyed while under constant attack for nine days. (For scenario designers looking to recreate this in terms of *ASL*, Cornelis Bauer's *The Battle of Arnhem* is recommended reading.)

It was during this debacle that the 4th Parachute Brigade would lose over 80% of its manpower. What few of the 4th Brigade made it back to Allied lines were merged with the 1st Parachute Brigade, and the 4th was relegated to history. For the rest of the war, the 1st Airborne Division had only two brigades—the 1st Parachute and the 1st Air-Landing.

The last combat jump (Operation Manna) for the 2nd Parachute Brigade occurred on 12 October 1944 over the Megara Airfield near Athens in Greece. The 4th Para Battalion made the initial drop, closely followed by the 5th and 6th battalions. Here German units were being rapidly withdrawn north to fight the Russians encroaching into Germany. The British 2nd Brigade, along with the 23th Armoured Brigade, took up pursuit of the Germans through Thrace, Salonika and to the Bulgarian border. But the communal riots and partisan fighting between rival political groups were slowly plunging Greece into civil war. At first, the British were able to avoid it; but as the warfare grew in intensity and relations with the Soviet Union were strained, the British brigades were orderd to destroy the Greek Communist Party and drive it from Athens. After four weeks of intense street fighting, the 2nd Paras were able to report success in this in early January 1945. On 31 August, after being returned to England in June, the brigade was officially disbanded.

Finally, Operation Varsity was the Anglo-American air assault across the Rhine, carried out by the British 6th Airborne and U.S. 17th Airborne divisions. Unlike earlier operations, the massed drop was to take place after the ground forces had opened their attack. The airborne troops were to capture and defend the high ground east of the Rhine,

TABLE 1: Table of Organization—British Parachute Infantry Battalion

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
HQ Company	304	
Battalion HQ	64	10-2 SMC 8-0 SMC
Inf Platoon	55	4×6-4-8 MMC 3-2-8 HS LMG ATR (pre-1944) *or* PIAT (post-1943)
Engineer Platoon*	62	9-1 SMC 5×4-5-8 MMC 5×DC FT (1945 only)
Mortar Platoon (A/L)	64	4×2-2-8 Crew 4×3″ MTR
Transport Platoon*	59	5×2-4-8 HS 5×IP Carriers Staff Car for CO
Medical Detachment		*No Equivalent*
3 Parachute Cos. (each)	125	
HQ Section	17	9-1 SMC 8-0 SMC 6-4-8 MMC
3 Platoons	36	
Platoon HQ	1	ATR (pre-1944) *or* PIAT (post-1943)
Mortar Section	5	2-2-8 Crew 3″ MTR
3 Sections	10	3×6-4-8 MMC LMG 2″ Airborne MTR

*—Attached from Brigade

TABLE 2: Table of Organization—British Glider Infantry Battalion

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
HQ Company	332	
Battalion HQ	64	10-2 SMC 8-0 SMC
Inf Platoon	55	4×4-5-8 MMC 2-4-8 HS MMG ATR (pre-1944) *or* PIAT (post-1943)
Engineer Platoon*	62	5×4-5-8 MMC 5×DC FT (1045 only)
Artillery Platoon	64	3×2-2-8 Crew 3×75mm Pack Howitzer 3×Jeep (U.S.)
Transport Platoon*	59	5×2-4-8 HS 5×IP Carriers Staff Car for CO
Medical Platoon		*No Equivalent*
3 Glider Cos. (each)	161	
HQ Section	17	9-1 SMC 2×8-0 SMC 4-5-8 MMC
3 Platoons	36	
Platoon HQ	1	ATR (pre-1944) *or* PIAT (post-1943)
Mortar Section	5	2-2-8 Crew 3″ MTR
3 Section	10	3×4-5-8 MMC LMG 2″ Airborne MTR

TABLE 3: Standard ASL British Airborne Company OB

The following would be the *ASL* composition of a single Parachute/Glider company. For actions involving three or more companies, add both battalion-level SMC. Use this organization for Indian, Gurhka, Polish and Canadian companies as well. As a final matter of interest, the BPV for a Parachute Company would be 148; for a Glider Company, 177.

Parachute:	*Air-Landing:*
9-1 SMC	9-1 SMC
8-0 SMC	2×8-0 SMC
10×6-4-8 MMC	13×4-5-8 MMC
2×LMG	3×LMG
2×2″ Airborne MTR	3×2″ Airborne MTR
2×ATR *or* PIAT	3×ATR *or* PIAT
2-2-8 Crew	2-2-8 Crew
3″ MTR	3″ MTR

occupying the extensive woods there. In a single airlift on 23rd March, over 21 thousand airborne troops descended on the Germans between the Rhine and Issel rivers. The British troops covered the northern part of the Diersfordter Wald between Rees and Hamminkeln. The 3rd Para Brigade dropped west of the woods to cover the rear of the 5th Para and 6th A/L brigades. The 5th dropped in the center astride the highway running north of the forest, blocking it completely. The 6th A/L Brigade came down east of the forest, advancing into the city of Hamminkeln and across the River Issel. In this last airborne operation of the war, the Red Devils suffered 347 killed and 731 wounded.

The 6th Airborne was now reinforced with independent tank and artillery formations. From Hamminkeln, it moved northeastward along the German coast to the Baltic, fighting as regular infantry. In the small Baltic town of Wismar, men of the 6th Airborne were on hand to effect the link-up with the Red Army troops approaching from the east. On this 2nd day of May 1945, the war was over for the 6th Airborne Division.

On 10 May, after recuperating from the beating suffered at Arnhem, the 1st Airborne Division was posted to Norway. Here it was to assist in the round-up and disarming of German units. On 24 August, the 1st Airborne was returned to England and was disbanded two months later.

Fitting the Red Devils into ASL

A fairly typical British airborne division would number about 12148 officers and other ranks. Each division would include a headquarters unit, some divisional artillery, a recce regiment, two parachute brigades and an air-landing brigade. The divisional artillery would have a glider-borne light artillery regiment of three troops of US-made 75mm pack howitzers. Also included would be two AT troops and an AA troop to provide protection for the division. Support and supply service units were standardized along the lines of regular British infantry divisions. With but small adjustments, this TO description can be used to represent the British airborne forces from 1942 through the war to 1946.

While the airborne artillery were initially assigned a British-made gun, it did not last long. The US 75mm pack howitzer proved to be just right for quick-support for the airborne troopers. By the time the 1st Para Brigade went into combat, all the artillery units were equipped with the American gun. These were issued nine to each divisional artillery troop. In a battalion, there would be three 75mm pack howitzers (M1A1—see US Ordnance Note #12) in an artillery platoon.

The AT troops assigned to each brigade would be best represented by six OQF 6-Pounder 57L guns (British Ordnance Note #6), six unarmed carriers for towing, and four carriers with HS as a security section. The "security" carriers would include two with mortars (Note #71) for illumination at night, one with an ATR (Note #70) for AT defense, and a fourth with LMG. In 1945, the AT troop was reduced to four 6-pounder guns per troop.

The division AA troops were of two types. The 20mm AA Troop would have eight guns (Note #20) towed by jeeps. These units were designed to be transportable by glider, following the troops down in a subsequent landing to provide immediate AA protection. The divisional 40mm AA Troop consisted of four guns (Note #21), towed by unarmed carriers, and followed the division in its land supply train.

The Recce Regiment of an airborne division consisted of Tetrarch tanks, the "common" Bren carriers, and modified American jeeps. There were three recce squadrons assigned to each regiment. The Hamilcar Glider was designed specifically to carry the Tetrarch tank (British Vehicle Note #2) into combat—although it proved to have many other uses. The British glider currently depicted in *ASL* is the Horsa design, with appropriate PP values, and cannot represent the Hamilcar without SSR. For would-be scenario designers, consider that a Hamilcar could carry one Tetrarch AFV, or two Bren carriers, or one jeep and towed gun (all vehicles and ordnance crews included), or four squads plus SW. A Hamilcar would be a Very Large and slow target, and so would not receive the "+1" To Hit DRM (or IFT DRM) given airborne targets normally. (Players should also make note of U.S. Vehicle Note #51 with regard to unloading passengers/equipment.)

The Recce personnel favored a modified form of the American Jeep. Captain Sterling's L Detachment (SAS) had developed a semi-armored jeep for use in their raids deep behind German lines in North Africa. The design was copied by the airborne commanders for use in their reconnaissance operations. Armor plate was bolted to the front and front sides around the engine compartment and across the windshield (with slots for the driver's vision); this provided protection for the engine and driver, while the gunner manned twin Vickers machineguns mounted on a pedestal in the rear deck of the jeep. This vehicle can be brought into play by SSR giving it an AF of "0" in the VCA only. There would be two MGs: a HMG with 6FP that could be fired only in the VCA and a secondary MMG (AA-mounted) with 4FP that could fire in any direction. Both MGs would have a range of eight hexes, but only the HMG could be removed from the vehicle.

In each division there were two parachute brigades, each with three battalions. Each division also had one glider brigade, also with three battalions. Only at the battalion level do the differences between the paratroops and glider troops start to show in the TO&E. A parachute battalion (*Table 1*) would have a mortar platoon (four 3" mortars), while the glider battalion (*Table 2*) would have an artillery platoon of three 75mm howitzers. Too, a glider-borne battalion had four companies, as opposed to the parachute battalion that had three. Each company would be composed of four infantry platoons.

The Battalion CO (10-2) counter should be used in designed scenarios only under certain conditions: if the historical record states that he was personally in a certain action, if the scenario OB includes the battalion HQ company, or if all three infantry companies are shown on the scenario OB. Of the battalion HQ, only the engineering platoon might be detached to serve with different companies. The infantry platoon of the battalion HQ had as its sole task the protection of the CO and his HQ staff. The mortar, artillery and transport platoons would all remain under the CO's direct command, except under extreme or desperate conditions.

A parachute company had a strength of 125. The company was divided into a HQ section, a mortar section, and three infantry platoons. For *ASL*, the HQ section contains a 9-1 leader and 8-0 leader, and one 6-4-8 that represents the protection party guarding them. The Mortar Section would include a 2-2-8 crew and 3" mortar. Each infantry platoon was divided into a platoon HQ and three infantry sections. On the table, the platoon HQ lists the SW available and three 6-4-8 squads represent the three sections. (Note that the ATR and PIAT would not normally be in use at the same time in any one company.) Since the British paratroopers used valises to carry their rifles and Brens, the LMG counter is dropped with the squad parachute counter. The other squad SW—ATR, PIAT, FT and MTRs—must be dropped using the usual SW parachute counters and rules.

A glider company had a HQ section, mortar section and four infantry platoons. The HQ and mortar sections are identical to those of the parachute company—except that all squads will be represented by 4-5-8 Elite MMC. The 4-5-8 was chosen to represent the glider troops as they tended to be armed with rifles in large part (rather than the SMGs favored by the paratroopers). Each glider company had four platoons, each with a platoon HQ and three infantry sections. As with the paras, each company would have either an ATR or PIAT.

As referenced in the *ASL* Rulebook (A25.42), the British paratroopers receive a "5" ELR, with their morale underlined. The glider infantry also receive an ELR of "5", but their morale is not underlined. (While well-trained, the glidermen were not volunteers.) Like all British troops, the airborne are immune from the effect of Cowering (A25.45).

The last table provides a standard *ASL* OB for the British parachute and glider companies for use by players. The Parachute Company OB would also serve as the standard for elements of the Polish Parachute Brigade, the Canadian Parachute Battalion and the 44th Indian Airborne Division. In the case of the Gurkha parachute units, players should note that of course all rules for Gurkhas apply (A25.43).

One last word on weaponry. In the Ordnance Notes of Chapter H, it is stated that each platoon carried a 2" mortar (one per three squads). In historical references, it is often stated that each airborne platoon often carried many support weapons. If readers look at the "Squad Weapon Allotment Chart" (page H71), light mortars and light machineguns are designated as one per five British squads. This seems at variance with the Ordnance Notes. Since it is my belief that the Weapon Chart should be used at all times unless there is a compelling reason not to, the charts accompanying this article are calculated to provide for play balance in DYO scenarios. To circumvent the Weapon Chart is not my purpose, but the above will explain the differences that some will note between Table 1, 2 and Table 3.

As in the past, a scenario is included to give readers the chance to experience the British airborne troops in action on the cardboard battlefield. In Scenarios '89 A1-A3 (*ASL Annual '89*), the Germans conducted a glider assault on the New Zealanders defending the Tavronitis Bridge in Crete. Now it's time to try the other side of the coin, at the now-famous Pegasus Bridge in Normandy. It is my hope that this is but the first of many scenarios highlighting the actions of the "Red Devils".

☆

Over the Fence . . . *Cont'd from Page 50*

Map with a prisoner (only if the mission was a "Prisoner Snatch"—3.1.3) or have −10 VP deducted if he elects to abort the mission before reaching the "Target" counter (3.9).

5.2 The following are Optional Rules required or recommended for the play of this campaign game:

16.1 Grenade Return Throw—Recommended
16.2 Assorted Optional Firing Modifiers—Recommended
16.3 Weapon Reliability—Recommended
16.4 Suppression by Non-Automatic Weapons—Recommended
16.6 Pinned and Inactive Status—Recommended
16.7 Optional Weapon and Equipment—Required
16.8 Extra Major Personal Weapons—Recommended
16.9 Standing Behind "2" Height Cover—Recommended
21. Fires—Recommended
22. Individual Personal Characteristics—Recommended (for SOG Team)
23. Wounds and Cover—Recommended
24. Morale—Required
25. Prisoners—Required

☆



ALPINE HUNTERS

Reference Notes for ASL

By Steven C. Swann

Wars prior to the 20th Century were primarily decided by actions during the "civilized" weather seasons of spring, summer and early autumn. Until the late 1800s, most countries with mountainous borders could depend on small militia units armed with rifles and an intimate knowledge of the local mountains to defend the passes that would lead any invader into their homeland. These small units may not have been able to halt an enemy, but they could delay him to give regular forces time to prepare to meet that enemy. As the world approached our "modern age", the development of railroads and highways began the erosion of this military concept. With these means of transportation, the mountain militia formations no longer had the muscle to prevent—or slow—an invasion through the passes they were charged with defending. But this imbalance was tilted again with the advent of the machinegun and light-weight automatic weapons and explosives.

With the weaponry available in the early decades of the 1900s, most of the nations that bordered the Alps again faced the need for military units specially trained for combat in the high regions. France formed their *Chasseurs Alpins*, Italy their *Alpini*, and Germany and Austria their *Gebirgsjaegers* ("Alpine Hunter") battalions. At first, these were company- or battalion-sized formations that could operate independent of higher echelon organizations. They tended to be equipped with the latest of light weaponry and gear suited (occasionally specially designed, or adapted from existing civilian examples) to the terrain and climate.

In August 1914, war came again, but initially there was little call for any of the mountain troops by the major combatants, who were more concerned with the movement of massive armies in the flat areas of Flanders and rolling hills of Poland. In 1915, Italy declared war on the Central Powers, which brought the unexpected need for the defense of the southern borders of Austria-Hungary. But the small Austrian jager units were no match for the larger Italian *Alpini* ones leading the invasion. Austria was forced to commit more of her troops to the southern alps, and soon much of the Austrian reserve was tied up in the defense of the mountainous frontier.

This attack led to the dismissal of most military theories that had governed the movement and actions of large bodies of troops through the mountains. It was found that, contrary to expectations, not all military units involved had to be mountain-trained in order to fight effectively in the high regions. What was required were enough trained units to act as guides and assault troops. Many served as teachers, for simply making most any experienced soldier aware of the dangers and difficulties of alpine combat allowed any small military unit to operate in the mountains, if it had a detachment of alpine troops to help.

At the start of World War I, Germany had only a few battalions of jaegers trained and equipped for mountain operations. During the battles in the Vosges, the Imperial German Army found its men outclassed and outfought by the French *Chasseurs Alpins*. With Italy's subsequent entry, the high command was forced to re-evaluate its methods, and so began the raising of its first *Gebirgsjaeger* battalions to replace the mountain militia. The bulk of the men for these new units came from the German kingdoms of Bavaria and Wurttemburg, both of which already had alpine units in their state armies composed of those born and raised in the Alps. They were skilled in survival, climbing, skiing and hunting in the thin air and high reaches.

By March 1915, these alpine units had been removed from state control and incorporated into the Imperial German Army. The first German alpine corps was composed of two brigades: No. 1 with the Bavarian Lieb Regiment and Bavarian Jaeger Battalions; and No. 2 with the Bavarian Ski Battalion, the Hanover Jagers and the Mecklenburg Jager Battalion. Seven artillery batteries, engineers, signals and trench mortar units were added to provide the corps with its own support elements. The personnel of all units were experienced mountaineers, and most had already gained some combat experience in France.

For the duration of the fighting, the "Alpine" Corps would prove itself to be a superb fighting unit. That it was able to achieve much is shown by the fact that the corps was moved to so many theaters of the war—wherever the need for an aggressive, elite unit was noted. The German Alpine Corps fought first in the Tyrol, then the Macedonia area. The fighting abilities of its men were so highly thought of that they were next sent to Verdun (1916) and used as assault troops. Rumania was the next assignment, and then back to the Vosges mountains in France in 1917. Later they would be part of the German offensive at Caporetto (Italy), and then at Mount Kemmel for the 1918 spring offensive. From here the corps was moved to Serbia, and then to the eastern front where it served until mid-1919.

Between the wars, the army of the Weimar Republic retained the tradition of the alpine corps in three small units stationed in Bavaria. In 1935, with Hitler in power, the Wehrmacht entered a stage of great expansion. This was the year that universal conscription was reintroduced in Germany. All inductees were required to serve a period of time in the military unless they were judged disabled or unfit. With this influx of men, the three small Gebirgsjaeger battalions were enlarged first to a brigade, then a division. This first division was designated the 1st Gebirgsjaeger Division and included the 98th, 99th and 100th Gebirgsjaeger Regiments, with support provided by the 79th Mountain Artillery Regiment. Others soon followed.

All the mountain divisions were established using the same TO&E. Each was composed of an HQ, sundry support units, an artillery regiment and two infantry regiments that together totaled 13056 officers and men. The HQ would include the divisional staff officers, HQ company, a motorized map reproduction office, a semi-motorized signals battalion, service formations, and a field replacement battalion. For the sake of our discussion here, all units described are based on the 1943 *soll* establishment. (A "soll" was the official establishment that would be used to represent any unit up to strength and fully-equipped with all support weapons.) Of course, due to the massive losses from 1941-43 in the east, very few formations of any kind were at this level.

The support units of a Gebirgsjaeger division included a motorized traffic control detachment, a mountain AT battalion, a *Hochgebirgs* ("high alpine") battalion, and semi-motorized reconnaissance and engineer battalions. The divisional AT company was outfitted with 25 50mm AT guns. Each *Hochgebirgs* battalion was composed of an HQ section, five rifle companies, and a "technical" company with engineer platoon, signals platoon and light howitzer platoon.

The mountain artillery regiment (2330 of all ranks) included the HQ battery of a pack train detachment and a radio platoon, a pack train supply column, and three battalions of artillery. Three batteries made up the firing elements of each artillery battalion. In each regiment, two of the battalions were semi-motorized and one horse-towed or mule-packed. There were to be one battalion each of 12 150mm howitzers, 12 105mm howitzers, and 24 75mm howitzers.

The regular Gebirgsjaeger regiment of 3064 officers and men was made up of an HQ and three battalions. The HQ had the staff, signals platoon and a heavy howitzer (two 105mm pack howitzers) platoon as the artillery complement. A Gebirgsjaeger battalion of 877 each had, besides the HQ staff, five companies, of which three were *jaeger* (rifle) companies. The battalion's technical company encompassed the signals, engineers, light howitzer platoon (two 75mm howitzers) and an AT company (37mm guns and ATRs). Each jaeger company of 147 men was further divided into three rifle platoons and a weapons platoon equipped with two 81mm mortars and an AT rifle squad. Each jaeger platoon was equipped with three LMG and one 50mm mortars for support.

Divisional transport was provided by 477 motorcycles, 858 trucks of various sizes, 714 horse-drawn wagons and carts (with some 3506 horses and mules). Supply columns were organized into supply trains made up of 200 animals. During the winter and muddy months on the Russian front, the normal transport was supplemented by the acquisition of *Panje* carts, Russian sleds and native horses suitable for the terrain and weather. In Lapland the carts and sleds were pulled by reindeer, while in the Caucasus region the 1st and 4th Gebirgsjaeger Divisions used the Bactrian camel for transport at times. In short, while the most favored vehicles were the Volkswagen (in its various forms) and Kettenkrad, the alpine troops were quite able to adapt local transport methods to their style of warfare.

In 1938, Austria was annexed, and with it came two Austrian alpine divisions. The German Army now had three full divisions trained to operate in mountain conditions. The 2nd Gebirgsjaeger Division was formed from the former Austrian 6th Infantry Division, and included the 136th and 137th Gebirgsjaeger Regiments and the 11th Gebirgsjaeger Artillery Regiment. The 3rd Gebirgsjaeger Division had its beginnings with select elements of the Austrian 5th and 7th divisions, which were formed into the 138th and 139th Gebirgsjaeger Regiments and 12th Gebirgsjaeger Artillery Regiment. Both conformed to the TO&E of the original German formation.

Together, these three divisions were formed into the 18th Gebirgsjaeger Corps in 1939 for the invasion of Poland. Posted to the 14th German Army and positioned to cover the southernmost flank, all three were intended to play a role. But due to the heavy congestion caused by the movement of the bulk of the German Army to the eastward in August, only the 3rd Gebirgsjaeger Division was in position on the Polish border on 1 September. Moving up from Austria and Bavaria, the 1st and 2nd divisions arrived at the front two days after the war started. The 18th Corps was assigned the task of breaking through the Carpathian Mountains from lower Silesia and then eastward to Lemberg. Once there, the mountain corps was to wheel north and make contact with the German 3rd Army moving south from Prussia.

Here in the high Tatras, the Gebirgsjaegers received their baptism of fire—from other mountain troops. The Polish High Command had placed their 1st and 2nd Alpine brigades and the Rzezov Motorized Brigade in defensive positions here along the left flank. In the mountains, and the low country beyond, the jaegers found that their Polish counterparts could fight with the same expertise and elan as any elite unit in the world. Once through the mountains, an advance slowed by the unexpected resistance, the 18th Gebirgsjaeger Corps spread out across the flat lands. But as a form of "light" division, they had very little in the way of motorized transport and soon fell even further behind schedule. In order to speed the advance, the commander of the 1st Division collected all the transport he could locate (including that of the other two divisions). Making up a rag-tag convoy from softskinned vehicles stiffened by the presence of a few armored cars, he began a race across southern Poland. The column refused battle whenever possible, moving swiftly eastward, leaving bypassed pockets of Poles to be swept up by the following divisions.

This advance formation reached the outskirts of Lemberg on 13 September and Maj-General Kubler, its commander, attempted to take the town by a *coup-de-main*. But desperate Polish infantry made an unexpected immediate counterattack and drove his detachment back. Not having the forces or heavy weaponry necessary for a city battle, Kubler settled for blocking the roads to the town and preventing Polish reinforcements from arriving while awaiting the arrival of the rest of the corps. The Poles at Lemberg were still holding out when the forces of the Soviet Union began crossing into eastern Poland. Lemberg, according to the Nazi-Soviet agreement, was located in the Russian zone. Rather than surrender to the hated Russians, the Polish commander now chose to do so to the German Gebirgsjaegers. After this surrender, the 1st Gebirgsjaeger Division turned Lemberg over to Soviet occupation troops (little realizing that other jaegers would once again have to fight for Lemberg in 1941).

Early in 1940, two more Gebirgsjaeger regiments—the 142nd and 143rd—began mountain training in order to form a fourth mountain division. The 142nd was disbanded after the successful conclusion of operations in the West, but the 143rd Regiment was transferred to Klagenfurt to serve as the core for the formation of the 6th Gebirgsjaeger Division. From late 1940 through early 1941, the 6th would serve occupation duties in Poland, before being transferred south.

Meanwhile, the legend of the Gebirgsjaegers was being forged in Norway. For that invasion, the 139th Regiment of the 3rd Division had been selected to take and hold the Norwegian port of Narvik. Transported by destroyers into the fjord, the jeagers were able to surprise the Norwegian defenders and land without a single casualty. But this easy landing was to bring some hard fighting in its wake. A few days later a British flotilla trapped and sank all the German destroyers in the narrow fjord. Now the 1750 jaegers (along with a few stranded sailors) stood isolated in the snow-covered north. The mountaineers of the 139th were under the command of Maj-General Eduard Dietl, an energetic and innovative Austrian. Using divers, he reclaimed several AA guns from the decks of the sunken destroyers. Equipping the sailors with these and captured small arms, he placed them along the south shore of the fjord. His jaegers were arranged in a string of outposts north of Narvik to protect the vital railroad that ran from Sweden to the port. He even received one battery of 75mm pack howitzers by parachute to supply his meager force some artillery support.

The morning of 13 April saw the beginning of the "Battle of Narvik". Arrayed against Dietl was the bulk of the 6th Norwegian Brigade, up to strength but missing most of its support weapons (which had been stored in Narvik when the Germans landed). And on this date the British 24th Guards, French *Chasseurs Alpins* and a Free Polish brigade began landings to the north and south of the town. For the next ten weeks, the jaegers defended their positions while under constant pressure. Low on food and munitions, Dietl's command was slowly pushed closer and closer to the Swedish border.

On Friday, 10th of May, even as Dietl seriously discussed with his surviving officers marching the 139th into internment in Sweden, German troops smashed across the borders of Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and France. Notified of the attack, Dietl put his plans on hold while hoping that the Allies would withdraw their forces for the defense of France. Instead, the enemy increased its operations in an obvious attempt to wind-up this sideshow in the far north. With increasing casualties, the 139th was again forced further back into the mountains until Dietl decided they must make a last stand. Ski patrols on 5 June informed him of an increase in British and allied activity, and he suspected that the final push might be about to begin. But after two days with no contact, German patrols were again dispatched and returned with word that all of the Allied forces except the depleted Norwegians had been evacuated.

With only Norwegians left, Dietl launched his own counteroffensive and forced the surrender of the gallant 6th Norwegian Brigade in only three days. Meanwhile the 138th Regiment had taken Trondheim. Compared to the operation in Norway, the fighting that other Gebirgsjaegers experienced in France was but a training exercise. The epic story of how 2000 German Gebirgsjaegers and sailors had held off 15000 Allied troops in ten weeks of mountain warfare made Dietl a hero. His reward was command of the newly formed "Mountain Corps Norway", of which the 3rd Division was to be the core. In November of 1942, this corps would be renamed the 19th Gebirgsjaeger Corps, and was destined to spend the entire war in Lapland.

After the fall of France, the OKW started making plans for the invasion of England. Leading the way was to be elements of the 1st Gebirgsjaeger Division, and these mountain men spent their summer training for a seaborne operation. When *Sealion* was cancelled, the Gebirgsjaegers of the 1st continued their amphibious training, for they were now slated to serve as assault troops for the capture of Gibraltar. When this plan too was cancelled, they were at last reposted back to the Alps.

On 23 October 1940, after the decision had been made to invade Russia, orders were issued to pull six regular infantry regiments from divisional units slated for conversion to panzer divisions. Mountain training began for these, and its completion saw the number of Gebirgsjaeger divisions increased to six. The 4th Division was

composed of the 13th and 91st Gebirgsjaeger Regiments, along with the 94th Gebirgsjaeger Artillery Regiment. The 5th Gebirgsjaeger Division was formed around the men of the 100th Gebirgsjaeger Regiment (stripped from the 1st Division), and included the 85th Gebirgsjaeger and 95th Gebirgsjaeger Artillery regiment as well as the revamped 100th. To the 6th Division was added the 118th Gebirgsjaeger Artillery Regiment.

Meanwhile, to the south, a new front had opened. Mussolini launched an ill-advised all-Italian invasion of Greece on 28 October 1940. In bitter fighting, the Italians were driven back into the mountains of Albania by the able Greeks. Worse, British troops occupied the Greek islands of Crete and Limnos. This seized Hitler's attention, for the Rumanian oilfields around Ploesti were within bomber range of airfields on Crete. Afraid that the British would use their new-found ally as an entrance into southern Europe, Hitler ordered the invasion of Greece to protect the flank of his envisioned great invasion of Russia. When, as part of the deployment for the attack on Greece, Bulgaria allowed the entry of German troops, the Greek government authorized the landing of military forces from the Commonwealth on the mainland. By 31 March the 1st Australian Corps (6th Australian and 2nd New Zealand divisions, along with the British 1st Tank Brigade, 2nd Armoured) had disembarked and taken up defensive positions north of Mount Olympus along the River Aliakmon.

By the end of 1940, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria had all joined the Axis. Pressure had been put upon Yugoslavia to follow suit and on 25 March 1941, the signing of an agreement between Yugoslavia's Prince Regent Paul and the Axis coalition took place in Vienna. But elements in the Yugoslav military disagreed, and took this as pretext to conduct a successful *coup d'etat*, led by General Simovic. They then installed the 17-year-old Prince Peter on the throne and disavowed the Axis alliance, but tried to maintain a neutral stance. Hitler saw this as the "blackest of treacheries" and ordered Yugoslavia added to the plans that OKW was engaged in laying to deal with Greece.

The 2nd and 12th Armies were assigned the "Balkan question." The 1st Gebirgsjaeger Division formed the main element of the 49th Mountain Corps in the 2nd Army, and would invade Yugoslavia from its positions in southern Austria between Klagenfurt and Bleiburg. (Originally, it was to have been part of the 12th Army slated for operations in Greece, but was transferred to the 2nd to assist in the rapid conquest of Yugoslavia.) From Austria, the 1st Gerbirgsjaeger was to cross the Slovene Alps and make for the city of Celje. In the early hours of 6 April 1941, dive bombers of the Luftwaffe opened the attack with a massive air assault on the capital. After one-and-a-half hours, all communications between the Yugoslav high command and its field armies were severed.

The actions of the 1st Gebirgsjaeger Division was of a secondary nature in that they were mainly to protect the left flank of the Italian 2nd Army. In the Slovene Alps, the jaegers were able to easily shove aside assembling units of the Yugoslav 7th Army as they made their advance; on 11 April the 1st Gebirgsjaegers captured Celje, where they accepted the surrender of the newly formed Slovenian government. The main thrust of the Axis campaign had been the quick capture of Belgrade by the XLI Panzer Corps and XLVI Panzer Corps. Under attack from three sides, the city fell and by 17 April Yugoslavia had gone the way of Poland, Norway, Denmark, France, Belgium and Holland.

Under command of the 12th Army were the

TABLE 1: Table of Organization— German Gebirgsjaeger Battalion

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
Gebirgsjaeger Battalion	877	
Battalion HQ	27	10-2 SMC 8-1 SMC
Technical Company	171	
Signals Platoon		2×Squads Radio
Engineer Platoon		3×Squads 3×DC FT LMG
Lt. Howitzer Platoon		2×Crews 2×75mm INF Gun 2×Opel/Kfz1/KdKfz2
AT Company	30	
2 Gun Sections (each)		2×Crew 2×37mm AT Gun 2×Opel/Kfz1/KdKfz2
ATR Squad		2×Halfsquads 2×ATR/PSK
MG Company	208	9-1 SMC
HMG Platoon		3×Squads 3×HMG
MMG Platoon		3×Squads 3×MMG
Mortar Platoon		4×Crews 4×81mm/120mm MTR
3 Jaeger Cos. (each)	147	
Company HQ		9-1/8-1 SMC 8-1/8-0 SMC 8-0/7-0 SMC Squad
Weapons Platoon		2×Crews 2×81mm MTR Squad ATR/PSK
3 Jaeger Platoons (each)		3×Squads Halfsquad 50mm MTR LMG



TABLE 2: Standard ASL Gebirgsjaeger Company

The following would be the *ASL* composition of a single Gebirgsjaeger company. Note that three different OBs are possible; type of units, ELR and SAN would vary depending on the type of company (Wehrmacht, 6th and 7th SS Divisions, or other SS). Further, when in combat, elements of the MG Company or Engineer Platoon would usually be attached depending upon mission.

	Wehrmacht	*6th & 7th SS*	*Other SS**
	9-1 SMC	9-1 SMC	8-1 SMC
	8-1 SMC	8-1 SMC	8-0 SMC
	8-0 SMC	8-0 SMC	7-0 SMC
	11×4-6-8 MMC	11×6-5-8 MMC	11×4-4-7 MMC
	3×2-4-8 HS	3×3-4-8 HS	3×2-4-7 HS
	3×LMG	3×LMG	2×LMG
	3×50mm MTR	3×50mm MTR	3×50mm MTR
	ATR/PSK	ATR/PSK	ATR
	2×2-2-8 Crew	2×2-2-8 Crew	2×2-2-7 Crew
	2×81mm MTR	2×81mm MTR	2×81mm MTR
ELR	4/5	4/3	NA/2
SAN	4	2	2
BPV	174	202	109

*—Use Axis Minor MMC

5th and 6th Gebirgsjaeger divisions as part of the 18th Mountain Corps. From positions in southern Bulgaria, the corps was to help break through the Greek Metaxas line of fortifications. After this penetration, the jaegers were to secure the valley of the Struma river, which would give the German motorized formations waiting behind them access to the coastal lowlands of eastern Greece. Where in Yugoslavia, the enemy ill-prepared and facing attack from three directions, here the Gebirgsjaegers were forced to conduct a frontal assault on a fortified line manned by troops at full readiness. But since the Metaxas Line was built along a mountain range, it was decided that the lightly-armed Gerbirgsjaegers were the "obvious" choice as assault troops. After three days of near-continuous assaults on pillboxes held by Greeks fighting with fanatical courage, the 1st Division was finally able to breach the line enough to allow exploitation by the waiting panzers and panzergrenadiers.

After the breakthrough, the German mororized forces began a rapid advance down the peninsula towards Athens. Approaching Mount Olympus, they ran into the semi-prepared British defensive positions, and were halted. Here in another mountainous region of Greece, the panzers were again restricted in their maneuver by the narrow passes and steep slopes, so the 5th and 6th Gebirgsjaeger Divisions were trucked south to penetrate the British position (known as the "Thermopylae Line"). Climbing over Mount Olympus in a blizzard, the jaeger regiments of the 5th outflanked the British lines on 19 April and forced their hasty withdrawal. On the 23rd, the 6th Gebirgsjaegers forced the pass at Thermopylae, completing the rout. While British units dashed for the coast and evacuation, the 6th Gebirgsjaeger Division, in coordination with the 2nd Panzer Division, captured Athens. By 30 April hostilities had ceased and the campaign for Greece was over.

After the evacuation of Commonwealth forces from Greece, all save the 2nd New Zealand Division and some garrison forces were returned to Egypt for rest and refit. On Crete, the New Zealanders were deployed to defend the airfields still in use by the RAF. Hitler, still concerned with the safety of the Rumanian oilfields, and prompted by Kurt Student, approved an airborne invasion of the rocky, mountainous island. As originally planned, the operation was to be a showcase for the Luftwaffe, using the 7th Parachute and 22nd Air-Landing divisions—but the 22nd was unavailable. Casting about for another veteran division, General Student selected the 5th Gebirgsjaegers to serve as his air-landing reinforcement. After a very short training, the jaegers arrived in the confusion at Crete by plane and boat.

Once the paratroopers were in possession of the Maleme airfield (22 May), German Ju-52s began their shuttle service from Greece bringing in the men of the 5th Gebirgsjaeger Division. Many flights landed while the airfield was still under fire and went straight into the lines without waiting for their parent commands to arrive. Seeing that none of the other major objectives were secured and out-of-touch with Student, General Ringel, the commander of the 5th, set out to pacify the western end of the island. The 95th Gebirgsjaeger Pioneer Battalion was left to guard the airfield and to capture the town of Kastelli (where some paratroopers were being held captive). The 1st and 2nd battalions of the 100th Regiment along with the 1st Battalion of the 85th formed a line east of the airfield and prepared to attack.

Using their mountaineering skills to the fullest, the jaegers outflanked the New Zealanders by moving through terrain the enemy thought inaccessible. Time and again the German alpine troops were able to force the Commonwealth units to fall back or be isolated in a slow but steady erosion of their positions. Believing that the British would move most of their forces to Heraklion on the eastern end of the island to make their stand, Ringel did not realize that they would instead escape Crete by moving south over the rugged White Mountains to embark for Egypt. Thus, he assigned only small detachments to pursue the New Zealanders, while the bulk of his divison continued the capture of the northern shore.

With the fall of Heraklion and the relief of the paratroopers there, Ringel was finally able to turn his entire force southward in an attempt to catch the remaining British forces at Sphakia. In the blazing heat of the Mediterranean summer sun, the jaegers struggled to move their equipment over and through the mountains while staying in contact with the British. With no vehicles or even animal transport, they were forced to pack everything—supplies, munitions, heavy weapons, water, casualties, everything—themselves. Inevitably, the lack of artillery and ammunition, along with the stubborn resistance of the New Zealand rear guard, prevented Ringel from interrupting the evacuation of the bulk of the British force.

The German Gebirgsjaegers had fought in all of Hitler's campaigns from Poland in 1939 through Crete in 1941. Except for a brief period in France and the Low Countries, their campaigns had been in, near or through mountainous regions. But 22 June 1941 brought mountain operations to an end for the rest of the year when the long advance across the vast Russian steppes began. Grouped in three Army Groups, 136 German divisions forged into Stalinist Russia. In the campaign the 1st and 4th Gebirgsjaeger Divisions were assigned to Army Group South; the 5th to Army Group North; and the 3rd and 6th divisions assigned to Dietl operating along the Murmansk Front from Finland.

The 1st and 4th divisions formed the bulk of the 49th Mountain Corps (17th Army) during the encirclement battle at Uman in July 1941. The 49th Corps had, at various times during *Barbarossa*, attached to it a light division and two regular infantry divisions assigned to its command as well. The reason the regular divisions were assigned to a mountain corps can be traced to the original organization of the Gebirgsjaeger divisions. Each such was defined as a "light" division in that it had only two infantry regiments (as compared to three). In mountainous terrain, a two-regiment division could operate as effectively and coordinate its components better than a three-regiment unit. But out on the open steppes, the lack of manpower and guns was felt immediately. Thus, through the campaign across southern Russia, veteran regular divisions were to be added for specific operations.

On 15 November 1941, the 7th Gebirgsjaeger Division was created when the 99th Light Division was ordered converted. The original regiments of the division, the 206th and 218th Jaegers, were retrained and re-equipped. Artillery support was provided by the newly-formed 82nd Gebirgsjaeger Artillery Regiment. It would be 1942 before this new batch of mountaineers would see combat as "Gebirgsjaegers." Dispositions of the mountain divisions in 1942 included the 2nd, 6th and 7th in Norway or Lapland; the 3rd and 5th were now fighting in the Leningrad sector; and the 1st and 4th were still with Army Group South. The Lapland region was a land of marshes and tundra; the vast expanses of frozen low country, broken by a few low hills, did more to lower the morale of the mountain troops than did the Russians they faced. The Leningrad sector was also devoid of the terrain they were accustomed to, and would leave the jaegers dreaming of high mountains and cool summer breezes. Only in the south, as the German forces pressed into the Caucasus Mountains, would the Gebirgsjaegers be in their element.

Army Group "A" (one of two such in AG South) was to move through that summer of 1942 over the Caucasus range toward Baku on the east side. Here the Germans hoped to capture the vast resources of lead, silver, oil and timber of the region, crippling Russian production while boosting their own. The job of breaking through this easternmost European range was, of course, assigned to the 49th Mountain Corps. On 24 August, a special unit formed from volunteers of both divisions planted the Nazi flag and both divisional flags on the peak of Mount Elbrus, the highest in the Caucasus Mountains and the high water mark of the German military in their eastward drive.

Fighting in the Caucasus region was unlike any to date, and wore many different aspects. On the north side of the range, most of the moisture fell as snow, even in the summer months. The danger of avalanches was always present, and it was found that just one round from a gun into an overhang would cause it to crash down upon any below, a tactic both the Germans and Russians would repeatedly use. On the southern slopes the moisture came as rain, which lessened the danger of avalanche only to replace it with the threat of flash floods. Hence, most of the fighting here occurred over the ridgelines and summits. Here in the mountains the vehicles were given up in favor of pack animal transport. And the native Muslim tribes of the region—the Cherkassians and the Kharachians—loathed the Communist government and so made common, if not always expected, cause with the jaegers.

The Germans faced the Soviet version of mountain troops here in the Caucasus, and were not impressed. STAVKA's conception of mountain troops was that any unit with warmer sleeping bags and ropes were the equivalent of the Gebirgsjaegers. Many bloody losses would be inflicted before the Soviet command began a true mountain training program. But poor as these Russian troops were, their numbers did accomplish the mission of stopping the Germans from breaking through the mountains into Asia. In November, the Russians opened their winter offensive with the object of driving the German

17th Army out of the mountains. From November through the following March, the opposing alpine troops would fight innumerable small, isolated battles in falling snow or raging blizzards. By spring, casualties, combined with partisan activity to the rear, forced the retreat of the 49th Mountain Corps.

Spring 1943 saw the 1st Gebirgsjaeger Division, after refit, posted to the Balkans to undertake anti-partisan operations against their growing activity. Meanwhile, the 3rd was removed from the Leningrad front to join AG Centre and take an active part in the battles along the Don River. The 4th Gebirgsjaeger was sent northward to link with the 5th still near Leningrad. The 2nd, 6th and 7th remained at the stalemated front in the far north. One new regiment, the 756th, was raised in Austria, but shipped out to fight with the Afrika Korps. At ''Long Stop Hill'' near Medjez el Bab, Tunisia, in a bitter fight with elements of the British 1st Army, its three battalions were virtually wiped out and the remainder taken prisoner.

After a year of dismal successes, the spring of 1944 again saw wholesale transfers of the Gebirgsjaeger divisions. The 8th was formed from cadres drawn from the 139th Gebirgsjaeger Regiment and 157th Reserve Division. (Due to the shortages of men and material, it was not until February 1945 that the 8th Gebirgsjaeger Division went into action in the Italian Alps, surrendering to the Americans in April with the armistice there.) The 5th Division was transferred from Russia and took up positions near Cassino (Italy) where it helped to fight the British and Americans to a standstill. Falling back to the prepared defenses of the Gothic Line in northern Italy, the jaegers fought a delaying action that slowed the Allied pace. The 5th Gebirgsjaeger Division's Maj-General Schrank surrendered to Allied forces near the Po in late April 1945.

The 1st and 4th divisions found themselves together again in the Carpathain Mountains. Despite their successes, as the Red Army moved into Bulgaria and Rumania, both these nations sued for peace with the Soviets. February 1945 found the 1st, 3rd and 4th Gebirgsjaeger Divisions defending Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia; they were soon joined by the barely trained ''9th'' division (so designated only 12 days before the end of the war) to hold the Semmering Pass in eastern Austria. In the German province of Styria, the 1st Gebirgsjaegers became a part of the 6th SS Panzer Army defending their homeland. In their native mountains, the jaegers showed a fanaticism unheard of, fighting even past the last day of hostilities to keep the Russians out of the southern Alps of Germany and hold open the routes through which many Germans and Austrians fled westward. Styria was one of the few areas of Germany not overrun by Allied forces before the May armistice.

After the Russo-Finnish armistice on 2 September 1944, Finland was forced to oversee the evacuation of German troops from her soil. As the German army in lapland marched towards Norway, the task of providing a rear guard fell upon the 7th Gebirgsjaeger Division. The 7th had been fighting in Soviet Karelia, just north of Leningrad. Hoping that their Finnish comrades would leave them alone to depart, the jaegers had to first disengage from the Russians, and then move almost the entire length of Finland on foot to the Norwegian border. But under pressure from the Soviets, who felt the German withdrawal too placid, the Finns were forced to hurry them along. The 7th came under constant attack from Finnish Sissi units as winter came on. After a major but inconclusive clash between the Finns and 7th Gebirgsjaegers at Rovaniemi, the last Germans finally pulled out. Upon reaching Norway, the 6th and 7th were ordered to take up positions to resist an expected Allied invasion, while the 2nd was recalled to Germany. The Allies never did invade Norway and these elite veterans spent the rest of the war in isolation as garrison troops. Only after the war ended did they return home, under British supervision.

In the last confusing, days of the war the OKW accidently gave the designation ''9th'' to two separate mountain divisions. The first 9th Gebirgsjaeger, which received its designation after the retreat through Finland, consisted of a battle group commanded by Maj-General Krautler. (The second ''9th'' is the one referred to above, cobbled together from various small formations just before the end of the war.) Karulter's command surrendered to the British in May 1945 along with all other Wehrmacht forces in Norway.

In late 1944, as mentioned, the 2nd Gebirgsjaeger Division reached Denmark where it underwent reorganization. From here it was shipped south to Wurttemberg (Germany) to aggressively defend the region against the Americans (see ASL Scenario J). Fighting from February through May, General Hans Degan, a native Bavarian and badly wounded in the last weeks of the fighting, finally surrendered his command to American forces. The final chapters of the 3rd Gebirgsjaeger Division are much the same. Withdrawn from AG Centre, it continued operations against the Russians in Hungary and Slovakia until surrendering after the armistice.

Last, but defintely not the least, there is one last Gebirgsjaeger unit worthy of mention. It probably best demonstrates the quality of men and officers that comprised the elite. Battle Group ''Ringel'' was a small irregular formation composed entirely of convalescent and recruit jaegers, a handful of staff officers, along with a few discharged veterans and civilian volunteers in the Steiermark province of Austria. General Julius ''Papa'' Ringel, hero of Crete and recently commander of the LXIX Corps, assembled them in January 1945. Their weapons were scrounged from museums and home guard units, and included only three WWI-era field guns for support. This *ad-hoc* formation of proud Gebirgsjaegers was able to drive the Russians back from Fledbach clear to the Riegersburg line, and then held that line against all Russian counterattacks until the final German surrender in May.

SS Gebirgsjaeger Divisions:

The Waffen SS created a total of six Gebirgsjaeger divisions and one mountain brigade during the latter half of the war, but these divisions were largely composed of foreign volunteers and did not perform as well as the regular Gebirgsjaeger divisions. Further, as the war progressed to its end, they were plagued with constantly increasing desertions.

The 6th SS ''Nord'' Gebirgsjaeger Division served in Lapland until the German withdrawal from Finland, whereupon it was shipped to Germany to take part in the Ardennes Offensive of December 1944—with no particular distinction. Cut off on the western side of the Rhine in March 1945, the division—now only six thousand strong—put up a spirited resistance, taking several days for overwhelming U.S. forces to run it to ground. The divisional commander was finally captured on 2 April, bringing its organized resistance to an end.

Perhaps the most famous and best of these SS formations was the 7th SS ''Prinz Eugen'' Gebirgsjaeger Division. In an attempt to control the growing partisan problem in Yugoslavia, the SS raised the 7th to combat them in their own environment. During its tour of duty, the 7th took part in many operations, including the attempt to take Tito and the destruction of the 1st Yugoslav Partisan Division. By the end of 1944, the 7th SS Gebirgsjaegers were fighting a Bulgarian-Russian army invading Yugoslavia. At Cilli, the last remnants of the 7th were overrun and scattered by partisan forces.

The 13th SS ''Handschar'' and the 23rd SS ''Kama'' Gebirgsjaeger Divisions were both Croat formations made up of Muslims with a few German officers and NCOs. The 13th was undoubtably one of the worst combat units in the Waffen-SS. After a mutiny in southern France, where it had been sent for training, in mid-1943, the 13th was sent to the Balkans in early 1944 for anti-partisan duties; however, it largely confined itself to massacring defenseless Christian villages and establishing record desertion rates. During the retreat from the Balkans, the 2nd Panzer Army disarmed the well-equipped troops, giving its supplies and weapons to German formations. It disbanded in early 1945. The 23rd SS Gebirgsjaegers was formed in Bosnia during the late summer of 1944, but its morale was so poor that it never saw action and was disbanded just four months later.

The 21st SS ''Skanderberg'' Gebirgsjaeger Division was raised in Koddevo (Albania) on Himmler's orders on 17 April 1944. With a complete lack of German officers and equipment combined with the dubious nature of the Albanian rank and file, the division never completed its organization nor its training. Even small units outfitted with captured equipment and sent out on anti-partisan operations deserted. By mid-1944, most of the recruits were unemployed German sailors from ships trapped in the Aegean. When the Germans retreated from Albania, the division was disbanded. The more reliable members of ''Skanderberg'' were transferred to the 14th SS Gebirgsjaeger Regiment of the 7th SS division.

The 24th SS ''Karstjaeger'' Division originally began as a single ''high alpine'' company formed in July 1942 for operations in the Istrian peninsula. Within four months it had grown to battalion size, mostly Italian Fascists, and took part in Axis operations until Italy surrendered. In July 1944, it was ordered that it be expanded to division size, drawing additional manpower from the Tyrolean and Italian Alps, but this proved impossible. It apparently never exceeded regimental strength, and was disbanded in 1945 at the time of the armistice in Italy.

The single Waffen-SS brigade was the SS-

Gebirgs Tartar Brigade, created from the Tartar Regiment in September 1944. Drawn from Mohammedan Tartars of the Crimea, it was a police regiment with German officers. When the German Army evacuated the Crimea, the regiment went with them, fearful of reprisals. The brigade was disbanded in December 1944 and the personnel transferred to other formations of the Waffen-SS.

By the end of World War II, many nations had "mountain" divisions. But none were actually trained to operate in the high reaches of the European mountains, and were instead "winter combat" specialists (like the U.S. 10th Mountain Division). And none—especially those of the SS—approached the record of service and professionalism shown by the Wehrmacht Gebirgsjaeger divisions.

Fitting the Gebirgsjaegers into ASL

Selection of an *ASL* counter-mix to represent a Gebirgs unit can be affected by several conditions that historically affected their composition during the war. Morale, ELR, squad quality and leadership all varied dramatically depending on the men recruited, the recruiting area and nationality, and the shifting morale of the troops on various fronts as the fortunes of Germany shifted. In some cases, even the nature of the region that the fighting took place in would have an effect on tactical morale.

A generic battalion OB is provided (Table 1) that shows the usual Gebirgsjaeger TO&E in *ASL* terms. This allows us to examine the battalion structure without concern for squad quality or morale. Using this table, would-be scenario designers and DYO enthusiasts can simply insert the appropriate squad and crew types (from Table 2) to represent a company of any of the three broad levels of Gebirgsjaegers spoken of here.

Looking at the Wehrmacht Gebirgsjaeger battalion as an example, a 10-2 and 8-1 SMC were selected as battalion-level commanders. While the Battalion HQ shows a manpower of 27, most were clerks, runners, medics and such and would not be reflected in any *ASL* scenario. The Technical Company has four distinct platoons, any of which could support a Gebirgsjaeger company in action. The Signals Platoon has two 4-6-8 MMC with a Radio; the radio still must be manned by a SMC to be effective, which can come from any of the battalion's sub-units. The Engineer Platoon has three squads with three DC, an FT and LMG as armament; the ID letters of these squads should be recorded to indentify them as having all engineer and sapper abilities (H1.22-.23). The Light Howitzer Platoon is composed of two crews and their 75mm Infantry Guns, with two vehicles as transport (Opel Blitz, Kubelwagen or Kettenkrad). Each battalion had an AT Company equipped with four 37mm AT Guns in two sections, with appropriate transport. A unique part of the AT Company was an AT "squad", represented here by two 2-4-8 HS each armed with an ATR. After September 1943, the ATRs should be replaced with the Panzerschreck (PSK). Elite units would have received the PSK before other line units (and the Gebirgsjaegers were definitely considered to be an elite formation by OKW); if in doubt as to substituting the PSK, a random die roll can be made.

The Machine Gun Company is composed of three platoons—an HMG, a MMG, and a MTR platoon. Each Gebirgsjaeger MG platoon will have three 4-6-8 squads manning an equal number of HMG or MMG (depending on the platoon in play). The Heavy MTR Platoon has four 81mm MTR manned by crews; this would be re-equipped with 120mm MTR after 1943. Since battalion-level OBA support would be provided by the MTR platoon, the MTR platoon *and* MTR OBA cannot co-exist in the same scenario.

The three Jaeger ("Rifle") companies have identical organization, with—in this case—the company 9-1 along with a 4-6-8 squad in the HQ section. (SS company-level SMC would be an 8-1 or 8-0 depending on quality of unit.) Each Jaeger company had an inherent Weapons Platoon equipped with 81mm MTR and crews and an ATR squad; as with the Technical Company, the ATR would be superceded by PSK in September 1943. The infantry component of a Jaeger Company has three platoons of three squads and one HS each. Each platoon would have a 50mm MTR manned by the HS, while a LMG would be distributed among the three squads. A variable number of MMG- or HMG-armed squads from the MG Company might be assigned to the Jaeger Company depending upon its mission. Except in the case of special actions, all SW assignments in these TO&Es follow the German SW Allotment Chart (H1.83).

It should be noted that the regular Gebirgsjaeger divisions were recruited among the populace of the mountainous regions of Germany and Austria. As the Russians pushed their way into these regions, the jaegers were now fighting on their home ground to defend their friends and families. In all of Germany, these areas were not overrun by the advancing Soviets, due in the most part to the staunch defense put up by the German Gebirgsjaegers. Since these formations were indeed able to hold off the Soviets until after the war officially ended, allowing so many others (and even, unfortunately, some SS formations) to escape to the west, their ELR should be "5" during scenarios set in March, April or May 1945—and "4" previous to that. The one exception would be any scenarios that represent the jaegers in combat in Lapland or the Kuban area, where morale tended to be lower due to the terrain; I would recommend a "3" ELR in these instances. Finally, if designing an end-war scenario, remember that the Gebirgsjaegers were heavily outnumbered by the Soviet enemy, and found with the fatalism and fanaticism typical of such elite formations; "No Quarter" (A20.3) should be applied.

Without the degree of artillery support an infantry division could expect, the Gebirgsjaegers turned to other methods. Primarily, they had better than average marksmen (many having hunted and camped in the Alps all their lives), equipped with the latest scopes, and came to rely on long-range sniper fire. For this reason, I feel that the SAN in any Gebirg scenario should be based on an initial value of "4", with an adjustment up or down depending on the situation.

Turning to the SS formations, the same general structure is used, but the squad and leadership quality changes. For the 6th and 7th SS Gebirgsjaeger Divisions, being relatively well-trained and prepared, the standard SS 6-5-8 is substituted for the 4-5-8 MMC. But the major differences between a Wehrmacht and SS division will be found in the ELR and SAN. Like many SS formations, the 6th and 7th maintained excellent morale through 1943; but the defeats of 1944 and 1945 brought too many replacements and an erosion of morale. Unless there is sound historical data, the ELR for elements of these two divisions should be set at "4" from 1939-44, and "3" thereafter. Too, the SAN will be lower, given the lack of many native mountaineers in their ranks.

The other SS formations represent those Gebirgsjaeger divisions composed of other nationalities: the 13th and 23rd of Croats, the 21st of Albanians, Turkomans from the Crimea in the SS Tartar Brigade, and so forth. All of these nationalities would qualify as Axis Minors, even though they were officered by Germans and wore German uniforms (some, not so proudly). Using the Axis Minor elite MMC seems to be the best compromise to reflect their fignting qualities and weaponry. Poor units usually have poor leadership (or vice versa), and this is reflected in the choice of SMCs. Being generous by nature, I left them with an 8-1 SMC for Company CO, but they are restricted by the LG# to only one extra SMC. However, since these were supposedly "German" companies with German leaders, I have left both leaders in place but have reduced the values. Following the same line of logic, Axis Minor crews would be used to fill all crew spots, but will operate the weaponry without restriction. Being low-quality troops, the company-level AT squad was never to receive the PSK, and the ATR is the only weapon allowed to them.

These alien units were not created until late 1943, and hence do not have a 1939-43 ELR. Then, being just as likely to desert as fight, the ELR has been set at "2" for 1944-45. These battalions will be governed by all Axis Minor rules and restrictions shown in the A25 Chart and listed in the rules (A25.8). With this lack of elan and training also comes the lowest SAN possible; unless there is a definite historical reference to such found in your research for scenario-design, the SAN will always be "0". Given that these formations usually saw combat against partisan forces, I think that some interesting scenarios can still be crafted with these SS Gebirgsjaegers as participants.

Some general characteristics apply to all German Gebirgsjaegers. All German mountain troops would be allowed Scaling (B23.424) and use of skiis (E4.0) in any appropriate scenario. In as much as these men hailed from the high Alps (at least those in the regular army divisions), Extreme Winter (E3.74) penalties do not apply to non-SS Gebirgsjaegers. Further, given their equipment, all German Gebirgsjaegers—even of the poorest SS units—have Winter Camouflage (E3.712) when appropriate.

Scenarios placed in the Caucasus Mountains could also have Chekassian/Kharachian partisans fighting alongside the Germans against the Soviet forces. Two or three (random dr) 3-3-7 MMC and a single SMC (random dr) can be added to the German OB. These Axis partisans would have five MF while in any hex other than level 0, and all benefits of A25.24 would be applied normally.

☆

PULLING OLD CHESTNUTS FROM THE FIRE

The AtlantiCon ASL Tournament Scenarios

By Jim Stahler

At AtlantiCon '90, I ran my first *ASL* tournament, after having played in several over the years. Taking this as a golden opportunity to kill two birds with one HE round, I also chose to update a few of the "oldies" - scenarios originally published for the *SQUAD LEADER* system. After some enjoyable hours, I located four relatively short scenarios originally published in The *GENERAL*. Then I set out to modify and balance them for *ASL* play.

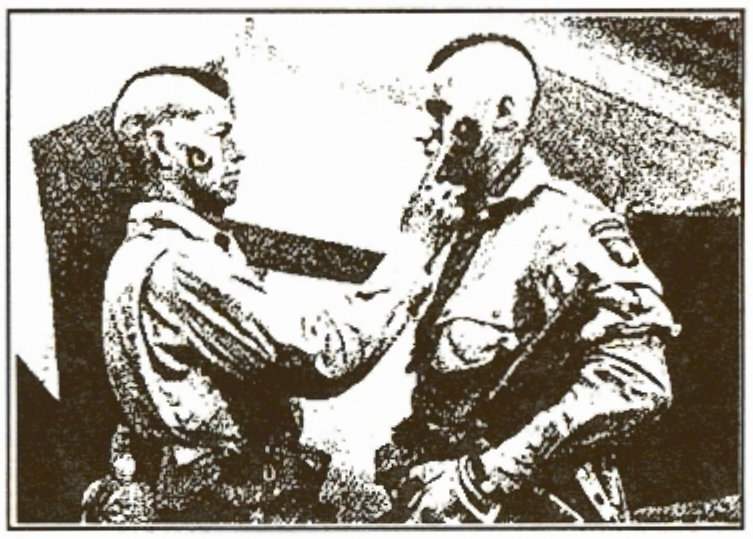
I arranged my tournament to emphasize game play, rather than designing it to simply generate a "winner". A single elimination format is certainly the most efficient way to come up with a single winner; but the majority of the participants don't get to participate much. Why, half are eliminated after having played only one game. I didn't want to eliminate anyone from the fun. Too, single elimination tournaments are strictly limited in terms of number of participants, which is in turn determined by the number of rounds, which is a factor of the amount of time you have to conduct the tournament. The best *ASL* tournaments are open-ended affairs (ala Bill Conner's "Oktoberfest"). Since time limited me to having but four rounds, this would have meant but 16 players if I'd conducted a single elimination competition. Consequently, I opted for a round-robin format; players were only eliminated if they so wished.

I also wanted this to be a team tournament, for several reasons. It feels good to have someone on your side as a team-mate, someone to commiserate and swap stories with, who is interested in your good fortune and skill. By having two team-mates playing opposite sides in two games of the same scenario, the effects of any imbalance in a scenario will be spread as evenly as possible. With two games being played by a team in a round, there are three possible outcomes for the team: winning both, winning neither, winning one. This makes scoring simple. I assigned one point for each game won, to a maximum of six for the entire tournament effort of a team.

Because of the possibility of an odd number of teams in some rounds, and to give the participants the chance to skip a round voluntarily so as to enjoy other activities at the convention, I counted only three of the four scenarios towards a team's final score. Thus the six points possible, from both players winning each game they played. It turned out to be a an exciting tournament; on the last round, there were still ten teams in contention - most of them with a good chance of at least matching for the top spot. And, many of the individual games were very close, coming down to the last turn or the last die roll.

My number one nightmare had been that all four scenarios would be wildly imbalanced, with every team split in every game. Thus, a 32-way tie for first place. But that didn't happen. In fact, there was a clear winner from this team tournament. Congratulations to Perry Cocke and Chuck Goetz of Baltimore (yes, they playtest with the boys of Avalon Hill) for winning the tournament with six points. Honorable mention to the teams of Kevin Meyer/Jeff Coyle and Dan Murray/Jim Turpin, who tied for second place with five points each.

Best of all, the scenarios - all classic confrontations designed for the original system - proved popular and fairly balanced. I did a bit more polishing, and you'll find these enclosed. What follows is the rationale that I used in the update effort, and an brief analysis of the tactics for each.



THE POUPPEVILLE EXIT - Update

I admit it. The version of this scenario that I used in the tournament wasn't as well balanced as well as I thought. In 16 matches played in the tournament, the Germans won 13 times - and most of these were not close victories. The three American wins were by the narrowest of margins. So I worked on it quite a bit since (until my *ASL* playtesting buddies would scream, "Not Pouppeville Exit again!"), and believe the version presented here is now an even contest.

In the actual battle, Lt. Colonel Ewell, commander of the 3rd Battalion of the U.S. 501st Parachute Regiment, led about 50 men against 60-70 Germans in Pouppeville on D-Day. The Germans didn't put up much resistance, but it still took four hours for the paratroopers to secure the town. In the game, the Americans have eight turns (roughly 16 turns). The Americans suffered 18 casualties, inflicted 25 and took 38 prisoners. The remaining Germans retreated towards the beach (down the road between the marshes leading to 3A6) and surrendered to troops of the 8th Infantry Regiment, who had just landed at Utah Beach.

The original design (published in The *GENERAL* as Scenario F) used the *SL* paratrooper squads with eight firepower factors. The current *ASL* paratrooper squads are 7-4-7, which are markedly weaker; they are a column down in almost every firegroup attack, and in close combat now attack these Germans at 3-2 instead of 2-1. The new version squads have some advantages which partially make up for the reduced firepower: broken morale of "8", smoke and WP grenades, assault fire bonus, and underlined morale with a high ELR. These advantages, in my mind, still don't make up for the reduced fire however.

On the German side, the firepower of the Kubelwagon is reduced to "3" and the range of the crews is reduced to two hexes. However, the morale of a German crew has been raised to "8", making them tougher to break. So, while the Americans are a little weaker than before, the Germans are a little stronger in relation to their enemy. Thus, to weaken the Germans and boost the Americans, I fiddled with the quality of the forces.

I started by lowering the quality of the German MMC. Originally, these numbered five 1st Line squads (4-6-7) and two Conscript (4-3-6). I substituted three 2nd Line (4-4-7) and four Conscript squads. I left the German leadership alone; they are pitiful enough as is. I also refrained from adjusting the guns and crews and vehicle, although I got rid of the HS with the Kubelwagon. I gave the Germans an ELR of "2", even though their standard for this time of the war was "3". But this was not a top-quality unit, and it had been demoralized by the bombardment and the airborne landings.

I gave the paratroopers an ELR of "5", as is appropriate to their "elite" status. I promoted two of their leaders from an 8-1 and 9-1 to a 9-1 and 10-2. Let the 10-2 represent Colonel Ewell, if you will. I also eased the American victory conditions a bit. Originally they had to capture or eliminate both AA guns; now they need only keep a manning crew from being in Good Order even if the gun is intact. It is sufficient if the crew has abandoned its gun, gone berserk, broke or is engaged in melee. It is now no longer possible for a German half-squad to circle around the paratroopers, man an AA gun, and so prevent an American victory (once a favorite ploy). The guns must now be manned by a German 2-2-8 crew.

The concepts of "Stealthy" and "Lax" did not exist when the scenario was first printed. Since the paratroopers were well-trained in hand-to-hand combat, I made them stealthy; the Germans are lax because of their poor showing in the historical account. This makes the Americans more deadly in CC since they now have a fair chance of ambushing their enemy. I gave both sides the minimal SAN of "2".

Finally, to provide some sort of rational play-balance provision, I decided to add a Hero to their forces. I feel that this is in keeping with the quality-versus-quantity nature of the scenario. To help the Germans, raise the quality of their four Conscript squads to 2nd Line. Maybe they weren't so bad after all; they did hold out for four hours. And with an ELR of "2", they will become Conscripts soon enough.

Analysis

There isn't much to say about the German set-up, since it is fixed. About the only choices

that the German player must make is the facing of his guns and of the Kubelwagon. German movements will depend upon the American line of attack. Typically, the paratroopers start off by attacking the positions around the gun in 3U2 and taking the buildings between 3V1 and 3S1. If a few American squads break, it might pay to reinforce the position with a couple of squads crossing the road. Three squads in a building are very difficult to approach, even if they are all Conscripts.

If it is not prudent to cross the road, the best defense lies in the buildings from 3R3 to 3T4. Most of these are of stone construction, and the Americans cannot move adjacent without crossing the road and exposing themselves to point-blank fire. It is important for the German to maintain concealment as long as possible, and to avoid trading shots with the paratroopers. During your own turn, assault move out of American LOS and the reoccupy your positions during the Advance Phase. The key is to delay them, and to force them to fire in the PFPh, to prevent them from moving far that turn.

The main strength of the German forces is the MMG with the 9-1 leader. It should move to the second floor of either 3N1 or 3N2 on Turn 1, where it can threaten the road in front of your main line as well as being in position to attack several places that the enemy must use to fire at your defensive line: 3U2, 3T1 and 3R1. Pray that the MMG doesn't break down.

The Kubelwagon isn't very powerful, but it provides a lot of fun. A couple of possible uses present themselves. Use it to protect the roads by moving it to 3N4 or 3S7. It can also try to run around in the American rear to keep DM Americans DMed and to prevent routs. Another possibility is to have the crew abandon the vehicle and scrounge its MG to bolster the infantry defenses.

Once the Americans do manage to break a few German squads and cross the road, you must carefully defend hex-by-hex, falling back every turn to avoid their massed firepower. If all goes well, you can hang on to the AA gun in 3N7 (keeping the crew concealed as long as possible) - and perhaps hold onto building R5 too. With that comes the victory.

The Americans have a long way to go in a very short time. Their task is certainly attainable, but they must be careful to make use of every turn and to defeat the Germans in detail. Their first objective is the AA gun in 3U2 and the enemy squad in T2. An important first turn move is a squad and leader starting in 3AA6 and moving to 3W4 (maintaining concealment) and advancing to 3V3. They can control the road and seal the enemy gun off from reinforcements. In a later turn they can assault move to 3W4, where they have LOS over the walls to 3S4, denying a critical rear area location to the Germans.

The biggest headache for the Americans will be that MMG. It is worthwhile diverting another squad and leader to head that way. If they start at 5AA8, they can get to 5R7 in Turn 1, 5N9 on Turn 2, and then threaten building 3M2 by Turn 3. Even if they don't knock out the MMG and capture the building, this force can at least draw some fire while their comrades dash across the street. I like to start this little group with the DC and give it to the 9-1 leader; this is sure to draw the fire of the MMG. Also note that any unit in hex 3M2 makes the Germans upstairs encircled, which adds a +1 DRM to their fire as well as lowering their morale. Also note that a smoke grenade placed in the ground level of the building affects the units on the 2nd level above it, which can also neutralize the effect of that MMG.

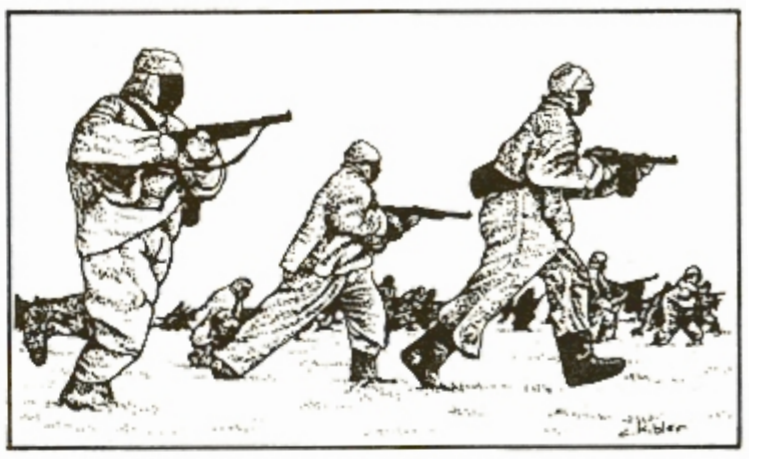
This leaves the 10-2 leader, and four squads with MMG and bazooka to go up against the AA gun and squad. The leader with some MMC can move to 5W1 on Turn 1, while the remainder can move to 5W10 from 5BB8 using the road bonus. From this configuration, the force can retain its concealment and then advance to 3V1 and 3V0, becoming a major threat to the gun crew.

What happens at this point depends upon the German reaction. The gun and protecting squad should be dispatched in another turn or two, and the the paratroopers will have to weaken the Germans across the road if they plan on progressing further. The building in 3S1 is important because it is out of LOS of the dreaded MMG but in LOS of the German positions in Q4, R3, S3 and T3. Three American squads, the MMG and the 10-3 there can quickly discourage some of the enemy from fighting.

Before long, no later than Turn 5, the Americans have to cross the road. One method is to use smoke and dash (if there is a place to dash to). An alternative is to spread out and advance into the road. If the Germans stand and fire, they are in deep trouble if any paratroopers do not break. Then it becomes a house-to-house struggle as the paratroopers battle towards the last AA gun. They must capture buildings 3R3 and 3R5 along the way, and be in position to rush the AA gun on Turn 8.

The Americans have three weapons that are easy to overlook, but can be quite powerful in the right circumstances. Don't forget that White Phosphorus; it causes a morale check in the location it is placed. If a U.S. squad has extra movement factors left, it always pays to move it adjacent to an enemy unit and toss a WP grenade its way. If the target doesn't break, at least its first fire is pretty well neutralized for that MPh. Similarly, the DC is very powerful in the right circumstances. Its possession makes a lone leader dangerous, and should the Americans get a hero the DC is just the weapon for him. Finally, the bazooka can be effective against Germans in buildings or behind walls (for example, from 3U2 to 3T3). Don't forget that a leader can use his leadership DRM to modify the To Hit DR of a bazooka. If it hits, it can do a lot of damage - and if it malfunctions, it is not too great a loss.

Play of this scenario can lead to a close *ASL* game. If the Americans break too quickly or lose a lot of time exchanging fire with the Germans, they will run out of time. On the other hand, if the Americans move quickly and use all their assets, they have a solid fighting chance of winning the match and securing the Pouppeville Exit. As the tournament play proved, it is a most excellent challenge for both players.



THE DEAD OF WINTER - Update

This scenario was originally printed as Scenario M in The *GENERAL*. A small force of Germans valiantly try to hold on to their positions against a powerful force of Siberian infantry supported by the awesome new T-34 tanks grinding across the snow. This is a short, quick-playing, violent scenario - ideal for a tournament.

I kept the forces, board configuration and game length the same as in the original. I translated the T-34/76A from *CROSS OF IRON* to the *ASL* T-34 M40. I gave the Germans one more trench to counter this. In the original scenario, the Russian needed to exit seven out of a possible 12 squads (counting each tank as two squads). Converting this to *ASL* exit victory points, the Russians have 36 possible VP (seven each for their AFVs); so I required them to exit 20 points to win. It is possible for them to win by exiting all three tanks alone, but that is not too easy. If one T-34 is immobilized or eliminated, the Russians must exit three squads and a leader to compensate - which is about what they needed to do in the original to claim victory. On the other hand, even if they exit all their infantry unscathed, they must still exit at least one tank to win.

The Germans are given their standard ELR of "4" for this period of the war. I upped the ELR of the Russians to "3" because this represents an elite formation. I also made the ELR the basis for the balance provisions. To help the Germans, reduce the Russian ELR to "2" (which is the norm for them at this stage). To assist the Russians, reduce the German ELR to "3", to reflect the unexpected hardship that they endured during their first winter in Russia.

For both, sniper numbers are set low. The Germans receive the higher SAN simply because they are on defense. There is Deep Snow as in the original design, and the Siberians have Winter Camouflage, the *ASL* equivalent of "snow smocks". I have the German tanks dug-in because the *ASL* rules make provision for this and because the text of the scenario aftermath indicates that the tank was hull down.

Some of the changes from *SL* to *ASL* aid the Russian, while some help the Germans. It is now harder for the German anti-tank weapons (the 37L AT and the tank's 75mm) to destroy the T-34s. It is almost impossible for either weapon to take out a T-34 from the front, and harder than it used to be from the side or rear. The Siberians can now enter the game concealed, and Winter Camouflage allows them to retain their concealment even if they assault move or advance into open ground. In *ASL* at

this date, the Russian player may opt for a Commissar, who can increase the morale of several squads and rally broken infantry more quickly than a conventional leader, although at some risk.

To the German's benefit, they can now set up their AT gun HIP, and all of their infantry start concealed since the Russians enter from off the board. The Russian AFVs must use platoon movement, and the red MF means they will risk breakdown or stalling when they start up. Moving through the deep snow entails a risk of bog, as if moving through mud . . . but worse. The low ground pressure of the T-34s helps, but they have a bog DRM of +2 (+1 due to the snow, and +1 for Deep Snow) and so bog down on a DR of "10" or more. The tanks must also risk bogging when they enter a trench hex; and the ground is still covered with Deep Snow, so the DRM of +2 still applies.

Both sides are subject to ELR replacement, but this hurts the Russians more as they have the lower value, and they lose more when they suffer replacement. A Russian 6-2-8 becomes a 5-2-7, while a German 4-6-7 is replaced with a 4-4-7 (meaning no change in firepower or morale). That dug-in tank is a lot harder to KO than the immobile tank of the original version. It gets a +1 To Hit DRM for being a small target (D9.53) and is only affected by a turret hit or critical hit! Finally, Winter Camouflage for vehicles only applies to attacks made at a range of more than 16 hexes, most improbable in this scenario; and for the infantry it only applies at ranges greater than eight hexes. Since nearly all the fighting will be closer than that, the Winter Camouflage is less effective than the snow smocks were in the original design.

Analysis

But, taken all together, this scenario is very similar to the original in feel and play. The Russian player could just run his tanks off the board, in theory, and so easily win the game. However, there is so much that can happen on the way. A tank can bog down in the snow or while crossing a trench; a tank can be immobilized or eliminated by infantry attack, especially with the 9-2 directing it; the infantry can demolish a tank with a well-placed demo charge; a tank might stall or be immobilized while starting up; the German guns can try for deliberate immobilization. All the Germans need do is immobilize one tank, and a small horde of Siberian infantry are forced to exit instead.

The Siberians have the edge in morale and close-in firepower, but the Germans have the advantage of defensive terrain, range and leadership. The Russian tanks can stop to help their comrades on foot, but that makes them more vulnerable to the enemy guns and infantry; and they must then risk stalling or immobilization when they start up again. Time also works against the Russians. Five turns is a short game. A tank stalling or bogging can be delay enough to keep it from exiting the board within the time frame of the scenario.

The Germans have a host of possible strategies, despite the small size of the scenario. They can put everything in the southwest corner of the board to defend the exit area. But this set-up gives the Germans no rear area to rout to, no place to retreat, and gives the Russians too much terrain for "free". Nevertheless, it is not a bad idea to stretch the trenches from BB1 to GG4 to force the Russian tanks to take a bog DR as they cross the trench line. Another possibility is to put everything on the eastern edge of the board where the Russians enter. This is fatal - the Russians can use their camouflage to enter the board concealed and engage the Germans in close combat, which the superior Russian firepower and numbers will win.

For my part, I prefer to place my trench line in the middle, from X2 to X7. Building X1 is the best defensive terrain in the game; I place the 9-2 and at least one squad with the MMG there. The rest of the troops hold the trench line and cover the front of the main force with fire. The idea is to halt the enemy infantry, and perhaps knock out a tank that blunders too close.

The AT gun is useless against the frontal armor of the enemy. Note that APCR is available however, and it can be very effective up close. (HEAT cannot be used since it is not available until May 1942.) The gun must hide and wait for that flank or rear shot. Hexes Z3, AA4 and CC6 are good locations. I like to put the dug-in tank in the open area near Z5. It is very hard to knock out, and it should be able to fire at the flank or rear of the T-34s that bypass it, as well as help protect the German infantry in X1 while using its CMG to threaten anyone crossing the open area to the east.

The Siberians are forced to advance under the cover of the woods and buildings in the south of the mapboard. Note that the building in X1 is best approached from the woods in V0 and W1. The Russian infantry should stay concealed as long as possible; perhaps they can get close enough to advance into close combat while still concealed, with then a good chance for an ambush. If the infantry is quickly successful against the enemy infantry, they can begin searching the obvious hiding places for that pesky AT gun.

Meanwhile, the T-34s should remain in motion to minimize the chance of being hit, and they should stay in platoon together so that no tank need make a NTC to be able to move. The tanks can make a fast break and take their chances at an early exit, or they can hang back in the rear waiting for the infantry to clear the way. If a few Germans break, the tanks should rush into the enemy's rear and prevent the Germans from routing. The Russian player should also be alert to overrun possibilities, but wary of the enemy infantry attacking his tanks in CC. A final alternative is to take the long northern route behind the hedges and avoid the enemy gun. This takes a long time, especially when using platoon movement. One bog here can mean that a tank won't exit the board in time. No matter what route you take, sooner or later the T-34s must run the gauntlet to leave. Button up, turrets front, and full speed ahead.

Mr. Stahler completes his review of the updated scenarios used at AtlantiCon '90 ("Hill 253.5" and "Aachen's Pall") in the next issue of The GENERAL.

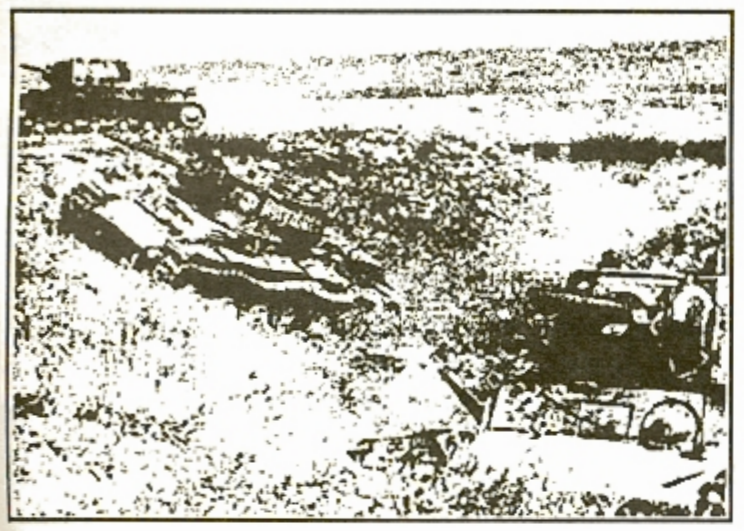
☆

PULLING OLD CHESTNUTS FROM THE FIRE

The AtlantiCon ASL Tournament Scenarios, Part II

By Jim Stahler

In the last issue, Mr. Stahler reviewed his efforts at updating "Pouppeville Exit" and "The Dead of Winter" for the AtlantiCon '90 ASL tournament he hosted. The following looks at the other two scenarios he modified to ASL standards and used in the final two rounds.



HILL 253.5 - Update

This is the longest of the four scenarios that I used in the tournament. I could accept this because I knew that the one previous and after were each extremely short. My third tournament scenario was originally published in The *GENERAL* as Scenario B. It has just about everything in it: infantry, ordnance, tanks, fortifications, offboard artillery and aircraft. The Germans are ordered to smash through prepared Russian positions, capture a hill, and then fend off a Russian counterattack.

The board configuration, game length and turn of Russian reinforcements remain unchanged. The Victory Conditions are essentially the same as before. I put them in terms of *ASL* control (A26.11). The Germans must still control three of the ridgetop hexes and keep the Russians off the other four. But converting this scenario to *ASL* format has made it a distinctive action, one that is a true test for any fan of this game system.

I used the standard ELR of "4" for the Germans and of "3" for the Russians for this period. SAN are low because this is a rural area; the defending Russians have a SAN of "4" because they are on the defense. The Russian balance provision permits HIP for one squad-equivalent; the German makes the 8-3-8 squads "Sappers" to make it easier to clear the Russian mines and wire.

Playtesting found that the Russians were winning too readily, so I weakened their force a bit. I reduced the 9-2 leader to a 9-1, removed their concealment counters, and replaced the four 2-3-7 HS with three crews to man the three guns. Instead of entrenchments, all Russians are now allowed to set up in foxholes if in suitable terrain. The remainder are the same as before. Note that the guns and crews can now use HIP when set up; but the mines are now limited to six, eight and 12-factors per hex (or they can be exchanged for AT mines). With the Russian reinforcements, I translated the original KV IA and KV IC to an *ASL* KV1 M41 and a KV1 M42. The Russian halftrack is replaced with a GAZ truck. The Molotov Cocktail counters are replaced with MOL capability.

On the other hand, I made only a few changes to the German forces. I removed the Psk from the OB since they were not used until September 1943. And I added a 7-0 leader.

Aircraft are more deadly in *ASL* than in the earlier system since planes can now remain in play and strafe enemy units. This is especially useful against moving infantry. The Russian planes have an additional advantage in the reduced dogfighting ability of the German Stukas. To partly compensate for this I eliminated the bombs from the Russian Sturmoviks and added a +1 drm to their arrival chances. The Stukas should arrive first and have a chance to drop their bombs before the Sturmoviks arrive to drive them off.

An important aspect of this scenario is the ability of the Russians to deal with the German armor, and later the ability of the Germans to deal with the Soviet KVs. The halftracks have an armor factor of only "1" and are vulnerable to almost anything. The Panther has a frontal armor of "18" hull and "14" turret, and it is vulnerable to almost nothing. It can be taken out from the side or rear, however, with an AF of only "6". The PzJg Tiger has frontal armor of "18" on both hull and turret. Its side and rear armor is "8" on the hull and "11" on the turret. These are impressive beasts, almost impervious to frontal attack. The Russian AT capability consists of their 76L guns (both emplaced and mounted on the KVs), their 45L AT gun, their MOL capability and their aircraft.

The 76L guns have an AP To Kill number of "13" (which goes up to "14" against an adjacent target). Short of a critical hit, this cannot affect the frontal armor of these German tanks. However, a flank or rear hit has a good chance of KOing a Panther, and a slim chance of knocking out an Elefant The 76L guns can also fire APCR which makes it somewhat more deadly. The To Kill number goes up to "14" then, with a value of "17" at a range of one hex. It still can't penetrate the front of either tank, but it does become more deadly against the flank or rear. The 45L AT gun is weaker. Its To Kill value is "10", deadly against the halftracks but not too threatening against the tanks. It can also use APCR, with a To Kill number running from "12" to "15" depending on range. This is enough to make a flank or rear shot effective against the big guys.

The flamethrower and Molotov Cocktails can ignore the massive armor factors, making these metal monsters as vulnerable as a PzII. The To Kill of a FT is "8" versus an adjacent tank, and "4" against a tank two hexes away. A tank wants to stay at least three hexes away from an enemy flamethrower. Any Russian infantry in an adjacent hex can possibly hurl a MOL against a vehicle (with a TK# of "6"). This is downright dangerous to the panzers; they'd better give the Russian squads a wide berth.

There are several other ways the Russians can destroy or immobilize the Panthers and Elefant. The Sturmoviks have a small chance of knocking out an AFV. Their To Kill number is "5", modified to "7" by Rear Target Facing and Elevation Advantage. More importantly, this is applied against the Aerial AF, which is "3" for a Panther and "4" for the PzJg Tiger. This yields a small but real chance of hurting the enemy AFVs, although the Soviet planes are more likely to be employed strafing the infantry and dogfighting the Stukas.

The Demo Charge also has a chance of harming an AFV, but it has to be placed or thrown from an adjacent hex, which is not easy. The AFVs are also vulnerable to close combat by the Russian squads, who will need a "5" or less to stop the Panthers. The Elefant is more vulnerable since it has no machineguns. This is yet another reason for the German AFVs to keep their distance from the Russian infantry.

There are a few more hazards for the Panthers on this battlefield. They can bog in the wire, or have a tread blown off by a mine. Their biggest danger lies within, however. Every time they try to start up, there is a risk of stalling, immobilization, or even burning. These AFVs are certainly powerful assets, but they must be used carefully.

This scenario takes place before the PF and Psk were available. The German infantry cannot harm the Russian tanks unless they get in close. Their flamethrowers are deadly up to two hexes, and the DC can be effective against an adjacent tank, but their real threat to the Russian AFVs lies in close combat (especially with a leader helping). Normally, they won't get within a hex or two of the Russian tanks. So, at a distance, the main German AT weapons are the guns on their Panthers and Elefant, and the Stukas.

The Russian tanks have armor factors of "8", "11" and "14". The side/rear hull of the KV1 M41 has an AF of only "8"; the front turret of the KV1 M42 an AF of "14". All other hits face an AF of "11". Note that these Russians are designed for all-around defense, and the differences between front and flank armor are not as pronounced as on the German AFVs. Against this, the 75LL gun of the Panther has a TK# of "23", and the 88LL gun of the Elefant a TK# of "27". Either can dispatch either Russian tank easily from any facing, in any aspect. These are clearly the German's best AT weapons in this scenario.

But don't forget the Stukas. Their MGs are not likely to harm a tank, but their bombs can be quite effective. If a bomb gets a direct hit, its To Kill number is "16" against the tank's Aerial AF ("4"). Including the Rear Target Facing and Elevation Advantage modifiers, the Final To

Kill is "18" - bad news for the tank. A near miss is more likely, and starts with half of the To Kill ("8"); this is still dangerous for the tank unlucky enough to be nearby.

One final AT weapon few consider is the off-board mortar support that each side receives. OBA is much more effective in *ASL* than in the earlier system because a spotting round is two levels high and much easier to see, and each FFE lasts an entire game turn (typically attacking twice). With OBA, a KIA result destroys an AFV, and a result of K or one greater results in shock or immobilization. The 80mm+ OBA attacks on the "12" column, so a DR of "3" or less destroys a Panther. Since the Elefant and KVs have AF of all "8" or greater, they are destroyed on a DR of "2". So, the moral is that the tanks should avoid FFE is possible, but that an FFE is far from certain death.

I have discussed the vulnerability of the AFV in some depth because they are the key to this scenario. One Russian tank can win the game by itself simply by lumbering onto a hilltop and staying there. However, it takes only one Panther or Elefant to counter this action. And, with their large main guns and MGs, these AFV are potent against infantry too.

Analysis

The Russian strategy revolves around ending the game with at least one Good Order unit on a hilltop hex since it is almost impossible to stop the German from gaining three Level 3 hexes. If all German AFVs are out of the way, and if a KV can survive the Stukas, the Russian will be king of the hill and win the game. Otherwise, plan to have a squad on a Level 2 hex adjacent to one of the hilltop hexes at the end of Turn 8, at which time it can advance onto the Level 3 hill and give the Russians a victory. Good positions for this are M4, K4, J5, I5 and I4.

The first Russian line of defense consists of the obstacles, the wire and the mines. Both are effective against the enemy infantry and nearly useless against their armor. Incorporating the cliffs into the defense, a solid line can be established across the board. For example, put either mines or wire or both in hexes Q1, Q2, R3, S4, S5, S6, S8, S9 and S10.

Russian infantry must be placed to cover the wire and mine hexes, but also initially out of sight of the Germans so that they won't be broken before the game even properly starts. Good places to hide are N3, L2, Q4, R6 and R9. Another excellent position is P6, which the Germans cannot see without getting very close. This is a good place for the flamethrower team. I like to place a Russian squad in a foxhole in K5 too, and have it move to J4 to dig another to be occupied by the reinforcements when they enter. The ordnance should be placed in concealed locations from which they can expect to get flank or rear shots on the German armor. Don't forget to use APCR, which gives you a second chance to get a hit.

One problem for the Russians is where to put the radio, and where to call in the mortar fire. The obvious spot for the observer is on one of the Level 3 hill hexes to get maximum LOS. The danger is that the Germans can then observe the observer and suppress him with their own fire. This makes Q6, P5 and O5 poor locations because they are too exposed. N5 is a good spot, since from it you can observe east of the cliffs as well as some of the terrain west of the ridge. In case the enemy does push west of the cliff, the observer can advance to M5 with a good view. Both N5 and M5 have covered retreat routes, which can be very important if the observer breaks. FFEs can be dropped in front of the German advance or on top of it if you are fortunate. This is one case in which harassing fire would be handy to slow down the German pace. It attacks with only 4FP instead of 16, but it covers a much wider area and isn't likely to affect your own troops if they are in foxholes.

The Russian infantry must fire at the Germans when given the opportunity, but should forego Prep Fire if they can assault move to hide from the defensive fire (and then advance back into their previous positions). The Russian player must be alert for Molotov Cocktail and CC possibilities to nail any German AFV that wanders too close. Expect to take some losses and for the enemy to gain ground, but hope to slow him enough so that the Russian reinforcements can enter unopposed and grab a position from which they can then approach a hilltop hex.

The Germans should be able to take four Level 3 hexes without too much difficulty - generally four of the five hexes from O6 to M5. The hard part is keeping the Russians off the two remaining hill hexes (J4 and K5). This means making sure that no Good Order, unpinned, Russian infantry are in any of the hexes adjacent to these as well (K4, I4, I5 and J5), from which they can advance onto the summit in the Russian half of Turn 8. Also, you want to make sure no Russians are in M4 and/or N6; these woods might contain hidden crews which can also advance onto the Level 3 hexes.

The initial German set-up depends much on the Russian set-up. If there are Russian units that are in LOS of hexes in the German set-up area, put out strong fire groups to attack them, led by your 10-2 or 9-2. The tanks and Elefant start in W5, Y6 and Y4 where they can add their firepower to that of the infantry and can interdict Level 2 hill hexes.

The halftracks can be used to discover minefields; they are affected by A-P mines only on a "12". Too, they can be used to transport the infantry across the mines and wire quickly. Be cautious since these lightly armored vehicles are vulnerable to all the Russian guns, the artillery, the mortars and even to their MGs. Another option for the halftracks is to convert an open ground hex to a non-open ground hex so that concealed infantry can assault move or advance there without losing their concealment. For example, if there is a Russian unit in the woods at P6 and concealed Germans in Q8 or R7, a halftrack can move to Q7, allowing the Germans to advance there while retaining concealment and even getting a +1 TEM for the vehicle. This tactic works even if the halftrack becomes a wreck.

The German has three keys to victory: his flamethrowers, his armor and his planes. The FT are tricky to use effectively since they are only effective at close range, and their very possession makes the operator vulnerable. They can certainly be used as a threat, keeping them nearby but able to move while other units rush the defender. If the Russian fires at the first units, the squad with the FT can move into range and fry the enemy in the AFPh; the Russian holds his fire, the closer Germans should be able to get him. Yet another trick with the FT is to keep the operator concealed, preferably with the 10-2 leader, and assault move into concealment terrain within range of the target. If they can weather the defensive fire, they can do their damage.

The Panthers and Elefant start the game by firing from their initial positions at any visible Russians; but before long they will have to advance into the fray. These are the German's best weapons here; the player must protect them but still use them to full advantage. Keep them at least two hexes away from any Russian infantry, and they shouldn't have unsearched concealment terrain to their flanks or rear since they are vulnerable to the hidden Russian guns. Their own guns should be used to convince the Russians to abandon their positions by getting an Acquisition or two. Remember those powerful MGs of the Panthers. Do not use the AFVs to charge ahead to encircle the onboard Russians, or to prevent routs, or to overrun the enemy infantry. This only invites trouble from a hidden AT gun. Once the Russian AFVs enter the board, they must be the primary targets for the 75LL and 88LL guns. At a minimum, position them so that they cover the Level 3 hilltop hexes. Preferably, get them hull-down on Level 3 hexes themselves.

You don't know when you will get the Stukas, nor how many. If the Sturmoviks are already on board when your planes arrive, they have just one turn to attack before they are pounced on by the Russian fighters. Drop their bombs immediately on the choicest target(s) available. Otherwise, the bombs can be saved for use against the Soviet armor or dropped on Russian infantry in exposed positions. The Stuka's MGs can be very effective when used to strafe Russians in motion, either the ones retreating from your advancing troops or heading north to reinforce the front.

The Germans are faced with a heap of obstacles and a long way to go in eight turns; but they also have a lot of excellent tools with which to overcome those obstacles. Victory depends on how well the German player integrates those tools in his plan.



AACHEN'S PALL - Update

This is a very small, quick-playing scenario ideal for a tournament. I figured that by the end

of Saturday, the gamers in my tournament would be a bit shell-shocked and would appreciate a simple fight to end things. This scenario fit the bill perfectly. It has a total of 14 squads and a couple of vehicles, uses less than half a mapboard (ol' familiar Board 1), and lasts only four turns. The update should be playable in an hour or so at the most. (One game ended in much less than that - the American player won in the Prep Fire Phase of his first turn.)

The original scenario, published in The *GENERAL* as Scenario P, pitted seven US squads against five German squads. In the playtesting, we found that the Americans not only failed to take the hotel, they were driven back by the Germans as well. Part of the problem is the added vulnerability of the attackers in the *ASL* rules due to the various defensive first fire options: multiple MG ROF, Defensive First Fire, Subsequent First Fire, Final Protective Fire. After some experimenting, I found that adding a couple of squads to the American OB and promoting the German corporal (7-0) to a colonel (6+1) resulted in a fairly balanced game.

I gave both sides the standard ELR for this period. Snipers tend to be more active in urban settings, so I gave the U.S. a SAN of "3" and the Germans a SAN of "5" (because they are on the defense). To tip the game towards the Americans, I upgraded the 9-1 to a 9-2 leader - significantly helping their attack and steadiness as well as their rally capabilities. The German balance provision gives them one concealment counter. Essentially, this will halve the first American attack against any one hex. It allows the German, for example, to mass force in H5 with a good chance of survival.

Analysis

The German set-up should make it difficult for the Americans to cross the street to approach the hotel (building G6), and at the same time keep enough force in being so that when the enemy does manage to enter the hotel it will take them a while to clear it. Also, bear in mind that the U.S. player has the first fire, and he has a lot of firepower to play with. It is tempting to put a lot of strength with the 10-2 to get the benefit of his leadership, but the Germans must disperse to protect against that massive American hammerblow.

I like to start a squad with the HMG in H5. This is the most vulnerable position, but it is necessary to deny the Americans quick access to the hotel. The main German position is in G6 with the 10-2, two squads and the other HMG. From here they can cover I6 and I3. One squad is deployed into F5 and F6 (with the colonel in F6). This gives some additional fire into hexes I4 from F5 and J6 from F6. The last squad goes into G4 to prevent a flanking maneuver to encircle the defenders. It also nicely covers the road hexes I4 and I5.

The German strategy is to avoid American fire if possible, try to gain concealment, and then attack the exposed enemy with maximum firepower. When the GIs gain a toehold in the hotel, retreat to the upper levels. Note that point-blank fire does not apply if the target is two or more levels above the attacker. If Germans are on the 2nd level of G6, they can on Americans in the street at G5, G7 and H6 using point-blank fire, but the Americans do not get the same benefit firing back.

The U.S. player has a lot of force, but his squads are fragile (with morale of only "6"). They do much better firing than being fired at. So they should get as much mileage out of their 1st Turn Prep Fire as they can. For example, they can put six squads in J5, on levels 0 and 1, massing 36 FP on either H5 or G4. This still leaves three squads, the MMG and the 9-1 leader, for 22 more FP which can start in J4.

One of the most interesting aspects of this little scenario is the self-propelled 155mm, the M12. These were usually used as indirect mobile artillery in the rear. This battle is one of the few times they served in a direct fire role. It has the capability to do a lot of damage when it gets a hit, but unlike an assault gun it is very vulnerable. It must be crew-exposed to fire, and the crew receives only a +1 TEM. It is a prime target of the Germans if they are not distracted by a more immediate threat from the American infantry.

The scenario is too short for the big gun to do a lot of moving about, so its initial position is critical. Hex J8 allows it to attack three of the four hexes of the hotel, and J7 is a relatively safe location for its ammo vehicle. However, this position for the M12 is risky because it can likewise be attacked from the three hexes of the hotel. In K6 it can be fired at (and receive fire from) only hex G6. This reduces both its usefulness and its vulnerability. Similarly, in M6 it has LOS only to G6 - but it is now six hexes away and the inherent German firepower is halved due to the long range. Other good locations for the gun are J1 (where it has LOS to G6) and K3 (where it can see F5).

Even though it isn't as mobile as an assault gun, it can move to a new location by using one DPh to limber, its next turn to move, and the following DPh to unlimber - allowing it to fire in the next turn again. And don't forget that it can fire White Phosphorus. This causes a MC in the target hex as well as greatly reducing the effectiveness of outgoing fire due to the hindrance. Since WP is fired using the Area Target Type, it affects all levels of the target hex it hits.

An easily forgotten weapon is the bazooka. Although there is not any German armor in this scenario, the Baz can be used against infantry in a building, and can be fired from the ground level of a building by accepting a +2 To Hit DRM (with a morale of "6", the Americans do not ever want to risk the backblast penalties). At a range of two hexes, the To Hit number is "8", but there will be a net +5 DRM; this doesn't leave much of a chance to hit. However, if the Baz is moved up one hex, and fires from the street at an adjacent hex, the TH# is "9" with a DRM of +3, which gives a fair chance to hit and do damage.

Likewise, there is the German Panzerfaust for them, which is an inherent part of every squad, HS and SMC in their OB. Possible targets for the PFs are the enemy infantry in buildings and the M12. Since this scenario takes place in 1944, the range is only two hexes - a good reason for the American to park the M12 at least three hexes away from the Germans. Against infantry, it is less likely that the German unit attempting to fire even has a PF (a +1 for firing at infantry); and the chance of getting a hit against infantry in a stone building is very low. However, a leader can help, and if the PF hits it attacks with an unmodified 16 firepower factors.

Remember that the Americans don't actually have to take the hotel building to win, just break all the German MMC in it. In fact, the U.S. player can win by voluntarily breaking all his own squads, routing away, and then having the German abandon the hotel to chase them. Don't count on it though.

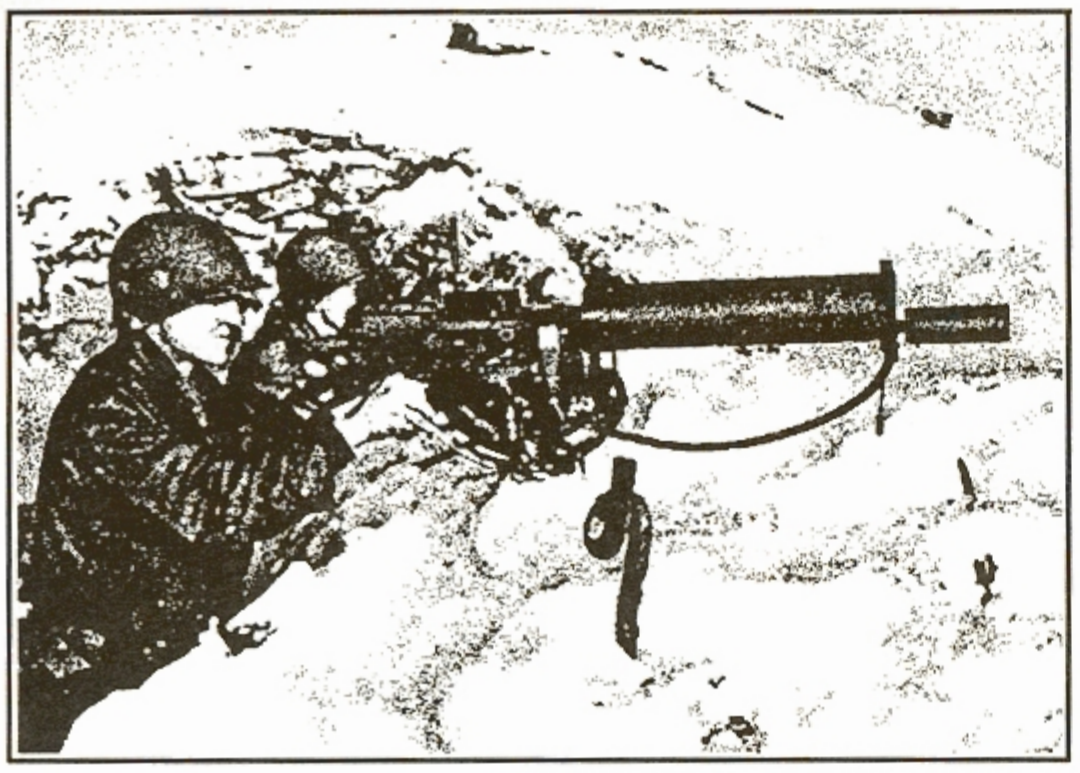
The American player should begin the game with Prep Fire attacks to soften up the German positions; but he can't afford to spend more than one turn on this. Squads must be advanced in I5 and I6 on Turn 1, or use Turn 2 to assault move into these hexes, covered by smoke. WP placed in H5 is particularly effective. If H5 is abandoned by the Germans , they can dash there, but only if they can safely rout away if broken. It may be necessary to send a squad or two to building G4 via H2 or H3 to reduce any irritating Germans in that building, to possibly get encirclement on Germans in H5 and G6, and to threaten more hexes of the hotel to further spread out the German defense. Another flanking force, perhaps a squad deployed into HS, can start in J8 and move to I7 to help encircle the enemy in H5, or to G9 to help encircle G6.

With careful use of smoke and firepower, the Americans should be able to gain the hotel in the first two turns, and use the last two turns to secure it. The US troops must not be shy about advancing into close combat; they have the advantage of numbers and CC firepower. The later turns should find the American firing at the upper levels of the building from the street and using infantry overrun to get past the 6+1 if he is being used to block the stairs. If possible, let a squad become concealed once in the hotel to enable it to assault move and advance adjacent to the Germans with relative safety (but it is very hard to be too safe with a 10-2 leader facing you down).

"Aachen's Pall", even though short, is a demanding contest for both sides. With sound play from each player, this scenario will often come down to the last dice roll.

CONCLUSION

Again, congratulations to the team of Cocke/Goetz for their impressive win in the AtlantiCon tournament. In four rounds of some of the toughest competition, their abilities (honed by long hours playtesting with the boys from Avalon Hill at the Baltimore offices) proved out. Watching them play was a most enjoyable way to spend a summer weekend. But the best part of the tournament, for me, was my chance to polish some of my old favorites from the days of *SQUAD LEADER*. I would hope to continue to have the opportunity to revise more of these "old chestnuts" in the future and re-introduce them in the high-energy environment of tournament play. Meanwhile, I think fans of *ASL* will enjoy these four. ☆



SEMPER AVANTI

Reference Notes for ASL

By Andrew H. Hershey

In recent issues of The *GENERAL*, various "light" combat formations of the United States, Nazi Germany, Great Britain and the Soviet Union during World War Two have been the subject of a series of excellent articles by Steven Swann. My article seeks to continue in that vein by examining one more of the five so-called "light" infantry units employed by the United States during the war: the 10th Mountain Division (hereafter, "10th Mtn." for short). It was the only designated mountain division in the American order-of-battle during the war, and an outfit unique in many other respects.

In the summer of 1942, with the United States engaged in a ground war in the Pacific Theater, the War Department turned its attention to the creation of special mountain and jungle-trained formations, which were deemed necessary in order to fight in such extremes of climate and topography as found there. At that time it was generally held throughout most quarters of the U.S. Army that a standard infantry division's heavy weapons and its dependence upon motorized transport would reduce its effectiveness as a fighting force in areas devoid of roads, densely overgrown and/or mountainous.

Plans were put forward by the War Department in August of 1942 for the formation of two or three mountain and jungle divisions, with each division comprised of about 10000 officers and men. From October of that year through February 1943 very little headway was made with the actual raising of such units, however. They remained "paper divisions". Debate and difficulties had arisen over size and attendant transport problems (one stumbling block being the movement of a large number of mules and horses, which formed a light division's primary source of transport, overseas to the proposed theaters of operation). Eventually, in March 1943, a TO&E figure of 9000 officers and men was settled on. Nearly all the components of a full infantry division were present, but in reduced numbers. The divisions were "lightened" by the elimination of all organic reconnaissance elements (which were later replaced), and by cutting most forms of motorized transport. In addition, the field artillery elements of the new divisions were diminished in firepower. Henceforward, three battalions of 75mm pack howitzers (U.S. Ordnance Note #12 and British Note #9) would make up each division's artillery compliment instead of the usual three battalions of 105mm and one of 155mm guns.

In June 1943, the War Department finally authorized mobilization, but for only one division - and this solely for test purposes. The division created, rather ironically, was the "89th Light Division (Truck)". This was accomplished by converting the existing 89th Infantry Division. However, upon further reflection two more divisions were given the "go-ahead", though still on an experimental basis only. The new units formed were the "71st Light Division (Pack, Jungle)" and the "10th Light Division (Pack, Alpine)", which eventually became the 10th Mtn. Division. The 10th was based, in large part, from the already existing 87th Infantry Regiment which had undergone some alpine training on Mt. Ranier in Washington and had taken part in the invasion of Kiska. Fresh recruits were directed to the new Mountain Training Center at Camp Hale (Colorado), located just outside Leadville at an altitude of 11000 feet. The new arrivals would eventually form the basis for the division's two other regiments, the 85th and 86th.

Like the 1st Special Service Force (see the *ASL Annual '90*), the 10th Mtn. was made up of experienced outdoorsmen: guides, hunters, trappers, cowboys, forest rangers, mountaineers and skiers - lots of very good skiers. A third of the division troops were already what we might call "hard-core skiers"; still a further half were proficient before training began, while the remainder learned quickly at Camp Hale. Proficiency at skiing formed the trademark of the unit because of a rather unique recruiting system. The National Ski Patrol, founded by Minot Dole in 1940, acted as a conduit channelling recruits to Camp Hale. Eventually over 10000 already qualified skiers were passed on by the patrol to the 10th Mtn. Division. Once at Camp Hale under the guidance of professional pre-war climbers (the 10th Mtn. had several renowned Swiss and Austrian climbers in its ranks), the men underwent extensive training in mountaineering, both in summer and winter conditions. Special artificial glaciers were built to better simulate European Alpine conditions. Needless-to-say, in winter, skiing was a daily routine (now turned into drudgery by the Army as the 10th Mtn.'s divisional song immortalizes "90 pounds of ruck-sack on my back"). Snow-shoeing and alpine survival skills (such as snow cave construction) were also stressed.

Another important factor which made the 10th Mtn. unique was that the intelligence level of all its ranks was well above the Army's divisional average. Nearly all the division's members had a high school diploma, with a goodly proportion either being college students/graduates or successful applicants for Officers Candidate School (OCS). Eight-six per cent of the division passed the required OCS exams. As a result of this some men turned down commissions or refused OCS offers altogether in order to remain with the 10th Mtn. In those cases where enlisted men were commissioned, most were able to return to the 10th Mtn.; a few, however, were eventually transferred (some to the FSSF). Both the physical nature of the training and the mental aptitude of the men engendered a great deal of unit cohesion and *esprit de corps*. Officers and enlisted men in the 10th Mtn. were on very close terms with one another. In recognition of the unique qualities of the 10th Mtn., when in the course of 1944 the War Department was forced to "strip" non-active divisions of personnel in order to replace losses in front-line units, it was one of only two divisions exempted from this process.

Having undergone their training, the next stage in the life of the experimental "light" divisions was a rigorous set of field tests and maneuvers. From February 1943 through April 1944, the new divisions were put through their paces. In California, the 89th and 71st Divisions sparred with each other in the Hunter Ligget Military Reservation. In the mountains around Leadville and Aspen, meanwhile, elements of the 10th Mtn. engaged in mock winter combat at 12000 feet or more. The results of the tests were poor. The 89th and 71st Divisions were found to have used a third (and sometimes half) of their manpower to build roads and trails or to simply man-haul supplies. Review boards recommended disbanding the two; higher authorities agreed and the divisions were reconverted to standard infantry divisions. In the case of the 10th Mtn., the trials were equally as unsatisfactory, poor results in part caused by ill-suited equipment and clothing and the choice of exercise area. However, unlike the other two divisions, the 10th Mtn. was given a reprieve. Despite the War Department's dislike for spe-

cialized troops at the time, the unique nature of the skills possessed by the men of the 10th Mtn. ensured their survival as a unit (skiing in the 1940s was not a popular recreational pastime). Sanctioned with the official designation "mountain division", the 10th boarded ship for Italy in December of 1944 with an expanded compliment of 14101 officers and men (roughly the size of a regular division), 6000 beloved mules and horses, plus several tons of specially-produced alpine equipment (packs, goose-down sleeping bags, boots, parkas, rifle-slings and climbing gear). Also bound for Italy with the division was a consignment of M-29 "Weasels". The Weasel was a specially designed tracked vehicle for use in the snow, the precursor of today's "snow-cats" (there is as yet no *ASL* piece which depicts the M-29, as there was in *G.I., ANVIL OF VICTORY*).

In February 1945 the 10th Mtn., under the command of Major-General George P. Hays, entered the Fifth Army's IV Corps sector and was assigned a position just west of Highway 64 in the Reno River valley. The mountains in the area, while rugged, were well below the 11000-12000 foot heights on which the division had trained. As the only fresh unit available, and more importantly because of its special skills, the 10th Mtn. was immediately selected by IV Corps HQ to spearhead the planned spring offensive. This attack was designed to break out of the Apennines, in which the Germans had held the Allies for some time, sweep through the Po valley west of Bologna, where the preponderance of U.S. armor could be used to best advantage, and then race to capture the passes which lead through the Italian Alps to Austria. If successful, the plan would trap several German armies. Once the offensive was underway, the 10th Mtn. was to form the vanguard of IV Corps' drive to the Alps (which is how it came by its motto *Semper Avanti*- - "Always In Front").

However, as a preliminary to the final offensive, it was vital that the peaks surrounding Highway 64 be captured, especially a long ridge line (the Sarasiccia-Campania) strongly held by the enemy. Lying to the west of the highway, the promontory comprised four central peaks and was dubbed "Riva Ridge" by the men of the 10th Mtn. (A familiar name, perhaps, to those of you who may have skied the "Black Diamond" run at Vail, named in honor of the division's exploits on the ridge.) To take the heights would require a vertical climb of 1500 feet, a move which could only be done at night due to the cross-fire from nearby hills. On the night of 18 February, the reinforced 1st battalion of the 86th Regiment, which had been hidden in houses and barns at the base of the ridge throughout the day, began the climb. Meanwhile, to the east the 1st and 3rd battalions of the 85th Regiment and 1st and 2nd battalions of the 87th Regiment prepared to launch an attack on a separate set of dominating peaks - Mount Belvedere and Mount Gorgolesco - once the ridge was in hand.

At 1930 hours the men started up the side of "Riva". In the darkness the assent was greatly aided by the fact that special path-finding teams of volunteers had reconnoitered routes and prefixed nylon ropes to the cliff. This measure enabled the reinforced companies of 200 men to climb with even the heaviest of support weapons. Most elements of the battalion were atop by 0230. The German sentries were caught off guard; they did not believe the Americans capable of such an alpine-style assault. By 0545, all four peaks were secured after a series of brief and bloody engagements with the enemy. Only in one instance were desperate measures called forth. Having ordered his men to construct snow caves, a young Lieutenant Loose called down artillery on his own position in order to stave off a German counter-attack which threatened to push his unit off the ridge. The survival skills put to a unique test worked well; protected by the snow and ice blocks, the lieutenant and his men weathered the barrage and held their position until relieved the next morning.

With the ridge secure, the way was now clear for the two battalions of 85th Regiment and those from the 87th Regiment to launch their own attacks on the other peaks astride the highway. Thankfully, this time no climb was required. On the night of the 19 February, having foregone artillery preparations in the hopes of achieving tactical surprise a second time, the two regiments attacked the German hilltop outposts. Once again success was swift, and by daybreak the two peaks were secured. Both units then pressed north-eastwards in the direction of Mount Torraccia. Here however, German resistance stiffened considerably. For the next several days, heavy fighting ensued. Eventually, allied fighter-bombers had to be directed on to the enemy positions. Over 400 sorties were flown in support of the 10th. Finally on the 23rd, the 3rd battalion of the 86th Regiment, committed from reserve, broke the German's hold on the heights. Mount Torraccia fell, and the path to the Po was open.

In order to re-supply the attacking units atop the Apennine peaks, which in some areas jut out from the valley floor like volcanic islands from the seabed, the engineers of the 10th Mtn. Division (126th Mountain Engineer Regiment) erected an ingenious system of aerial tramways. These 8'x4' pallets attached to overhead cables enabled those on the summit to be re-supplied in a matter of minutes instead of the several hours required to hike up by man and mule. Likewise, the wounded could be quickly evacuated on the tram's return journey. By early March, in bold attacks in the face of stiff opposition, the 10th Mtn. had captured the remaining peaks along Highway 64. In so doing, Hays had successfully maneuvered IV Corps into position for its spring offensive. This was not done without a heavy cost; the division suffered 1349 casualties (309 KIA).

On April 14th, after a pause to refit and a further delay caused by bad weather, the primary offensive commenced. The 10th Mtn. was once again chosen "to carry the ball." So began what became known in IV Corps' history as the "19 Days" as, with the 10th Mtn. leading the way, the corps went from the Apennines to the Alps - an advance for the 10th Mtn. of over 140 miles. On the morning of the 14th, after a heavy air and artillery preparation lasting nearly 90 minutes, the 10th Mtn. moved forward into the Pra del Bianco, a bowl-shaped basin just ahead of Rocca Roffeno (the divisional object for the day). Capture of the massif and its nearby road junction would not only allow direct road access into the Po valley, but would also turn the left flank of the German 94th Infantry Division.

As the 85th Regiment entered the Pra del Bianco, however, it ran straight into a series of entrenched and fortified positions which were screened by an extensive network of both anti-personnel and anti-tank minefields. Fortunately these enemy positions were completely manned only at night. The mines, however, slowed the 85th Regiment and forced accompanying tanks and tank destroyers to retire. Alerted to the attack, German reinforcements began to arrive and take up their firing positions in the fortifications. The 85th's attack began to stall. While artillery was being called down, a few enemy positions were silenced at close quarters by the infantrymen of the regiment in bitter fighting. On his own initiative, PFC John D. Magrath of G Company armed only with his rifle cleared one machinegun post. Taking the captured weapon, Magrath went on to knock out three more redoubts, one of which contained two heavy machineguns. But while checking on the wounded men left behind during his heroics, Magrath was himself killed. His actions earned him the Medal of Honor. The efforts of Company G in clearing the basin enabled a battalion of the 86th Regiment to thrust through and take Rocca Roffeno by late afternoon. Despite higher-than-expected casualties, the offensive was still on schedule.

Over the next several days the men of the 10th "island hopped" along the remaining peaks which overlooked the Po valley, capturing in the process over 3000 disheartened German prisoners. Having at last broken out of the Apennines, the race to the Alps was underway in earnest on the 20th of April. On the 23rd, using assault boats and 50 attached DUKWs, the 10th Mtn. was the first IV Corps formation to cross the Po River. In order to maintain its position ahead of IV Corps, now that the mountains were behind them, General Hays formed an *ad-hoc* mobile task force under the command of Colonel William O. Darby of Ranger fame (see The *GENERAL*, Vol. 25, #5). Darby had recently been named assistant divisional commander to the 10th Mtn. when its original divisional officer was wounded by a mine leading his own task force forward to the Po River.

Task Force Darby (TFD), as it was known, consisted of the division's 86th Regiment, the 13th Tank Battalion (taken from the 1st Armored Division), a company of light tanks and tank destroyers and three battalions of self-propelled artillery. While TFD raced forward across the Po plain, the remaining two regiments, the 85th and 87th, mopped up bypassed strong points. On the 25th, just two days after crossing the Po River, TFD advanced 20 miles in one day to Villafranca. There, after a brief firefight, it captured the town's airfield and an intact FockeWulf 190 (its pilot had landed thinking the airfield was still in German hands). From Villafranca, TFD drove pell-mell some 40 miles northwards to Lake Garda with the objective of seizing a series of tunnels and passes which led north through the Italian Alps

towards Austria. The Germans, aware of their importance to the Allied offensive, had fortified some and prepared others for demolition. As TFD made its way forward, the Germans set off charges at the first series of tunnels, thereby blocking the entrances and bringing down onto the road much of the surrounding cliff-face. Using DUKWs, which had remained with the division, Company G of the 86th Regiment skirted around the blocked tunnels and made an amphibious assault under fire on the remaining tunnel strongpoints. This succeeded in capturing several before the Germans were able to rig them for demolition. Darby then went on to take Torbole, a small town at the head of Lake Garda. It was here on the afternoon of April 30th, while discussing plans with a fellow officer, that the much-decorated Colonel Darby was killed by a lone round from a concealed German 88mm.

Just two days later, all was quiet on the Italian front. Hostilities had ceased - at least in Italy - with a negotiated truce. In 114 days of fighting the 10th Mountain Division had suffered 953 dead and 3134 wounded, one-third of all American casualties in Italy and the heaviest toll taken by any division of its size for that length of time in combat anywhere. This fact serves as a reminder that the 10th Mountain was one of the elite fighting combat units of World War Two, despite its short existence. After returning to the States in August, the division was formally decommissioned in November 1945.

Fitting the 10th Mtn. into ASL

One facet of the division which the preceding has endeavored to convey is that the ranks of the 10th Mtn. were filled with what the Army would call "officer material". Because of this, each platoon leader is entitled to a "-1" modifier, with its respective morale level being determined by a die roll (1-2 = 9-1 SMC; 3-6 = 8-1). While the division contained no more officers than its Table of Organization allowed it to (673), its enlisted ranks were almost to a man potential officers themselves, (recall the 86% figure mentioned above). Thus, in contrast with the FSSF and Rangers, whose officers have been the subject of special consideration in terms of *ASL*, it is upon the average infantrymen (or in this case the above-average infantrymen) of the 10th Mtn. which we should concentrate.

In order to reflect the unique qualities of these men, I believe that companies and platoons of the division should have a higher compliment of Non-Commissioned Officers (8-0 and 7-0 leader types) than might normally be allotted to them otherwise (see Table 2). In a DYO scenario depicting the 10th Mtn., this can be implemented quite easily. Any fractional surplus left over from the division of friendly Equivalent squads (H1.74) by the Leader Generation (LG) factor enables the player to add one additional 8-0 *and* one 7-0 leader. If this calculation yields no fractional remainder, add one 8-0 leader automatically. (Remember that elite squads must have been purchased earlier.) This system also yields improved chances of "trading up" (H1.81) and effectively simulates the better "officer pool" which the division enjoyed.

In addition, because an overwhelming proportion of the division's men qualified for OCS (some even turned down commissions in order to remain with the unit when transfer seemed likely), the *first* and *second* Rally attempts of a player's *own* Rally Phase may be performed as a Self-Rally regardless of normal Self-Rally capability (A18.11). However, each attempt at Self-Rally must take place in a separate Location. All other rules regarding Self-Rally are unchanged, except as modified herein: if one or both of the MMC rolls an original "2" Dice Roll (DR), each is entitled to an additional "-1" die roll modifier (drm) on the ensuing Leader Creation Table (A18.2). This special drm is cumulative with all others listed for Nationality, Morale Level, Status, etc. Likewise, anytime a 10th Mtn. MMC attacking in Close Combat rolls an original "2" DR, it may also apply the special drm (-1) to any Leader Creation attempt (A18.12).

The 10th Mtn. was, for the most part, a standard American infantry division in terms of the composition of a line company (three rifle platoons and one heavy-weapons platoon). The composition of a rifle platoon's squad was 12 men - ten armed with M1 semi-automatic rifles, one with a Browning Automatic Rifle and the twelfth man with a 1903 Springfield bolt-action

TABLE 1: Table of Organization - 10th U.S. Mountain Division

Unit	Manpower	Animals	ASL Equivalent
3 Regiments (each)	128/2739	953**	
3 Battalions (each)	35/825	c.317	
HQ Company	9/112		10-3 SMC 8-1 SMC 2x6-6-7 MMC
3 Line Cos. (each)	6/187		
Company HQ	2/20		9-2 SMC 8-1 SMC 2x6-6-7 MMC MMG
3 Rifle Platoons (each)	1/36		9/8-1 SMC*** 3x6-6-7 MMC
Heavy Weapons Platoon	1/36		8-1 SMC 7x3-4-7 HS 2xMMG 3x60mm MTR BAZ (1945)

* - Officer/Enlisted
** - 9xBell Horse, 51xRiding Horse, 765xPack Mule, 128xRiding Mule
*** - see article for explanation

TABLE 2: Standard 10th Mountain Company OB

This would be the ASL composition of a single 10th Mountain line company. For actions depicting two companies, add one battalion-level 8-1 SMC and a 6-6-7 MMC, plus a 3-4-7 HS and BAZ (1945) from the battalion's Heavy Weapons Company. If three companies are involved, add the 10-3 SMC, plus one Radio (81mm MTR OBA available), a 6-6-7 MMC, and a 3-4-7 HS with HMG.

9-2 SMC
9-1 SMC
4x8-1 SMC
2x7-0 SMC (see article)
11x6-6-7 MMC
7x3-4-7 HS
BAZ (1945)
3xMMG
3xM19 60mm MTR

TABLE 3: Divisional Assets

Unit	ASL Equivalent
3 Field Artillery Battalions	
4 Artillery Batteries (each)	4x2-2-7 Crew 4x75mm Pack Howitzer 4xMule
10th Mountain AT Battalion	
6 AT Platoons (each)	3x2-2-7 Crew 3x57L M1 ATG 3xJeep
10th Recon Troop Mechanized	
3 Recon Platoons (each)	8-1 SMC 7-0 SMC 6x3-4-7 HS 3xM8 AC 4xJeep (with MG) 2xJeep (with dm 60mm MTR)

TABLE 4: 10th Mountain Capabilities

	Feb-March 1945	Apr-May 1945
Morale:	Normal	Normal
ELR:	5	4
SAN:	4	2
Stealth:	No	No
Ski:	Yes	Yes

rifle. This last weapon could be fitted with a telescopic sight for use as a sniper rifle. (In practice, it was often replaced by another M1 for added firepower.) A squad of the 10th Mtn. would best be represented by a 6-6-7. The very nature of the recruits and their training, which instilled a great deal of confidence, self-reliance and unit cohesion, warrants the use of the 6-6-7 and its higher morale level. Both the War Department and the commander of the German forces opposing the 10th Mtn., Field Marshall Kesselring, considered the division an "elite unit". As elite squads, the MMC can make use of all U.S. support weapons without penalty. The morale would not be considered to be underlined, however.

In depicting the first actions of the 10th Mtn. during February and March 1945, their Experience Level Rating (ELR) should be "5". Thereafter, due to the heavy casualties, the ELR would drop to "4" for those actions taking place in April and May of 1945. Since the mountains offered excellent terrain for snipers and the mountain warfare field manual called for their extensive use, the Sniper Activation Number (SAN) should be "4" for those scenarios taking place in February and March 1945. Thereafter, the SAN value should be set at "2" to better reflect the rapid advances in the Po valley, which left little time to set up planned and camouflaged sniper positions.

The "specialty" of the 10th Mtn. was skiing and mountaineering. Therefore, all SMC and MMC of the 10th Mtn. are always assumed to be ski-equipped in scenarios where ground/deep snow is present. Because of their expertise in cross-country skiing, all such SMC and MMC receive a movement bonus of one MF while on skiis. This 1MF bonus is only applicable if the unit does not change elevation at *anytime* during the course of its Movement Phase (MPh). The additional movement factor awarded by this bonus may also be used to extend the special MF allotment of broken (A10.5)/wounded (A17.2)/berserk (A15.431) units as well. [*EXC:* This 1MF bonus derived for not changing elevation cannot be claimed if the unit must/elects to change elevation during the MPh/RtPh.] All other rules regarding units on skiis apply unaltered (E4.3). SMC and MMC of the 10th Mtn. are always considered to be wearing Winter Camouflage (E3.71) in scenarios where any type of snow is present. As a result of their mountaineer training, SMC and MMC are assumed to be Commandos for purposes of climbing and scaling only. (Note: Thus they are not stealthy and their ELR/Morale is still subject to Table 4 on the previous page.)

In contrast with some of the other "light" units already examined, the 10th Mtn. was a division in its own right and so consequently had organic support elements. In terms of *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, three of the divisional assets can be simulated easily: artillery, anti-tank and reconnaissance. The division's three field artillery battalions each had three batteries of four 75mm pack howitzers (M1A1), which instead of being drawn by jeeps were packed by mules (G10.1). Each of these battalions had 347 mules assigned to it to pack the guns, which could be broken down into six pieces each for loading, with ammunition and other equipment man- or animal-packed. Depending upon the terrain, a mule was capable of carrying 200-300 pounds and it would therefore take between five to six mules to carry one gun. The photographic evidence seems to indicate that a single mule carried between 12-15 rounds of 75mm ammunition. All rules for animal-pack guns should be observed; and in any DYO scenarios, players should allocate enough animal counters for transport.

On the basis that the mountains were not the best environment for tanks, the divisional TO&E allowed for a limited anti-tank capability. The division's AT battalion consisted of 18 57mm (M1) guns towed by jeeps. The guns were formed into six platoons of three guns and three jeeps each.

Originally, the "light" divisions were to be devoid of organic reconnaissance elements. These units, as it was then thought, could be raised on an *ad-hoc* basis from elsewhere when needed. But by 1944 when the 10th Mtn. shipped out for Italy, separate recon elements had been re-inserted after the field trials. The division's reconnaissance troop of five officers and 157 men were initially mounted on horseback; in actual fact, the troop was mechanized (with the horses retained for special situations). The troop was eventually composed of three platoons of three M8 armored cars and six jeeps, all carrying either machineguns or 60mm mortars.

It is hoped that through this article and the accompanying scenario that readers will come away with an appreciation of one of the more unique combat outfits of the Second World War, America's alpine division. As the only U.S. division of its kind, it oftentimes found itself placed "between a rock and a hard place". But it was "Always in Front". ☆

WANTED:
Marketing/Sales Director

Can you replace a man whose career spans the entire life of the commercial wargaming hobby? With the announced retirement of Tom Shaw, The Avalon Hill Game Company is seeking a new director for its Marketing and Sales Division. Duties include, but are not limited to:

Preparation and scheduling of Trade and consumer advertising.

Liaison with manufacturers' representatives and domestic/foreign accounts.

Administration of COOP advertising policy.

Development of sales aids and other programs for the Trade.

Representation of the company at numerous Trade shows and game conventions.

While not necessary for the applicant to be familar with all of our games, preference will be given to the individual who is if all other qualifications are the same. Interested readers should respond with a detailed resume to Jack Dott, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214.

MORE OLD CHESTNUTS

The Origins ASL Tournament Scenarios

By Jim Stahler

At Origins '91, held in Baltimore, I offered the second installment (see Vol. 27, Nos. 2 and 3 of The *GENERAL*) of my *ASL* Team Tournament. Eventually, 18 two-man teams participated. Congratulations to the team of Guy Chaney and Mike McGrath, who took first place in the standings. And an honorable mention must go to last year's winning team, Perry Cocke and Chuck Goetz, who finished in the #2 spot, losing matches only to Guy and Mike.

Like my 1990 tournament at AtlantiCon, the 1991 version had two-man teams play in four rounds, the best three of which counted. Teams are not eliminated from the tournament, except when they withdraw. There was one notable improvement over last year's competition: I figured how to get everyone playing with an odd number of teams entered without resorting to an unsavory "bye". I paired off all the teams but three. For each of those three, the U.S. player of one team was pitted against the German player of the second team, and his partner took the Germans against a U.S. player of the third team. The remaining members of the second and third team play each other. The teammates of these three teams do play members of different teams, but each team takes both the German and American side in each scenario - and everyone gets to play!

I used four more updated "oldies" from the original SL system. This year, my scenarios even had a theme. They all pitted American paratroopers against German forces, and they all took place in rural terrain (in fact, they all used Board 5). However, the four scenarios did represent four different campaigns: Sicily, *Market-Garden*, the Bulge and Operation *Varsity*. These were all primarily infantry actions, but each scenario includes a German vehicle or two to add spice to the challenge.

Once again, here I present the updated designs of the four scenarios I used in the team tournament, together with my rationale for the changes, along with a brief analysis of the strategies and tactics of each.

With the addition of the French to the system, I foresee many more potential scenario updates; indeed, I am already hard at work on the 1992 Team Tournament scenarios, to be offered at AtlantiCon in College Park, MD this coming summer. The best players will again put in an appearance; you could be among them.



THE NISCEMI-BISCARI HIGHWAY

For the first match, the action takes place in Sicily. Scattered paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne capture a couple of Italian anti-tank guns, lay a small minefield, and block the road between Niscemi and Biscari to protect the invasion beaches from a counterattack by the Hermann Goering Division. This scenario was originally published in The *GENERAL* as Scenario E.

One problem that I faced upgrading this scenario (indeed, all of them) is that the US paratrooper squads dropped from 8-4-7 MMC to 7-4-7 in the transformation of *SL* into *ASL*. That one factor drops each a column on the IFT for almost every attack, and significantly reduces their power in Close Combat (since the German MMCs tend to come in multiples of 4FP). The increased broken-side morale is nice; but originally, the GIs didn't suffer from DM, and so rallied quicker than they do now. (They just don't make paratroopers like they used to!)

At the same time, the German MGs—which usually form a significant portion of their fire attack strength—have been "improved" in *ASL* by a factor each. In the original version of Scenario E, the Americans had 40 attack factors, while the Germans (MMCs plus MGs) had 44. If I had made a straight translation to *ASL*, the Americans would have dropped to 35 factors while the Germans would be up to 49 factors (a swing of nine factors). Add to that the multiple ROF that MGs now have, and the Americans are at a severe disadvantage. In our local playtesting, the Germans always won. To redress the balance, I removed a LMG from the German OB and added a squad to the American OB. The attack factor ratio is now 42 US versus 46 German, very similar to the original design.

Yet the Americans still needed some help, as further playtesting proved. So I gave them six Concealment counters to confuse the German opponent a bit and make things more interesting for both players. I also increased the U.S. leadership by substituting a 9-1 for an 8-0. These are elite troops, after all.

I replaced the original PSW 231 with the PSW 232 model to keep the six-factor IFE intact. Besides, in July 1943, the PSW 232 was the more common vehicle in German service (although both were used by the Hermann Goering Division) at this stage of the war. To counter the armored threat, the paratroopers have the two captured AT guns (for which we can now use actual Italian counters), but they really need more to keep the armored car at bay. I increased the number of bazookas from one to three. Also, note that some of the A-P mines can be exchanged for A-T mines. At least one player in the tournament did this to good effect.

Speaking of mines, in the original system, mine factors could be sprinkled individually all over the map (1-2 factors per hex). Since the mines attack as units both enter and leave the hex, one factor could be quite effective. But no longer. Now mines must be placed in fields of six, eight or 12 factors per hex. Consequently, I increased the number of mine factors from "10" to "12". So the Americans can have now two hexes with six mine factors each, or put all of their eggs in one 12-factor basket. It forced some interesting decisions upon the American players in the tournament, especially when I removed the SSR that forbid the mining of building hexes.

Finally, I dropped the SSR forbidding foxholes to be dug, since I'd read nothing about the situation that would prevent such activity. In fact, digging foxholes seems to me the likely thing to do, given the time and opportunity.

For play-balance provisions, I allow the US player to set up one MMC using HIP. This can be quite important, especially for a bazooka team. As long as there is a squad lurking somewhere in the woods, the German will have to be very careful with his armored car. For the German play-balance benefit, remove one US squad. This takes us back to the number of squads in the original scenario. The US ELR is "5" of course, which is the norm for paratroopers; the German value is "4", also standard for them for this month of the war. Sniper numbers were set deliberately low, since this is a rural setting and snipers would have fewer places to hide than in a city.

All these changes bore up rather well in tournament play. Out of 17 games of this scenario, the Germans won nine and the Americans eight. It doesn't get much better balanced than this.

The important match-up in this scenario is the bazookas and AT guns versus the German armor. In 1943, the bazookas' To Kill number is "13" while the AC's strongest armor is only "3". Thus, the armored car can be destroyed on a DR or "9" or less, immobilized or shocked on a "10", against the front. From any other facing, it is killed with anything other than a dud. Clearly, this armored car crew should be mortally afraid of the bazooka-toting paratroopers. The bazooka's range is only four hexes, and at maximum range its To Hit number is "4" . . . but why take chances. The German player should keep his AC at least five hexes away from the nearest possible bazooka, and protected by infantry should the American get aggressive and move a BAZ forward into firing position.

The captive Italian AT guns are, meanwhile, both a lot less dangerous and a lot more dangerous than the bazookas. They are less so because their TK# is only "10" (although this can be increased by one within a two-hex range). That AC, with its frontal armor, has a fair chance of surviving a frontal hit from an AT gun. Of course, a flank or rear shot is significantly more deadly because of the weaker armor.

But the AT guns are more dangerous because they set up hidden, making that flank or rear shot more likely than any shot from a bazooka should the German get a bit careless. Too, the AT guns have a much longer range than the bazookas. It is possible for them to hit the armored car anywhere on the mapboard if they have an LOS to it. The chance of hitting becomes minimal beyond six hexes, especially if the AC is in motion. At the typical range of 7-12 hexes, the TH# is "8", with a possible +4 DRM (for being captured, plus fire at a moving target). Thus, the AC is only hit on a DR of "4" or less, making such far from a sure thing. The Americans should hold their fire unless the AC is stopped; and even then they may be reluctant to fire beyond a six-hex range.

The German player has the advantage in numbers, firepower, range, leadership and armor. And the German player has the initiative, which allows him to choose his axis of attack. The American has a lot of anti-tank weapons, but the prime US advantage must be deception - personified in his Concealment counters, HIP guns, and the mines. Most important, perhaps, the American player has time on his side, since the Germans are faced with a strict time limit.

The American player has three basic choices in his defensive strategy. He can: 1) set up everything as far forward as possible with the intention of keeping the Germans from crossing the road between 5R9 and 5EE7; 2) give up the building 4X1 and defend in the rear between buildings 4Y9 and 4CC6 behind the hedge; or 3) plan a fallback defense to make the German work to cross the road to get to Board 4, but preserve enough paratroopers to make a stand for the rear two buildings. Personally, I prefer the last option.

To keep the Germans from crossing the R9-EE7 road in their first turn, I like to position squads in 4R1 (to control hex 5R9), 4U1 (to watch 5T9, U10 and V9), 4V1 (which has LOS to 5S9) and W1 (for 5V9, W10 and X9). Note that a unit can start concealed in 4V1, though Open Ground, since no German unit starts on the map. On the other side of the board, US units should start in 4AA1 and 4B1 to discourage the Germans from marching down the road from 5GG5 singing panzer songs.

Once the Germans enter and bring significant fire to bear, the paratroopers should pull back. They won't last long trading shots with the enemy, since the Germans can concentrate their firepower better, the terrain is about even, and the Germans have a 9-2 leader and an armored car. Good positions to fall back to are the buildings in 4X1 and 4T3, and the woods in 4U3, V2, Z3 and AA4. When it becomes necessary to vacate that line, the woods in 4T4 and 4V3 are good spots for delaying units while all other survivors race for the big grainfield. When the paratroopers reach the buildings in 4X8, 4Y9 and 4CC6, they must stop and fight. By this time, the Germans should be short on time and faced with no protected avenues of approach. If all goes well, the German player will either have to reduce the paratroopers by fire to take a second building safely (which can take too long) or make a desperate charge across the open with little chance of success.

Two vital issues which the US player must consider in this strategy are the placement of the captured AT guns, and of his mines. The AT guns have but one mission - neutralize the German armored car. The key is to place them where the enemy won't expect, but where they can get a clear shot at the AC, preferably within six hexes. Even if these don't destroy the damn thing, if they remain hidden long enough to cause the German player to cautiously keep his AC out of the action, the guns have done their job.

That armored car is not likely to move through the woods; therefore your opponent has three choices for an approach. It can either cross the bridge in 5Y8, cross the bridge in 5Z9, or cross the gully somewhere between 5AA10 and 5FF7. An AT gun in 4CC1 can guard both bridges, and the other in 4FF1 can watch the approaches and exit of the gully. However, there are lots of other creative possibilities. A hidden gun in 4AA1 can guard the gully, while a gun in 4BB1 can fire at the armored car if it crosses either bridge. Other interesting places to consider are 4GG4 and 4Z3, or for a last-ditch defense 4CC6 and 4X8. Don't forget to boresight the guns, since the Germans enter from offboard; and remember that the gun crews can function as infantry when the guns break down (which they will do on a DR of "10" or more).

The 12 mine factors can be placed in one hex, divided into two fields of six factors each, or some of them can be exchanged for A-T mines. Personally, I shy away from that last option myself, since the A-T mines can only attack the armored car - which must move right into the A-T minefield. And even then, the A-T mine attack dr must be passed. However, at least one American player in the tournament did make use of A-T mines, which did eliminate the enemy AC. I prefer, however, to spread the mines out in two six-factor groups. Hex 4X1 is an interesting spot to place mines, because some German infantry will almost certainly enter that hex to satisfy the Victory Conditions. However, that is also a handy hex in which to post some of your own forces, who won't easily withdraw if surrounded by mines and who might trigger the minefield before the Germans even enter the hex. Hex 4Y1 is another obvious place for a minefield, blocking the only road between boards 4 and 5. A less obvious location is 4S3, which would be useful if the Americans are planning to make a stand at the road between 4R2 and 4W2.

If the GIs defend further back, mines could be put in 4AA4 and 4BB1 to deny the enemy good positions from which to fire on 4CC6. Alternatively, mines could be placed in 4W8 and 4X7 to interdict the only covered approach to the US positions. As with the AT guns, the mines are best placed in locations that the German won't expect, but that he will probably enter in the course of the game; and the placement should be integrated with the American scheme to stop the Germans. Obviously, if you play the same fellows frequently, placement should change from game to game to keep your enemy guessing.

There are two more aspects to consider in American play: smoke and prisoners.

All the US squads have a smoke placement number of "3", and they can place WP with a dr of "2". I don't see much opportunity for the paratroopers to make use of the latter, for they must be adjacent to a German unit during their MPh with two MF remaining. In this case, they might as well leave the neighborhood, since they face point-blank fire from the enemy if they fail to find their WP grenades. However, smoke can come in very handy. For example, smoke can be placed in the squad's own hex to cover a retreat, or to make an open ground hex safer to cross to reach cover. However, there is the attendant risk. If the squad fails to place the smoke, it can be attacked in its current hex without the cover of any smoke; and if the squad should roll a "6" on the placement dr, it cannot move at all! But, if the squad is in a tight spot anyway, the risk is well worth it.

It is not too likely, but sometimes a German unit must rout without a safe route. It must then offer to surrender, and the American player must decide whether to take it prisoner, or refuse the surrender and invoke No Quarter. Should you have the chance to capture a German in this scenario, it would be best to refuse the surrender. I have too often seen the guarding unit break (usually from a sniper) and the prisoners escape to eliminate the guard and rearm themselves. In this small scenario, that event can be fatal to the Americans. On the other hand, there will be very few times when "No Quarter" might prevent a German from surrendering. I recommend that the paratroopers take the attitude "No more Mr. Nice Guy," and keep themselves unburdened by prisoners.

German strategy depends on the choice of entrance hex made at the start of the game. Most gamers will select the protected road hex at the north end of the board (5R6). This locks the German into an attack through the woods in the northeast part of Board 4, and thence on through the grainfield towards 4X8. The Germans will have to take buildings 4X1 and 4Y9 to win. If the 5R9-5Y10 road is not defended, German platoons can get as far as hexes 4T1, 4U1 and 5V10 on Turn 1. If the enemy does defend the road, the German player should just occupy the woods from 5R8 to 5V8, all set to apply some serious firepower against the paratroopers. A HS or two can get to the road in hexes 5S9 and 5T9 without a leader, hopefully drawing some fire and exposing some American positions. Meanwhile, the 9-2 leader should have three squads with the MMG and a LMG with him, forming a very nasty firegroup with 20 FP. The other two LMGs, carried by two or three more squads, follow the 8-1 to compose another 14-18 FP group. The remainder have the mission of infiltrating the US positions - making withdrawal risky, drawing fire away from the larger firegroups, and exposing the American positions.

Your armored car should not rush into the combat too quickly. When the battle has been joined, the PSW 232 can be used to zip to the rear of the American forces to keep them from pulling back or to interfere with the routing of broken paratroopers. It should remain in Motion to lessen the chance of a hit, and always stay at least five hexes away from any bazooka

(it can take its chances with the hidden Italian AT guns). When the AT guns are located, the armored car can find a "safe" hex and stop to apply its considerable firepower against stubborn American positions, firing its IFE and CMG as a firegroup. It can even be used in an armored assault to help the infantry make that last hop onto the objective.

But don't overlook the southern entrance (via 5GG5/6) when pondering your German strategy. Going from 5GG6 to the building FF6 to the gully, your infantry can get to 5FF7 and 5EE8. On the bound during the Advance Phase, they go to Crest status to bring down fire on hexes 4CC1 and 4FF1. Alternately, they could continue down the gully and on the next turn go into Crest status as far down as AA10, or advance to the woods in 5Z10. From there, the Germans can head towards 4X1, or ignore it and go directly for 4CC6. Then on to 4Y9. Or the German player could grab 4X1 and 4CC6 to win the game.

Regardless of the route you take, you must concentrate against part of the American force and destroy it in detail, using your superior firepower, range and leadership. You must be alert to any opportunity to cut off retreating paratroopers, while bringing a lot of firepower to bear on their front.

Consider now the German smoke capability, and their view of "No Quarter". Every German squad has a smoke exponent of "1". Since the squad must expend two MF to even attempt to place smoke in an adjacent hex, and a dr of "6" freezes the unit, this is not a tactic for the German player to rely upon. The armored car, however, has a smoke dispenser that leaves smoke on a DR of "6" or less, without risk of depletion. This can be *very* handy, especially in the endgame. Suppose, for instance, the German player has units in 4AA4 that must take 4CC6. The PSW 232 is nearby, and no bazookas are around. The AC can move to 4BB5 and use its smoke dispenser. If it is successful, the infantry can then run through 4AA5, 4BB4 and 4BB5 with some protection from that smoke.

Unlike the panzergrenadiers, the paratroopers will often find themselves in positions where they will be forced to surrender (if the Germans have any luck at all). Adroit use of the armored car to penetrate into the American rear to prevent routs can bring this about. The Germans, unlike the ruthless Americans, should take prisoners whenever possible so that other trapped paratroopers will not be able to low-crawl away. Of course, the Germans must be careful, lest the prisoners escape and retake one of the objective buildings. (This nearly cost one German player his victory in a game in the tournament.)

In summary, "The Niscemi-Biscari Highway" is an almost perfect tournament scenario. It is fast-paced, and always varied. It offers both players several tough choices, yet the forces are such that one can recover from minor errors in judgement or luck. While the onus of the attack is upon the Germans, they certainly have the quality and quantity to achieve their goal - provided they don't dilly-dally. As the tournament results proved, it is an excellent challenge for all players of *ASL*.



DEVIL'S HILL

Market-Garden is in progress. The Allied vanguard has a very long, very narrow supply line that is the constant target of German counterattacks. Here, the men of the 82nd Airborne Division prepare to assault a German-held hill to protect the highway from enemy observation. This scenario features the US paratroopers on the attack; but it also offers the German player the chance to counterattack with his reinforcements. The paratroopers face second-line Germans, dug in on a hill, with some first-line reinforcements on the way.

This scenario is unique in two ways. It is rare for such a small scenario to give both sides an opportunity to attack (although when the game starts, the burden is on the Americans). Secondly, the German player both sets up first and moves first. This gives the defenders the first fire opportunities of the match, but if the Americans survive the initial prep fire, they can have both the defensive fire and their own prep fire before the Germans can react again. This makes for some intense minutes at the beginning of the game.

"Devil's Hill" was originally published as Scenario G in The *GENERAL* (Vol. 17, No. 2). I never played this first *SL* version, but I had been told that it was unbalanced in the German's favor - and I can see why at a glance. Not only do the paratroopers have to attack across open ground to a hill with an entrenched enemy on top, but the enemy has an advantage in range, a HMG and MMG, and a 9-2 leader! So, before doing anything else, I reduced the German 9-2 to a 9-1, while promoting one US 9-1 to a 9-2; and I reduced the Germans holding the hill to 2nd line troops. But when we playtested this version before the convention, the Germans still won consistently.

Back to the drawing board. In translating "Devil's Hill" to *ASL*, the paratroopers lose an attack factor per squad - nine factors. The Germans meanwhile gain a factor for each MG. This is a swing of 11 fire factors. I adjusted for this by adding another squad to the American OB, and by postponing one of the German squads until Turn 3. I also increased the leadership of the US 8-0 to 8-1 and transferred the onboard German 8-0 to the first group of reinforcements. In further playtesting, it seemed balance had been achieved. This was confirmed during the tournament, in which the Germans won eight games and the Americans seven. Again, the results were as close as one could want, with a lot of the matches themselves being real cliffhangers (which is appropriate, considering the Board 2 terrain).

For play balance, to aid the Americans add a second MMG to the US forces to give them more firepower. To help the German player, upgrade the second-line troops to 4-6-7s (as they were in the original design). The ELR of the paratroopers is the usual "5"; the Germans display their standard ELR for 1944, when times were getting hard. I gave them a SAN of "4" since they were defending, while the attacking paratroopers have a lower SAN of "3".

The first German decision that must be made is the placement of those crucial foxholes. One strategy used to good effect is to group them together to concentrate the defense. However, since the American player must take all three, it is perhaps best to spread them out. I prefer a placement in 2Q6, 2M5 and 2K5. The German HMG, the leader and a squad is placed in 2Q6 where this stack can defend the southern end of the hill, with cliffs in front making it tough for the paratroopers to approach. The 2M5 position also has a protected approach from the rear, which is quite handy for reinforcement or mounting a counterattack. It can be reached from the front only via open ground, which is covered in turn by the position in 2K5. I like to place the MMG and a squad in 2K5, where it can protect 2M5, defend against a drive through the woods around 2I9, or deter a sweep to the north of the hill.

The gun can be emplaced on the top of the ridge, but the German player will get the most value from it by setting it up HIP. Since it must be placed on Hill 621, it can be hidden only in the woods. My favorite spot for this potentially potent weapon is 2I7 or 2J6, covering the approaches to 2K5. Another fine position is in 2L8 to cover the central path to the hill, via 2L9 and 2M9. Yet another place for the gun is a hex to the rear of the hilltop, to bring fire on one of the foxhole hexes once captured by the paratroopers. Good positions are 2M4 (to fire on 2M5 or 2K5) and 2Q4 (for fire on 2Q6).

There is one squad left for the German to place. It can either garrison the middle foxhole (2M5), add to the firepower from 2K5 or 2Q6, or start in one of the woods hexes in front of the ridge where it is out of American LOS. Prime locations are 2H6, 2M7 and 2P6. Here it might slow the US attack, buying time for the reinforcements to arrive.

Let's pause to examine the American options. The US player must take all three foxholes, and hold them against any German counterattack. Initially, he faces only three German squads, plus the infantry gun. But if he takes very long reaching the hill, German reinforcements will stiffen the defense and one foxhole (at least) will become a much tougher position to capture.

There are three routes available to the paratroopers to reach the hill: the south flank (via the shellholes and 2S6), the central woods via 2L8, and through the northern woods (via 2I7). Regardless of the path chosen, the paratroopers will have to cross some deadly open ground to reach the objective - unless the German defenders are first broken. Breaking them is a job for the 9-2 leader directing the MMG. With three squads, he can form a firegroup of 14.5 factors,

making a 12 (even) attack on one foxhole. The American 9-1 can direct three more squads, and make an 8(+1) attack. Of course, these guys must first survive the German prep fire from their target(s).

What fire can the Germans dish out? If the German player should place his 9-1, two squads and both MGs in 2Q6, he could make a 16 (even) attack on one of the American positions - which will usually wreak havoc - and there is a fair chance of ROF dispatching another. If this *is* the German set-up, it is probably best to pick another route to the hill, or spread out the American squads to give him too many targets to engage easily. If the enemy places just one squad manning the HMG with the 9-1 in the target foxhole, he can still make an 8 (even) attack. This is better, but still dangerous - especially with the threat of ROF from that deadly HMG. However, I feel that this is a risk worth taking, for the 9-2 leader should help your GIs pass any MC (if he passes his, of course).

The remaining paratroopers must move out towards the selected foxhole on the first turn. If they don't capture at least one foxhole on Turn 2, you'll be in trouble. At least a couple of squads should be dispatched to the ridgetop to interdict the Turn 3 German reinforcements. Once the Americans capture one foxhole, they must work their way along the ridge to get to the other two. The US player must garrison any foxhole once captured, so that the enemy can't take it back on the bound.

It may also be worthwhile sending a squad or two to the opposite end of the hill from the main thrust to force the German player to keep troops in all his foxholes; these flanking Americans could possibly encircle the Germans should the opportunity present itself. They may even get into a position from which they can interdict the German reinforcements. Many good things are possible from such a small investment.

An important weapon for the paratroopers is their smoke grenades. There are likely to be many situations where the GIs must cross open ground, especially as they close on the ridgetop. This is the ideal time for a smoke in this match. And if a paratrooper squad manages to move adjacent to a German position with 2 MF remaining, it should attempt to place WP in the German location to cause a MC and hinder any fire from them.

The bazookas, on the other hand, have limited use in this scenario. There are not likely to be German targets in buildings or behind walls (although German reinforcements in 2M1 would be in range of a bazooka on the top of the ridge). The most likely targets for the Bazooka are the truck and the infantry gun. Bazookas devour trucks, destroying it on anything less than an "11" if a hit is achieved. The gun, however, is a lot harder to hurt. If hit, it is attacked on the IFT with an HE equivalent of "8". On a roll of "2", it is eliminated via a Critical Hit. If a "3" is rolled, the gun is disabled and the crew eliminated. Otherwise, a straight 8-factor attack is made on the gun's crew, modified by the gunshield if applicable. It always pays to take a shot against the gun with a bazooka, but don't count on doing much damage.

The German response to all this depends on the American success. If the German MGs have targets on Turn 1, prep fire to the maximum extent of their ROF. And take defensive fire shots against paratroopers moving in the open during the second half of the turn. When the German reinforcements show up on Turn 3, these should move to cover any foxhole still held by the German player. Double-timing with a leader, these first reinforcements can get from 2Q1 to 2Q5 and then advance to 2Q6. Or they can race to 2N4 from 2M1, to advance into 2M5; or to 2K4, ready to advance into 2K5. Don't put all the reinforcements into that foxhole, however; keep something back in case a lucky shot breaks everyone there. Then, a fresh squad could advance in on its next turn to shield the former occupants while they are rallied.

The German Flak truck presents a special problem. It must certainly be kept away from the bazookas, but it is also vulnerable to the paratrooper's inherent firepower. Just one US squad within four hexes can eliminate it on a DR of less than "6"! Perhaps the best use for it is to be moved to the rear of the ridge and positioned adjacent to a hex that the paratroopers must enter. If the enemy has taken 2Q6, for instance, one good spot for that truck is 2L4 or 2L5, from which it can make a point-blank attack on 2M4 or 2M5. Another fine spot is in 2N4, where it can fire point blank into any of the three adjacent Level-3 hexes. An alternate use for the truck is to forget about the temptations of point-blank fire and position it as far away from the action as possible. For example, it can enter at hex 2Y1 and move to AA4 on Turn 3. From there it can fire on the Level-2 hexes east of the ridge as far as 2M4 and the Level-3 hexes from 2O5 to 2Q6. And it is safely out of the range of everything north of hexrow S2 (except possibly the US MMG).

The last reinforcement group is the German player's "ace-in-the-hole". If the paratroopers still haven't gotten very far by the time they are available, the squads and leader can move to reinforce a foxhole. They can also be used to construct a line east of the ridgetop to block the paratroopers' advance along the ridge. Or you could opt to leave them out of the action for a turn or two, and bring them on in a rush to recapture any foxhole the Americans have left weakly guarded, or guarded by a unit broken by a lucky sniper shot.

All in all, this is another fast-paced, tense scenario. The German reinforcements shift the balance with their arrival, and may be called upon to mount a counterattack. The use of the Flak truck offers some interesting problems. The American player faces an uphill fight, across open ground, against entrenched MGs. Surely, the stuff of legends. This little-remembered scenario makes for an excellent proving ground for adept *ASL* players.

Mr. Stahler completes his review of the updated scenarios used at Origins '91 ("The Attempt to Relieve Peiper" and "Hunters from the Sky") in the next issue of The GENERAL.



MORE OLD CHESTNUTS

The Origins ASL Tournament Scenarios, Part II

By Jim Stahler

This is the second installment of a two-part article describing the re-design of four scenarios (see last issue, wherein "The Niscemi-Biscari Highway" and "Devil's Hill" appeared). Jim Stahler updated these SL designs to mate with the ASL system, playtested them, and then used them in his round-robin ASL team tournament at Origins '91. The four all feature American paratroopers battling the Germans.



THE ATTEMPT TO RELIEVE PEIPER

I did not plan it this way, but each of these four scenarios takes place in a different season (as well as in a different campaign). "Hunters In The Sky" takes place in the early spring; "The Niscemi-Biscari Highway" occurs in the summer; the Americans attempt to take "Devil's Hill" in the fall; and "The Attempt to Relieve Peiper" occurs in the winter, with snow on the ground!

The Battle of the Bulge! Colonel Peiper's famous *Kampfgruppe* has broken through the American lines but been stopped cold, exhausted its supplies, and is now cut off by fresh troops from the 82nd Airborne Division, who were rushed to reinforce the beleaguered GIs holding the line. In this match, we find troops from the 1st SS Panzer Division trying to break through the thin rank of paratroopers to reach their comrades.

This scenario didn't turn out as well balanced as I hoped. It seems like there is one "dud" at every tournament, and this one is it. The Germans won 11 games, with the US taking only four. It wasn't as imbalanced as it sounds however, since a lot of the games came down to the wire. I have made a few small changes to help the Americans, playtested the scenario some more, and I believe that this version is an even contest for the readers.

As in all these scenarios, each US paratrooper squad lost a factor as it was updated for *ASL*, and each German MG gained a factor. Helping the American player somewhat, artillery is much more effective in *ASL* than it was in *SL*. It can get more than the old maximum of four missions, and each mission lasts for a complete game turn. In addition, a spotting round is two levels high, making it easier to see. (In *SL*, spotting rounds always landed out of sight, and it was a rare game in which the artillery actually contributed.) Artillery is the American's most potent weapon in this scenario, as it was in World War II. I also changed the SSR to allow the US to make artillery requests from the start of the game; and I allowed the radio to remain offboard, with its owner secretly recorded. These changes should make up for the reduced firepower of the paratrooper squads.

To compensate for the increased firepower of the German machineguns, I deleted two of their six LMG, reducing them by six firepower factors. I also removed the German armor leader, and gave the Americans two more foxholes. In the tournament, I allowed US squads to set up in foxholes if they start in suitable terrain. That gave the Americans a total of seven foxholes possible, but it led to strange situations (such as the American player starting a squad on a hilltop just to allow the artillery observer on Hill 621 to be in a foxhole). Now the Americans have four foxholes, but they are not restricted to being set up with a squad.

Another post-tournament change that I have made was to allow the US player to use HIP for one MMC. This adds some extra excitement to the game as well as serves to bring the game to a better balance. The German player must constantly worry about that hidden unit. Needless-to-say, there are lots of good hiding places throughout the woods.

I kept the number and type of squads the same as in the original, as well as the infantry leaders and the SW - with the exception of reducing the number of German LMG. Of course, the German HMG must start dismantled. The Americans still have ten Concealment counters, and the game is still ten turns long. I gave the Germans the minimal SAN of "2". The Americans are on the defense amid the dense woods, so I gave them a high Sniper number of "5". The paratroopers have their special ELR of "5"., of course. The Germans normally have an ELR of "3" at this period of the war, but I increased it to "4"; after all, they are the Waffen SS.

There is no StuG IIIG with a 105mm gun in the *ASL* countermix. The closest German equivalent is the StuH 42, which was in common use at this time of the war. It has the same speed, about the same armor and the same gun as the StuG IIIG in the original scenario, but its machineguns are its weakness. It only has a feeble 2FP AAMG, which can be used only if it is CE. However, the assault guns do have *Schuerzen*, as they could have been so equipped during this period (and since they were SS AFV, they probably were).

Historically there was snow on the ground, so Ground Snow is in effect in the updated scenario. This automatically results in "Wet" environmental conditions. The main effect of Ground Snow is to negate the road bonus and make it more difficult to negotiate the slippery slopes. Units are still not allowed to roll for entrenchments, because of the frozen ground. Let's assume that it took a long time and perhaps some explosives to dig any foxholes that begin the scenario on board.

I used the *ASL* exit victory point format of A26.3 to replace the original victory conditions. The *SL* scenario required the Germans to exit seven squads, with each AFV counting as two squads. This gives the Germans the equivalent of 13 squads, of which seven must exit. The updated scenario OB gives the Germans 25 points worth of infantry, plus 12 points for the AFV, for a total of 37 possible points. Seven-thirteenths of 37 is just about 20, and so this is the number of victory points that the Germans must exit to win. The exit location, the German entrance location, and the American setup limits remain unchanged from the original scenario.

For the German play-balance provision, it seems only fair that I give them back the 9-1 armor leader that they had originally. To help the Americans, I take away a turn from the Germans, putting that much more time pressure on the attackers.

Before I start discussing any strategy, I want to touch upon some of the important match-ups in this scenario. The most obvious one is a bazooka against a StuH 42. The frontal armor is "8" in both aspects, upper superstructure and lower. The To Kill number of a bazooka is "16", which eliminates the target on a DR of seven or less, immobilizes or shocks the AFV on an "8", and does some possible damage on a "9". A flank or rear hit is a guaranteed kill, barring a dud. Clearly, the assault guns want very much to avoid the bazookas.

Another factor to consider is the chance of getting that deadly hit. The bazooka has its own To Hit table on the counter. The 1944 bazooka's maximum range is four hexes, but at that range the To Hit number is only "4". The StuH 42s are small targets, and if they are moving then the chance of hitting them is negligible, even if the bazooka is directed by a leader. One hex closer and it becomes a different story. The To Hit number goes up to "7", and it improves by one for each hex of range closer to the target. It goes way up to "11" at range 0, but that is not a likely range in this scenario. Suppose that a StuH 42 makes a dash past an adjacent bazooka in the woods. The To Hit number is "9", with a +3 DRM; a hit occurs on a DR of "6". This is risky play for the German player, but doom is far from guaranteed. Of course, if the StuH 42 comes to a halt, it becomes much more vulnerable. As always in *ASL*, there are other factors to consider, such as leadership and LOS hindrances. In general, at four hexes there is little to worry about, especially if the vehicle is in motion. Anything closer starts to become dangerous, and moving adjacent to a bazookas should only be done in desperation.

The StuH 42 commander also has to worry about artillery, which can attack the AFV with either an HE concentration or harassing fire. An HE concentration attacks armor on the "20" column of the IFT. None of the DRMs apply. A DR of "3" is needed to eliminate the AFV outright; a "4" or "5" will do some harm, either

immobilizing or shocking it. An HE concentration is dangerous, but it can be survived more often than not. Note that immobilization is almost as good as a kill in this instance, since an immobilized StuH 42 cannot exit the board and earn victory points.

American harassing fire is a bit less dangerous to the AFV. It attacks on the "6" column. Note that even though it is four columns to the left of the 20 column, the first KIA is only one less than on the 20 column itself. A DR of "2" is required to eliminate the vehicle, but a "3" or "4" does harm it. This is significantly less dangerous than an HE concentration, but it is still to be avoided if possible.

The StuH 42 can, of course, fire back. Suppose that the leader with the radio is in a foxhole on the hilltop. What chance does the StuH 42 have of discouraging that pesky forward observer? The farthest likely range is 19 hexes, say from 5A6 to 2Q6. At this range the infantry To Hit number is "5". If the vehicle is buttoned up, and acquisition cancels out the foxhole TEM, a DR of "4" is needed for a hit. That is not a very good odds, even though a hit would result in a 20FP attack with no TEM. An Area attack ignores the TEM on the To Hit DR. With the AFV buttoned up and the target fully acquired, a "9" is needed to hit. However, the resulting attack is only on the 8-column with a +2 DRM for the foxhole. This is still more effective, overall, than the attack on the infantry target type. If the observer is concealed, as he is at the start of the game, only an Area attack makes any sense.

In this scenario, your tactics begin with the US setup. The premier weapon in this scenario is the American radio. In the previous discussion, I assumed that the leader with the radio is stationed in a foxhole on top of Hill 621. The best spot is 2Q6. A leader in that hex can see nearly all the board except the far north, which is irrelevant. Of course, the obstacles all over the board create vast numbers of blind hexes. Some interesting hexes that can be seen from 2Q6 are 5L6, I8 and J8 across the clearings in the woods; and C3, B3, B4, A5 and A6 at the southern edge of Board 5; 5H1, G2, G3, G4 and F3, where some critical fighting is sure to take place.

There are other options for the observer besides being placed on Hill 621, though. Since the owner of the radio is recorded, the 8-0 leader can be placed on the hill to draw German fire, and the real observer can set up HIP (along with a squad now) with LOS to some of the same locations that the 8-0 on the hill can see. Won't the German player be surprised when the 8-0 breaks and routs away but the FFE still lands!

With that plentiful American ammunition, the US player shouldn't be shy about drawing an extra card in the attempt to nail German units out of sight. With one black card drawn, there is still a 2/3 chance of drawing another black card and keeping the FFE right where you want it.

The American player must bear in mind that there are four types of FFEs that. can be called down. The most used is an HE concentration. That is certainly deadly, especially against enemy units in the woods or moving in the open. However, don't ignore the benefits of harassing fire. This scenario is tailor-made for that option. It affects a much larger area than any concentration (19 hexes rather than seven), and attacks with a respectable six factors. Add to that the air burst DRM or FFMO/FFNAM and it is dangerous enough to cause damage and seriously hinder German movement.

Smoke is normally though of as protecting the movement of the attacker, but it can be useful in a couple of ways to help the defender in this scenario. For example, suppose that the Germans are face to face with paratroopers across the road running from 2GG6 to T2. If powerful German fire-groups are in 2Z1 or AA1, a likely mid-game situation, a smoke concentration in 2ZO would be handy. It would disrupt the German fire for two turns, but the road that the Germans must cross remains clear of smoke. If smoke is a good idea, WP is sometimes a better one. Even though the hindrance isn't quite as much, that initial morale check may break a squad or two. Smoke can also be used to cover a squad's retreat; and as smoke costs an extra MF to enter, it can slow down the German advance at a critical time.

After the leader with the radio is placed, the next big decision faced by the US player is the composition and location of his HIP force. One possibility is to deploy the squad and hide one of the HS with a bazooka to worry the German armor. This should be somewhere in the rear adjacent to a road that the enemy armor must use. It will be discovered late in the game, if at all, which keeps the enemy wondering where that HIP unit is.

Another ploy is to use HIP for a full squad with the MMG and a leader somewhere in the woods. The hope is that the Germans will blunder into it with some juicy target that can be hit with a punishing 20-factor attack with a "-1" modifier. I walked into one such a trap in 5L0 and had three SS squads and the 9-2 leader break and run away. Note that this position also covers the road from 2V1 to Z2. These are just a couple of suggestions for the use of your HIP. The point is to be creative and unpredictable.

The rest of the US force should be mixed with dummy stacks and be prepared to use a fallback defense. They should start as far forward as possible, but not in locations where they can get cut off. For example, in the first turn the German infantry can move to 5I5 and advance to I6. This cuts off any units that start in 5E3 or F3. Units in 5C2 or D1 are at risk too. They had better get back to a safer spot on the first turn. If the Germans are about to apply strong firepower on 5FO and GI, units in 5F1 and G2 had better pull back now or get trapped. Similarly, LOS on hexes 2AA1 and ZO will trap units in 5G1.

Ideally, the Americans can pull back, without sustaining many casualties, to the woods that used to be hill 538 while holding the German player up for about four turns. The paratroopers can defend positions such as 2CC4, AA3, X2 and W2 with lots of fire covering the road, and the threat of bazookas keeping the StuG 42s at bay. This is a good line to fortify with foxholes. However, those foxholes may not be much of an advantage. True, they give a +2 TEM instead of the +1 TEM of woods . . . but there is a price to pay. In the aforementioned woods hexes units can move deeper into the woods in their movement phase to protect themselves against the German defensive fire, and then advance back into position for the German turn. This doesn't work if in a foxhole. The unit must expend a MF in its hex to exit the foxhole, at which time it is subject to the very torrent of defensive fire that it was trying to avoid. With all that German firepower, it may be foxier to remain outside the foxholes.

If possible, the Americans should have two lines of troops. On the German turn, one line is at the edge of the woods, while the other remains one hex inside the woods after gaining concealment. The Germans must Prep fire at concealed units, who themselves only open fire at units moving in the open. On the US turn, everyone exposed moves into the woods, and the concealed units advance back into position, while the revealed units stay in the rear to gain concealment for the next turn. If it takes the Germans more than two turns to crack this position, their time-table is in severe difficulties.

With the endgame, the Americans must retreat and delay as best they can, and hope for some artillery to land as the Germans emerge from the woods near their VP exit area. One guiding principle while defending in the woods is to keep at least three hexes away from the Germans. If the Americans are only two hexes away, the Germans can assault move adjacent to the US units, maintain their concealment, and then advance into close combat. If they are three hexes away, the Germans must use non-assault movement to move adjacent to the Americans, and so forfeit their concealment.

It is easy for most players to overlook the anti-infantry role of the bazookas. Since it is too early in the war to fire WP with them, they are limited to HEAT only. And HEAT cannot be used against the Germans in the woods or in the open. However, there are a few places where HEAT can be used. There almost certainly will be Germans in the building in 2Z1 at some point, a prime bazooka target. There is a good chance that a bazooka can fire at 2T1 in the course of the game, and at 2W7 at game's end.

The US smoke grenades have limited use in this scenario. I wouldn't expect a US squad to be in a situation where it can use WP. The Americans are not likely to move adjacent to the Germans in this game; and if the Germans start adjacent to a US squad, the Americans will either prep fire or move away too quickly to spend time throwing grenades. Smoke can be useful if the US player finds some of his troops trapped, however. A smoke grenade can give some protection to the retrograde movement and make it a lot easier to exit a foxhole in good order.

Now let us examine the SS options. The German forces have a bunch of advantages in terms of numbers, morale, leadership, range, machine-guns and armor support. The high German morale allows them to take risks, and the length of the game allows the Germans to spend a turn or two trading fire with the Americans, applying their superior firepower and leadership.

The Germans must exit 20 victory points. The Germans start off with 18 points worth of squads, seven points from leaders, and 12 points for the armor - for a total of 37 victory points possible. Thus the Germans must exit the majority of their forces. However, don't forget

that the Germans can take prisoners, who count double for exit purposes.

The German player's greatest headache will likely be the US artillery. There are two ways to deal with this. One is to carefully avoid locations that can be seen from the hilltops. This is not so easy; eventually the German infantry must emerge from the woods to reach the exit area. And harassing fire can be brought down on a hex two away from German units without even drawing an extra battery access card.

The alternative is to find the observer and break him. The two StuH 42s can fire at the artillery observer from the southern edge of the board using either Area Fire or the Infantry Target type. The HMG can fire at the observer with the help of a LMG and the 9-2 leader. From a hex such as 5L6, this fire group can get a 4-factor attack with 0 DRM while the observer is concealed, and an 8FP (+0) attack once concealment is lost. Or that same force can move to 5M7 on the first turn, assemble the HMG in the DFPh, and move to 502 or P3 on Turn 2. From there, the squad's inherent firepower can join the probing attack. Of course, the observer will be "shooting back" with his OBA. It may be safer to abandon the woods for open ground to avoid air bursts. The trick is to dance between the shells and still bring down fire on the observer. If your infantry can't break the observer, perhaps the StuH 42s will.

I like to divide the German infantry into three stacks, plus a couple HS to use as scouts. One stack has the 9-2, HMG, two LMGs and three squads. This engages the artillery observer and then applies its considerable firepower to any enemy squads in sight. A second force has a 9-1, two LMGs and three more squads. This is a powerful force with 24 firepower factors that can make a 12 (+0) attack against a concealed unit in the woods. The third element has the other 9-1 and two squads. The last squad is deployed into two HS that scout ahead and, perhaps, draw some US fire.

A German stack with a leader can get as far as 5I5 on Turn 1 by entering 5I10, bypassing SI9, I7 and I6, and ending its MPh in I5. Then it advances to 5I4, where it cuts off anything in 5E3 or F3. A HS or two should scout 5E3, C2 and D1 just to make sure that there are no hidden bazookas that can threaten the assault guns.

The main German tactic in the tournament seemed to be to move up to an enemy unit and advance into its LOS with several powerful stacks. This gives the US the choice of Prep firing with the chance of breaking a German unit but with the near certainty of getting blown away itself, or withdrawing. If the US player is careless, the Germans maneuver to cut off and eliminate enemy units. In this way the Germans work their way through the woods on Board 5, across the road on Board 2, and into the woods that used to be Hill 538. Then they simply march through the woods and off the board.

This route does have the advantage of clearing the road for the StuH 42s. An alternate route goes to the north directly to Hill 621. Units taking this route must deal with the snowy, slippery slopes and must cross the open ground around 5R1. The northern route has the advantage of being unexpected and is not as likely to be well-defended. It certainly avoids the HIP unit, and allows the entire German firepower to be massed against the artillery observer on the hill. It, however, has the disadvantage of leaving the StuH 42s without infantry support.

Those StuH 42s are an important part of the German forces. Their victory points are important sure, and so is their firepower! Any paratrooper that becomes acquired had better move somewhere safer. When they are buttoned up, the AFVs are relatively safe; the only long-range American weapon that can hurt them is the OBA, which is probably chasing after infantry in the woods.

It goes without saying that they should keep buttoned up if there is any chance of enemy infantry in the same county. When buttoned up they cannot use their AAMG, which makes them very vulnerable to close combat, so they should keep well away from American infantry. They can still engage the observer at long range. Once the observer is disposed of, their most effective use is to move to a position five or six hexes away from a US unit that has just had a German force move adjacent. Move, halt, and acquire the enemy in the AFPh. It adds one more reason for that paratrooper squad to run away.

If the German infantry chooses the northern route, the StuH 42s can try to run the gauntlet and join them. On the first turn they should move to 5B6 and B7, remaining in Motion. This move keeps some distance between them and the US infantry. On Turn 2, they can boogie as far as 5K3 and J3. Note that Ground Snow negates the 1/2 MP movement rate for roads, so the StuH 42 crews do not have the option of exposing themselves to gain speed on the roads (which is not a good idea anyway considering the proximity of the paratroopers at this point). On Turn 3 they are out of the woods and near their little friends on foot, provided that they survive the enemy fire on the road. How likely is that? A bazooka on the road has a very good chance of killing one of the AFV; if the StuH 42 enters the bazooka's hex, the To Hit number is "11" with a +3 DRM (+1 for small target, +2 for motion). This yields a hit on a DR of "8" or less, with damage on an "8" or less To Kill DR. If the bazooka is adjacent to the road, the chances of a hit goes down significantly. If a paratrooper unit is on the road when the StuH 42s go by, it has a chance to make a Close Combat Reaction attack. A squad would need a DR of "4" to immobilize the AFV (CCV = 5, with a +2 DRM for motion, -1 DRM for no MG), provided that the infantry unit passes its PAATC. Depending on what the enemy has on the road, there is an excellent chance that one gun gets through and a good chance that both will, but it is risky.

Since this scenario takes place in 1944, the Germans do have panzerfaust capability. These fire HEAT just like bazookas. They do not have an enemy vehicular target in this scenario, but the PF has some potential use against enemy units in buildings and behind walls. This can be useful if the paratroopers are defending the buildings 2Z1 or T1, or dug in at the building/wall complex around 2V8. The chance of the PF doing any damage is not great; first the unit must have a PF (a squad needs a dr of "1" or "2" since the target is not an AFV) and then it must get a hit. If the target is in a wooden building or behind a wall two hexes away, a "4" TH DR is needed. However, if the PF hits, it attacks with 16 firepower factors and no DRM! Don't make the attempt if the squad has a MG to fire, or if it is the German turn and a Pin result would be inconvenient, and certainly not if the SS squad firing it is already pinned. Still, if the circumstances are right and if the dice are friendly, this shot can break the game open.

Do not forget that the SS squads also have smoke. Their smoke exponent is only "2" and they do not have WP. Nevertheless, smoke can be just the ticket needed to cross the 2FF6-T2 road to get to the woods, or to protect the approach to an American position while in the woods. For example, a stack of three squads and a leader in 2BB1 that would like to get to BB3 could start by placing smoke in BB2. Three tries will normally yield at least one smoke counter. The stack spends two MF in the attempt to place smoke, two more MF to enter BB2 with smoke there, and two more MF to enter BB3. In another situation, that same German stack is in 2BB3 with a US squad in ZS, three hexes away. The Germans move to BB4 (two MF), place smoke in AA5 (two MF), and then declare CX to enter AA5 (three MF with smoke). If there were no smoke placed (eight chances out of 27), they do not declare CX. There is a risk, of course; each squad that rolls a "6" in its smoke availability dr ends its MPh and remains in BB4.

In summary, the Germans have a lot of tricks to use in this scenario, as do the Americans. It will always be a fluid fight, decided by strategy, tactics and the dice. And it makes a terrific tournament scenario for experienced players.



HUNTERS FROM THE SKY

Field Marshal Montgomery is poised to cross the Rhine with his British 21st Army Group. The assault is to be spearheaded by two airborne divisions, the British 6th and American 17th. This scenario depicts some of the action involving the US paratroopers in their last combat drop of the war. A company of paratroopers land amid waiting German infantry and AA guns, with more German reinforcements on the way. The paratroopers must take and hold their rally point. The Germans must keep them from doing it, without being quite sure where the rally point is.

"Hunters From the Sky" was originally published in The *GENERAL* as Scenario I. It is an interesting situation, partly because it starts with a paratroop drop, which randomizes the situation and makes every game play very differently. It also, conversely, makes the scenario hard to balance. There is even more randomization in the selection of the US assembly point and the appearance of the German reinforcements.

In the tournament, it first appeared that there

was a play-balance problem when the Germans won four of the first five games reported. However, the Americans won the last three, and two games were too close to call and went uncompleted. When the dust cleared, the German players had won four games and the US, four. I call that "balanced". However, if the game ends quickly, it is probably because the paratroopers were shot up by the Germans on their way down, and the game is a German victory. After that, the Americans have the advantage.

Like all the other scenarios in this tournament, each US squad lost an attack factor in the conversion to *ASL*. To make up for this, I added another US squad to their forces. This also has the effect of filling up the second wing so that both wings have five squads. I gave the Americans another leader, an 8-1, to allow both wings to have two leaders.

I gave the Germans another squad too, since our playtesting showed that the US was doing *too* well once the paratroopers hit the ground; and I gave them a 7-0 leader, since they seemed too fragile with but one leader. I did take away a LMG, since they now have three factors instead of two. I also gave an 8-0 leader to the German "Reinforcement Group 2".

I eliminated the part of the victory conditions that gave the Germans an immediate victory if they eliminated six US squads. Historically, paratroopers were frequently able to accomplish their objectives with only a fraction of their strength. Now, the game goes to the side that controls the US assembly point, regardless of casualties. One other major change I was forced to implement is to allow the US player to keep secret the assembly point until the end of the game. I could see no reason why the Americans would announce to the Germans what their assembly point was to be. And, this keeps more suspense in the game; the German is guessing right until the end.

Another change that I made is to require one wing to land on its predesignated drop point, and the other wing to land on a randomly determined drop point. If both wings land on their drop points, the paratrooper player has a big edge in the scenario; it is far too easy when the whole force comes down near its objective. But if both wings land randomly, the Americans can be in big trouble. Some units you can expect to see shot up, and the survivors probably have a long march to get to their assembly point. Thus, half the time the game would be determined after the American player rolls for the drop points (i.e., after only two die rolls). To avoid this situation, the new SSR guarantees one wing to land on target, and the other wing to miss.

With all the randomness in this scenario, every game plays out differently. It is difficult to discuss strategy and critical terrain when you don't know what the US objective may be, you don't know where the paratroopers will land, or where the German reinforcements will enter. But I can try.

A key element in the US strategy is to keep the enemy guessing about the location of the objective. Each drop point should threaten two or more possible assembly points. Further, each drop point should be at least six hexes from the nearest board edge, so that there is no chance of an offboard landing. Of course, the closer to the center of the board, the more likely it is that the paratroopers will be subjected to German AA fire while in the air and vulnerable.

If the assembly point is 2W9, 2M9 or 4S2, a good area for the two drop points is in the center of Board 2. There is no large patch of woods; the paratroopers can maneuver their chutes away from any small stand of trees, as long as they are adjacent to open ground. Most of the squads will land within two turns' march of all three possible objectives. For best effect, send at least one squad to take each of the three objectives, and let the German figure out which is the real one. Hopefully, he will take back two of them, but the wrong two!

If 4I10 is the assembly point, reasonable drop areas are the northern end of Boards 4 and 5. The northern end of Board 5 is safer, since it is farther from the center of the board and likely concentrated German AA fire, but it does give away the objective. The northern end of Board 4 threatens both 2M9 and 4P6 as well 4I10. Send forces towards all three objectives if there are enough available; at the least, move forces toward two of the possible assembly points.

Hexes 4P6 and 4I10 are the tough objectives. The temptation is to place the drop point in the middle of Board 4, near the objective. I did that once. I got shot to pieces. It is much better to land farther away to get down in some order, and then move out for the assembly point. If 4P6 is the VC, your best bet is to land in the northern part of Boards 4 or 5 and feint toward 4I10. However, the central position of 4P6 that makes it so easy to defend also makes just about any drop point on the board equally good. The paratroopers can reasonably land anywhere *but* the middle of Board 4 (because of the threat from the Germans) and the southern half of Board 5 (because of the threat from the trees). The odds are that the wing which is forced to a random drop point will be in just as good a position as the wing whose drop point was selected.

I think that 4I10 is the toughest objective of all to reach. It is very risky landing too close because the threat from German AA on Board 4 and the woods on Board 5. Reasonable landing sites are the southern edge of Board 4 (from where the Americans can also threaten 2W9 and possibly 4P6), but the Germans are not likely to be fooled. Other possible landing sites are the southern third of Board 2 threatening 2W9, and the northern third of Board 5, making a feint toward 4I10. Both of these sites are quite risky too however, given the long distance the paratroopers must travel on the ground to win.

The German player must make his onboard set-up with no knowledge of the American objective, nor the drop points, nor even the location of his own reinforcements. He can view the game as a defensive battle and place a squad to hold each of the six possible enemy objectives, but they cannot support each other and this arrangement is likely to fail. A better approach is to create a flak trap in the middle of the board with the squad firepower and the AA guns and view the game as primarily a counterattack to retake the assembly point (once deduced) from the paratroopers. The Germans have the advantages of organization at the start of the game, greater range in his squad weapons, machine-guns, mobility from the trucks, and, for half the game, they have unopposed armor.

From the selection of the pre-designated US drop point and the movement of the paratroopers on Turn 2, the German player should be able to deduce the assembly point, or at least narrow it down to a couple of buildings. Organize the six squads that start on board, coordinated with the reinforcements when they arrive, into a powerful force to retake those buildings. Their advantage in mobility should allow the German player to mass against the paratroopers, and the advantages in range allow the German squads to stand back and blast the enemy from a relatively safe distance. If all goes well, the StuG IIIG arrives to deliver the *coup-de-gras* and win the game.

Of course, all *never* goes well. The paratroopers have a lot of inherent firepower and two bazookas to make the armor keep its distance. Five squads can land anywhere and cause all sorts of havoc. It promises to be a tough struggle for both sides.

Weapons that can fire at descending paratroopers include the two AA guns in the scenario and the infantry's inherent firepower. Oddly, the LMGs may not fire at paratroopers in the air. The AA guns should not be placed in buildings, certainly, since they could not fire at descending paratroopers at all. If placed in woods, their ROF is reduced by one and their "Case A" DRM is doubled should they have to change the covered arc - so woods are not a good place them either. The AA guns should not be placed adjacent to woods or buildings to avoid having their LOS to targets in the sky blocked by those obstacles. That leaves plenty of good spots for them in the open on these three mapboards. I think that the best places for them are covering the middle of boards 2 and 4. These are the spots away from the dense woods closest to the most possible US assembly points.

For instance, hex 2P8 is an excellent place for one AA gun. It is well away from any blocking obstacle, it can cover a lot of the center of Boards 2 and 4, and it is in LOS of two possible assembly points (2M9 and 4S2). Another good spot for a gun is 4Q4. It can cover much of Boards 2 and 4 also, it is within LOS of the two possible assembly points 4P6 and 4S2, and it also has a very convenient LOS along the hex-grain to 5A9, even though this is hindered by some grain (which is being treated as brush in this scenario). Even though these guns are in the open, they receive the +2 TEM from being emplaced until they relocate.

The German infantry should be set up in a central location so that they can move on any of the possible assembly points. I suggest splitting the squads into two three-squad platoons, each with a leader. Position one near the border of Boards 2 and 4, near the middle. This force can quickly move on 2W9, 2M9, 4S2 or 4P6. The other force should be placed near the middle of the Board 4/Board 5 border; it can contest 4P6, 4Y9 or 4I10. Unlike the AA guns, the infantry has no need to worry about changing covered arc. Single-hex woods are good places for the squads. They have some protection and their aerial LOS is unblocked.

On the drop, your infantry must fire at any paratroopers in range. Even at long range (up to six hexes) the squads each attack with two factors. The Americans are most vulnerable while

still in the air, with no TEM and with the Hazardous Movement penalty. If a couple of US squads can be nailed before they hit the ground, so much the better. Once the paratroopers are on the ground, the German infantry should head for the probable enemy objectives. Occupy the threatened buildings first if able. If the paratroopers get there first, don't engage in an uneven fire fight with them. Trade shots at a range of five or six hexes, where they are halved and you are not. Be patient and wait for friendly reinforcements to arrive. Interdict the enemy movement when possible, to keep them from reinforcing any squads holding their assembly point. The Germans should infiltrate some troops to encircle the Americans and prevent rout. When there are a few enemy squads broken, or if the Germans have a strong local numerical advantage, make the move and attack. If that opportunity does not arise and you must be patient; the StuG IIIG should be able to swing the balance in your favor if your losses are light.

The two trucks are quite important units for the Germans. Vulnerable as they are, they can be used in three ways. Yes, they can attempt to overrun paratroopers that have landed in the open, and that is one use (but not a very promising one). Alternately, they can start the game loaded with squads, giving the infantry "instant" mobility. Unfortunately, the infantry can move nearly as fast on foot as a truck moving off-road, so the roads are not as convenient as they could be. Their very best use is to haul around the AA guns. Each truck can be positioned in the same hex as an AA gun, allowing it to be moved to a more convenient spot once the paratroopers have landed.

But the strongest German unit is that StuG IIIG. It comes in late, Turn 5 or possibly Turn 6, so it is available for only half the game. However, by that time the Germans should be concentrated against the US objective, and maybe a few American squads are broken or destroyed. The StuG IIIG should position itself out of range of the deadly bazookas. The bazookas have a To Kill number of "16" versus frontal armor of only "8". If hit, there is a better than even chance that it is gone. It is too valuable to lose in this way.

The obvious use of the StuG IIIG is to fire HE at any paratroopers ensconced in a building. At six hexes, even if buttoned up (a good idea with all the bullets flying around) the gun can hit on a "7" with a -2 DRM for acquisition. When the gun does hit, it attacks on the 12 column with no TEM. The StuG IIIG has another important weapon some players will overlook - smoke. When it is time for the German infantry to make its final assault, place some smoke right on top of the Americans to disrupt their defensive fire. Also, you can use its smoke dispenser to leave some smoke to block US LOS. At the end of the game, if the Germans are desperate, the StuG IIIG could be used to overrun the Americans in their objective building. This has little chance of success, since it has so little MG firepower, but it can be effective in preventing the Americans from firing outside their hex while the German infantry make their last assault. This could also be accomplished by bypassing the building without attempting to overrun it. And don't forget the tactic of Armored Assault, with the infantry hunkering down behind the assault gun as they approach the building.

Once the drop points are chosen, and until the paratroopers hit the ground, the American player has few decisions. All he can do is maneuver his parachutes one hex, mostly to avoid landing in the trees or on top of a building. He has to trust in luck. Once on the ground use defensive fire to shoot at targets of opportunity, if any. The real action starts on the second turn. It is then time to move out.

Move toward all possible assembly points. Only you know the real one. Keep it that way. Take at least two of them, and maybe threaten another one or two. Much depends on where your troops end up on the ground, especially that half that landed randomly. Do what you can to prevent the Germans from concentrating against your objective. This includes interdicting German movement as much as possible, threatening alternate objectives, and blocking the German reinforcements if you have troops in the neighborhood.

There are three possible entry points for the German reinforcements: 5GG5/6, 2Q1 and 4GG5/6. The first can be blocked by a squad in the woods or a building. Good positions are 5CC6, FF6, GG4 or GG7. If the squad has a bazooka, keep out of the building so that it can get a better shot at the trucks or the StuG IIIG. The 4GG5/6 entry can be countered by a squad in either 4GG4 or GG7. The 4CC6 building is a possibility if the squad doesn't have a bazooka, but its LOS is limited by the hedges. Hex 2Q1 is the least likely entrance point. It can be blocked by a squad in any of the nearby woods, which is all the more dangerous with a bazooka.

Speaking of bazookas, they are powerful weapons in this scenario. Since it is 1945, the bazookas can fire WP at infantry in any hex. This can be very effective against a large German firegroup, not only does the smoke reduce the effectiveness of outgoing fire, but the units in the target Location must take a morale check. The bazookas can also fire HEAT against infantry in buildings, which is handy if the Germans get to your assembly point first. Of course, their natural use is against the StuG IIIG, since they are the only weapons the paratroopers have that can affect it (outside of Close Combat). If the German player is careless, a bazooka can be used against the trucks; if it hits, it is not a pretty sight. And don't forget that a leader can direct bazooka fire.

One important American weapon to consider is their infantry smoke grenades, which can also be WP. If an American squad is pulling back, it is wise to consider throwing a smoke grenade to cover the retreat. On the offensive, when the squad moves adjacent to the enemy, it is time for WP. It has a good chance of breaking the German unit; and even if it doesn't, it significantly hinders the German defensive fire against any other units moving up.

Because of the few units involved, all these tournament scenarios are playable in one evening; but the low number of pieces also require that each unit to be all it can be. All these scenarios require careful thought, but I believe none more so than "Hunters From The Sky". I hope you enjoy them.





SCENARIO BRIEFING

Player's Notes for ASL

By Mark C. Nixon

Mark Nixon is a wargamer without peer, and a fine writer. His insightful articles offering hints on the play of ASL *scenarios (*"Desert Winds" *and* "Desert Sands" *in the pages of Vol. 25-6 and 26-1;* "Early Victims, Early Victories" *in the '91* ASL Annual*) have been very popular. When Mark made the offhand suggestion to Rex Martin that an irregular column could be devoted to such, my predecessor wisely did not hesitate. What follows is the first installment of "Players' Notes for* ASL*". Given that there are now some 213* ASL *scenarios (with another three dozen or so being added each year), I expect there will be many more.*

ASL Scenario A25
Cold Crocodiles

Rating: 60% British

Attraction: How could anyone resist seeing those Crocodiles in action? And, the confrontation between Cromwells and Challengers on one side and panzerfausts and barndoors on the other promises high excitement indeed.

German Advantages: PFs; 88LL Guns; Stone Buildings; HIP

If you normally play against opponents experienced enough to maintain a goodly distance from your PF-toting infantry, it may actually be that the potency of these weapons seems quite less than it truly is. But never lose sight of the value in scaring the enemy into keeping his distance, particularly in this situation when they are driving AFVs at you which would surely end the gaming lives of any German troops they elected to hammer. When they do try to move in close you can "PF" them; but, for the most part, the British armor will remain about four or so hexes away. Of course the 88s can do pretty well too, and ought to give both the enemy infantry and AFVs plenty to fear. The combination of two HIP guns sporting two ROF, 16 IFT factors and a TK# of 27 guarantees the German can dominate play in two locations—at least for awhile—when these guns enter the battle. Their Large Target size limits set-up choices, but there are still enough available to keep your enemy guessing. Defending stone buildings will, as always, make your "8"-morale troops very difficult to break, and the ability to HIP a squad-equivalent just might be turned into a broken stack of enemy squads or a defunct tank at a crucial moment.

German Disadvantages: Outflanked; Mobility; Time

This German force is wonderful, but these three big disadvantages combine to find them, often, overwhelmed by about Turn #6 when the Crocodiles and their escorting infantry drive into their right flank. The problem for the Germans is the need to defend stone buildings, but all the ones south and west of 23O10 (on the west side of the canal) are just about impossible to hold onto without sacrificing the large group northeast of this position—and possibly the bridge as well. The German player who attempts to hold all will soon find his command reduced to a few isolated pockets of hopelessness; and even if he tries to withdraw before the enemy, he will likely find his avenues of retreat cut by the more adroit British and their AFVs. On the other hand, a defense which yields the southern half of the battlefield will invite an early British assault upon the bridge area and building 23010 (the "break-even" building for the British, as it is the 11th stone building they should normally come upon) and a possible crossing to the east side, with all that entails. In this case, the defense might be well situated to fend off the enemy reinforcements due on Turn #4, but has allowed the "at-start" British contingent too much freedom of action. The Germans are in a bit of a pressure cooker in this scenario.

German Defense:

The defense must protect stone buildings and the bridge at 23P7, while also providing optimum fields of fire for the 88LLs, HMG and MMG. This must all be done without excessive concentration in any one area lest the enemy 80mm FFE lambast a major share of your strength at a single blow or, equally devastating, lay in FFE Smoke on the position and allow the British infantry and tanks to overwhelm your troops. Placing those 88s will determine the nature of your defense, assuming you are not going to merely stick them out on their own and not try to support them (a tactic I won't even discuss here). Notice that Board 23 from hexrows H thru V offers only four whole-hex locations where these guns can be HIP: T7, T8, M10 and I8. Avoid the common error of trying to HIP on that orchard-road, for guns cannot be emplaced on paved roads (C11.2) and therefore cannot be HIP (A12.34). Of those four locations, only hexes T8 and M10 would allow the guns to remain HIP once the enemy pulls into LOS. But, happily, there are several decent locations on Board 24 and in the half-hexes shared by the two boards for the big guns. If you like to gamble that the British will bring on the Crocodiles at 24I10 or north, there are HIP locations galore which can nearly guarantee elimination of at least one Croc, provided the opponent obliges, and neglects to land a smoke FFE in the area to cover their reinforcements. The woods in 24Q2 and 24N1 are a favored place, as is the orchard in hex 24O3. At least these spots allow your infantry to hang in there and support the guns for awhile, since this is the point where the enemy's attack is most susceptible to getting hung-up as they attempt to traverse that wicked, deadly area from 23S9 to 23O10.

But, of course, that is why you must also expect the FFE to land here, and the British to concurrently swoop through the Board 24 village to come at 23010 from the west as well. After all, they need to gather in those stone buildings there and threaten to drive on past towards 24J2 and beyond. Because you must expect the British anywhere and everywhere across your entire front, selecting remote but devious locations for the 88LLs will be a very tough decision for you. A spot like hex 23G3

seems nearly a foolhardy choice, but take a look how it controls key hexes 23S8, R7, R8, Q8 and P7, while effectively screened from all other fire. Unfortunately, once you're spotted, a smoke FFE in the bridge area will eliminate the threat from this ATG long enough to allow the trapped British to escape the kill zone. Another devious spot is 23H10, which not only can cover the northern end of Board 24, but also will see a wealth of targets along the orchard road, and the P7 bridge as well, and can also deal some death to enemy infantry coming through the 23J10 woods area. But, again, the LOS are so restricted from this position that the gun can be smoked and hit from multiple directions once found. Therefore, I am putting these guns in more conventional positions from which they ought to be able to lend more of their much needed fire to the conflict. I expect the guns in these outposts to eventually fall to the enemy, but to at least enjoy plenty of fire opportunities while they last.

If I were willing to risk a squad to try to take out a tank with its PF, I might HIP a 5-4-8 in 23V5 in order to take a shot at any British tank which might park itself at 23X4 to control the orchard road and bring fire on 23N9, or in P8 with the intent to lay smoke. But I think it rarely wise to expose a squad in such a place as this from which rout may become impossible. Any of the other orchard road hexes would be safer, and might be just as good. They certainly would be less suspect. In any case, some of my set-up selections will probably register high enough on the "unsuspected" scale to be a surprise. The 88LL ATG at 2403/1 is a normal enough tactic, but the one at 24S2/6 might look a bit out of place. However, despite setting up HIP in open ground, the gun will not lose HIP unless the enemy reaches hex 24V1 (a real squeaky LOS)—which is just what the HIP 8-1 and MMG are in place to prevent—or hex 24U5, adjacent hexes or the many hexes north of the "S" row with LOS. I see the gun occupying a spot where the British won't expect it, and enjoying some entertaining command of the bridge area. It can stay concealed when it fires, too!

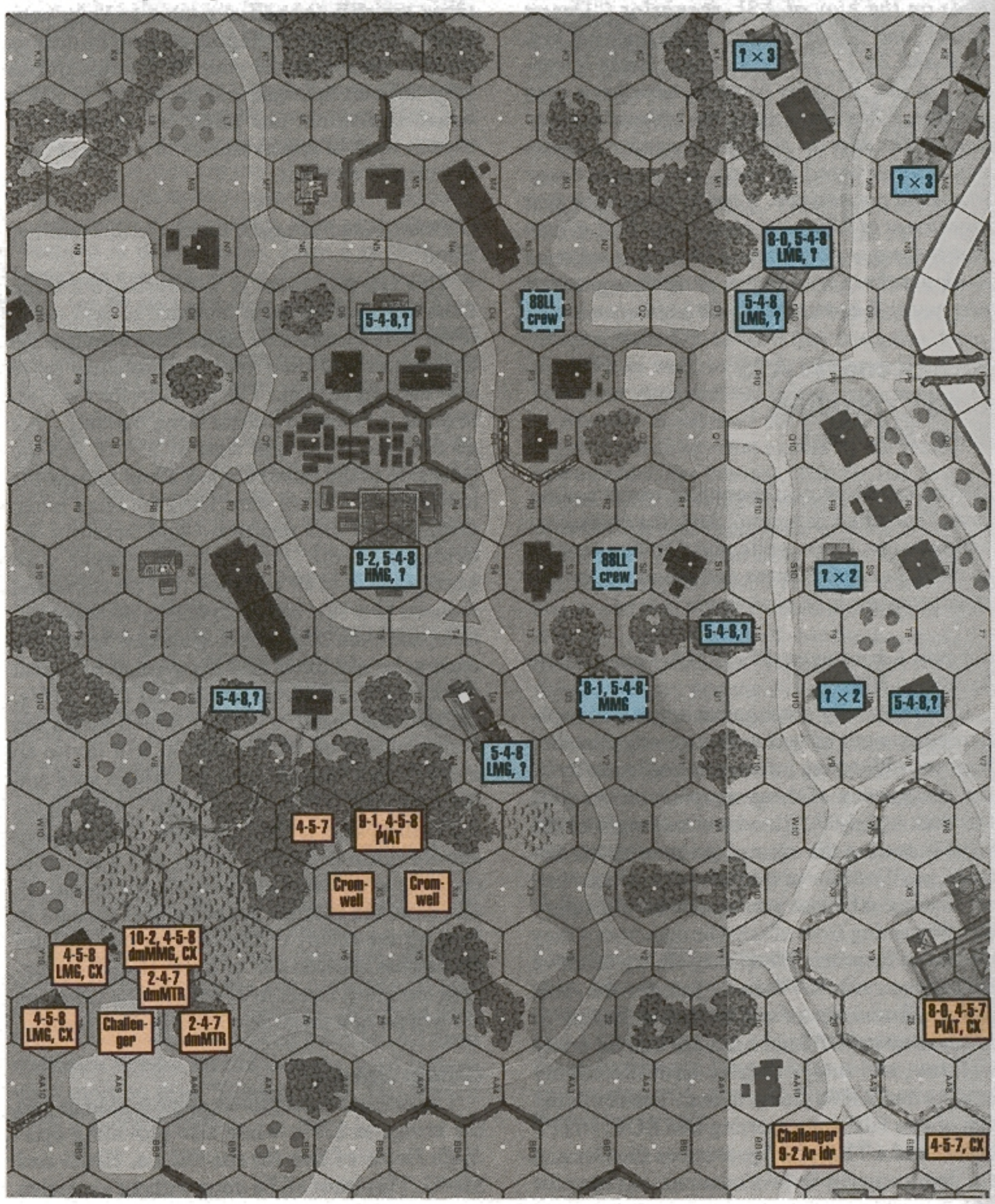
Unusual, for this scenario, is the absence of both the HMG and the MMG from building 23010 in my placement. The German units in that building actually expect the British to come straight at them, in which case I will pull back and let them come. All the Dummy counters are on Board 23 to try to confuse the enemy (why would there be Dummy stacks way back in L9 and M8?), with the idea that if he believes this area is held in strength, he will assume the Board 24 village is weakly defended. I'd be happy to fool him into coming for the village in strength, for that's where I am waiting and can fight an even battle; but in truth, I expect him to go straight for the bridge after all. When that happens and the FFE and all guns zero in on that area, I am hoping my heavy fire from the west flank will be enough to prevent them crashing through. One thing in my favor is that, as I mentioned earlier, the bottleneck around the bridge will be tough for the British to cross. If their Smoke works well, there is not much I could do either way; but I am banking on coming out of it better by keeping my strength away from the *schwerpunkt* in this gambit set-up.

Because the British will show me where they are attacking on their very first turn, I will be able to react and reposition my troops. If the attack comes straight at 23O10 as I suspect, peripheral units at 24V7 and 24O5 will immediately head for the northeast. They can get themselves in position to hinder the enemy reinforcements, or back-up the 23O10 position, or even support the 24O3 ATG as needed. The JgPz IVs will not only try to maneuver for some high-odds shots on the enemy armor, but will also keep an eye on self-preservation since I cannot afford to lose their seven CVP apiece. When the game deteriorates to the point where I am taking high risks with these vehicles, I will be sending my opponent a message that I think the battle is nearly lost.

The standard "accepted" defense for "Cold Crocodiles" would see the HMG and MMG in building 23O10, with the Germans attempting to stop a British thrust at that point. But I am convinced the British are too strong for such a defense to work well, especially once the smoke starts pouring in. So I am allowing the enemy to reach that area without sacrificing substantial elements of my own force. With my troops to the north and also still holding in the village to the southwest, British infantry who have pushed into the bridge area will find routing a serious problem, and pushing further north perhaps impossible.

British Advantages: Crocodiles; OBA; SMOKE; Firepower; 76LL Guns; Leaders

No big hurry to end this scenario, for the real fireworks don't even enter play until Turn #4 when those two Crocodiles waddle into the picture. Coupled with healthy AF, impressive SMOKE capability, fast-turreted 75mm gun and 4-FP CMG, the BF36 make these among the most imposing vehicles in the entire game system, marred only by their lowly 7MP allotment. Indeed, it can even lead to frustration to have such vehicles available yet have to suffer the tedium occasionally involved in wheeling them into play. But it is worth the wait to give players a chance to experience the "joys" of dealing with such beasts. These British reinforcements bring with them approximately 63% of the firepower in the scenario and enough SMOKE to ensure ample screening to ease your attack forward. In order to deal with German reinforce-



Positions at the end of the first British Player Turn. Actually, most of the British units would still be under "?" at this point, as they all enter play concealed.

ments we see the 76LL in action, as sure to end the gaming life of a JgPz IV as the 88LL will of any of the British vehicles. Add in two "-2" leaders, and I'll take the British.

British Disadvantages: Vehicular CVP Losses, Northeastern Buildings

As those Cromwells and Challengers provide the cutting edge to carve your way to victory, their loss will inflate enemy CVP enough to keep the Germans in the game; and if the Crocodiles fall as well, unthinkable as that may be, it would be a total of 43 CVP for the six AFVs and 9-2 armor leader—quite a deep hole indeed for the British infantry to navigate across afoot. Not that these lads cannot afford to lose an AFV to find an ATG, for they have the tools to then dispose of the offending gun and proceed. But enough of this kind of trading, plus a loss or so to PFs and assorted German devilry, and the number of extra stone buildings in the northeast needed to secure a win might escalate out of reach. Not enough of a worry to convince your tankers to hide, but just enough to keep them dispersed at first, until those 88LLs are found, in order to avoid the embarrassment of one lucky enemy gun taking out more than a single tank in one fire phase.

British Attack:

I think the most conventional attack here is to rush up CX into the 23Y7 building and walled-in area and push on due north from there, hopefully with FFE landing support fire right away (be it SMOKE or HE). Naturally your tanks will initially fire off sM left and right to provide flanking cover, and to hinder potential enemy killer shots from suspected HIP locations (like a 23V5 HMG boresighted on 23AA6, 9-2 leader directed for a 6-FP,-4 DRM). This is probably how the game usually opens; but since my Germans have tried to set up to defy such an attack, let's suppose this British commander has played the scenario two or three time and wants to do things a bit different this time, just to gain a new angle on the encounter. So this time the attack kicks off on Board 24, with just a reduced platoon moving into the two big stone buildings on Board 23 to secure their eight CVP and maintain the look of pressure on that flank. One advantage here is the unlikely event of any harm befalling British units moving up to the 24W6 woods area on Turn #1. There shouldn't be anything much to fear, so the British squads ride tanks and use Armored Assault CX to close with the enemy quickly. Notice the two HS rode the tank to 24Z8 and unloaded in that hex (overstacking as they did so) without CX (disallowed for unloading units anyway) thanks to the peculiar timing of Armored Assault, which actually leaves a world of freedom in the hands of the AFV to spend its MPs quite however it pleases with very limited restrictions. Of course, these tanks are getting as far as they do because they have entered play CE, although they have opted to BU once the road rate has been utilized.

From the positions reached on Turn #1, my Tommies will bull their way on into the Board 24 village over the next few turns while the tanks poke and probe, sticking close to the infantry and remaining dispersed. One tank goes through the 24U8 pass along with my infantry. But only one tank at first until I secure the immediate area. Likewise, the tank on Board 23 will work its way northward in support of the small force there; and a third tank will work the 24U3 road, very cautiously. There is no room to push forward with the fourth tank without exposing at least two of my AFVs to potential shots from a single HIP 88LL or the HIP infantry, so the fourth tank hangs back in the 24X4 area to exploit any opening. It will also be able to provide support fire and smoke, especially in and around hex 23S8, which might be welcome indeed for my weak right flank. In the meantime, the FFE will target the best enemy concentrations found and, hopefully, pile up some CVPs.

I believe I have enough to win the game even without my reinforcements, although the 60% advantage I've claimed would then be history. In such a situation, I don't feel I have to worry about each and every CVP as though its loss could mean an enemy win, so I will be very aggressive with the AFVs. After all, even if I lose one to a HIP 88LL, locating that gun will, from my point of view, also mean locating four German CVPs (the gun with crew) which I will nail to nearly even the score—and I may even be able to capture the Gun for more CVP. Therefore, I gain maximum use from my tanks, which will in turn assist my infantry and improve my overall performance. Compare my progress to the overly cautious commander whose tanks will remain safe and secure but not of much help to his infantry, who will find themselves moving very slowly against tough troops with "8" morale in stone buildings.

Continued on Page 18

THE PERCENTAGE OF FIREPOWER

Welcome to my "Scenario Briefing" series, the latest semi-regular column to feature the play of *ASL*. My two-fold purpose is to review popular scenarios for *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, while concurrently using each as a means to explore some of the many tactics available to players (experienced and novice alike). Readers will, therefore, encounter occasional references to numbers and probabilities (basic stuff only, I promise), but will frequently come across the "percentage of firepower" wielded by one side or both in these columns. As an introduction to the series, permit me to explain.

The "percentage of firepower" is the raw firepower totals, adjusted for ROF, for the contestants. I use this to gain a rough idea of exactly how much IFT FP advantage the stronger force could theoretically apply against the opposition in a single half-turn at normal range, assuming hits for all TH weapons, average ROF and no malfunctions or cowering. Here is an example of how I calculate ROF-adjusted FP for a hypothetical German force (and thereby derive the "%-FP"):

Type	Quantity	Strength	ROF	ROF-Adjusted FP
Infantry	4	6-5-8	—	24
FT	1	24	—	24
HMG	1	7-16	3	14
MMG	1	5-12	2	7.5
LMG	1	3-8	1	3.6
50mm MTR	1	2-IFT	3	4
50L ATG	1	6-IFT	3	12
PzVG (MA)	1	12-IFT	1	14.4
PzVG (MGs)	1	3/5/2	—	10
80mm OBA	1	16-IFT	—	16
TOTAL =				129.5 FP

Thus, a 3-ROF weapon will average 200% of its printed value; a 2-ROF weapon, 150%; and a 1-ROF, about 120% - excluding breakdowns and cowering. Obviously, OBA might affect many Locations and not just the single one I assume, but it might also not be available at all on many turns or might be used as SMOKE. Since this is a single half-turn average, I believe counting OBA for only one Location is a fair representation, as expecting it to affect more (or less) than this would be even less realistic. Compared to a British force which fields 79-FP, the above German OB would brandish 62% (129.5/208.5x100) of the FP in the scenario.

Forms of FP that I do not include in such a calculation are:

1. MOL, PF, Psk, Baz and PIAT (too restricted vs infantry and availability/hits too unreliable)
2. Demo Charges (a "one-shot" weapon)
3. SAN, Mines, Booby Traps, PreGame Bombardment (no player control).

These are all important elements of *ASL*, but must be handled elsewhere in my coverage, and not included in the %-FP. I have a theory that the attacker normally needs about 62% of the FP (calculated in this manner) to hope for success in a well-balanced scenario, and that any substantial deviation from this must be explained by other features of the encounter. For example, heavy fortifications, dense TEM, amphibious operations, time limit, armor-versus-armor actions (or any non-IFT battle), special morale or leadership are some qualities which might allow the %-FP to float above or below my expected level. In the absence of such factors, however, an FP advantage or disadvantage might be the primary reason for the "balance" of the scenario to swing one way or the other. Too, timing of any reinforcements influences the ebb and flow of the percentage advantage. Thus, using these raw figures on occasion will provide a solid point of reference which can act as a standard to aid me in the examination of various unique scenario features.

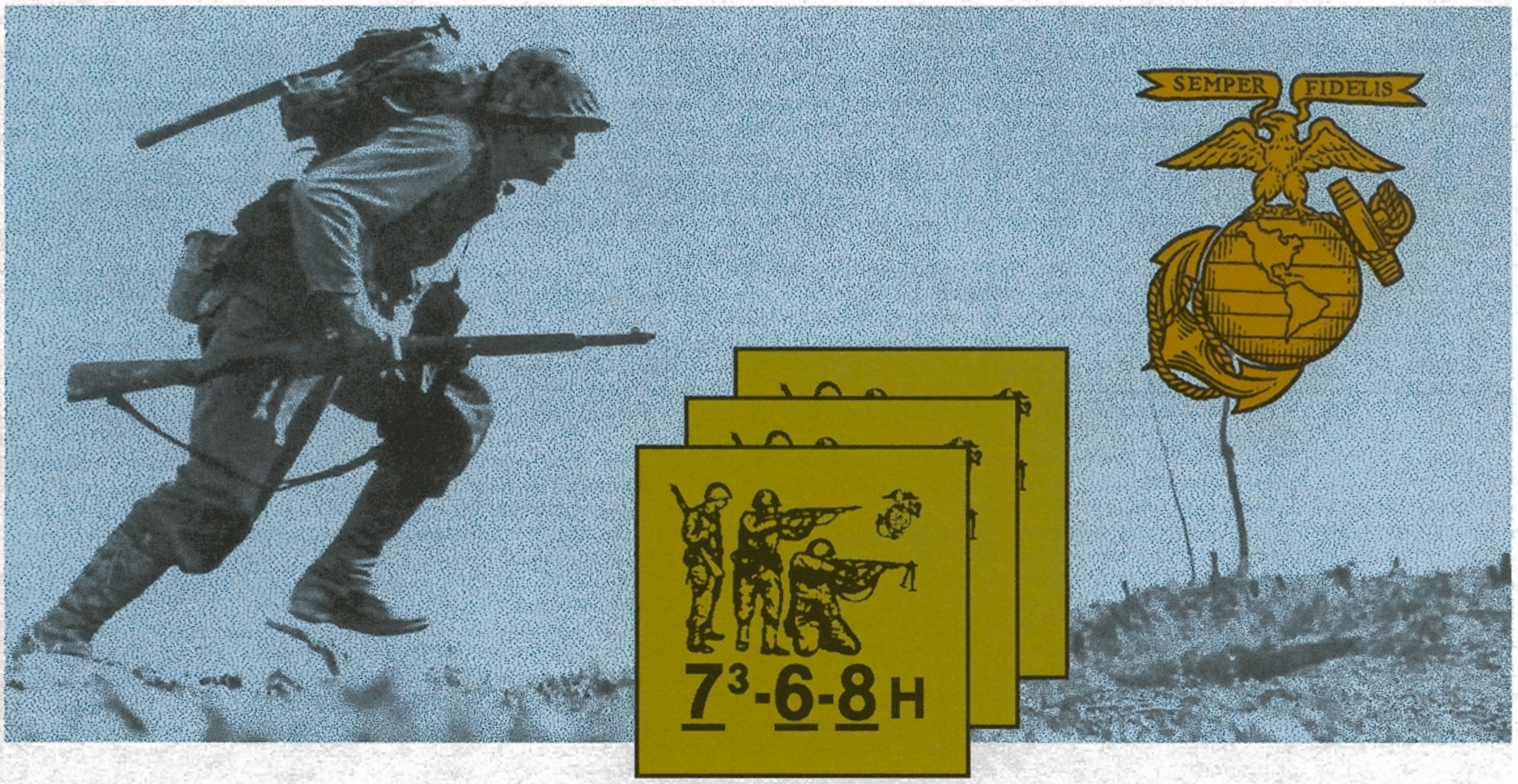
Of course I won't actually be *trying* to lose tanks; but I do want to emphasize that tank losses are acceptable provided they can be afforded; that they disclose the location of one of those killer 88s to enable the rest of my troops to react against it; or even if I am just gambling and the potential gain justifies the risk. Every move on the board (or every non-move, for that matter) carries with it some level of risk. The player who best manages the balancing of all these risks will probably be winning *ASL* scenarios more often than he is losing.

One advantage in attacking along the west edge is that it makes the entrance of my reinforcements a bit safer. If I want, by the time Turn #4 rolls around I ought to be able to bring those Crocs onboard without worry in the 24Q10 area, which will have been cleared by my infantry. That's not to say I won't go for an entrance further north after all—if the threat to the northern stone buildings would be of more help. But if I need some help in the village, or if the 88s have not yet been found, the northern entrance loses most of its attraction and I'll probably just drive right into the village and start flaming everything in sight. The ideal weapon to pry high-morale troops out of stone buildings, those 36-FP flamethrowers are effective from two-hex range, and still have 18-FP at a three-hex range. Notice that D3.31 allows the FT to fire in Bounding Fire at full FP, but D2.42 will halve fire if the vehicle is in Motion. Curiously, during its MPh a vehicle is not "in Motion", only before/after can it be in Motion, by definition. Thus, the vehicle can fire the FT during its MPh at full FP, or stop and fire it in AFPh at full FP, or end its MPh in Motion and fire in AFPh at half-FP. Take special note of this, for there has been some talk of altering Rule D2.42 such that it applies during the MPh as well, so it will be best to determine how your opponent reads this important rule.

Above I mentioned the British 63% FP rating; but consider what occurs as the reinforcements enter the contest. The British begin a might weak with 52%, leap to 67% on their fourth turn and then slide to 63% when the JgPzs enter later than same game turn. Adhering to my expected 62% rating for a successful attack (see sidebar), I believe this helps emphasize the value of using all that smoke capability in the early turns to work your troops forward, despite the fact that the British are about 65-FP shy of what I'd like to have. Forward progress still must be made, and smoke is the key. Once the Crocodiles enter play, the lethality of their FTs can best be gauged if we consider the British would control only 55% of the FP without these two weapons. As if any further proof were really needed, this shows the FTs are vital to British victory and demand to be used.

Conclusion: Elite infantry and quality leadership, high-powered guns and flame-throwing tanks promise top-notch action in St. Joost. It's a cold day in Crocodile heaven—only these beasts are impervious to the weather, and to much of what the Germans can throw their way as well.





SEMPER FI!

The United States Marine Corps in ASL

By Steven C. Swann

It sounded so easy. Just go to my local library, look up the Table of Organization (T/O) for a US Marine Rifle Company during World War II, and convert that into *ASL* equivalents. After performing this chore many times in the past for my previous articles, I believed that it would be a fairly routine assignment. I don't know what I was thinking of . . . Just like Boot Camp, it turned out to be anything but "easy".

First problem: The US Marine Corps (hereafter, "USMC" or "the Corps") changed the T/O of its divisions *every* year from 1942 through 1945. To varying degrees, each such change affected every level of the unit — right down to the rifle company. Second: During 1942 and 1943 the Marines had one standard Line Rifle Company OB, two types of Raider (Commando) Rifle Companies and a Marine Parachute Rifle Company. Even with all of this variation, there were also special companies composed of elements of pre-war Marine Defense Battalions and Scout-Sniper units and organized in the field for specific tasks. All this meant that I had to research nine different types of infantry companies and convert *all* of them into *ASL* counters to adequately reflect the USMC.

It should be mentioned that the information I gathered about the US Marines has been (or will be) presented in two different articles. This article, *Semper Fi!*, will concern itself only with the standard Marine Divisions (MarDivs) that were established from 1942 to 1945. Beginning in the 1930s and continuing throughout the war, the Marine Corps experimented with several different types of rifle companies. The T/Os described in this article will include only company organizations that actually saw combat service during World War II. These would include the standard rifle and heavy weapons companies, and the 1945 assault platoon. ("First to Fight!" will be published in the *1993 ASL Annual* and will cover the Defense Battalions and other special Marine units.)

FIREPOWER

The *ASL* system does not use a SMC to represent every officer and senior NCO that is listed in a T/O. If so, there would be a large number of SMC cluttering up our cardboard battlefields. Instead, the SMC that are shown on a scenario's "Order of Battle" (OB) represent the extraordinary officers and NCOs that appear on the battlefield and who perform above and beyond the normal call of duty. The training that every Marine rifleman received upon induction always included the basics of military leadership. American Marines were taught, and expected, to take command in any situation where they found themselves to be the senior man present. Because of the high proportion of officer casualties that occurred in the Pacific war, it was not at all unusual to find platoons led by corporals and companies led by sergeants. To reflect this leadership ability by all ranks of the Corps, the Leadership Generation Number (LG#) for the Marines has been set at "4.5", a considerable improvement over the usual American value. Therefore, the *ASL* leaders shown on the Marine OBs are representative of exceptional leaders and not of numerical quantity.

There are many men in any military organization or unit who are not front-line combat personnel. Even on a company level, there are some whose jobs do not normally require their presence on the firing line (except under unusual and dire circumstances). Except by SSR, all enlisted personnel of a unit will not be represented by MMC. Personnel that will not be shown in counter form would include the clerks, supply and maintenance personnel, vehicle drivers (inherent in vehicle counter), stretcher bearers and medical corpsmen, company and platoon communication runners, and US Navy personnel. After 1942, all Marine rifle squads are represented by 6-6-8 and 7-6-8 squad counters, while Marine support troops (who were not issued BARs) will be represented by a 4-5-8 squad MMC and respective half-squad counters.

Squad firepower for the Marines was a thorny problem for the *ASL* design team. In 1942, a USMC rifle platoon had four squads, of which three were nine-man rifle squads and the fourth an eight-man BAR squad. The rifle squads were equipped with one BAR and eight M1903 bolt-action rifles. Equating this to the *ASL* standard that had already been developed

ACROSS THE WAVES

What can one say? *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, which began as simply an infantry-oriented tactical wargame, has grown to be more than most of us ever expected. With the inclusion of Sections 11-18 of Chapter G (*GUNG HO!*), the system now encompasses all aspects of World War II land combat. In fact, here in the Dakotas, the section on Landing Craft (G12) alone has caused several *ASL* fans to turn into sea-sick novices and back away from the water. Rather than lose any more troops to this strange phobia, perhaps I should take a beginner's look at these unique vehicles. To make this trip palatable and painless as possible, let's board an LCVP (Note #3 on Page H110) and ride along with a bunch of Marine Scouts.

Looking down into the LCVP, I see that it appears to be armored — but not heavily. Still, it is designed well enough that the passengers can be BU (G12.123) and protected from small-arms fire. Unfortunately, this is not so for the Coast Guard crew which must be CE in order to pilot the craft and man the AA as it approaches the enemy shore. The Scouts are very glad that the armor plate was added after June of '43. And that two 4FP MMGs are mounted, providing some chance to inflict damage on the Japanese during the run-in.

My fellow passengers are already aboard awaiting the "land-lubber". Since the LCVP's PP (39) is underlined (signifying a bow ramp), there are a couple of jeeps (15 PP each) with their HS (zero PP cost, since they are passengers — G12.121). Too, there is a 3-4-8 (five PP) carrying a dm MMG (two PP) and the platoon leader, a 9-1 SMC (one PP). The Marines gladly make room for me, since there is some to spare (one PP).

Casting off from the APA (troop transport), the LC starts its run-in to the shore, clipping along at five hexes per turn (one MP per hex entered). As we pass the Line of Departure, I take a quick peek over the side . . . and wish I hadn't. Splashes caused by enemy artillery shells are all around us and the high whine of passing bullets doesn't help my nervousness at all. As our craft gets closer to the shore, the enemy fire finds the range; we are being peppered by a hidden Japanese HMG. Taking a hit in the cockpit (1MC), the crew falters and are Stunned (G12.111) as the helmsman falls wounded, momentarily losing control of the boat and allowing it to shift direction. We also lose speed until another crewman grabs the wheel and fights to re-establish our course.

Because we've lost some time, we are now far behind the other LCs in our wave and appear to have become an excellent target for a Japanese gun firing from a bunker. With a loud *CLANG*, I know that something has hit us, registering a TK DR of one less than the necessary TK value. This 1944 model LCVP must have fairly good flotation chambers since I see that it has a Damage Point rating of "3" (on the back side of the counter). After suffering that one DP (12.62), we all start to pray aloud that any other hits are only near-misses. Tearing my eyes away from the hole in the hull, I suddenly notice that the crew and passengers are all taking the MC caused by the collateral attack. Our crew must have been toughened by the first one and passes with ease. But the HS riding in the first jeep fails and is "Casualty Reduced" (12.13). That Japanese TK DR was a devastating blow to the Scouts, as it was just enough to hit the second jeep with a "4", immobilizing it. Standing next to the jeep was the 9-1 Lieutenant, who fails his MC also but is lucky that it is just a minor wound. In true "John Wayne" fashion, he is able (though slowed) to continue.

Glory be! Finally we approach the shore and the surviving Marines prepare to disembark. Pulling the dead from the lead jeep, the HS from the immobilized one climbs in and readies itself. I'm simply grateful that it was the rearmost jeep that was immobilized by that hit, for had it been the front one both would have had to be left behind on the LCVP (12.151 and 12.42). The Guardsman pilot shouts that we are nearing shallow water. As we enter each shallow water hex, the helmsman pulls out his dice and rolls to determine if he has run Aground (12.21). The first is safely passed on this Slightly Sloped Beach (G13.4), leaving only two to go.

Nervously we all watch him. He rolls a second time, and again passes through the shallows safely. Who knows; maybe we can reach this beach without getting wet after all! Entering the third (and last) hex of the water, that "+2" DRM to the left of the LCVP's MP finally catches up and we run aground just a few feet from the dry sand. Seeing a Japanese gun on a hillside traversing in our direction, the "bow hook" (ramp operator) lets go the ramp and we jump out. Splashing about in the water with the LCVP has cost us 25% of our MF/MP, but at least we are all out of that damn big target. Just in time, too, as an enemy artillery round turns it into scrap. Ah, maybe it will provide some cover (12.83) for the next assault wave.

Having found the biggest grain of sand on the beach to hide behind, I notice that the Coast Guard crew was able to survive that last, devastating blow and are milling about in the water as if they don't know what to do. No wonder, thinks I, since their morale instantly drops to a "6" (12.112) as soon as they are out of their element. So long as they can avoid combat, they should be safe since they are only worth 1VP (12.114) unless captured, which won't happen when fighting these maniacal Japanese. I shout that they should find a spare MG abandoned by the Marines, since they can operate that and could at least contribute to the fight. Hell, they could even Scrounge (12.83) one of the LCVP's MMGs.

That Scout jeep must have been water-proofed (G13.4221), as it cruises past me paying only one MP for wading (instead of the usual 2MP). Even as I watch, the MG-toting HS advances into the jungle, faithfully following the wounded leader. Finding a nearby crater (easy to do after the naval bombardment of the shore), I settle back to study some of the approaches used by other LCs in the second wave. After all, I am just an observer.

The next wave consists of two LCM(3) loaded with a Sherman tank each, and six more LCVPs bring in infantry reinforcements. But, having found a gap in our vaunted air cover, two Japanese FB drop down and make straight for the approaching boats. Passing its TC (a fairly easy thing to do with a vehicle moving across open water), the first elects to attack the LC as an armored vehicle (12.66) and drops its single bomb, achieving a Near Miss for a hull hit with halved FP. Taking three DP, the LCM continues to chug along. The second FB must be piloted by an ace, since he achieves a CH (12.679) on the other LCM, sending it and all its passengers to Davy Jones' Locker with no survivors (it was in deep water still).

Coming around for another pass, the first pilot decides to make a strafing run on an LCVP, attacking it as though it were an unarmored vehicle due to its open top (12.61). Rolling an "8", the Japanese attack doesn't harm the LC itself, but does force all of its passengers to undergo a collateral attack. They all pass with ease, bolstered by the fact that our own fly-fly boys finally roar down to get the enemy planes off our back.

But oh, what a wily foe this Japanese commander is! Another American LCVP has just blundered into an A-B (anti-boat) Minefield (G14.53). Making an Availability dr, the mine attacks the hapless LC on the 36FP column, using the ★ Vehicle line as though it were unarmored. A tremendous explosion (DR of "7") causes six DP to the LCVP. Good fortune favors us today, and since A-B Mines can be placed only in shallow water, allows a survival DR for all its PRC. The third LCVP is obviously handled by an expert as the helmsman, cursing loudly and declaring he'll never play again if the dice go cold, pilots it through the three Aground TC and, altering course slightly, steers it from the hexspine to a hexside in its VCA for a perfect Beaching (12.3). However, one LCVP has fallen behind the others and is making only four hexes per turn now, with every Japanese gun turned on it; I'll bet that it is manned by an Inexperienced crew (12.113).

I just realized something significant! Most everything I've seen today has a corresponding rule in Chapter D. These LC have run Aground (Bog), been blown up by A-B mines (A-T mines), suffered air attacks, moved forward, been loaded and unloaded, and had their crews survive the destruction in shallow water. I guess that means that using an LC is pretty much the same as transporting our boys in trucks or halftracks. This new way of war doesn't look all that complicated now.

Oh, I know that there are many details we've not experienced in today's assault; but then, when does one ever see *all* the rules applied in a single scenario? This is just a small action, not like going through **Hell or High Water** (ASL #73) with 11 LCVPs or hitting the **Bloody Red Beach** (ASL #74) with 19 LVT and four LCM. They are a bit much for one's first time at the ocean front. In fact, given what I've seen on this outing, I've decided upon a training run for would-be commanders to get their feet wet:

Take Overlay **F** from the old *G.I.* gamette (a true fan throws nothing away) and place it in the middle of one of the *Ocean* overlays from *GUNG HO!* The island is named "Sirot" and is part of the Green Islands group, has Slightly Sloped beaches, and is covered with Light Jungle. Surf is NA, and there is a Mild Breeze from the NW. Now get yourself two LCVP, 4.5 British 4-5-8 squads, loaded with two LMGs and led by an 8-1 SMC. On the island, have your opponent set up HIP 2.5 Japanese 4-4-8s, one 50mm MTR, a MMG with its 2-2-8 crew, all commanded by a single 8-0 leader. Now, Sergeant, clear that island of unbroken enemy troops in five turns or less. [*Sirot, an unimportant dot in the vast Pacific, was actually taken by elements of the 37th Battalion, 3rd New Zealand Infantry Division on the morning of 17 February, 1944 against the stiff resistance put up by its small, isolated Japanese garrison.*]

Making a few practice assaults on this island should give you all the basics. These sessions will cover the movement, running aground, non-ordnance direct fire and ordnance indirect fire, and unloading of Landing Craft. Switch sides and play through this training scenario several times. Once you get the basic rules down, you might start adding other elements (surf, heavy guns, fortifications, reefs, etc.) to the action. In fact, this practice scenario might be more fun than you can imagine, and could grow into an exciting scenario of endless variety. Upgrade the forces involved, remembering to increase the capabilities of the combatants evenly to keep it in balance. No reason to limit the battle to just the Japanese and New Zealanders either; after all, every army practiced for assault landings and beach defense. You might even wish to substitute *SL* Overlay **A**, **G**, **H** or **I** for new challenges.

But, that's all the time I've got for this today. The Marines are pushing into the jungle in force now, making for the hill that is their objective, and I need to get moving so I can watch how they deal with the cave complexes that lie ahead. After all, I'm just the observer. You boys can get your sea-legs now, I suspect. Maybe we'll get a chance to ride together again; you drive next time.

Hey, Gunny, wait for me!

for other nationalities provides a FP of "4". The BAR squad had two BAR gunners and six M1903 riflemen, providing slightly more firepower with the extra BAR even while losing a rifleman. The extra BAR (LMG) would boost the FP to "5" for a BAR squad. These two squad types are given fair representation by the use of a 4-5-8 MMC and a 5-5-8 MMC for the 1942 time period.

During 1943, all Marine rifle squads were reorganized and equipped with at least two BARs and the number of men increased to 12 per squad. The BAR squad formation was dropped, leaving three 12-man squads per platoon. While this may not seem like much, it should also be remembered that by 1943 all Marine companies had been issued the new M1 Garand rifles. While retaining the 5FP for two BARs per squad, we now have increased the manpower by three men and are using semi-automatic M1 rifles. This increase in both manpower and firepower provides the basis for the 6-6-8 Marine squad of 1943 and its assault fire capabilities.

By 1944 the Marine rifle squad was increased to include three BARs and gained an extra man as well, giving a total of 13 men per squad with at least three automatic weapons and nine semi-automatic rifles (the SL often carried a SMG). The extra BAR man now allows the FP to increase to "7", and the automatic and semi-automatic types of weapons allow the capabilities of Spraying Fire and Assault Fire to be assigned. The standard Marine squad remained at that level until the end of the war, so giving us the final 7-6-8 Marine squad MMC. The *ASL* designers have provided a series of squad counters that perfectly reflect the changing T/Os of the US Marine Corps throughout World War II.

MORALE

The *ASL* counters for the US Marines all have a Morale level of "8". This will likely raise a controversy between various players (especially those from one branch of the services or the other) about the difference in morale for Marines and regular — even Elite — Army troops. There are several reasons why the Marines were assigned a value of "8". Let's take a brief look at the background of the United States Marines.

The red stripe worn by officers and NCOs on their dress blue trousers (known as a "blood stripe") was earned for the Corps in the Mexican-American War. Several times the regular Army had assaulted Mexico City and been repulsed. After the Army had given up, the Commanding General (Army) finally offered the Marines a chance. Men of the Corps carried the assault into Mexico City and won, but at a heavy cost — 90% of the Marine officers and NCOs present were killed or wounded in that one day. At Belleau Wood in World War I, the Germans gave the US Marines the name "Devil Dogs". All soldiers of any nation have nicknames for themselves and their opponents, but bestow such fearsome epithets only upon units that they respect and fear. This was, and still is, considered an honor by Marines.

Skipping over World War II for the moment, during the Korean War even General MacArthur wanted Marines for assault troops because he knew that they could carry the day. The Chinese troops were told by their superiors not to fight the "Yellow Legs" (Marines) because they would not retreat, and it would cost too many troops in relation to the position gained. The Marines were eventually ordered to stop wearing their leggings in order to prevent the Chinese regulars from knowing whether they were fighting the Army or the Marines. Of all Allied POWs during Korea, the Marines surrendered least and broke under brainwashing least of any of the United Nations' troops.

The Marines have always prided themselves on their self-reliance and fighting ability. Due to the tremendous manpower needs during mobilization following the Pearl Harbor attack, the draft was instituted in December 1941. Many amateur historians might claim that, since the Marines were using the draft, troop quality would surely be the same as that of the US Army. But this line of reasoning turns out to be in error. The Marine Commandant of the time, Lt-General T. Holcomb, assigned liaison officers to all State Governors' offices and draft boards to defer all draftees who indicated a preference for the Marines and hold them until Marine training camps could take them. The rest of the story can be best summed up by a direct quote from the *History of Marine Corps Operations in World War II* (Vol. 2, page 35):

> . . . This program, which was quite successful, resulted in the seeming paradox that most of the draftees in Marine uniforms were still volunteers, in fact if not in name. The intangible but clearly evident atmosphere of a volunteer outfit was retained by the Marine Corps throughout the war. This spirit was especially evident in the units of the Corps' striking arm — the Fleet Marine Force — where officers and men alike were intolerant of anyone attempting to get by with a marginal performance. The prevailing attitude was that every man had asked to be a Marine and no complaints were expected when the going got a little rough.

One other attitude prevailing in the Pacific theater was not in evidence in the European theater among the Americans. In the Pacific, America was fighting the Japanese, a people that had attacked Pearl Harbor without warning and without a declaration of war. Most Americans were so outraged that they flocked to join the military services so that they could fight the Japanese. The war in Europe had not touched the lives of the majority of Americans on the emotional level as yet. Thus the Pacific war was a more "personal" war to many Americans at home, while the European war was a distant fight involving distant people. This difference in attitude had a large effect on the determination and mental willingness of a Marine to face combat.

Last, the question of play balance must be considered. Look at the way the Japanese are handled — step reduction in squad strength until broken in the half-squad unit. This method of handling the Japanese was considered necessary due to the unique Japanese characteristics of *bushido*, of fighting and dying even when victory was impossible. The USMC and the Japanese regulars went head-to-head on the beaches and coastal areas many times. While the Army fought its war of fire-and-maneuver, this option was not available for most Marine commanders. As amphibious troops, the Marines were expected to take their objectives — usually by direct frontal assaults against an opponent who would fight until the end without mercy expected or given. For this type of simulation, some equalizer was needed to reflect the intensity of the fighting that occurred between these two opposing forces, even on the tactical level. Too, the structure of the amphibious assault rules — where the attackers have nowhere to fall back to and rally — necessitated a higher-than-usual morale level.

The morale level of "8" is a justifiable value for the Marines, who were the elite amphibious assault troops of the US forces in the Pacific and whose *elan* became legendary. Emphasis must be placed on the difference in the theory of attack between the Marines and the US Army. The training of the Marines stressed that objectives were to be taken as quickly as possible (the longer the fight dragged on, the longer the fleet had to sit vulnerable offshore), while the US Army's approach was much more methodical, with much stress put upon taking as few casualties as possible while securing the objective. This is not just an ex-Marine's view; even the Army's General MacArthur wanted to retain the Marines for leading his amphibious assaults in the SW Pacific, and in fact kept the 1st and 3rd MarDivs under his direct command as long as he could.

EXPERIENCE

Here again, Bob McNamara was forced to diverge from the existing charts for the Americans as given in the *ASL* Rulebook. Chapter H (H1.28) provides a chart with ELR guidelines for American forces that is incorrect for the Marine units in the Pacific Theater. The Marines have always considered themselves a breed apart from the other armed forces of the United States. Marines, for the most part, have been volunteers. The men who have answered their country's call by enlisting in the Marines have a high *esprit de corps*, one that is raised even higher by the training that they receive.

For many years prior to World War II, individual Marines had been gaining combat experience in the so-called "bandit wars" of Central America. After Guadalcanal, the Corps took the tactical lessons learned there and in Central America and modified the training of all regiments. Some lessons were brought home from the Makin Raid by the 2nd Raider Battalion. Still more insights and new procedures for amphibious operations were learned from the invasion of Attu Island (Alaska) by the 7th Infantry Division, US Army. With the new training and equipment developed through hard experience, the ELR is and should be "5" for all Marine units. The only time the ELR might be lowered would be in a scenario where the American unit is heavily depleted, to represent a very desperate situation, or for the early Marine actions in the Philippines or the Wake Island defense during December 1941.

OFFBOARD ARTILLERY

The selection of OBA values for *ASL* Marines was made easier by using the Divisional Equipment charts provided. The values offered below are for OBA that is provided by Marine parent units. Other forms of OBA may be provided by US Navy destroyers, cruisers and battleships. Divisional and Naval OBA would always enjoy "Plentiful Ammo" conditions (except by SSR). An exception might be at Guadalcanal, where the Marines were left unsupported on the island by the withdrawal of the Navy before all supplies were offloaded. At Guadalcanal, any US OBA (except mortar) should be shown as having "Scarce Ammo" until November 1942. During the first two years of the war, the Navy's pre-invasion bombardments left a lot to be desired in accuracy; therefore for the years 1942 and 1943 the placement of United States Naval OBA should require an accuracy dr of "1" to be on target (G14.64). The use of Naval Battleship and Heavy Cruiser OBA should also be restricted to scenarios that allow the Japanese an overwhelming number of squads. HE FFEs of 350mm (14") and 400+mm (16") give a very high KIA value and are just too easy to abuse. Battalion and Regimental OBA could be affected by Scarce Ammo conditions, and should be determined by studying the historical references for the scenario in question, while still conforming to all OBA rules as given in Chapter C.

Artillery support provided by parent units of Marine companies was slightly different from that of the US Army, but does not seem skewed by the *ASL* rules. As an aid to any scenario designers among the readership, two charts are offered giving the level of artillery support from Marine resources and Navy resources afloat. Readers will note that naval guns are usually given in inches while *ASL* OBA is always designated in millimeters (mm). The naval chart below provides both measurements, as well as the primary type that could be expected from each ship type present.

Marine OBA Chart:

Type	Level	Year
60mm MTR	Company	42-45
81mm MTR	Battalion	42-45
75mm ART	Regiment	42-44
75mm ART	Division	42-44
105mm ART	Regiment	1945
105mm ART	Division	42-45
155mm ART	Division	1945
155mm ART	Corps	43-45

Naval OBA Chart:

Naval Type	ASL Type	Ship Type
5" Guns	127mm ART	Destroyer
8" Guns	203mm ART	Light Cruiser
14" Guns	355mm ART	Heavy Cruiser
16" Guns	406mm ART	Battleship

A BRIEF HISTORY

At the time of the American entry into World War II, the US Marines had already begun expanding and reorganizing their divisions based on the triangular concept. This system was based on the fact that all sub-units of a parent unit would be grouped in threes. In other words, a division had three regiments of three battalions, of three companies, of three platoons each. In 1942 this was the form in all USMC formations except the light tank battalions of Marine divisions. (The light tank battalion had four companies of M3s.)

Unlike the US Army, which had small (approximately 15,000 men) and separate infantry and armored divisions, the Corps had true "combined arms divisions" from the very start. Each Marine division was equipped with enough artillery, tanks, support and transport units to insure that each regiment could have its own attachment of each in any combat situation. The regiments withsuch attachments were termed "Regimental Landing Teams" (RLTs) and were numbered according to the infantry regiment number. An example would be the 5th Regimental Landing Team, consisting of the following units: 5th Marines (Inf), one company of tanks, one battalion of artillery, one company each of pioneers, engineers, transport and supply. Each RLT would also receive its own naval medical unit to handle casualties. In general, each Marine regiment in an assault could bring any and all types of units with it that were required for it to fulfill its mission.

In December 1941, only two Marine formations would see any ground combat. In the Philippines and at Corregidor, the 4th Marine Regiment fought the Japanese until ordered to surrender in May 1942 (*ASL* Scenario #68). On Wake Island, the 1st Marine Defense Battalion withstood the initial Japanese invasion attempt, but eventually had to give way before the overwhelming strength of Japanese reinforcements. In the absence of a 1941 T/O, the D-Series 1942 T/O should be used for any scenarios concerning these two actions.

At the beginning of 1942 the Corps had only two divisions available for combat; the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions. As the fighting progressed, the number of divisions gradually increased to six full combat divisions (with supporting elements) by the war's end. During August 1942, the 1st Marine Division landed at Guadalcanal and fought the Japanese to a standstill in a series of "battles of attrition". In November, the 2nd Marine Division and elements of the US Army arrived at Guadalcanal to relieve the depleted 1st MarDiv, which had spent the last four months fighting alone against the Japanese.

For the first few months of 1943, the Marine divisions were unable to assist the American advance in the Solomons Island group. The 1st MarDiv was still in Australia and New Zealand undergoing re-organization, retraining and refitting with new equipment. The 2nd MarDiv was deeply involved with preparations for the Gilbert Islands campaign, where it was to make the Tarawa assault. The 3rd MarDiv was still in the States finishing its training and formation. The burden of combat in the Central Solomons campaign of 1943 fell on the ParaMarines, Marine Raider Battalions and the Marine Defense Battalions. This campaign included battles for the islands of New Georgia, Vangunu, Rendova, Vella Lavella and Kolombangara.

In November 1943, the new 3rd MarDiv and the Marine Raiders were committed to action in the Northern Solomons campaign, beginning with the invasion of Bougainville (scenarios #67 and #73). ParaMarines were moved north and landed on Choiseul Island for a week-long raid as a diversion for the Bougainville operation. Meanwhile, the 2nd Marine Division took part in the bloody invasion of Tarawa (20 November) in the Central Pacific drive through the Gilbert Islands, in the process proving the worth of the new LVTs. Tarawa was the bloodiest combat action for American forces to date, where the 2nd MarDiv averaged 1,000 casualties per day during the three-day assault. The 1st MarDiv, after spending some months recuperating and replacing men lost due to combat and tropical diseases, assaulted the island of New Britain on 26 December, 1943, applying direct pressure on the huge Japanese naval and air base at Rabaul.

The year 1944 was an active one for the Marine divisions, who were all involved in the Central Pacific campaign. On 1 February, 1944, the 4th MarDiv landed at Roi-Namur and secured the islands in two days. On the 18th, the reinforced 22nd Marines began securing the islands of Engebi, Eniwetok and Parry. The new 4th Marine Regiment (former Raiders) seized Emirau Island in the Bismarks on 20 March, 1944. Saipan was invaded by the 2nd and 4th Marine divisions in June. On 21 July, Guam was retaken by the 3rd MarDiv (Scenario #74) and the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade (ProvMarBrig). The 4th MarDiv landed on Tinian (July 24) in the Marianas. Meanwhile, the 1st Marine Division invaded Peleliu in September of 1944 (Scenario #72) in preparation for the Army's invasion of the Philippines.

In 1945 there were two major Marine campaigns. The 4th and 5th Marine Divisions stormed the black sands of Iwo Jima on 19 February 1945. By the 25th the level of fighting on Iwo Jima was so intense that the 3rd MarDiv was committed. Iwo Jima . . . Mount Surabachi . . . names that carry an immense amount of emotion for Marines from that day to the present. Here on the sides of a volcanic mountain a Marine company started its trek up the mountainside. Hours later, only six Marines and one Navy corpsman survived to place a small American flag on a bent piece of pipe and raise it on the mountaintop so that all those fighting below could see it. A later re-enactment of this flag-raising for the photographers would inspire a monument to those brave Marines that is still visited by thousands each year. The Marine's assault on Iwo Jima prompted the admiral commanding the Navy's fleet to write of the action: "uncommon valor was a common virtue".

The 1st, 2nd and 6th Marine divisions (together, the 3rd Amphibious Corps) invaded Okinawa on 1 April 1945. Here on a "home" island of Japan itself, three Marine divisions and three Army divisions (the 24th Corps) fought a three-month battle that would prove to be the most costly campaign of the war for America. By July 1945, the official end of the Okinawan campaign, American losses were 12,000 dead and 37,000 wounded (against an estimated 110,000 Japanese casualties). Prior to the Okinawa invasion, the two senior regimental elements of the 6th Division (4th & 22nd Marines) had been designated as the 1st ProvMarBrig and had taken part in the Guam

TABLE 1: Table of Organization - D-Series Marine Infantry Battalion (Authorized 1 July '42)

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
Infantry Battalion	933	
HQ Company	111	
Battalion HQ	75	10-2 SMC 8-1 SMC 5x4-5-8 MMC 2xJeep
Company HQ	36	4-5-8 MMC
Weapons Company	273	
Company HQ	29	9-2 SMC 8-1 SMC 8-0 SMC 4-5-8 MMC 1-Ton Truck
AA/AT Platoon	24	2-3-8 HS 3x2-2-8 Crew HMG 3x37mm ATG 3xJeep
MTR Platoon	76	4x2-3-8 HS 4x81mm MTR
3 MG Platoons (each)	48	6x2-3-8 HS 6xMMG
3 Rifle Companies (each)	183	
Company HQ	29	9-1 SMC 8-1 SMC 2x8-0 SMC 4-5-8 MMC LMG*
Weapons Platoon	28	
Platoon Section	4	2-3-8 HS
MTR Section	11	2x2-3-8 HS 2x60mm MTR
MG Section	13	2x2-3-8 HS 2xMMG
3 Rifle Platoons (each)	42	
Platoon HQ	7	2-3-8 HS
BAR Squad	8	5-5-8 MMC
3 Rifle Squads (each)	9	4-5-8 MMC

* - see article for explanation

TABLE 2: Table of Organization - E-Series Marine Infantry Battalion (Authorized 15 April '43)

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
Infantry Battalion	953	
HQ Company	137	
Battalion HQ	123	10-2 SMC 8-0 SMC 6x4-5-8 MMC
Company HQ	14	4-5-8 MMC 3-4-8 HS
Weapons Company	228	
Company HQ	41	9-1 SMC 8-0 SMC 3x6-6-8 MMC 1-Ton Truck
MTR Platoon	58	4x2-2-8 HS 4x81mm MTR 4xJeep
3 MG Platoons (each)	43	6x3-4-8 HS 6xMMG
3 Rifle Companies (each)	196	
Company HQ	28	9-1 SMC 8-1 SMC 2x8-0 SMC 2x6-6-8 MMC BAZ '43**
Weapons Platoon	39	
Platoon Section	4	3-4-8 HS
MTR Section	16	3x3-4-8 HS 3x60mm MTR
MG Section	19	3x3-4-8 HS 3xMMG
3 Rifle Platoons (each)	43	
Platoon HQ	7	3-4-8 HS
3 Rifle Squads (each)	12	6-6-8 MMC

** - after 10/43 only

assault. Both Okinawa and Iwo Jima were part of the original Japanese empire at the beginning of the war, and the capture of these islands showed the world that the US Marines had brought the war home to Imperial Japan. The end was near.

This summary account of the USMC's experience in the Pacific touches only upon the major campaigns. Obviously, there are many actions involving the Corps that can now be gamed. The five scenarios featuring the Marines that are part of *GUNG HO!* barely touch upon the many unique and bloody battles in which they were involved. The PTO now offers fertile ground for *ASL* scenario designers.

ORGANIZATION

1942 D-Series (Table 1)

At the time of the invasion of Guadalcanal the Marines were organized under the D-100 Series Table of Organization (T/O). The D-Series Table was officially adopted on 1 July 1942. In this scheme a Marine division was composed of 19,514 men divided into a special troops regiment of 3,031 men (which included the tank battalion of four companies of light tanks), a service troop regiment of 1,946 men, an engineer regiment of 2,452 men, an artillery regiment of 2,581 men and three infantry regiments of 3,168 men each. A Marine infantry regiment had its own H&S company, a heavy-weapons company and three infantry battalions. Each battalion had its HQ company, a weapons company and three infantry companies. A rifle company included the company HQ section, a weapons platoon and three rifle platoons. At the time of Guadalcanal, Marine platoons were composed of an HQ section, a BAR squad, and three rifle squads. As explained above, each rifle squad at this time had one BAR, a submachine gun, and six riflemen and a rifle-grenadier. The BAR squad was armed with two BARs, a submachine gun and five rifles.

A normal 1942 series Marine rifle company, using *ASL* definitions, would be composed of three platoons, each of which would include three 4-5-8 rifle squads, a 5-5-8 BAR squad and a 2-3-8 HQ HS. The company HQ should be represented by one 4-5-8 squad and, using an LG# of 4.5, four SMC (9-1, 8-1 and two 8-0s). Each company had a weapons platoon with a mortar section and a MG section. The mortar section would have two 60mm MTRs and two 2-3-8 HS, while the MG section would be composed of two HS and two MMGs. The weapons platoon HQ could be represented by a 4-5-8 MMC. For combat, the entire weapons platoon would come under the direction of the company CO. At the beginning of the Guadalcanal campaign, there were a few Vickers LMG (left over from WWI) still being carried about by some Marines. For DYO scenarios that take place between August 7th and November 30th 1942 on Guadalcanal, you might add one British LMG to each Marine infantry company.

Looking at the D-Series T/O, one can see that the weapons company T/O calls for three 20mm combination AT/AA Guns. The *ASL* US Ordnance counters do not include a suitable 20mm AT/AA gun counter — but it really doesn't matter since these 20mm guns did not see combat with the Marines in the PTO (except possibly with certain Philippine militia units in 1941). By August the Marine Divisions had already upgraded to the 37mm AT Gun for the invasion of Guadalcanal.

Any scenarios representing the defense of the Philippines (the original 4th Marine Regiment)

TABLE 3: Table of Organization - F-Series Marine Infantry Battalion (Authorized 5 May '44)

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
Infantry Battalion	918	
HQ Company	213	
Battalion HQ	138	10-2 SMC 8-0 SMC 5x4-5-8 MMC
Company HQ	17	5-5-8 MMC 2-3-8 HS
MTR Platoon	76	4x2-2-8 HS 4x81mm MTR 4xJeep
3 Rifle Companies (each)	235	
Company HQ	53	9-1 SMC 8-1 SMC 2x8-0 SMC
HQ Section	33	2x7-6-8 MMC BAZ '44
MTR Section	20	3x3-4-8 HS 3x60mm MTR
MG Platoon	44	12x3-4-8 HS 12xMMG***
3 Rifle Platoons (each)	46	
Platoon HQ	7	3-4-8 HS
3 Rifle Squads (each)	13	7-6-8 MMC

*** - see article

TABLE 4: Table of Organization - G-Series Marine Infantry Battalion (Authorized 4 Sept '45)

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalent
Infantry Battalion	996	
HQ Company	270	
Battalion HQ	131	10-2 SMC 8-0 SMC 5x4-5-8 MMC
Company HQ	26	2x4-5-8 MMC
MTR Platoon	58	4x2-2-8 HS 4x81mm MTR 4xJeep
Assault Platoon	55	
Platoon HQ	10	9-1 8-0 5-5-8 MMC
2 Assault Squads (each)	8	4-5-8 MMC FT DC
3 Rifle Companies (each)	242	
Company HQ	51	9-1 SMC 8-1 SMC 2x8-0 SMC
HQ Section	31	2x7-6-8 MMC 2xBAZ '45
MTR Section	20	3x3-4-8 HS 3x60mm MTR
MG Platoon	56	14x3-4-8 HS 14xMMG***
3 Rifle Platoons (each)	45	
Platoon HQ	6	3-4-8 HS
3 Rifle Squads (each)	13	7-6-8 MMC

or the first four months of the Guadalcanal Campaign should use the 1942 Marine T/O&E. Armor support available to Marine units under the D-Series organization would include all variants of the M2A4 and M3 light tanks (except the M3A1 Satan).

1943 E-Series (Table 2)

The E-Series T/O was authorized on 15 April 1943. Some of the changes that were instituted by this divisional re-structuring saw the light tank battalion reduced to three tank companies, and the artillery regiment increased by the addition of one 105mm howitzer battalion. Marine parachute battalions were removed from divisional command and became Corps-level units. Under this series, flamethrowers were used by engineer units only, with one company of engineers assigned to each RLT.

The 1943 division had a total manpower of 19,965 men, a 459-man increase over the 1942 D-Series. The special troops regiment (which included the MPs, AA units, and Light Tanks) had 2317 men. The service troop regiment (including Motor Transport, Medical, and the Amphibious Tractor unit) totaled 2,200 men. The engineer regiment of 2,513 men included the Navy "SeaBees" and Marine Pioneer and Engineer battalions. The artillery regiment was increased to 3,207 men with the addition of the second 105mm battalion. Three infantry regiments had 3,242 men each. Each regiment had a H&S company, a weapons company and three rifle battalions.

Many changes occurred at the battalion level with the creation of the E-Series T/O. The battalion HQ company expanded with the addition of another Navy medical unit (amphibious assaults were proving to be casualty-intensive). The Company HQ section was decreased in size, while the HQ section of the Weapons company was increased. The 81mm mortar platoon had a decrease in personnel without a decrease in the number of mortars. The rifle company weapons platoon was increased by one medium machinegun and one 60mm mortar, now totaling three of each weapon. The rifle platoons lost the BAR squad, but each rifle squad was increased to 12 Marines and two BARs each.

In *ASL* terms, the T/Os which came after 1942 are much easier to organize and represent. The company HQ would include a BAZ '43 after October 1943. The increase in the weapons platoon just means adding another MMG and 60mm mortar with their respective half-squads. With the reorganization of the Marine squads, each rifle platoon now numbers three squads; and we can use the 6-6-8 counters for the normal Marine rifle squad universally. The battalion weapons company loses its AT Gun platoon to its parent regiment, a move which gave the weapons company more maneuverability in jungle combat.

The 6-6-8 Marine MMC should be used for all MarDiv combat actions commencing with those involving the 2nd MarDiv in November 1942 at Guadalcanal. These counters will represent Marine units in the Northern Solomons campaign (Bougainville), the Gilberts campaign (Tarawa and Buarika atolls), the Marshall Islands campaign (Roi-Namur, Eniwetok, Parry Island) and the New Britain campaign (Iboki Plantation, Volupai Plantation, and Emirau). E-Series armor support could include all of the M3 and M5 light tank models except the M3A1 Satan, but could even include some of the M4A2 medium tanks which appeared at Tarawa.

1944 F-Series (Table 3)

Even though the F-Series TO/E was not authorized until May 1944, it was in use in an *ad hoc* form prior to that month. The Marine F-Series division had a paper manpower of 17,465 men, down about 2,000 from the prior form. The divisional tank battalion took on the numerical name of the parent division (such as the 1st Tank Battalion of the 1st Marine Division). The tank battalions were given the M4A2s, while their scout company was transferred to the headquarters battalion as a recon company. In the divisional artillery complement, the number of 75mm pack howitzers was reduced to two battalions per division. The engineering regiment was reduced to just an engineer battalion and a pioneer battalion. The Navy construction battalions (SeaBees) and amphibious tractor battalions became corps-level troops.

The F-Series infantry regiment had an manpower of 3,218 men. In the HQ company the supply section was increased to platoon size. The 75mm SP (self-propelled) gun platoon of the regimental weapons company was doubled in size to four guns per platoon. All vehicles and flamethrowers were maintained in the H&S Company and issued to the various low-level units as required.

The 1944 infantry battalion saw an overall decrease in personnel with the elimination of the weapons company. The Headquarters company was increased to 213 men by the inclusion

of the 81mm mortar platoon (76 men), transferred from the former weapons company. The three machinegun platoons from the weapons company were distributed among the three rifle companies, one MG platoon per company. At the same time, the number of machineguns per MG platoon was increased from six to twelve. This gave the Marines the increased firepower needed to resist the Japanese banzai attacks which were becoming common as American forces approached the Japanese homeland. The rifle platoons went from 43 men to 46 men per platoon, with an increase of one man per squad. This one-man increase brought another BAR to each squad (making three BARs) — in *ASL* terms, this increases the squad FP to "7" and allows Spraying Fire.

Bazookas finally make their way into the formal USMC OB with the F-Series, even though bazookas had first been used by the 2nd Para-Marines Battalion during their Choiseul Island raid in October 1943. As can be seen on the SW Allotment Chart line for 11/43-3/44, one bazooka was issued per ten squads. Actually, the Marines themselves (including officers and enlisted ranks) were not overly fond of the 1943 bazooka model and were just as likely to "forget" to load it into their landing craft. With the advent of the more reliable and accurate 1944 bazooka, its use became more widespread throughout the Corps.

The major difference between the E-series and the F-series battalion T/O in *ASL* format is the placement of the units. The HQ company now includes the 81mm mortars and their crews as well as the HQ personnel. You may notice that the MG platoon now has 12 MMG counters and is located in each of the three rifle companies. This means that 36 MMG counters would be needed to fill out an entire battalion T/O. (Compare this to the maximum of 16 MMG/HMG in a Japanese infantry battalion!) The *ASL* counter mix does not allow this (unless the player wishes to order extra squad/weapon counter sheets), and it is not recommended since giving any nationality that many MMG would destroy the play-balance of any scenario. Rather, use of the official *ASL* SW Allotment Chart (G17.151) is recommended except when historical references state that a heavy weapons unit was participating in the combat action being played. The *ASL* size of the USMC rifle platoons and 60mm Mortar sections remain the same as that of the E-Series.

Use of the 7-6-8 MMC should begin with the Marianas campaign (Saipan, Tinian and Guam). In September 1944, the assault on Ngesebus Island marked the end of the New Britain campaign just as the Marines were hitting the beaches at Peleliu. By the time the F-Series T/O took effect, all armor support except the Scouts would have converted to the M4 medium tank. The Scout units would still operate the M5 light tanks, and the M3A1 Satan finally makes its appearance with the Corps beginning with the Saipan operations.

1945 G-Series (Table 4)

In 1945 the size of the Marine Division was increased to 19,176 officers and men per division. The HQ battalion now included two new units: A war dog platoon of 64 men, 18 scout dogs and 18 messenger dogs; and a rocket platoon of 54 men. The rocket platoon used multiple rocket launchers (rocket OBA) mounted on trucks to provide rapid artillery support. The tank battalions were designated "Medium Tank" battalions and were using M4A2s or M4A3s; each battalion had also officially received nine medium flamethrower tanks in their T/O. The artillery regiment was increased in firepower with the addition of a third 105mm howitzer battalion.

The 1945 Marine infantry regiment was composed of a headquarters and service company (H&S with 249 men) and a weapons company (175 men) of one 105mm Howitzer platoon and two 37mm AT gun platoons at four AT guns per platoon. There were three infantry battalions of 996 men each. In the regimental weapons companies, the 75mm SP motor carriage was replaced by the M7 "Priest" self-propelled 105mm howitzers.

Each G-Series Marine infantry battalion now included a new assault (engineer) platoon of 55 men organized in three sections, each with two seven-man assault engineer squads. These assault units were trained in the use of flamethrowers and demolitions and were allotted as needed to the rifle companies. The rifle companies remained the same, except that each machinegun platoon was increased by two more MMG (making a total of 14 allowed per company).

In *ASL* terms, the differences between the 1944 Marine battalion and the 1945 battalion are slight. The Company HQ section of the HQ company was increased in manpower and results in two 4-5-8 squads being assigned. The HQ company also saw the addition of an assault platoon. Since the assault platoon was composed of combat engineers with a low number of men per squad (seven), the 4-5-8 squad MMC should be given Assault Engineer capabilities (H1.22) and Assault Fire capabilities in 1945 to serve as dedicated assault squads. You can see on Table 4 that the assault squads were small but were equipped with semi-automatic weapons.

All Marine divisions that took part in the Iwo Jima and Okinawa campaigns were organized under the 1945 G-Series T/O, even though this series was not *officially* authorized until after the war. In the rifle companies the only change was the increase of the two MMGs in the machinegun platoons. Again the standard *ASL* counter mix will not allow battalion-level play without ordering extra squad/weapon counters; the use of 14 MMG per Marine company is not recommended!

The year 1945 marked the final offensive by American ground units in the Pacific with the invasion of Iwo Jima in February and Okinawa in April. For all scenarios dealing with these last two offensives, the G-Series T/O should be consulted for determining the correct supporting elements that could be drawn upon by the typical Marine rifle company. By 1945, the Sherman based POA-CWS-H1 Flame Tank (US Vehicle Note #21) was available for the Marines, and made its appearance at Iwo Jima along with the normal allotment of the M4 family.

Fitting the Marines into ASL

In all cases, it must be remembered that the full number of counters in an *ASL* T/O may not actually be used in a PTO scenario. There were always some losses before the beginning of any combat action on the beach or inland. Losses in men and equipment are to be expected during any assault landing occurring under fire. Many landing craft were unarmored and very susceptible to artillery fire while approaching the shore. The coral reefs common in the Pacific could rip out the bottom of the smaller landing craft (LCPs and LCVPs) or cause the craft's crew to unload the Marines many yards from shore. This, of course, increased the number of casualties to the assaulting Marines wading through the surf. Would-be scenario designers are cautioned to carefully study the historical records and accounts before deciding upon the Marine OB in any simulated ground action.

I hope that this information can be put to good use by other *ASL* players; and especially by hopeful scenario designers. I began this series of "Reference Notes" in response to a query from the then-editor of The *GENERAL* on unit composition. It has been a wonderful learning process for me, and a challenge I do not regret taking up. Never again will I question the historical research that goes into designing well-balanced *ASL* scenarios.

For my part, with *GUNG HO!* now available and so many of my comrades designing scenarios for the PTO, I'll just enjoy the vicarious pleasure of pitting the USMC against the best of the rest.

☆

TABLE 5: Standard Marine Rifle Company OB

To allow comparison, the following shows the ASL composition of a single Marine company under each of the organizational schemes. For actions involving three or more companies, the HQ company of the battalion should be added.

D-Series	E-Series	F-Series	G-Series
9-1 SMC	9-1 SMC	9-1 SMC	9-1 SMC
8-1 SMC	8-1 SMC	8-1 SMC	8-1 SMC
2x8-0 SMC	2x8-0 SMC	2x8-0 SMC	2x8-0 SMC
10x4-5-8 MMC	11x6-6-8 MMC	11x7-6-8 SMC	11x7-6-8 MMC
3x5-5-8 MMC	10x3-4-8 HS	10x3-4-8 HS	10x3-4-8 HS
8x2-3-8 HS	3xMMG	4xMMG*	4xMMG*
2xMMG	3x60mm MTR	HMG*	2xHMG*
2x60mm MTR	BAZ '43	3x60mm MTR	3x60mm MTR
LMG*		BAZ '44	2xBAZ '45

* - see article for explanation .

THE NUMBERS GAME

A Look at the 1992 ASL Competition

By Russ Gifford

As an *ASL* player myself, and as a tournament director at AvalonCon this past summer, it's my goal (some might say "duty") to see players competing in scenarios which both sides have an equal chance of winning. Winning a scenario with a side that can't lose isn't my idea of fun; and I'm certain that playing the other side in such is no one's idea of a good time, either—at least, not in a tournament! I believe that is why Mark Nixon's article, "The Numbers of October" (in the *'91 ASL Annual*), has resonated throughout the *ASL* fraternity around the world. I've seen gamers from Minneapolis to Dallas, from Baltimore to San Francisco, consulting "Nixon's Numbers" before they decide to play a particular scenario in competition. And it's no different at major conventions anywhere; I've found "the numbers" jotted directly on the scenario cards, and the entire chart taped inside the cover of *ASL* rulebooks.

I'm not at all certain that this is what Mark intended when he penned the piece (or Rex when he published it), but like his "anti-IIFT" article, it *has* changed the way people play *ASL*. Even the very best players do not seem immune to the influence of the inferences and conclusions drawn about the scenarios from these records, despite reservations and warnings from Nixon and others. Now *ASL*ers are hungry for all the win-loss stats for the scenarios that they can get their hands on; so consider this piece "The Numbers, Part 2" and let me share with you how the scenarios I selected for the competition fared at the 2nd AvalonCon *ASL* Championship. (Please refer to the accompanying chart.)

Comparing these stats to Mark's numbers, you'll quickly notice that the AvalonCon tournament gave many of these scenarios as much play in one year as they have had in five [*now six*] of Conner's "ASL Oktoberfest" (often abbreviated as "ASLOk"). In short, the play at AvalonCon could be considered the "acid test" of the numbers game. Readers should remember that the format of the tournament was designed to bring players of equal ability together in each round in a select few scenarios, as opposed to the somewhat random nature of pairings and scenarios at ASLOk. (Since the AREA ratings were new to about half the field this year, there were some regrettable "overmatches" in the first two rounds; next year, as the AREA system becomes prevalent, the skill levels should be much closer to parity in every round.)

What sort of conclusions can be drawn from these results of the competition? In most cases, they simply serve to prove that five year's worth of ASLOk play was no fluke. For example, "Silence that Gun" received 19 playings this year and the Germans finished with a record of ten-wins and nine losses. Some 18 playings at the ASLOk (as of 1991) give the Germans an 8-10 rating. Add the two together, and you'll have a 18-19 record for the Germans in this scenario, indicating that it is fairly balanced when played by experienced gamers in a tournament setting. Other scenarios show a similar tendency. Putting all this together, we can consider the most-played scenarios (with a minimum of 20 matches at the two tournaments combined) among those used at AvalonCon:

Scenario	AvCon	ASLOk	Total	Balance
ASL #14	10-9	8-10	18-19	49-51
ASL #27	14-13	9-11	23-24	49-51
ASL #48	2-4	9-8	11-12	48-52
ASL #16	7-7	6-4	13-11	54-46
GEN T1	5-5	11-14	16-19	46-54
GEN A	4-3	16-14	20-17	54-46
GEN G6	8-12	9-9	17-21	45-55
GEN T4	7-7	10-17	17-24	41-59
RB6	3-7	6-6	9-13	41-59
DASL #1	5-10	17-5	22-15	59-41
ASL #1	11-20	8-8	19-28	40-60
RB3	10-13	4-8	14-21	40-60

(All figures list German victories first)

As you can see, most of these scenarios are tested, tried and true. Avalon Hill has striven to produce well-balanced challenges (despite early impressions) for fans of the system and seem to have succeeded. The data from two large tournaments certainly confirms this impression, as not a one of these quite popular scenarios reads as unbalanced. But all this leaves us with some intriguing questions.

Take, for example, ASL #16 ("No Better Spot to Die"). Some top players have labeled it as grossly unbalanced, yet the results of 14 playings at AvalonCon see an equal number of wins by both sides. And the combined total shows only a 54% tilt to the German player, hardly a significant amount; and this is with only 24 playings. This only serves to underline the problems of playing the "numbers game". ASL #16 might well be unbalanced (as some hold), but its record in high-level tournament play isn't bad.

By the same token, ASLOk scores DASL #1 ("Guryev's Headquarters") as one of the least balanced scenarios of all. Yet the Germans, favored by the ASLOk trials, lost two out of three playings at AvalonCon. Then there's "Fighting Withdrawal". I've always felt this scenario favors the Russians when they play tough, but the ASLOk numbers say it's a toss-up for either side! Humorously (now, not then), the only grief I got as tournament director in Camp Hill was from an entrant who felt DASL #1 didn't belong among the choices offered as the statistics "clearly show" it is a *walk* for the Germans. He also felt that I should have included more scenarios like "Fighting Withdrawal", since they are "proven" to be balanced! The truth is, I would have eliminated "Fighting Withdrawal" before dropping "Guryev's Headquarters" from the list. Why? Because my personal experience leads me to believe that I'd take either side in DASL #1 against *any* player before I'd take the Finns in ASL #1. Is that a fair assessment? Statistically, at AvalonCon II, the balance of these two scenarios ended within a percentage point of one anther. In the "numbers game", that's a breakthrough for DASL #1 and a breakdown for ASL #1.

There are many possible reasons for any of the results from both these tournaments. Which side got the balance provisions? How were the dice? Did the player who got tromped use all his possible resources (such as Smoke, Fire Lanes, Sewer Movement, Roof Tops)? Did both players play without rules errors? Many players, especially in the high-pressure environment of a tournament, overlook all the aces that are dealt them by the scenario designers, and some scenarios absolutely require a player to make use of all the tactical tricks to win. For instance, T8 almost demands that the player try for SMOKE on that first shot with the 155mm. In ASL #16, if the American doesn't realize that his chances of victory are pinned to the forced truce TC, he might structure his defense along the wrong line. Conversely, perhaps our German players lost because they overlooked the use of armored assault when crossing all that open ground and so suffered too many failed MCs. Such unanswered questions are why you can't simply point to any of these numbers as proof of a scenario's worth.

Four old favorites of mine had interesting results in the tournament:

"Rockets Red Glare" had 20 playings, and ended with a respectable 8-12 balance. However, in 18 matches at the ASLOk, it is adjudged perfectly balanced. Still, added together, that's only a 5% tilt from a perfectly even match-up in a short and enjoyable scenario. Perfect for an evening's entertainment.

With a 10-13 result at AvalonCon, "Bread Factory #2" is one of those scenarios where the Russian player makes it tough for the German only by utilizing every trick in his arsenal (Did the Russians use the cellars, or the Stealth advantage?). At the ASLOk, the scenario had a 4-8 record through last year—until the 1992 competition, when it when 5-5. Thus, as of right now, the results of the AvalonCon tournament closely mirror the six-year record at Mr. Conner's *Oktoberfest*. The fact that RB3 was selected in the last round for the championship game by the two finalists only attests to its perceived balance by the "best of the best."

In fact, only two other scenarios had more playings at AvalonCon II. One favorite from my

list proved to be "Liberation of Tulle", with 27 matches. At ASLOk, it enjoyed another 20. With some 47 games recorded, I'd say we have a fairly accurate look now at the balance of ASL #27. And it's pretty darn close. But the most-played AvalonCon scenario? Well . . .

The "loser" (as though there were any) at AvalonCon had to be everybody's favorite, "Fighting Withdrawal". Rated "even" in five years of the ASLOk, this chestnut hit bottom with an 11-20 record; almost a 2:1 spread! Why? I suspect that the Russians were easier to play than the ASLOk numbers would lead us to believe. Too, given the common perception of this scenario, I suspect that the majority of players grabbed the side *they* believed to have the advantage; some got a rude shock in the rough-and-tumble first round. (The vast majority of the top seeded contestants played DASL #1, by the way.) The other possibility (which I can't prove), is concern over the balance provisions. Worried that they might give the Finnish player the balance (an extra turn), both players may have chosen to play the Finns, and so surrendered the balance provision to the Russians. (On that point, I see no reason why a "null" choice for sides can't be used in competitive play [*i.e., hold out an empty fist*]; though this guarantees that your opponent will get his choice, it certainly prevents some of the more drastic balance provisions from coming into play. And if both players do this, low die roll gets choice of side with no balance provisions in play for either.)

The "winner" among scenarios in the "numbers game" at AvalonCon II? In my mind, it has to be DASL #1. "What?" I hear you screaming, "It's sitting at 5-10, which *is* a 2:1 spread!" Quite true. But in the opposite direction of the ASLOk numbers, which I've always contended were highly suspect. My theory on the imbalance supposedly shown at the ASLOk is that many of the players there prefer being the attacker in a scenario, so in the somewhat friendly competition took the German side and prevailed. But at AvalonCon, I think they "voted with their feet" and took the side they perceived to actually have the edge (the Russians), and thus consistently won. It's also interesting to note that the results of the '92 ASLOk were 3-3 for DASL #1; hopefully, all these numbers will redeem this gem.

One scenario was a surprise to everyone, myself included. While "Rachi Ridge" is just 3-2 in ASLOk play, it certainly wasn't a safe choice in the ASL tournament at AvalonCon. Of course, my first question must be, "Did every stick really land on target? Everybody involved figured out the drift correctly?" I couldn't say. Certainly in my playings, the scenario didn't seem that unbalanced. Has someone figured out a sure-fire trick for the Germans? If so, please share it with this poor *fallschirmjäger*.

My personal surprise, however, occurred on a different line of hills. I have argued that "Cibik's Ridge" was unbalanced since it was in playtest for *GUNG HO!* But I honestly thought it was unbalanced in favor of the Japanese. After

THE NUMBERS OF AUGUST
AVALONCON 1992:

Module/Scenario		Axis Win-Loss	Round
BEYOND VALOR:			
#1	Fighting Withdrawal	11-20(Finn-Russian)	Rd #1
#2	Mila 18	4-2	Rd #1
#4	Commissar's House	3-0	Rd #6a
#10	The Citadel	0-1	Rd #7
PARATROOPER:			
#11	Defiance on Hill 30	2-1	Rd #6
#14	Silence that Gun!	10-9	Rd #2
#16	No Better Spot to Die	7-7	Rd #2
PARTISAN!:			
#27	Liberation of Tulle	14-13	Rd #3
#31	The Old Town	1-1	Rd #3
WEST OF ALAMEIN:			
#35	Blazin' Chariots	1-3	Rd #4
#36	Rachi Ridge	9-0	Rd #4
THE LAST HURRAH:			
#43	Into the Fray	3-3	Rd #5
#46	Birds of Prey	4-3	Rd #5
#48	Toujours L'Audace	2-4	Rd #5
HOLLOW LEGIONS:			
#51	Taking of Takrouna	7-4	Rd #4
CODE OF BUSHIDO:			
#63	Eastern Gate	3-2	Rd #6
#65	Red Star, Red Sun	0-2	Rd #6
GUNG HO!:			
#67	Cibik's Ridge	6-12	Rd #6
The *GENERAL:*			
A	Guards Counterattack	4-3	Rd #4a
L	Hitdorf on the Rhine	5-8	Rd #4a
G6	Rocket's Red Glare	8-12	Rd #2
T1	Gavin Take	5-5	Rd #5a
T4	Shklov's Labors Lost	7-7	Rd #6a
T8	Aachen's Pall	3-5	Rd #5a
ASL ANNUAL:			
A32	Zon with the Wind	7-4	Rd #4a
A42	Commando Hunt	4-4	Rd #7
A44	Blocking Action at Lipki	2-0	Rd #7
A46	Rattle of Sabres	0-2	Rd #7
RED BARRICADES:			
RB3	Bread Factory #2	10-13	Rd #3
RB6	Turned Away	3-7	Rd #6
DELUXE ASL:			
#1	Guryev's Headquarters	5-10	Rd #1
A	To the Last Man	0-1	Rd #7

AvalonCon in August, I doubt that very many players feel that way any longer.

I'll leave the rest of such analysis and number crunching to you, with this caveat. Don't forget to look at trends. Mark's original ASLOk chart lists the results by year. Check to see which scenarios showed an imbalance in the first year of playings, but then showed a balanced result in later years. Like ASL #16, a scenario may start out favoring one side until players master how best to play the opposing side. ***Don't just assume a scenario is balanced because you read it here.*** *Nothing* can take the place of your own experiences.

So, what good are these *ASL* win-loss statistics? For one thing, Mr. Nixon's initial article has been a boon to tournament directors (at least to *this* tournament director); a report in black-and-white of how a scenario has performed in competitive play is far better than personal opinion. Although I may disagree with some of the results, it is still a very useful guide if you heed Mark's caution to keep an eye on the transitory reality of numbers. Anything that helps tournament directors create a level playing field is a good thing in my book, and Mark Nixon deserves a lot of thanks for his work on the continuing ASLOk scenario summation.

I do have one last word for the readers. You must realize that there is one huge factor in all these numbers that is not immediately obvious. I'm sure that all of you are now silently mouthing: "The dice". *Wrong!* In my opinion, the key factor in the results of all these hundreds of matches is *the person playing the winning side*. If the dice, or "unbalanced" scenarios, or any other single design feature or random factor really makes all the difference, why do we see so many of the same names at the top of the list each year at these tournaments? The key to such success can only be their skill in playing *ASL*. Sure, bad luck might imbalance a single game, but these "top guns" know that while the dice may win any match, it's the player that loses it. Bad strategy and bad moves have killed more hopes than bad luck ever has. Winning in *ASL* requires more skill than luck, and good planning and solid play *will* pay off. As a grizzled vet of SL days once told me: "Good dice come and go; it's the guy who does the majority of things right that wins the game."

The years have proven to me that he was quite right. Good play will win more games than good dice, as the results of both the Oktoberfest and the AvalonCon Championship show. Remember that the next time you begin adding up "the numbers".



AFTER-ACTION REPORT...

The First Annual *ASL* Open

By Gary Fortenberry

If the comments and compliments received from 48 totally fanatic attendees are any indication, the First Annual *ASL* Open was a huge success. The attendance was a shadow of the expected attendance of next year, and was largely due to the lack of advertising and incorrect location information publicized.

*ASL*ers began arriving early Thursday morning and excitement grew as each new arrival added his voice to the rising cacophony. A few escapees from the wedding party in the adjacent ballroom were very impressed with the game and even gave me their phone numbers so that we might get together to learn the game. Grognards began their favorite *ASL* war stories and even the new recruits had a few of their own to tell. Bill "Fish" Conner (or "GROFAZ"; he'll answer to either), arguably the greatest *ASL* storyteller of all time, had several gems to share. Rob Wolkey was mobbed when he arrived with the recommended scenario list. Following a quick scan, the preliminary debates over each scenario group were hotly joined. After greetings were exchanged and everyone had a chance to settle down, games were broken out and opponents squared-off and began to warm up for the "Major Offensive" kicking off at 9 AM Friday. There were still five games going when I left for home around 1 AM Friday morning.

Friday morning I received a FAX from Russ Gifford, good and bad news. On the one hand I had the current *ASL* A.R.E.A. ratings of all *ASL* specific members, but it meant Russ was not going to be here to hand-deliver the list..

By the end of play Friday there were 24 players in the running to make the final pairings. Everyone failing to make the final cut was invited to join in a "Scramble" tournament beginning Sunday morning. The scenario chosen for the Scramble tourney was *DASL* #9: "Preparing the Way". The top German and top Russian player would each receive cash and prizes. Mike Talbot exited 101 VPs to take top honors as the German, and top Russian Dave Roberts shut out the German while losing only 8 CVPs himself.

Saturday morning I learned I'd be playing Eric Baker and, as Eric is my favorite *ASL* opponent, I was looking forward to our match. (Eric is the favorite opponent of many *ASL*ers, so there must be some merit to his "style" and unquestionable honesty; above all else one must be a man of honor. I know I personally would benefit from adopting his grace under pressure.) We decided on *ASL* #75: "Strangers in a Strange Land", and Eric squeaked by me in a very close match. Eric took a well-deserved breather, and then he and Mike McGrath began the process of deciding which scenario they'd play in the semi-finals.

"Fish" Conner and Ronald Berger were already faced off in their semi-final match of the *'90 ASL Annual*'s *DASL* #5 : "Intimate War". Ronald's Americans were not quite up to the task of digging the reigning master of the defense out of a heavily fortified building. It didn't help that "Fish" had the most tenacious defenders of the *ASL* game system *in* that fortified building.

Bill was now awaiting the outcome of the match between Eric and Mike, who finally decided on *ASL* P: "The Road to Wiltz". Early on Eric looked as if he had the game wrapped up, but in keeping with the tradition of tenacity which the top players so often demonstrate, Mike hung in there. This doggedness paid off for Mike, and Eric saw victory slowly slip from his grasp as Mike's hot dice pulled him from the depths of defeat to the crest of conquest. A single fire phase witnessed one of Mike's Motion Jagdpanzer firing from a Smoke hex at a moving U.S. tank destroyer and scoring an unlikely hit/kill. This was just the beginning for Eric's *Ami's* as Mike tossed his smoking dice with abandon and the game ended with Eric Stunned, Shocked, UK, Pinned, TI, Broken and Disrupted. This comeback from the grave marked Mike as the "Man of Destiny: Golden Boy"; a title which later events would confirm.

Sunday morning the game that never was at AvalonCon, which Mark Nixon labeled "The AvalonCon Dream Match", finally came to be. "Fish" was facing "The Commander" in the Finals. Mike was playing "Fish" and it was for all the marbles; it was going to happen and we were there. The choice of the scenario to be played was an "Opening Game" in its own right, and both players maneuvered masterfully. They picked *ASL* #46 "Birds of Prey". "Fish" took the Belgians with Mike as the Germans. Both players gave their all in a stunning display of *ASL* mastery. Observers were overheard whispering to each other:" Can he do that?"; "Wow! I gotta remember that one!"; "I would have never thought of that..." etc.

When the final die came to rest, Mike grasped the hand "Fish" presented in an offering of congratulation. Some swore "Fish" was heard to swear the oath: "Next Time".

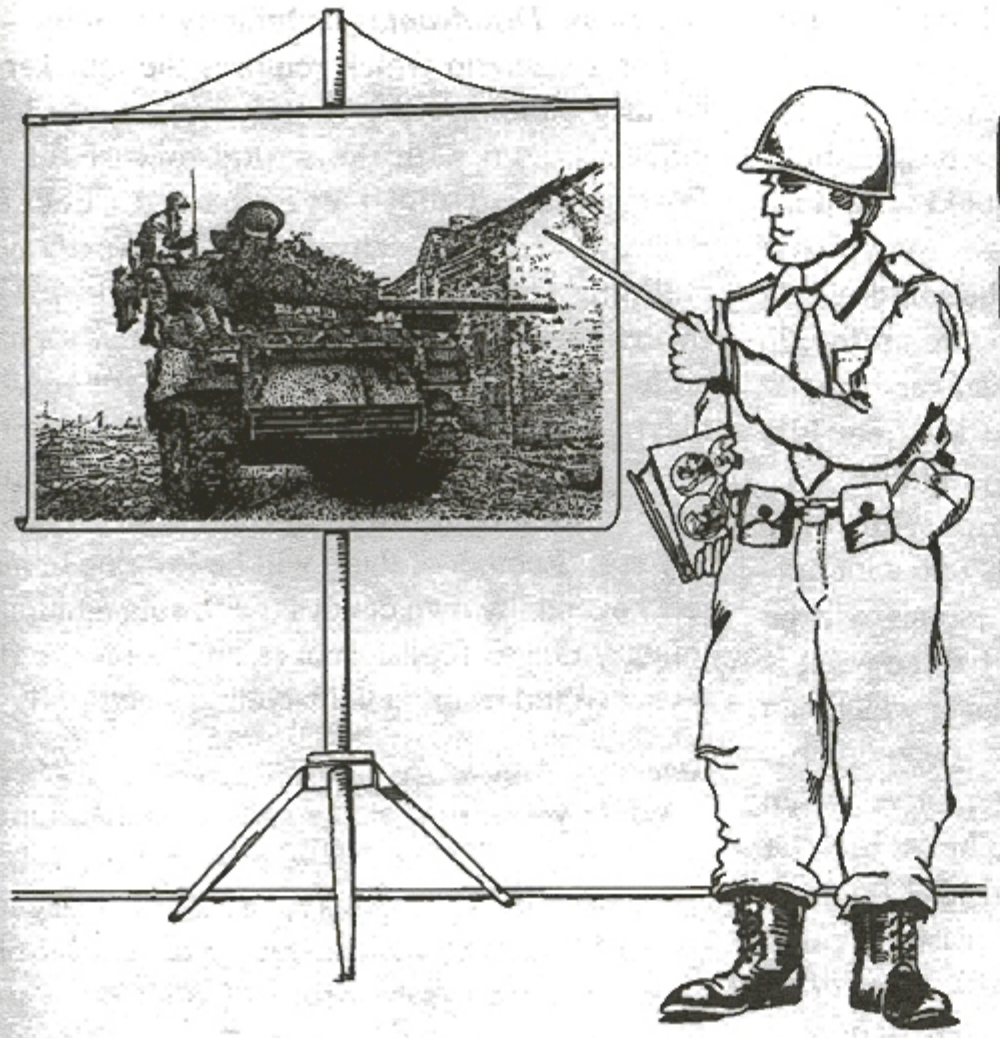
I can assure you, I for one will be on hand to see if I can win it "Next Time". You are all welcome to try, "Next Time".

The Second Annual ASL Open is scheduled for January 21st through the 24th, 1994, at the Arlington Hilton in Arlington, Texas. For further information, please direct all inquiries regardinmg this event to: Mr. Gary Fortenberry, 232 Linda Drive, Burleson, TX 76028.

FIRST ANNUAL *ASL* OPEN

Win/Loss Records

Source and Scenario(s)			Axis-Allied
BEYOND VALOR			
1.	Fighting Withdrawal		1-1
8.	The Fugitives		2-2
PARATROOPER			
19.	Backs to the Sea		2-0
YANKS			
23.	Under the Noel Trees		1-2
PARTISAN!			
27.	The Liberation of Tulle		1-1
WEST OF ALAMEIN			
35.	Blazin' Chariots		0-1
THE LAST HURRAH			
43.	Into the Fray		1-1
46.	Birds of Prey		2-0
HOLLOW LEGIONS			
51.	The Taking of Takrouna		0-1
53.	A High Price to Pay		0-2
54.	Bridge to Nowhere		1-1
CODE OF BUSHIDO			
62.	Bungle in the Jungle		1-1
63.	The Eastern Gate		1-1
CROIX DE GUERRE			
75.	Strangers In a Strange Land		1-4
76.	End of the Ninth		0-2
77.	Le Herisson		3-2
78.	Encounter at Cornimont		1-0
82.	For Honor Alone		1-2
STREETS OF FIRE			
DASL 1	Guryev's Headquarters		0-1
DASL 3	Storming the Factory		1-1
DASL 4	First to Strike		1-0
DASL 9	Preparing the Way		3-3
HEDGEROW HELL			
DASL 15	Barkman's Corner		0-1
RED BARRICADES			
RB 3	Bread Factory #2		3-0
RB 6	Turned Away		3-1
ASL ANNUAL			
90 A20	Counterattack at Sidi Bou Zid		1-0
90 A21	Counterattack on the Vistula		1-0
90 A24	Regalbuto Ridge		1-0
90 A25	Cold Crocodiles		2-1
91 A33	Tettau's Attack		3-2
91 A37	Dreil Team		2-1
92 A39	Showdown at Tug Argan Pass		0-1
92 A44	Blocking Action at Lipki		2-3
90 DA5	Intimate War		1-0
92 DA9	Royal Marines		1-0
The GENERAL			
A	The Guards Counterattack		1-0
I	Buchloz Station		1-0
L	Hitdorf on the Rhine		1-0
P	The Road to Wiltz		1-0
G6	Rocket's Red Glare		3-4
T4	Shklov's Labors Lost		1-4
T7	Hill 253.5		1-0
T9	Niscemi-Biscari Highway		2-0
T10	Devil's Hill		1-0
HASL			
A	Ghosts in the Rubble		0-2
IN CONTACT			
ICll	Monty's Mess		0-1
IC8	Celles Melee		0-3
OTHER			
	Munda Mash		1-0
Total			**57-53**



SCENARIO BRIEFING

Player's Notes for ASL

By Mark C. Nixon

DASL Scenario A2
Last Act in Lorraine

Rating: 55% German

Attraction: The appearance of thirteen Sherman tanks upon a single field of battle might say it all. But there are also guns aplenty on the German side, promising enough action on the 12 column of the IFT all around that it might be surprising to reach scenario end with any infantry left on either side.

Clarification: Before going anywhere with this otherwise excellent scenario, I want to clarify how I interpret a few hazy matters. First is the odd Victory Condition count of buildings which apply. Since SSR #1 eliminates second-level Locations and owners of the *ASL Annual '90* found errata therein which claimed there were eleven two-story buildings on boards b and d, I begin by being totally confused. I count 14 two-story buildings... but one is Blazing, two are Rowhouses and bK3 is a single-hex Multi-Story building which suddenly has no Level 2 (so is it a Two-Story House?). And where are the stairwells in these structures? I can't guarantee perfect answers, but here's how we play it: The burning building and the Rowhouses don't count, bK3 is a single-hex Two-Story House, and there are stairwells in every hex of these buildings (including the Rowhouses).

Next, if you follow the rulebook when placing that SSR #3 Smoke FFE, you will have to flip it over to the "Dispersed" side at the start of the US Turn #1 Prep Fire. I suggest you not do this, as the intention is for that Smoke to hang around for two turns. Don't try to use WP either, for this is clearly Smoke, not SMOKE. Otherwise, everything seems in order; but players should be sure to remember these are hedges, not bocage, and watch all that converted orchard and drifting SMOKE. Above all, make sure it is the *Deluxe* version of this scenario you play, as the original standard version is an American cakewalk, and a poor attempt in comparison to this fine encounter.

German Advantages: OBA; PFs; Mk Vs; Stone Buildings

As is often the case with OBA, I have to rate this 80mm capability as potentially the best weapon in the German arsenal. But that's a big "potentially", as we are all familiar enough now with the mechanics to understand that the problems with OBA can easily reduce its effect to "meaningless" — which, I want to add, is actually a very fortunate thing indeed (certainly one of the most perceptive decisions made by the designers of the game) as this allows the heavy artillery to occasionally get into the game but almost always prevents it dominating the play to such a point that all else amounts to naught. So the FFE might pound a US position or two, but won't win the game for the Germans alone. Panzerfausts will surely take out a couple enemy tanks here; there are so many driving around it would be difficult to miss! The two Panthers backed up by the JgPzs will also give the Sherman swarm plenty to think about, and at least draw off much attention which otherwise would have been thrown (in the form of 75mm and 76mm HE) at the German infantry, who can at least enjoy the comfort of stone buildings to ride out the storm.

German Disadvantages: Infantry Quality; Game Length

Apparently all the best infantry have been withheld in preparation for "Der Führer's Folly" later in the month. These poor excuses for soldiers won't even handle SWs properly, which ties the few 4-4-7s to the MGs. But this is not the weakest feature of the 4-3-6s — nor is it their range, FP, 1TC PAATC, two-column cower or even their "6" morale in an encounter which finds them in stone buildings facing enemy troops with but "6" morale themselves. No, the big problem occurs only after they break and, if fortunate enough to not fail ELR so they can rout to a leader, attempt to rally. Trying to rally units with a broken-side morale of "5" fast enough to keep pace with broken enemy troops who rally on an "8" does present a bit of a dilemma. None of which would matter much were the game a mere six or seven turns long. Expecting these guys to stick around for ten turns is asking a lot, and it is fortunate there are some of those elite crews in the area with big guns able to bolster your otherwise feeble ranks.

German Defense:

I must expect the front line to be smoked, so nothing important should actually be placed there. However, I don't want to give away the southern buildings, so will assign conscripts to the southern-most line. If the smoke lands perfectly for the US and enemy tanks drive up adjacent and unload squads on Turn #1, I will not wait for CC (the enemy may even still be concealed with the right smoke placement, and my boys are Lax) but will voluntarily break such squads and rout away. In this case the lack of woods is a benefit, for I want to rout to the buildings where my leaders are anyway. This frontline screen will not stop the enemy, and is not expected to, but will draw their infantry into these southern buildings where I hope some of my boresighted locations might do me some good. I have boresighted to target infantry, since that is the American player's weak link. Enough dead squads on the American side and the issue of controlling buildings will be settled in my favor. After all, I will usually be able to hit those enemy AFVs easy enough at these close ranges, so boresighting for the tanks wouldn't gain as much.

I would really rather find a spot more to the rear for my radio operator, but there aren't any which offer much of a view. Also, I expect to

eventually need the 7-0 to help with rallying, and his position at bF1 seems as secure as I can make it while also affording the option of an easy move to either flank or to the rear. He should get a few turns to bring in an FFE, and that's about the best I could hope for initially.

I am using the Panthers and the 75mm ATG to nail down both roads and provide a solid block in the center. The JgPzs hold in the east, but will probably be moved before long since they present a real stranglehold on any US attempt to bypass bC5/4. Worst case for the American would be to try to bypass through this hex, get nailed there, and so block future attempts with a wreck. Of course the wreck could be pushed out of the way by another tank (even at the end of the MPh it became a wreck), but notice that the pushing vehicle could not be in bypass along hexside bC5/4 (D2.31) but would have to push from either the building itself, or hexside bC5/3 or bC5/5. Though not explicit in the rules (all bypass hexsides in a hex are in the same Location), I think common sense rules that a vehicle in bC5/6 would not be able to push the wreck. However, I expect the US to avoid this block and aim for the west and center anyway, in which case the JgPz in bF6 will move towards the battle while the other one strives to retain its hold on bC2 and bD3 as long as my infantry can benefit from the effort.

My extreme west flank will be tested by infantry moving through the gully, but the surprise package for them consists of the AA Gun in hex dI1, which can hit the dH1 gully (boresighted) with a 12(-4) shot and 33% chance of ROF to boot, which will come in handy immediately for throwing at infantry broken by my initial shot who spent two MF to enter the hex. I might have considered setting up this weapon in the gully itself in dH1 since I could be seen only from dG1 and dF0 on the south (and even a wind change to swing the drifting smoke from dG2 my way wouldn't affect me at Level -1), but I would be weak against any tank attack. From dI1 I will have targets in dF4 and dF5 once the enemy decides to stay away from this gun.

I have placed the other two AA guns in the center to lend close support to my squads in their best terrain. These guns will probably be overwhelmed, but I want to utilize their point-blank fire in conjunction with the 2-ROF to try to jam the US center. The conservative approach would have been to position them further to the rear, but I anticipate needing their FP up close quickly in this one, and wouldn't really expect much real help from any 6(+2) or 6(+3) shots they might fire at enemy squads in buildings.

The backbone of my defense, the "killer" weapon which will pull me through the encounter even if the OBA fails me, is the Mk V tanks. My crews sitting in these vehicles are not afraid of bazookas (hah!), 75mm Guns (hah!), 105mm (hah!) or 76L (hah!). The usual assortment of Sherman tactics are not much to worry about either, since the wood and stone buildings lend +2 and +3 TEM to turn back massive doses of Area Fire shots and Deliberate Immobilization shots as well (hah, hah!). Sorry GIs, such TEM means the Panther will usually survive — the one in the stone building can't even be hurt on an Area shot without a CH which would have done even more on the Vehicle Target in the first place, and the one in the wood building would require an "eyes" on the IFT to score an Im/Sh. But never fear, for there are still dangers aplenty for these beasts — such as side and rear hits (shudder!), SMOKE followed by infantry CC, and even the US swarming on past in force (which they can actually do in this one with thirteen Shermans to flaunt). These tactics will be covered in the US section below, but the point is he fields thirteen "throw-away" tanks which can be cashiered for victory.

I don't totally discount the alternative set-up of placing the HMG and MMG in hexes bB4/1st and dB3/1st to boresight hD3 and hH2 (the former with a "+1" due to the out-of-season orchard in bA4), or even boresighting hL2 from dH3. Indeed, if you manage to catch your opponent carting riders through these locations, he might pay a fearful price and would, at least, no doubt feel obliged to unload his remaining riders rather than run through the residual fire, or else take a more circuitous route, in either case slowing his attack. But once you've placed a stack of two or more units under concealment in these locations, the US player will suspect them (maybe using conscript HS as a decoy would work) and avoid these "kill" spots. And, no doubt, the US smoke bombardment will be targeting this edge of my town, and more often than not will render such locations impotent. So you might toy with the tactic, but be ready to fall back when the GI storm hits town. Remember the C6.44 restriction of "First Fire only" use of boresighting for your MG/IFE non-ordnance applies only versus Infantry, not versus PRC. So you can hit PRC with the boresight DRM in any fire phase, should the GIs offer such a target.

American Advantages: SMOKE, Firepower; Gyrostabilizers; 13 Tanks

Not only do you get two Smoke FFEs to kick-off the festivities, but your tanks have plenty of SMOKE capability themselves and, of course, eight US squads bring a healthy supply of their own with them. So there is ample screening potential, and what it ushers into town is a robust 64% of the firepower in this scenario, mostly carried in the weapons of those Sherman tanks who alone out-slug the entire German contingent 3:2 in raw firepower. But much of this confrontation will be an armored struggle in the streets, and for that the tankers have Gyrostabilizers and those "very fast" turreted M4A3(75)Ws (ROF white background; Vehicle Note R) as well as possible APCR for the M4A1(76)Ws. More detail on these weapons later, as well as on the general strengths and some ideas on what to actually do with thirteen tanks in an area "smaller" than half a standard *ASL* board.

American Disadvantages: Infantry Quantity

For a scenario which requires the attacker to Control buildings, the American seems to have come to town with the wrong mix of forces. Fortunately, I don't even have to become embroiled in the touchy subject of *exactly* how Building Control is supposed to work; for no matter how it is sliced, meeting the VC with only eight squads in play will be tough for the US player. Preservation of infantry is the operational word; I can trade tanks for German squads and win, but cannot afford to lose my own squads at any cost. Enough of them will be lost due to matters beyond my own control that losing additional infantry due to foolish moves and excessive risk taking would result in defeat, almost certainly.

American Attack:

While you set up, make sure those two blazes are placed in dF2 and dG2 with drifting smoke out to dC1 and dD0. Also remember to designate six AFVs with Gyrostabilizers. I have a bit of a problem with the wording of SSR #4 which allows the M4A3(105) to be designated as having a Stabilized Gun (SSRs take precedence over the rules), but in this case I believe it is proper to view the SSR as poorly worded and *not* allow the 105mm gun to be stabilized, since the vehicle historically would not have the Gyro (per the Vehicle counter and Notes). Choosing between the other two tank types presents some interesting decision-making and, thankfully, there is justification for selecting either alone or a mixture of both. The M4A3(75)W has the lowly 75mm gun with a mere "14" TK#. But its 15 MPs will get around for those side and rear shots easier and its special ROF offering multiple hits might make the difference between a hull hit and a turret hit against one of those Panthers with its turret facing the Sherman across a side-hull AF; an initial turret hit would probably bounce but luck on the second hit might land a round on the hull and nail the enemy AFV. Likewise, the ability to hit infantry targets with multiple hits on the 12 column would be a big boost. By comparison, the M4A1(76)W is slower and lacks the multiple-hit potential, but does wield a "17" TK# which nearly guarantees a kill on a Panther side/rear hit, and also an APCR "22" TK#, which becomes a "25" TK# at a range of 0-1 hexes! Now we are dealing with something which might take out that Panther head-on, although the meager availability of "4" precludes any early celebration over this matter, and is not really enough on its own to justify what it probably would cost to drive up adjacent to the Panther in the first place (sacrifice of one or more tanks to draw its fire) in order to try some point-blank APCR shots.

So while it is true the Gyros, multiple hits, APCR and Gun Duel capabilities (Vehicle Note R) of the Shermans can be worked to advantage, the key word is "work" — as that is exactly what it will take to translate such esoteric aspects of these tanks into successful tactics on the battlefield. More often, it will be the straightforward might of thirteen tanks flooding enemy positions one or two at a time with, perhaps, a few choice


20L AA 2-2-8
75L AT 2-2-8
Pz VG,?
Pz VG,?
20L AA 2-2-8
7-0 ?,Radio
4-4-7 LMG,?
JgPz,?
9-1,4-4-7 HMG,?
+3 Smoke
+3 Smoke
4-3-8 LMG,?
20L AA 2-2-8
JgPz,?
+3 Smoke
+3 Smoke
+3 Smoke
4-3-8,?
8-0,?
8-1,4-4-7 MMG,?
+3 Smoke
+3 Smoke
4-3-8,?
4-3-8,?
+2 Smoke
4-3-8,?
+2 Smoke
4-3-8,?
+3 Smoke
+3 Smoke
+3 Smoke
4-3-8,?
+2 Smoke
+2 Smoke
+2 Smoke
+2 Smoke
M4A3(75)W 8-8-8
+3 Smoke
+3 Smoke
M4A1(76)W
M4A3(75)W×3 8-1,7-0,8-8-8×2 8-8-7,dmMMG
M4A3(75)W×2 8-1, 8-8-7 8-8-8, dmMMG
M4A1(76)W
M4A1(76)W
M4A3(105) 3-4-8+Baz×2
M4A1(76)W
M4A1(76)W
M4A1(76)W 8-8-8,Baz

rounds of SMOKE tossed in for cover, which cracks open the defense. With the right amount of SMOKE covering your approach against an enemy AFV you have managed to stun/shock, even your infantry might be able to get in for CC without fear of the dread sN7. And should the enemy tankers ever be caught CE with your infantry in close, remember they would not be able to use the sN7 in CC, and so are actually weaker for their CE status.

This attack could step a bit closer to "perfect" if only the smoke FFE landed prior to US set-up. As it is, the initial commitment must already be made, and unless the Germans have placed units in Level-1 locations which could interdict the road if the FFEs fared poorly, there is no reason at all to not use the road. Frankly, I like the odds for the smoke to land close to where I want it and so would line up heavily on the road anyway. The target hexes for my smoke FFE are dB3 and bB3. Potential confusion strikes again, as SSR3 says, "Roll normally for Accuracy" but with no radio onboard does this mean to roll as though it is an Offboard Observer (dr of "1")? My interpretation again, is to consider "normally" as the standard US dr of "2" or less. Both FFE will be accurate 11% of games therefore, neither accurate 44%, and only one accurate another 44% of the time. Fortunately the extent of error is halved, and even when the FFE lands a bit off the mark it will almost always still be in a useful spot (unlike gun-fired SMOKE which fails to appear onboard at all on a "miss", a pet peeve of mine I won't belabor here). To illustrate this US attack, my FFEs have landed at dD4 and bB2, and two seven-hex clusters of smoke now guard the southern edge of town for me.

I have the dm MMGs with the 6-6-7s, bazookas with two 3-4-6s and a 6-6-6, leaders riding with other 6-6-6s, all tanks CE, four M4A1(76)W tanks leading the way with no riders but with the 9-1 armor leader and all ganged-up around the hA3 road entry hex. I won't string all thirteen vehicles along the offboard road, for tanks can set-up adjacent to the offboard road, move onto it, and then proceed at the road movement rate and save several MPs in the process. All but two of my riders are on tanks with 15 MPs (which will come in handy when these must move forward and unload). The faster tanks can use ten MPs before stopping and unloading, whereas 13-MP tanks could only use eight (barring ESB). Remember, CE offboard moving tanks use the road movement rate (0.5 MP per road hex) when moving along the road, and if a tank with a rider enters one of those orchard hexes across a non-road hexside the rider must bail out (D6.21). This, in fact, limits the rider-laden tanks to a mere four-hex choke zone at hD3 (along the road), hD4, fK3 and fK1. But, again, the FFE smoke normally precludes this becoming an American difficulty the enemy might exploit.

Those four riderless tanks in the lead charge to the edge of town where they will stop, try their sM8 to smoke-in concealed enemy at dB1 and dB3, then start back up and move off the road for what follows. If it takes more than four tries to smoke things up, then that's what the Germans will be dealt. By the end of Turn #1, the area around the juncture of boards d and h will be a real traffic jam of Sherman tanks (similar to the illustration, which depicts the end of the first US MPh). The tanks are all CE, there will soon be drifting smoke all over the place, the three bazookas are in the rear just in case the enemy wants to move on me there, and enough 6-6-6s are up front to fend off any sort of CC attack the Germans might wish to try in their turn. The amount of smoke precludes anything else working. Thirteen Shermans are poised to burst into town on Turn #2. Even the odd sight of as many as three tanks in a hex does not risk much thanks to the smoke; any squad willing to take the backblast to try a shot will break itself much more often than it will hit, and if it doesn't take the backblast it may as well not bother shooting, for the penalty for overstacking (A5.132) is not severe enough to warrant losing concealment for such a shot.

There is no need to rush things. If the smoke FFE or the sM8 don't provide adequate cover, the whole attack could easily be backed off a few hexes to the south. No need to spin TCA or deliberately run through orchards to knock riders off the tanks fast. Any time saved by such expedient tactics in this situation will not help since the time limit is not really a problem. All that would be accomplished would be the breaking of a squad or so to compound the big problem your GIs do have, that of the number of squads available. This liability is the reason I chose to unload everyone in one spot for mutual support. The way a typical *ASL* attack runs, there are usually about a third of the assaulting squads actually fighting, another third broken and trying to rally, and the final third either newly rallied and moving to catch-up to the battle or performing other tasks such as guarding against counterattacks, gaining concealment, reducing bypassed resistance and so on. With only eight squads operating against Singling, this doesn't leave enough for a two-pronged attack; so it will be one consolidated push using the –1 leaders up front and the 7–0 in the rear to rally folk. Once Turn #2 comes, the tanks won't be shy but will seek out the German squads head-on (with the infantry intermixed). Given a choice between risking a tank or a squad to take out an enemy position, I will risk the tank. If I trade tanks for squads, I will win easily as my own infantry control all the buildings.

Conclusion:

The smoke barrage hits and the American armor crashes into town. Leaping from their tanks, the armored infantry swiftly gain cover in the stone buildings of Singling to flush the enemy into the streets. The big guns on both sides rule the day, however, as foot soldiers of both nationalities struggle to avoid death in those duels.



ROASTING CHESTNUTS

The AtlantiCon '92 *ASL* Tournament Scenarios

By Jim Stahler

Scenarios without vehicles! A significant majority of *ASL* scenarios published thus far involve a mix of infantry and vehicles. In the original system, pure infantry scenarios are even more rare—only 17 out of 111 *SQUAD LEADER* actions are vehicle–free. Looking to return to the basics, I updated four of these and used them in my 1992 *ASL* Team Tournament at AtlantiCon.

The turn–out for the tournament was a bit smaller than in the previous two years, but there was some tough competition nonetheless, with many a friendly but hard–fought game to enjoy. Congratulations to the team of Mike McGrath and Pat Cross which took the first prize. Perry Cocke and Chuck Goetz were the runner–up team (having come in first or second in all three years that I have hosted this *ASL* challenge). Perry courageously led his team to the second–place finish (when he wasn't busy winning the concurrent single–elimination tournament) over some fearsome opposition. "It was nothing," our modest hero proclaimed, "that any other brilliant player couldn't, at least, have come close to."

In preparation for this year's event, I updated two *SL* scenarios originally from The *GENERAL* ("Strayer's Strays" and "Gambit"). The other two scenarios were first seen as part of the 200 series (#209 and #210, to be exact). I opened the tournament play with "Commando Raid at Dieppe" because the defender's setup was fixed, so players could get into the competition as quickly as possible. Once the tournament started, teammates were allowed to use any spare time they might have to collaborate on the best defense and attack strategies for the subsequent three scenarios. I saved "Strayer's Strays" for the end. By that point, no doubt, the gamers would be fairly burned out. I wanted to have something short and simple for that crucial final round.

As it happened, all four scenarios involve the Germans facing the British or the Americans (and in one case, facing both of them at once). Two scenarios take place on Crete, one takes place at Dieppe, and the final scenario takes place at Normandy. With such an interesting mix, I hoped the competitors found something challenging. As before, I want to offer the updated designs to those who may not have been able to attend AtlantiCon. As before, what follows is my rationale for the conversion, with a brief analysis on strategy and tactics for both sides as well.

COMMANDO RAID AT DIEPPE

The first scenario, "Commando Raid At Dieppe" (*SL* Scenario 210), turned out to be the best balanced of the lot, given the small sample of games in the tournament. The Germans won seven out of the dozen pairings. This scenario



depicts an attack by a mixed force of British Commandos and American Rangers attacking a German artillery battery protected by trenches, wire and heavy machine guns. Historically, this was the only successful Allied attack of the otherwise grim Dieppe raid. To win, the commandos had to assault the gun battery, keeping the crews from firing their guns at the ships offshore, then destroy those guns, and then successfully withdraw for pickup at the beach. Meanwhile, the defenders looked to man the guns as long as possible, firing at the landing ships (way off the board in the distance) while fighting off the commandos.

As the best reflection of this, victory in this scenario is based on points. The original scenario awarded two points to the British player for each friendly squad and one point for each captured squad exited off the north edge of the mapboard, along with five points for each enemy gun destroyed. The Germans receive one point for *each* gun manned by an unbroken crew at the end of *each* player turn. In my revision, I made a few changes and kept a few things the same. I used the *ASL* Casualty Victory Point and Exit Victory Point rules in A26. Both sides receive Casualty VP, including doubled values for prisoners, and the British receive Exit Victory Points. The British still receive five points for each gun destroyed. The Germans still receive one point for each gun manned by a crew at the end of each player turn, but the crew must be unpinned and in Good Order. Since this represents the crew firing the gun throughout the player turn, a crew must be committed to firing its gun the entire player turn, which is represented by making the crew TI at the start of each Prep Fire Phase to have any chance of earning its Victory Point.

I shortened the game by a turn from its original *SL* version, primarily to put a little more pressure on the British. However, our initial playtest showed that the German reinforcements now arrived too quickly, making the game too difficult to win for the British. To correct this unforeseen error, I delayed their arrival until Turn 2. Now, there is even an interesting little sub–game with the British trying to intercept the German reinforcements, who are desperately trying to gain the battery position to join its defense.

I found very little to change in the Allied forces in this scenario. The British commando squads have been upgraded from the 6–3–8 values found in *COD* to 6–4–8 in *ASL*. This gives them the same range as the bulk of the Germans in this particular scenario. And instead of the traditional American 7–4–7 paratrooper squad, I used a 6–6–7 to represent the token U.S. Ranger squad, since this squad type is traditionally recognized in ASL to represent Rangers (*ASL* #19, "Backs to the Sea"; G5 "Six Came Back"; G8, "Recon In Force"; and A19, "Cat and Mouse").

On the German side, I replaced all the 2–4–7 HS with 2–2–8 crews to man the guns. I exchanged one 150L gun for another 170L gun, just for symmetry. Since the guns are all equivalent and only fire abstractly, the actual caliber of gun doesn't really matter in this scenario. I suspect that, historically, all guns of the battery were of the same caliber, since that is the case more often than not. So you could use any type of gun that you wish without affecting the play of "Commando Raid" one iota.

I did demote five of the seven initial German squads to second–line troops. It is unlikely that the Germans would have used their best to defend a battery which is supposed to be safe from the rear. I left two squads manning the two HMG at first–line; no doubt the best soldiers there would be put on the most important weapons. These HMG are in trenches (which are connected to the rest of the trenches in the battery) instead of mere foxholes now.

I also demoted two of the German leaders. In the original design, the German player had three 9–1 leaders, which struck me as much too strong for a static defense force. I reduced one to an 8–1 and the other to an 8–0. I also shifted one of the two LMG from the force in 5R1 to those in 4P8; in *ASL*, a squad can no longer fire two LMG and retain its inherent firepower.

The net effect of all this fiddling results in a slightly stronger British force (due to the longer range of the squads). The Germans are slightly weaker because of the drop in leadership and squad quality. Note however, that the morale of the German gun crews has increased to "8", and the German machine guns are more powerful than before because of their extra firepower factor, their multiple rate of fire, and the power of fire lanes. Perhaps the most significant change, though, is the delay of the entry of German reinforcements until Turn 2.

The British ELR is "5", since this is an elite unit. The German ELR is only "3" (rather than the expected "4" for this period of the war) because the Germans are a second–line unit, not expected to close with the enemy. The British have the minimal SAN of "2"; the Germans have been given a SAN of "3" because they are on the defense.

If you find the scenario uneven, to balance the game toward the British increase the depletion number of the mortars to "8". That smoke can be crucial in masking the German fire and allowing the British to get close. My German play–balance provision allows them to bring on their reinforcements on the first game turn, as they arrived in the original scenario.

Most of the special rules are unchanged from the original. I explicitly state that the American and British units are treated as the same nationality for leadership and SW use purposes, since the U.S. Rangers had been working closely with the British for awhile. They are also Stealthy because they are commandos. The Commando rule (H1.24) could be used, but their scaling ability seems irrelevant in a scenario without cliffs.

Perhaps the most significant SSR change lies in treating the grain in the battery area as open ground. I did this as a service to the players, rather than to help one side or the other. The board in the battery area is already cluttered by the trench and artillery counters. This SSR makes the game itself a bit easier to play; no moving of counters around to check LOS or count grain hexes for hindrance. It also has some interesting effects that help and harm both sides. The HMG in 4R5 now has unhindered LOS to 4K2, and units in the 406 building have an unhindered LOS to the north and northeast. On the other hand, a British unit in 4Q2 now has untroubled LOS along hexrow Q all the way to 5Q4. If the original scenario was a favorite, you'll discover some of these differences in your very first playing.

About the only freedom that the German has in his set–up is whether the units in the 4O6 building are upstairs or downstairs, and which of the hexes are to be bore–sighted by the two HMGs. For my money, all units in the building should be placed on Level 1. This is not as important as when the grain was still there, but it does yield some handy LOS even now. From 4O6, the Germans can see 4R1 and S1. From level 1 of 4P6, the Germans can see 4Q1 and R1, and have unhindered LOS to 4P1, for instance.

There are a lot of interesting locations to bore–sight. Some of my favorites are 4J4, I2, M2, P1, Q2, W1 and T3 from 4O5. The HMG in 4R5 should select one of the following hexes: 4T3, S2, R1, Q2, P1, K2 or I2. Bore–sighting is only useful if the enemy enters the targeted location in the Movement Phase, however. The odds are that a British unit will never enter some of these bore-sighted locations at all—or if it does, it will do so during the Advance Phase. Still, the –2 DRM can be devastating when the enemy cooperates.

The German strategy itself is very simple. Fire the artillery whenever possible, and fire everything else at the British whenever they show themselves. Beyond that, your play depends very much on what the British do. One important move on turn 1 is to block the enemy reinforcements from blocking your own. The squad and leader that start in 5R1 should move to the woods road on Board 5. Be very careful if the British have an LMG in 4Q2 behind the hedge. It can fire through the battery position unhindered all the way to 5Q4.

There is another potentially devastating move for the German player on Turn 1. If the British first turn units are entering to the west of the battery, part of your force starting in 4P8 should move west also, with the intention of placing fire and maybe a fire lane along hex rows L and M from your new position in 4L9 or 4M8. This is important if British smoke blocks fire from your two HMG. Be careful with this move. This force can easily run afoul of British defensive fire on the way, and those woods can be deadly should the mortars fire HE at them rather than smoke at the HMGs. And of course, these positions are right in the path of the main commando force coming from the west.

The German infantry in the battery positions should think defensively. If possible they could duck out of the way to avoid enemy defensive fire, advancing back into position for the enemy's turn. If a squad manning a HMG breaks, move another unit through the trenches to an adjacent location. Advance into the HMG position and pick it up during the Rally Phase. Don't leave those HMG unmanned for very long; they are the German's best defensive tool.

The reinforcements must reach the battery positions as soon as possible. The best route is across the stone wall, but to get there they have to cross the deadly Q hex–row (and maybe dodge fire from the British reinforcements). If necessary, they can cross some wire themselves to enter the trenches from the east. Also remember that they can dash across the road in 4Q9 or Q10 to minimize the effect of fire from 4Q2.

The British must enter the board, close with the battery, enter the trenches and destroy the guns, eliminate as many Germans as possible, and exit with as much of their force as is still left after all that. No problem. A tall order, but certainly not impossible to achieve.

The British have an edge in leadership, with a total "7" leadership DRM versus the German's "4". Also, the British morale is superior to all the German MMC except the crews. Their squads are all "8" morale (oh yeah, "7" for the US), and 9–to–10 for the leaders. Their ELR is also notably superior to that of the Germans. Their firepower is greater, with 76 firepower factors pitted against 70 (not counting the British mortars and the German crews). The British have two DC which can be very useful, even turning a lone leader into a major threat. The key British weapons are their two mortars with their s7 smoke capability. Note that the British are *not* considered elite for purposes of Ammo Depletion Number increase (C8.2, see the question and answer in the *1992 ASL Annual*). The British can expect, therefore, to get an average of two Smoke counters down to effectively neutralize German fire for a couple of turns.

The most exposed approach to the German battery position is over the wall. The two hexes, 4O7 and P7, are only the ones not protected by wire. This is where your main force must strike, and this is the objective of the British reinforcements. They must enter on Board 5, skirt the edge of the woods between Boards 4 and 5, and attack from the vicinity of 4M8 or N9. They must suppress the Germans with their firepower and advance using the woods and grain, and ultimately the wall, as cover.

The initial force, the 1st Company, must support the main force with firepower and smoke. There are three approaches that this force can take: east, west or up the middle. The advantage of an eastern thrust is that it can bring encircling fire down on the German defenders (in conjunction with the main force) and then hinder German routing. On the other hand, there are not many good positions that are not in LOS of both German HMG in the eastern side.

The center approach faces both HMG, but it allows your force to get to hex 4Q2 where it can interdict the German reinforcements with a LMG, and keep them out of the battery position itself. One possibility is to have a squad with the 9–1 and a LMG keep concealment and maneuver to 4Q2. From there it can apply one factor with a "–3" DRM against any Germans trying to cross 5Q1, Q2 or Q3. Meanwhile, two squads with a LMG and the 10–2 go to the building 4S2 where they duel with the HMG. The fourth squad deploys and carries the mortars to 4W1, where they can try to smoke the HMG position in 4O5. Or they can move to the shellholes in 4S3, where they can drop smoke on both HMG positions.

A popular alternative is to enter the western portion of Board 4. The 9–1 and a deployed squad haul the mortars behind the wall in 4I2, or makes a wider sweep and sets up the mortars in hexes 4I5 and J4. Meanwhile the 10–2 SMC and the remaining squads make for 4M2, where they can engage the closest HMG at normal range. In this instance, you'd best plan to drop smoke in 4O4 and O5, allowing the 10–2 and friends to get to the wire with relatively little interference from the Germans. With luck, more smoke can then be placed in 4N3 and N6.

An important element of the British strategy is the interdiction of the German reinforcements. A lot of force is not needed for this task. I like to send the Americans on this mission. The 9–1 and the 6–6–7 are sufficient. They can double–time and then advance to 5I4 on their turn of entry. If the German player has not read this article and did not block their route, the Rangers can get to 5Q3 on Turn 3, making it very tough for the Germans to slip past. If the Germans are in the way, the Rangers should aim for 5N0 or N1, where they can still hold up the German reinforcements. Finally, they will join their British comrades on the attack on the battery over the wall.

In most games, the British will get over the wire or past the wall into the battery position. It is then time for bayonets and hand grenades in the trenches. The British, with their superior leadership, stealth and firepower, should prevail. At this point, the German player simply tries to hang on and eke out another point or two for the firing of his guns. The British player must keep one eye on the number of points each side has and the other eye on the Turn marker. The question becomes, how many losses can the commandos take, and how many casualties can they inflict on the enemy? Did they distract the German crews from firing on the ships, or did the shelling continue for too long despite the best efforts of the Allied player? And how many commandos survive the action and are able to exit the board and return home? The last turn of this scenario can certainly be exciting, or simply an anticlimax to a well–played match.



GAMBIT

Our second scenario takes place in Crete. The Germans dropped from the skies on 20 May 1941 (see the next scenario, the "Akrotiri Peninsula Defense"). This scenario picks up the tale of the aerial invasion on the next day, when many British Commonwealth units were disorganized and in flight. It depicts an attempt by the 22nd New Zealand Battalion to withdraw from Maleme airfield and break through a thin line of German paratroopers.

This one was originally published in The *GENERAL* as Scenario Q. As I recall, opinion at that time was that the Germans were favored. I made a couple of major changes that I expected might help the Kiwis overly much, but in the local playtesting it seemed to have been for the better balance. In the tournament, it didn't turn to be as well balanced as I thought; the Germans won five of seven games. In anticipation of this article, I made another couple of changes to help the New Zealanders and I now believe it to be a closely balanced contest.

In the original scenario, the New Zealand troops were represented by 4–5–7 squads. But as the New Zealanders were historically elite, I therefore upgraded them to 4–5–8 squads. I left their leaders and support weapons unchanged. Meanwhile, I replaced the German 8–3–8 squads with 5–4–8 squads. The 8–3–8 squads represent specialized assault engineers in *ASL*; the 5–4–8 squads are more representative of German paratroopers. Each German squad gained a hex of range, but lost a fair amount of firepower in the exchange. I figured that these two OB changes would tip the game heavily in favor of the New Zealanders, but it was not to be.

I upgraded one German 8–1 leader to a 9–1 SMC, for variety and partial compensation to the Germans for the loss of firepower. I left the Germans without any support weapons, but as a balance provision I give them one LMG. This could be a powerful advantage; the extra range and the fire–lane capability could be crucial in a scenario such as this. To aid the New Zealanders, I arranged for their initial platoon to set up in a couple of foxholes, giving them some extra protection and more flexibility in their set–up.

I retained the original board configuration, game length, set–up restrictions and the special scenario rules. In the tournament, I allowed no Smoke at all (as in the original scenario), and made the Germans Stealthy. To balance the scenario better, I now allow the mortars to fire smoke although they are not considered elite for purposes of Ammo depletion Number increase (C8.2, see the question and answer in the *1992 ASL Annual*). Also, I decided not to make the Germans Stealthy after all. Note that, by A25.44, the New Zealand infantry *is* Stealthy.

I gave both sides the standard ELR allowed them for this period in the war. I could, I suppose, be justified in giving both sides a higher ELR since both sides are elite. However, both sides had been battered by the fighting on the day before, and this rather balances out their elite nature. The New Zealand side has the low SAN of "2" since they are on the attack and the fighting is out in the open. The Germans have a higher SAN simply because they are on the defense. (The higher SAN can also represent random events due to the confusion inherent in situation, as well as the chance of stray air attack.)

The victory conditions were originally stated in terms of squads. To update the scenario to *ASL* format, I use the Exit Victory Points in A26.3. The New Zealanders had to exit nine out of 12 squads, or three–fourths of their forces. In *ASL*, they have 28 VP worth of forces. To retain the same proportion, they would need to exit 21. I lowered it to only 20 victory points to help them a tiny bit.

The first British task is to place the initial platoon on board, which serves as the "gambit". The obvious intent is that the Germans concentrate their troops against this platoon, leaving the rest of the board weakly defended and allowing the main Allied force the opportunity to break out. Towards this end, the platoon should be placed at one end of the board or the other. The most natural place to put the gambit platoon is in the center of the board, in or around building 4P6, where it gets some protection from the building. However, this doesn't serve the purpose of drawing the enemy away from the main force. The German forces facing this platoon would also be in the center of their line, where they could move in either direction to block the main New Zealand thrust.

A better spot for the on–board platoon is in the western part of Board 4, in the woods in hexes 4H5/H6/I5/I6—or, even better, farther west around the woods in 4E5. This latter position requires that the New Zealanders either concentrate in 4E5, or spread out leaving most units in the open. However, any Germans shooting at them would also have to be in the open, and far removed from the main action.

An alternative plan is to set up the gambit platoon in the eastern end of Board 4, in the building in 4CC6 and behind the hedge in 4DD5. This gives them some decent protection and pulls any Germans facing them way out of position.

The New Zealand player has a lot of flexibility in the composition of this platoon. It only has to include two squads (or equivalent in HS) and a total of five counters. One possible OB has two squads and three SW. This seems silly. A better composition might one squad, two HS, an 8–0 leader and one SW, perhaps the ATR. This leaves ten squads and two leaders to enter as the main force. One possible placement for such a gambit force is a HS in 4EE6, a HS with ATR in 4DD6, and a squad with the 8–0 leader in 4CC6.

The New Zealand player could spread this platoon out all over the board, but there is no purpose to this. The Germans can spread out to face the platoon; this serves their purpose just fine because it likewise spreads out the German squads to cover the whole board against the escaping main body. By concentrating the platoon, the German player faces a dilemma. If he concentrates against the platoon, he won't have very much left to cover the remainder of the board. If he ignores it, the main force can enter to support it, and the entire New Zealand OB can concentrate to thrust toward an exit.

After the on–board New Zealand platoon is set up, the German player must place his squads and leaders on board. The Germans are too few to be strong everywhere. So, the German player has two strategies available.

He can plan to delay the New Zealanders while attacking the platoon with a major part of his force. Once the main New Zealander force has been committed, he can try to deploy in front of them as quickly as possible. Put four of the squads, and the 9–2 and 9–1 leaders opposite the platoon, and start the game blazing. Try to destroy the enemy platoon in the first two turns. Regardless of the effect, be prepared to pull back most of your units, using the leaders to speed the squads, to block the main enemy force which will soon be arriving.

The remaining German squads must be spread out to delay the main British body. Good blocking positions are 4D9 and 4K9 in the western part of the board, and 4X8 and 4CC8 in the east. Since the Germans move first, they can move forward and occupy other key locations (such as 4R5, 405 and 4N5 in the middle), provided that the New Zealand gambit platoon is not in the way.

The other German approach is to pull back immediately to defend the exits. On the first turn, all German units pull back onto Board 2 as fast as possible, positioning some squads to slow the enemy, while the remainder dig foxholes near the road exits. With three roads and eight squads, each road is defended by two or three squads; you'll want to re–adjust the defense as the opposing player becomes committed to forcing one or two roads.

A few squads should be placed on the hilltops to slow the New Zealand advance. If the Kiwis enter on the eastern part of the board, a squad on 2J4 or 2K5 should slow them up a bit. If they go up the middle, defend on the third–level hill hexes between 2M5 and 2Q6, and on 2S7 and 2T6. If the enemy enters on the west, good hilltop positions are 2Y6, 2Z6, 2BB6 and 2CC8. These units on the hills have the job of slowing the advance, not stopping it. As soon as the New Zealand troops are able to mass a good attack, don't be shy about abandoning the hills and joining the defense of the roads.

The road exiting at 2I1 can be defended by a squad in the building in 2G1, with other squads in foxholes in 2H2, 2I3 and 2K3 perhaps. The middle road (2Q1) can be defended from the woods in 201 and 2J1, the building in 2T1, and from foxholes in 2P2, 2Q2 and 2R2. The westernmost road, exiting at 2Y1, can be defended with a squad or two in the building in 2Z1, and by squads in foxholes in 2W2, 2X2, 2Y3 and 2AA3.

The advantage of defending well forward is that your broken units are able to rout back and later rally, and that the New Zealanders can be delayed while other German units have time to re–deploy. The disadvantage of defending the road exits is the converse—your broken units have nowhere to go, and the enemy is almost off the board when he first meets major resistance. On the other hand, the advantage is that the effective width of the front you must defend is greatly narrowed. The Germans are sitting precisely where the New Zealanders have to go, and there is time to dig foxholes to better protect your defenders before the enemy arrives.

Once the German player finishes his initial placement, the New Zealand player must decide finally where to commit his main force. The decision depends greatly on the German set–up. If the German forces are well spread out, join forces with your on–board platoon and attack in one unified mass. If the Germans have concentrated against that platoon, attack along the opposite end of the board where the Germans are not. There the New Zealanders should be able to concentrate ten squads against one or two and quickly overwhelm them.

In either case, the New Zealander troops must move quickly. There is quite a distance to go, and the more time spent mixing it up with a handful of German squads, the more time your opponent has to re–deploy his forces along the axis of advance. The New Zealand squads should deploy into HS as much as possible. If they can stay at long range from the German squads, each German squad only gets one shot. If the Kiwis are all deployed, the most. damage that they can suffer from that one shot is only one HS. Of course, in skirting the German resistance, only move one unit at a time, and move the leaders last. The New Zealand troops should be able to sidestep any residual fire and avoid German FPF. When possible, keep out of the normal range of the German units. This reduces the effectiveness of their firepower, and prevents them from using Subsequent First Fire. Accept the fact that you will have to undergo a few attacks with "–2" modifiers for FFMO/FFNAM; trust to the high New Zealand morale to get most of the troops through these.

When the New Zealand forces are all on the board, they should not just hug a board edge. This commits them to one exit road and allows the Germans to mass all forces at that one exit. Instead, aim your thrust at a point between two of the roads and force the German to guard both of them. Later on you can commit to just one of the roads, which should leave half or more of the Germans out of position to stop them. For example, if the Kiwis enter near the western edge of Board 4, they should not stay on the western edge of the board. The Germans could then maneuver all their forces to block the road in 2Y1 and it will he very difficult for the New Zealanders to win. Rather, they should initially aim for the general area around 2W7. This forces the Germans to defend both 2Y1 and 2Q1. You then have the choice of attacking toward the road exit which is lightly defended.

Similarly, if the New Zealand forces emerge along the eastern edge of Board 2, they should not stick to the east of the hill. This would commit them to exiting at hex 2I1. Instead, they should maneuver toward the hilltops in the neighborhood of 2M5. From there, they can make their final thrust toward either 2I1 or 2Q1, spreading out the defenders.

There remains, obviously, the question of what exactly to do with the gambit platoon. It is more important to keep this force alive and a threat than to just exit it. If the Germans have massed against it, spending a couple of turns destroying it, the platoon has done its job. If the German player ignores it, move it toward an exit road. Every victory point that it earns counts. If the German instead masks it with a couple of squads, again it has done its job. Don't risk this force too quickly; so long as it holds a couple of enemy squads away from the main force, it is earning dividends.

The New Zealand ace-in-the-hole is the Smoke from the two mortars. With average luck, each mortar should place one Smoke counter during the game. (Of course, the dice could decree no smoke at all or permit lots of it.) Regardless, this asset should not be squandered. If possible, save the Smoke rounds until the New Zealand troops are nearing the exit roads. Only use your Smoke earlier if the Germans manage to create a strong line that can't be penetrated without heavy losses or extreme delay. Fire HE rounds at Germans in woods if you must, where the "–1" DRM for Air Burst applies. Mortar effectiveness against units in foxholes and buildings is so low that firing at such units is worth neither the time nor the risk of breakdown. Another use of your mortars is to interdict enemy routs up to 11 hexes away, which the mortars can do without risking breakdown. Of course, first the New Zealanders have to break a German unit, and then have a LOS to an open ground hex through which it wishes to rout.

Each mortar should be manned by a HS. If the Germans are defending in the woods initially, the mortars should enter assembled. Otherwise they should enter dismantled to get that extra movement. Assemble the mortars during the DFPh when you plan to fire them in the next PFPh. When moving them assembled, it is worthwhile for a leader to be around to help carry them so that they can be moved quickly to where they are most needed.

The most interesting weapon may be your ATR. What good is an ATR in a scenario with no tanks or vehicles of any kind? Well, it has one firepower factor out to 12 hexes, which makes it the longest ranged in this scenario. Its most obvious use is to add a factor to a British fire group, bumping it up to a higher IFT column. However, the ATR has some other uses. It can impede normal enemy movement in open ground; a one–factor attack with a "–2" modifier cannot be ignored. With its one factor, it can cause a broken unit to become DM in almost any terrain in this scenario. Finally, it can interdict an enemy routing unit at a distance of up to 12 hexes. Don't discount it just because of its low FP and the absence of enemy armor. In a scenario as tight as this one, with such a scope for maneuver, it can prove the difference between defeat and victory.

Mr. Stahler shares the rest of his latest batch of re-worked chestnuts ("Akrotiri Peninsula Defense" and "Strayer's Strays") in the next issue of The GENERAL.

☆

We got a complaint from one of our readers that some of his *GENERAL*s were damaged by the glue on the envelope insert at the center. It's sort of a no–win situation; we've got to have the envelope in there, but if the envelope is folded with the gummed side out, and the magazine gets too damp, the gum sticks to the pages. Reverse the envelope, and the gummed flap sticks to itself, making the envelope unusable.

Jim Rose to the rescue! A long–time comic book and magazine collector, Jim tells us that when you have an envelope stuck to pages like that, *don't* try to tear it free. Instead, set a hair dryer on High and play it over the stuck materials for about five minutes. The heat melts the glue away completely, with no damage to the paper beneath.

☆

ROASTING CHESTNUTS

The AtlantiCon '92 *ASL* Tournament Scenarios, Part II

By Jim Stahler

Jim Stahler is a talented fellow. Not only does he redesign old classics such as D-DAY '77, *but he also finds the time to design original games such as* BREAKOUT: NORMANDY. *This is the second installment of his piece describing his redesign of four scenarios (see last issue for "Commando Raid at Dieppe" and "Gambit") for his annual team competition. This year, all four featured actions without vehicles, concentrating upon the purity of infantry combat as a challenge to the experienced players his well-respected tournament inevitably draws. No doubt, all of them certainly hope that Jim continues his event for some years to come (at least until he runs out of* SL *scenarios to convert to* ASL *format).*



THE AKROTIRI PENINSULA DEFENSE

With this issue (for those readers who keep track of such things), there are now seven *ASL* scenarios published by Avalon Hill dealing with the German invasion of Crete. Four of them cover the landings on 20 May 1941: "The Akrotiri Peninsula Defense" (this scenario) and the trilogy in the *'89 ASL Annual* ("Tavronitis Bridge", "Bofors Bashing", and "Descent Into Hell"). These scenarios deal with the initial glider descent and fighting on the island. "Revenge at Kastelli" (*ASL* #45) deals with the immediate aftermath of a parachute drop as angry Greeks hunt down paratroopers who are already on the ground. The previous scenario in my 1992 tournament, "Gambit", deals with the attempt by a New Zealand force to escape the clutches of the Germans around Maleme Airfield. Finally, "Probing Layforce" (A43 in the *'92 Annual*) depicts the efforts of a British rear guard to halt the German advance long enough to allow their comrades to evacuate.

"The Akrotiri Peninsula Defense" is one of the rare scenarios dealing with gliders. For you glider enthusiasts, there are two more glider scenarios yet to be updated from the original *SQUAD LEADER* system: "Rehearsal for Crete" from *COD* and "A Belated Christmas" from *GI*.

In search of a balanced competition, I was forced to make a number of changes from the original for this one. Actually, the old *SL* scenario looked pretty hopeless for the Germans. Of course, it *is* historical; the Germans lost dramatically in the real battle. But that doesn't do for a game. Thus, before we ever playtested it, I reduced the British force considerably and beefed up the Germans in "Akrotiri". It still was not enough. The Germans only won two out of seven games in my tournament. Since then I have reduced the British by another couple of squads. Now, I believe, the Germans have a good chance of winning—at least, that's what our further playtesting has shown.

The British originally had 12 squads in the town on Board 3; I reduced this force to 10 squads for the tournament (and the British still won five out of seven). So I have reduced this force by another two. The British originally had a 9-2 leader. He had to go. I also demoted one of their two 9-1 leaders. I left the machineguns and concealment counters unchanged. The *ASL* rules permit all units to be concealed in addition to any concealment counters given by the scenario, which results in the British having more concealment under *ASL* than they had originally anyway.

For the AA battery, I translated the on-time 2-3-7 crews to 2-2-8 crews. This should make them a bit tougher, but with the change in victory conditions they need to be tougher. To make the game even more interesting for the defender, I allowed the squads and leaders with the AA battery to set up HIP. I reasoned that if they were forced to set up on board, their positions could be a dead giveaway for the AA gun locations. In the *SL* version, there were three types of AA guns listed. However, as per the marvelous Ordnance Notes of *ASL*, the 20L AA gun was not used until 9/43. Consequently, I replaced the two 20L AA guns with two 40L AA guns. The 76L AA gun became the 76* AA gun.

Similar to my update of "Gambit", I replaced most of the German 8-3-8s with 5-4-8 squads, to make it more realistic. I retained three 8-3-8 squads to represent the combat engineers who landed in the gliders alongside the infantry. I also added a squad with a glider to the German OB, giving them 12 squads instead of the original 11. I promoted a 9-1 to a 9-2 to boost the German leadership, and added an 8-0 leader and another DC to go along with the third engineer squad. I was very tempted to promote the 10-2 to a 10-3 so that Major Stahler could get into the game, but I resisted the evil impulse. The changes to these Germans result in just about the strongest force for its size in any *ASL* scenario. All squads are elite, there is one leader for every two squads (including two leaders with –2 DRM), and every squad has a support weapon (including three DCs, a HMG, and two MMG for only a dozen squads). This is indeed a force to be reckoned with.

I made the victory conditions both easier and harder. Originally the Germans had to eliminate three of the five AA guns. Because of setup restrictions, a weaker German player can beat a much stronger British player by concentrating all his force on one of the three possible gun positions, and be all but guaranteed of winning the game if he guessed right, and guaranteed a loss if he guessed wrong. This gives a rank *ASL* beginner a one-third chance of beating a Mike McGrath or a Perry Cocke from the start. That is a far better chance than he would have in nearly any other published scenario. I now require that the Germans knock out four guns, requiring them to attack both gun sections. Thus, the victory conditions became tougher.

But to balance things out, I only require that a gun not be manned by a 2-2-8 British crew or not be in Good Order (which means malfunctioned, disabled, captured, or otherwise eliminated). In the *SL* scenario, a gun actually had to be eliminated. My reasoning, however, was that the objective of the glider troops was to neutralize these AA guns; there many ways of doing that. One way, of course, is to eliminate or capture the guns. Another way is to eliminate the crews, or at least drive them away from the guns. I doubt that an AA gun manned by an infantry squad pressed into service as a temporary crew would be very effective firing at aircraft. Yet a third way to knock out a gun is to be such a threatening target yourself and absorb so many shells from the guns that they run out of ammunition or melt their barrels, represented in the game by a gun malfunction. Any way that the Germans knock out the guns is fine, so long as they do the job. I also removed the immediate British victory should they eliminate nine German squads. As long as the paratroopers are doing their job, they are dependable. They simply must go for the guns at all costs.

The mapboard, set-up restrictions, and game length are retained from the original. I added SSR 1 defining the environmental conditions as moderate, which is the usual default for we "scenario designers". I created a mild breeze blowing toward the northeast. This is consistent with the prevailing wind at that location, and more important, it allows some interesting glider avenues of approach, especially on Board 6. (In the original game there is no wind.) The player with the glid-

ers can have his gliders land facing any direction, as long as they all face the same way. For a much wilder game, have the wind direction determined randomly after the British setup. I deleted a few SSR from the scenario that are no longer needed. And I ruled that all buildings on Board 6 are of stone construction. This is necessary since some copies of Board 6 appear to have all wooden buildings, while on other copies all buildings look like they are made of stone.

All the AA guns start in AA mode. This only makes sense, since they had been busy firing at German planes before the scenario starts. Not only are the AA guns not allowed to move, they can't even limber. I don't know why a player would want to, but it is not allowed regardless.

The British have ELR of "3", standard for this time of the war. The Germans are elite and have the excellent ELR of "5". The British, being on the defense, have a SAN of "4". The Germans have the minimum SAN "2", and their sniper is not even placed until the first British RPh, after the Germans have landed.

To help the British, should you feel they need the boost and use the Balance Provisions, I increase their force by two squads, making it closer to the OB in the old scenario. To aid the Germans, I reduce to three the number of guns that they need to neutralize, as per the original VC. This makes the German task *much* easier.

One final crucial change that I made is found in the title of the scenario. As published, the name of the peninsula was spelled "Akroiri" in the title and "Akrotiri" in the scenario introduction. I confirmed the spelling "Akrotiri" in a reference book, and that is how it is now spelled in the scenario title. A tiny typo originally, and one of the few in all the *SL* scenarios, but oh, how annoying.

The game starts with the British set-up. The first crucial decision he must face is where to place the three large "?" counters, and where to place the five AA guns that are the centerpiece of this scenario. Most British players will place two "?" on one board and one on the other; there is no reason to do otherwise. One of these three "?" marks the dummy section. The strategic question for the British player is which one is to be the deception? There is a lot to be said for putting all the AA guns together on the same board so as to concentrate the defensive firepower. The dummy position would be alone on the other board. On the other hand, putting the two real AA gun sections far apart dilutes the German attack as much as possible. In that case, the dummy can then be on either hoard.

One placement that I have seen is to place all five guns on Board 4, with the dummy "?" on Board 6. One section of three AA guns, all 40L, is positioned near 4W6 and the remaining guns are set up near 4K5. All the AA guns are on the western half of Board 4, close enough to Board 3 so that the infantry can move quickly to protect them.

A fine alternative set-up has one section on Board 6 and the other section on Board 4. The Board 6 "?" can be placed around 6Y10, so that its guns can be defended by the Tommies from 3I10, 3M7 and 3O10. Another possibility is to put these guns near the southern edge of Board 6. Any Germans who attack the guns here will not have time to join in the fray on Board 4. The AA guns can be defended by infantry in buildings 3Y6, 3Y8 and 3CC8.

There are several considerations to bear in mind when placing the AA guns themselves. They should have a good field of fire at nearby landing areas. Keep in mind that the gliders must land facing the wind, and that wind blows toward the northeast, so the gliders must land facing southwest. Your AA guns should not set up in woods, since that hinders their covered arc, and fixes their field-of-fire for the current phase. Being emplaced, they don't need the woods TEM after all. Another important consideration to remember is that the Germans could capture a tall building such as 3N1 or 6M5 and there set up their powerful MGs on the second level. Since all the Germans have to do is break the gun crews or drive them away, the guns should be set up out of sight of these buildings. For the crucial AA guns, hexes Y2, V4, U4, T6, N1, L2 and J2 are good positions on Board 4; and AA2, AA3, AA4, AA10, Y1, Y2, Y3, L8, M9, N4 and O10 are relatively safe positions on Board 6.

Once the positions of the AA guns have been determined, the British player must carefully set up the infantry. Is there anyone who doesn't put the MMG, a 4-4-7 and the –1 leader on the second level of 3N1? In fact, this building is a prime location for a MG in nearly every scenario that uses Board 3. From here, this machinegun nest can cover the area surrounding the grain near 4W6, a prime landing spot for the gliders, as well as fire at any Germans landing farther south near 4K6.

The placement of the British infantry is determined by their role of supporting the guns. If both gun sections are to be placed on Board 4, five infantry squads should be placed among the buildings 3I1, 3K1, 3M1, 3S1, 3T1, 3U1 and 3V1 to quickly reinforce the guns. The other two squads with the bulk of the dummy counters should be placed farther west to delay any glider troops landing on Board 6. To make this look like a larger force, one of these squads should be deployed. The squads and leaders that start HIP should be placed among the five guns themselves. Interesting places are 4X6 and 4U8, to interfere with the rout of broken German units (assuming the MMG does its job and breaks them initially).

Any AA guns set up on Board 6 are farther from the buildings on Board 3, and consequently harder to defend than the guns on Board 4. Obvious places for British squads are 3I10, 3M7 and 3O10 to defend any guns set up on the northern part of Board 6. Guns to the south would be defended by any infantry in 3Y6, 3Y8 and 3CC6. Infantry starting in 3P6, 3Q7, 3R6, 3S87 and 3T6 can go either way to defend the gun positions.

But once the Germans land, anything can happen. Do all you can to protect the guns and their crews. Losing squads doesn't matter; only the guns and their crews count in this scenario. Put everything you have between the Germans and the guns to keep the twain apart. Don't ignore the firepower of the AA guns themselves. Collectively, they have almost as much FP as your infantry. Don't sustain or intensive fire them unless truly desperate, however. When firing at the Germans, always fire the AA guns last, and only if needed to break or pin a threatening force. A malfunctioned gun is just as bad as an eliminated gun at game's end.

Before discussing German strategy, I want to touch upon an important consequence of the *ASL* glider rules. A glider has a guaranteed safe landing, with no chance of crashing, if it lands in clear terrain and its "Avenue of Approach" has five unobstructed hexes directly behind it. Landing in a building or in the trees is a very bad idea. But brush and grain hexes are just as good as open ground for glider landing.

For example, in this scenario, 6O5 is a good hex in which to land. There are at least five unobstructed hexes in its Avenue of Approach (6U8 to 6P5 along the road). This yields a "–5" drm to the Landing dr, which must result in a Final dr of at most "1"; so the glider lands in its Intended Landing Hex (ILH). There are no modifiers to the Crash dr, resulting in a safe landing. Some other examples of safe landing hexes in this scenario are 6W6, 6FF8, 3E4, 3G8, 4U4 and 4E6.

Some landing hexes have no chance of missing the ILH, but there is some risk of a crash. For example, in 6P4 or 6G3 there is a "+1" drm to the Crash dr due to the hedge being crossed; in 3F7 or 3W6 there is "+1" drm due to the Crest Line crossed. Landing in 6X6 or 4I2 suffers a "+2" to the Crash dr because of the wall. Landing in 6Z6 or 4T3 receives a "+3" Crash drm because of the woods or building in the ILH. Don't land your gliders there; always practice safe landing. Of course, if forced to evade because of AA fire, all bets are off. The Final ILH can be anywhere. All you can do is hope that you hit something soft.

Let's analyze the situation from the bird's eye view of the glider troops. In the middle is a town crawling with British troops. The objectives—the guns—are on the outskirts of the town. There are lots of good landing sites to the east and west of town, near where the AA guns are located. There are hills to the north and south of the town, which can be very good landing sites although a little dangerous, especially if the gliders are subjected to AA fire and forced to evade.

You know that the British MMG is on level 2 of 3N1, with a good leader directing its fire. There is a lot of enemy infantry in the town crawling about. At least one big "?" is on Board 4 and one other is on Board 6. To win, you have to knock out four of the five AA guns, which means attacking both gun sections, which could mean committing forces to both boards.

The German player has two strategies open to him, with many variations of each possible. Basically, he can be aggressive or cautious. An aggressive strategy involves landing as close to

the AA guns as possible, and knocking out several before the British infantry can react. The alternative is to land well away from the British guns, find out where the AA guns are (via SSR #5), organize your force, and attack overland, counting on the quality of your troops and their firepower to defeat the British.

The aggressive strategy has many variations. I will briefly discuss only four them: the *Triple* Attack, the *Balanced* Attack, the *Weighted* Attack, and the *Eggs* Attack.

In the Triple Attack, the German troops are divided into three platoons, each with four gliders, four squads and two leaders. One squad in each platoon is an 8-3-8 with its DC, and each platoon has a MMG or HMG. Each platoon is a potent force by itself. Land each platoon as close to a "?" as possible. The plan, obviously, is to land on top of the guns. You are guaranteed to land two of the platoons right on top of an AA gun section. The third platoon is necessarily out of the way, down near the dummy gun position. It acts as a reserve, moving to reinforce the friendly platoon with the most problems.

The Balanced Attack divides the Germans into two forces of six gliders, with half the strength in each. One force lands on Board 4, while the other lands on Board 6. Both forces land close to a potential battery position. This works best if the gun sections are split between the two boards, since all the Germans will be in action quickly. If all guns are on one board, the force there attacks the nearest section, while the other force makes its way there as fast as it can.

The Weighted Attack is similar, but the force that lands on the board with two "?" has seven gliders, while the other has but five. This takes into account the increased chance of both batteries being on the same board.

The Eggs Attack involves putting all your "eggs in one basket". The entire force lands in one concentrated group on the board with two "?", as close to one of the "?" as practical. If all the guns are on this hoard, the Germans are in pretty good shape. The guns in the target section should be knocked out quickly. Then the entire powerful force heads towards the remaining guns. However, if there are any guns on the other board, the Germans are in trouble. Feeling lucky, *herr Oberst?*

In all these strategies the gliders attempt to land right on top of the British AA guns. Although the gliders are all placed on board at the start of the MPh, they land one at a time. Save the most valuable gliders for the last.. These-are the gliders with the best leaders, the MMG and HMG, and the 8-3-8 squads. The British AA fire will most likely be resolved against the first gliders to land, which are the most expendable. Only spectacular ROF will result in AA attacks on the more precious gliders last to land. The British player has no way of knowing that the best are landing last. If he does guess this and holds his fire for last, he will lose the benefit of his ROF, which also works in your favor.

The cautious strategy is the opposite of the aggressive strategy, as you would expect. It involves landing as far away from the British as possible. It has two main variations. The first involves landing in one concentrated group. The problem with this is that there are not too many places where all 12 gliders can safely land together. The other variation is landing in two forces, widely separated.

Examining the board, there are a number of prime landing spots to avoid any chance of a crash. They lie in the northeast corner on Board 4, the southeast corner of Board 4, hills 547 and 534 to the north of Board 3, hill 498 on the south of Board 3, and the grainfield on the north of Board 6. Choose the landing point(s) based on where the British are. If your gliders all land at least 11 hexes from the nearest "?", the closest. AA gun is guaranteed to be beyond the normal eight-hex range, since it must be within 3 hexes of its "?".

Most, if not all, of the gliders should land more or less safely. At the time the Germans exit their gliders, the real AA guns must be placed on board. The Germans now know where the dummy is and where they must go. It is a matter of moving out.

The aggressive strategy challenges the British AA guns directly. Consequently, it leads to somewhat shorter games. The cautious strategy leads to a fluid firefight that can occur anywhere on the board. If the Germans break through to the guns, they can win. If the British manage to stop them, they lose. With this strategy the Germans must use all nine of their turns, and count on their superior troops and weapons to win the day.

With so many possible British defenses and so many different German strategies, this scenario has many, many possibilities. It can be played over and over again without exhausting all the permutations.



STRAYER'S STRAYS

For the last scenario of the tournament I wanted something short and simple. "Strayer's Strays" fit the bill perfectly. It is ideal for a short match in an evening. With no ordnance, no vehicles, no fortifications, few units, few turns, and single board, it almost qualifies as a "lunchtime" game (if your boss is only a little lax).

The scenario takes place on the first day of the Normandy invasion. The Germans knew where they were, but didn't know what was happening. The paratroopers knew what was going on, but only had a vague idea of where they were. "Strayer's Strays" depicts a clash between an ad hoc melange of the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions and a German garrison belonging to the 919th Regiment of the 709th Division. The paratroopers' mission was the capture of a vital causeway over the flooded lowland to allow their seaborne comrades an exit from the beach. They were moving in what they hoped was the direction of their objective, trying to swiftly pass through the enemy positions. In this scenario, time is of the essence; the assault waves of the 4th Division are already in their boats heading ashore.

I have now updated five other scenarios involving American paratroopers. They have all had the original 8-4-7 paratrooper squads from *SL* in the OB, and when converted to *ASL* the American player lost a lot of strength due their reduced firepower. I had to make a number of modifications to those scenarios to bring them back into balance. The original version of this scenario is based on the *GI* module, and it already had 7-4-7 paratrooper squads in place. Consequently, I made very few changes to this scenario. Conversion of scenarios from the *GI* level is the easiest, for much of the refinement shown by the current rulebook sprang from the playtest for that module. Unfortunately, the tournament showed the new "Strayer's Strays" to be pretty unbalanced. The Americans won six out of eight games. (However, it should be noted that in two of their victories the Americans relied on Exit Victory Points from prisoners to win.)

I made no changes to the order of battle of either side in this scenario, with the exception of having the U.S. MMG start dismantled, and adding four concealment counters to the German mix. These were not in the tournament; they should give the Germans a little bit of needed extra help. In the SSR, I made the Americans Stealthy and the Germans Lax. The paratroopers were very well trained, pitted here against a unit that was not the best of German formations, and the Germans *were* stunned by the airborne invasion.

The mapboard itself is unchanged, as is my habit. In the tournament there was a lot of confusion as to whether the buildings were made of stone or wood. They do look gray on some copies of the board, brown on others. So, I added an SSR that makes all buildings stone. The game length is the same as in the original, making the match very short but putting a lot of pressure on the Americans. Perfect for a tournament scenario intended to challenge the best of players.

The original victory conditions required the American player to exit five of his eight squads to win. In *ASL*, the Americans have 19 possible Exit Victory Points (excluding prisoners). Five-eighths of 19 is approximately 12, so that is what they must exit to win. To balance the scenario, I no longer allow prisoners to count as Exit Victory Points. (There is a persistent rumor that this will soon be a permanent ruling from Avalon Hill.)

... continued on Page 50

I kept the American ELR of "5" from the original scenario. Remember that ELR was introduced in *GI*, but only applicable to Americans. I gave the Germans the low ELR of "2", because the 709th Division was of low quality and because of the inherent confusion among the Germans. The U.S. has the minimum allowed SAN of "2". The Germans have a higher SAN of "4" simply because they are on the defensive.

For balance provisions to help the Americans, I reduced the required Exit Victory Points to ten, and thus the Americans can win with one less squad exiting the board. To help the Germans, I boosted their leadership with an additional 8-1.

Environmental conditions are moist, since it had been raining recently in Normandy. The invasion was launched during the now famous break in the weather that the Germans did not expect. As in most *ASL* scenarios, there is no wind at start.

The Germans outnumber the Americans by 50%, but they have inferior firepower (48 to 60), inferior leadership, and they must defend the entire length of the board. And the Americans have the initiative, which allows them to concentrate on one spot and achieve a local superiority. The board itself divides into three regions. On the west there is mostly grain, separated from the rest of the board by an arrow-straight road that runs along hexrow Y; let's call this "Y Street". To the east there is a huge orchard. In the middle are the chateau and scattered clumps of woods.

The dangerous flank for the German defender is in the west, where there is good cover, most of it out of range of the upper levels of the chateau and blocked from the view from most locations east of Y Street. Any American unit, especially with the MMG, can prevent German reinforcements from crossing Y Street in time to block the paratroopers' progress. The best way to defend this is with four German units right at the edge of the board, in hexes FF9, EE10, CClQ and AA10. Even a HS will do. The paratroopers cannot enter these hexes until the APh, so losing one of their four turns of movement. Entering the adjacent open ground hexes risks point-blank fire, with nowhere to rout should the paratroopers break. A commitment of two squads (four HS) should be enough to discourage an attack here.

To defend the other end of the board, a few squads placed behind the orchard wall could do the trick. Good locations are E7, G8 and I9. They will prevent the paratroopers from getting too far too fast on this flank. An alternative is a more aggressive defense, based in hexes H10, E9 and C10, aiming to stop the Americans at the very edge of the board.

By my count, there remain seven squads left to hold the center. Obvious locations are the buildings P9 and R9. A squad in K8 allows the paratroopers to enter the woods between K10 and N10, but not to reach the wall. Hex X8 is a good position from which to block Y Street. Hex T7 is a subtle place to put a first-line squad; from there it can fire down the road to Y10, as well as protect the flank of the squad in R9 from any attack along hexrow T.

This leaves two German squads in reserve. I would put one with a leader on the second level of the chateau in hex N5. This gives LOS to the woodline from K10 to N10, as well as down the hexrow to V9, and to a lot of other convenient places between. This squad should be 1st line for you want maximum range. The leader there serves to prevent cowering, and allows the squad to move at maximum speed to reinforce either flank. Being near the center, it can double-time either direction and be in position.

The other squad and leader should backstop the left flank by the grainfield. This flank has only two weak, deployed squads holding it. CC6 is a good spot, since it could then fire at any target along the Y6-GG5 road. This squad can be of second-line quality, since it doesn't need a long range. The squad should also have a leader stacked with it, so that it can move quickly to counter an attack elsewhere. They have the time, barely, to oppose an attack on the opposite flank. On Turn 1, this squad can double-time and then advance to T3. On on the second turn, it can reach M2. Turn 3 allows them to get to E3 or G1, believe it or not, in time to oppose the enemy next-turn rush to exit the board.

The HS in the grain and the squads in P9 and R9 can be conscripts, since they don't need much in the way of range. The three squads in the orchard can be second-line, since their range of "4" is adequate for the task asked of them. The squads in K8, N5 and T7 should be first-line troops, because their extra range is important.

The concealment counters should be placed in two dummy stacks of two counters each to resemble single squads or HS. One use of them is to make the weak force in the west look stronger than it is. These stacks can be placed in GG7 and BB6. Alternatively, they can be placed along the board edge to make the Americans even more cautious; a good spot if you opt for this is V9, T10, the woods between J10 and N10, H10, L10 or C10. Another alternative is to place the dummies in X10 and Z10, to discourage the Americans from blocking Y Street.

Once the Germans set up, the Americans must be committed to their point of entry. Of course, you can split them up into a number of groups and spread out all over the mapboard. But this is a bad idea. The Americans want to concentrate in one spot and, as one mighty fist, break through the paper-thin German cordon. This pits the maximum number of American units against the minimum number of German.

Time cannot be wasted. First, there are not many turns in the scenario. Second, the Germans will react and rush to reinforce the point of attack. The Americans have to exit a lot of troops, and cannot afford to take much in the way of losses. They must take some risks, but not any more than necessary. Wasting time is only going to see more Germans arrive near the point of your planned breakthrough.

In general, it is best to attack on one extreme flank or the other. An attack in the middle only allows all the Germans to concentrate against it. In the middle, there are too many long hexrows of open ground to cross. For example, an American attack between X10 and P10 would have to cross six open ground hexrows: P6-U9, O5-Y1, Q5-W8, R3-X6, R1-Y5 and R0-W3. Fortunately, the Germans have no machine guns to create fire lanes. Still, a few squads, using First Fire, Subsequent First Fire and Final protective Fire, can lay down a lot of residual markers, forcing a lot of attacks with a "–2" DRM on your stalwart band.

An alternative route is via the chateau, building N4. There are only one problem with this approach: the amount of open terrain. The first section must be crossed before the chateau is reached, mainly the L8-P10 hexrow and the X6-Q9 road. Once the chateau has fallen, there is still much open ground to cross to exit the board.

So the primary routes for the paratroopers to consider are through the grain in the west and the orchard in the east. To attack the orchard, deploy one squad into HS initially, and in the first RPh deploy another squad. These HS are used as scouts to draw fire. They will attempt to enter enemy hexes to strip concealment. The American full squads may then be able to move freely, unimpeded by enemy fire. If there is a chance of any German fire, move one unit at a time. If possible, infiltrate a unit or two into the orchard along hexrow I or J to interdict German reinforcements. On Turn 1, getting to the woods between A7 and E9 is good. Getting adjacent to the orchard wall is better. On the next turn, the Americans must be well into the orchard, or beyond it on the extreme eastern edge of the board. Turn 3 takes the Americans across the B5-I2 road; and finally the Americans are in position to exit and win. Sounds simple, no?

The grain presents a unique set of problems for you. If the Germans use a set-up such as I have described above, the Americans should use offboard units to attempt to enter the German hexes on the board edge. These "probes" can find out a lot without taking fire. Then these leading paratroopers can advance in with concealed units with a good chance of an ambush.

Don't forget that units can move offboard before entering an onboard hex. This may actually be important if the American player finds some dummies where he expected enemy units. It may take the first turn to get them on board, but the American paratroopers should be able to eliminate the Germans in close combat. Once that is done, there is not too much left to stop them.

It is important to have a unit, either a HS or a full squad, advance to Y10, carrying the MMG. The MMG must be assembled and ready to fire during the following DFPh. Its job is to interdict Y Street to prevent German reinforcements. Note that an American unit as far back as Y8 at the beginning of the fourth

American turn can exit the board. Using double-time and the road bonus, it can move to Y1 and if it hasn't been pinned or broken, it can advance off the board. This means that the unit manning the MMG can restrict its movement to the Advance Phase for the first three turns, and still have a chance to exit the board and contribute to victory.

Turn 2 could find the bulk of the U.S. units clearing the first grain field, entering building BB6 and in the woods from DD6 to GG7. By now there should be only a German squad or two left to deal with on this flank. By the third turn, the paratroopers should reach buildings CC1 and EE2 and the southwest corner of the board. On Turn 4 they move off the board and win the game (if the enemy and the dice have cooperated).

The Americans do not have time to stop for Prep Fire or most other niceties. However, your squads have a high Smoke exponent number. Make use of it. Also, with their Assault Fire capability, your squads' advancing fire is nearly as effective as any prep fire. From two to four hexes away, a U.S. squad is worth seven FP in Prep Fire, five in Advancing Fire. A fire group of four squads can lay waste on the 20FP column in the AFPh without breaking stride.

Once the paratroopers enter the board, the Germans will move everything that they have to oppose them, to block their egress. The scenario often becomes a race between Americans running for the far board edge, and the Germans rushing to block them, with the victor determined by the effectiveness of firepower and the courage of the men making morale checks. Makes for an enjoyable and fast-moving game.





SCENARIO BRIEFING

Player's Notes for ASL

By Mark C. Nixon

Deluxe ASL Scenario A
To The Last Man
Rating: 55% Russian

ASL analyst extraordinaire, Mark Nixon, continues his series of in-depth analyses of select scenarios with this look at the action in Budapest in January, 1945. TO THE LAST MAN was published in Vol. 24, No. 1 of THE GENERAL and has the distinction of being the only official supplemental scenario for DASL published thus far. Those wishing to reacquaint themselves with Mark's earlier work in this series should consult Vol. 28, Numbers 2 and 4.

Attraction: Loads of hitting power on both sides, room to move around yet plenty of difficult terrain, a surrounded SS force outnumbered 2:1 by Russians driving five juggernauts straight at them and FT, DC, HIP and machineguns galore. One of the best scenarios ever—a true "10"!

German Advantages: Stone and Fortified Buildings (Tunnels); HIP; SAN; PF/PSK; Interior Lines; Factories; Initial Concealment

"Little things mean a lot"; and it is a fortunate cliche to apply here, since these Germans lack any single dominating weapon to stem the Russian tide. But the combination of the attributes listed above, backed by twenty SS squads free to fight to the death, promises hard times for the Russian masses. Don't forget to rally broken 5-4-8 and 2-3-8 units as SS, with a broken-side "+1" morale (footnote A3l). Likewise, SS (squads only) have Assault Fire capabilities and, due to the Elite status and Ammo Shortage combination, all Depletion Numbers for Special Ammo play as printed on the counters. However, deriving any real advantage from these attributes which might be used to thwart enemy intentions will most likely come from a careful layout of the fortified locations, tunnels and HIP to hold the factories. In other words, the Russians are strong enough to pierce any single spot you try to hold, but their plans can be disrupted in areas where you fortify to stand like a rock, laying tunnels to escape or attack from a new angle or where your HIP pop out of nowhere, perhaps even utilizing a tunnel to reinforce a fortified location and save an otherwise doomed factory.

German Disadvantages: Number of Squads; Ammo Shortage; AFV Limited Movement

The opening Russian assault threatens to punch through your forward defense and smash onto boards "a" and "c" in the early turns. Troops you commit up front might be annihilated by Human Wave or outright firepower; yet if you disdain those forward positions in order to conserve infantry the problem merely exacerbates as even more Russians rush forward. Down two squads to one, this can easily deteriorate into a flood of enemy bodies hurling themselves at you to drag your squads down by sheer weight of numbers. Common enough tactics to expect from the Russians, but the frightening thing this time is that they have enough leaders to rally their broken and return for more swarming. Certainly, these SS are powerful in their own right, but if we think of the battle as four separate fights for the four half-boards of "a" and "c", it seems apparent five squads per half-board will not hold anywhere. Something will have to be sacrificed in order to defend specific sectors.

The other shortcomings in the defense are of lesser importance, but there will be plenty of opportunities to bemoan the fates as Ammo Shortage and those unpredictable AFV secret DRs occur. For the weak-hearted player, you might hope to dodge those secret DRs by spending only one MP in your MPh, thinking to avoid any chance of running out of fuel since two MP would have to be used to equal the first "doubles" rolled, but this will work only against a rookie. Careful reading of D2.1 clearly states that any vehicle, "which ends its MPh with MP remaining is assumed to use all those MP in that hex". Therefore, as soon as an AFV decides to move, the MkIVs have a 16% chance to run out of fuel; the JgPz has a 13% chance since it would spend (excluding ESB) only 11 MP normally and not have to worry about a secret DR of "12". On the higher "doubles", the vehicles have a better chance of reaching their destination, but will then consume the last of their fuel, nonetheless. But take heart; with all those enemy IS-2m running about, there is usually not much point moving around a lot!

German Defense:

One part of the scenery cannot adequately be covered here, for the rubble rolls of SSR #5 will alter as many as six hexes on your map. It is something which must be dealt with as it occurs, and forces certain constraints or allows unexpected opportunities. Otherwise, your defense might benefit greatly in this situation, moreso than most others, if you happen to be familiar with your opponent's style of play. That is, do you know him well enough to expect a first turn Human Wave, or do you know he won't try it at all? A well-organized Human Wave might destroy you on the first turn of the game—but one which runs into fortified locations, concealed HMGs and heavy fire might prove a blessing. However, usually your opponent is either unknown or his moves cannot be guessed anyway, and since a Human Wave brings with its pluses and minuses for both sides, it is not worth a lot of discussion. The set-up I am using, in fact, offers the Russians as much free space to initially cross as possible, an open invitation to "wave" on in but against horrendous fire. The only spot the enemy might realistically hope to overrun, bE1, will be denied them because it is fortified. Take a good look at that key position,

for you won't see my best leader holding a point like this very often; but he is up there this time to set the stage for some stiff resistance in the two factories.

The defense revolves around the need to deny control of buildings totaling eight points to the Russians and the hopelessness of trying to hold the line at all points against such a powerful attacker. My defense will give away the southern and eastern edges of the battlefield, will grudgingly yield the center, but will fall back from there to reinforce the west to try to hold the two factories bE1 and aK2 as well as the two-point building aM5. This is why ten of my twenty squads are already in the area— counting the HIP 6-5-8 in aM5 ready to slip through the tunnel to aL2 if needed—and only ten squads and one tank are fending off the most serious Russian threat, the "Elite front" force. My hope is the Russian "1st-Line front" will move directly against the factories and meet an early end at the hands of the 9-2 and his 40FP, the ATGs and the crafty use of some tunnels coupled with factory warfare. This explains what that 9-2 is doing; he will unload 40FP, ROF 20FP, Subsequent 20FP and even FPF 20FP against all comers. His FPF chances are very fine, as it would take a DR of "9" or higher to harm these troops, and the automatic "out" is there through the tunnel back to aK3 should they falter. That tunnel is why his command has only MMGs and no HMG; the MMGs can go with them whereas the HMG would have to be left behind. (Note that a Good Order SMC actually *increases* the IPC of one Good Order Infantry unit [even another SMC!], which would allow the HMG to be moved through the tunnel, but only by Good Order units.) Hex bE1 is a very peculiar factory hex, for LOS to all other hexes of the Factory are drawn outside the factory walls, so all fire both ways gets the +3 TEM—with the fortified hex getting +4, naturally. The 5-4-8 in aK3 is ready to reinforce via the tunnel, and the 8-0 is handy to rally any who come back the other way.

The few units off to the south in building aC3 are there just to keep the Russian guessing. This concentration of dummy positions and minimal resistance might just as often be placed in the south-central or northeast quadrants. The 9-1 and HMG in cJ1 seems an innocent enough spot, but covers the road all the way out to cA3 (with the exception of hex cB2), and also will put heat on any Russians moving up through dE5, dF5 and/or dG5. This is about as close to having any "on-board" reserves as the scenario allows, as the 9-1 can lead his boys in any direction from this location—even moving through one of the two nearby tunnels—thanks to the IPC boost from the leader to help with the HMG. A 6-5-8 lies HIP in cK3, ready to reinforce fortified cH4 if called for, or move up to help along the northern boardedge. The 9-1 with HMG is also probably headed this way, for Russian pressure in the north could threaten building aM5 in just a few short turns. Finally, my HIP HS with the PSKs are obviously looking for some surprise tank shots, although they won't hesitate to take on infantry targets if their FP is needed or if their HIP positions are about to be lost anyway.

While I like using my HIP potential in this manner, it is not the *only* ballgame in town. Another set-up might see HIP half-squads in dA4, dB3, dB3/1st and dC4 and a 5-4-8 with LMG in dE4. This will almost certainly lose all three of these hidden squads, but against a Russian who surges across the street and who does so persistently, the enemy casualties ought to make it all worthwhile. If all his troops on this flank set-up in this corner expecting to flood westward, you will have stopped them cold on Turn #1. Another fine option is to scatter a few HS around with the goal of letting the Russians sweep past, only emerging at game end to claim a few buildings. Best hiding spots in this case are usually upper levels of wooden buildings; the Russians rarely go up into these locations, and if they neglect to search/mop-up these buildings your plan will succeed. Just make sure, and before playing any scenario which requires an understanding of building control rules, that you and your opponent are using the same interpretation of Rule A26.12. While on the subject, any scenario such as this one which does not specify an "immediate victory" in the VC can be resolved only at the end of the last game turn, or by resignation. The Russians might gain 15 or more points, hut only win if they still hold at least 15 at the end of Turn #8.

My starting location for that MkIVJ in cH4(1/6) might seem a bit odd, but I like it for several reasons. At some point I know the Russians will mass enough firepower to overwhelm my troops in this hex, which I usually handle by pulling back, either through the tunnel or otherwise, and by moving fresh troops up through the tunnel to emerge concealed. Eventually, however, even this will not be possible, but having the tank in the hex will allow me to fire from hex cH4 with the infantry in my PFPh, and then blow off the sN9 in the MPh to add (hopefully) another "+2" smoke protection. Coupled with +4 for the fortified building, this just might hold off the enemy, and the smoke even applies against the enemy FT. Simply having an AFV in the hex forces the Russians to pass a PAATC before entering, even if they have successfully circumvented the fortified building block. This tank can be hit only at vertex cH4/6, and will be able to put heavy fire on all hexes of the factory.

The one great potential in my arsenal which might, when all else fails, snatch a victory from defeat is PF/PSK availability. If you've never been on the receiving end of the German 1945 PF potential in a scenario such as this one, you haven't really experienced *ASL* yet. I doubt the maximum 40PF could ever be used, and those four PSK even add to the carnage, all of which is ever so much more potent in the situation in those factories where firing units are not subject to the normal C13.8 Backblast penalty. That is why two PSK begin play already in the big factory and the other two will not hesitate to move there if needed. The danger for the Russian AFVs is obvious, and once Russian infantry enter the factory they are, for once, protected by only a +l TEM for ADJACENT shots. So the PF/PSK capability in this battle will go a long way toward stopping those enemy tanks as well as the infantry once they actually enter the factories.

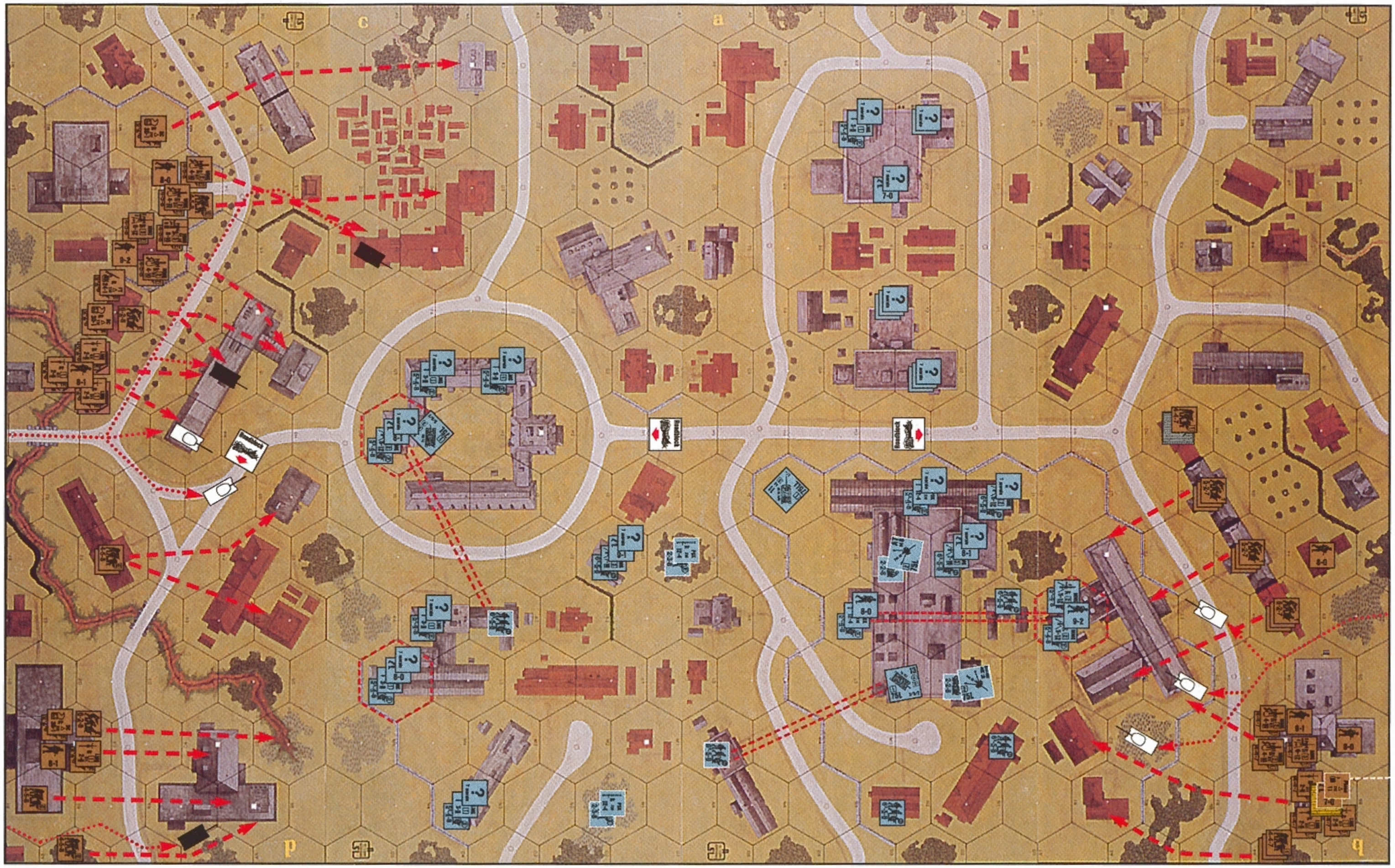
But this does not mean you can stand off at one- or two-hex range and rid yourself of the AFV menace and these massed infantry formations. Oh no, it won't be as easy as all that, for this scenario is titled "To The Last Man" for a very good reason. The last stand for the "Last Man" often enough will be trusty CC and FPF, two weapons displaying the ultimate proof of the frantic nature of this defense. Don't think I am recommending CC versus those Russian squads, which outnumber the SS 2:1, for I am not. But CC vs these AFVs may prove a very efficient arena to slaughter them due to the availability of German ATMMs. How effective can an ATMM be? How about a squad with a "–1" leader getting an ATMM vs one of those IS-2m tanks and rolling "10" to immobilize, anything less to kill? Make this the "–2" leader and throw in an Ambush "–1" DRM and the AFV is Immobilized even on a "12" DR!

But the scenario earns this title, perhaps the most apropos ever, due to the ability and (often) necessity of the SS to rely on FPF to stop the surging Russian infantry. Never have I seen a scenario of this size in which FPF is called upon so frequently. It is common, it is necessary, and it is usually fully justified. The SS have the morale to withstand repeated FPF attempts, the threat of an overpowering foe to force them into using it as a weapon, and the high broken-side morale backed by good leadership to come back from it when the attempt backfires. Added together, the PF, ATMM and FPF arsenal of these SS make for a very exciting and tenacious defense.

Russian Advantages: Firepower; Smoke; Human Wave; AFVs; Rout Denial and Encirclement

This has to be one of the classiest Russian battle groups to ever appear on an *ASL* scenario card. I still remember my shock back in 1986 when this scenario was chosen to be the one out of eleven to *not* be included in the *STREETS OF FIRE* module, for it was certainly one of the best of the lot and was the only one to feature such a healthy Russian force. These Russians roll into the German lines with 65% of the FP of this encounter at their command, split nicely between 39 squads, eight AFVs, OBA, machine-guns actually superior to those in German hands, and even leadership equal to the enemy for once. This FP advantage even exceeds my professed 63% desired for victory (2% is no small matter with these large numbers, for it equals 40FP) and is a mighty weapon indeed. That 120mm OBA might bring some grief to the enemy, although any of the limited spots in LOS it might be placed will do a better job keeping your own troops out than of breaking German troops if HE...so using smoke with it might prove wise. A smoke concentration in the front lines will work very well with your numerical squad advantage, allowing you to swarm in for CC action without taking the heavy fire.

A Human Wave might prove handy, although it's no guarantee as mentioned earlier, and the AFVs can blast apart enemy positions, crash through fortified buildings (get familiar with rules B23.41, 23.711 and 23.9221), wreck the German AFVs, crunch into the factories, stir things up by driving into enemy locations



Key:

IS-2m
SU-85
AFV movement
Infantry movement
Tunnel
White frame = HIP
= Fortified Location

(maybe forcing FPF CC Reaction Fire) and so on. As soon as you are able, send infantry up into those Level-2 positions (such as cK3) in order to deny rout to the enemy. Using this example, broken Germans in the aK2 factory could not rout toward any of the five hexes from aM5 to cI1 since that would entail routing closer to cK3. The value of a single infantry unit in a position such as this becomes much greater than it could be had it remained at ground level and continued the fight as just another pawn. If you are able to put enough of this kind of pressure on the enemy, and even fire at them to inflict Encirclement as well, your foresight will be well rewarded.

Russian Disadvantages: Time; Unknown Building Values

One of the appealing attributes of this scenario when it first appeared was its very scale. In the pre-*RB* era of *ASL* this was a very large scenario. That fact is less true today, as the size of scenarios has increased lately to such a point that we now look at "To The Last Man" merely as a good, "meaty" encounter with plenty of hard fighting from start to finish (no lengthy periods of maneuver or mad dashes for an exit, just lots of slugging) and only minimal physical obstacles on the battlefield for those accustomed to fighting on the *RB* or jungle boards. Still, it can take the Russian player a lot of time to work through those SS, and this problem is compounded by the fact that once a victory-point building is taken its actual point value (as assigned by the German) is not known until game end. This could lead to the Russian actually having possession of enough points to win but continuing to take additional risks to try for more buildings because he is unaware (at that point) of his superior situation. For that matter, the German moves last and could even take back a building or so, which is a very real threat and one a smart Russian player will try to prepare for, especially if there are still any HIP Germans out there.

Russian Attack:

I choose not to utilize a Human Wave most of the time. Perhaps it could be argued that the Human Wave and the Banzai are much closer to reality than a normal stately *ASL* MPh due to the loss of control of individual units and the concept of ordering a force to take some specific objective and then letting them go all at once, but we are here to play the game, not to fight the war. Consider for a moment the often levied accusation that this game should not be called "Squad Leader" so much as, perhaps, something like "Company Leader" (or at least "Platoon Leader"), due to the tight control each player exerts upon bodies of troops much larger than individual squads. Well, I see this as nothing more than errant thinking, for what real life Company Leader ever exercised the detailed control over individual squads in combat, far from his own sight, as we see in this game system? No one has yet come near convincing me that anyone higher ranked than the individual squad leader could command all these squads so precisely, and the game is generous enough to not limit the player to command of but a single squad, but instead has given him the joy of decision making as a commander for every single squad in his OB, no matter its scope. That is the secret. The player is the "acting" squad leader for every single squad in his command, even those without a separate counter denoting a particularly effective (or defective) individual. Of course this does result in somewhat incredible coordination between individual squads acting on their own to arrive at some desired result, but even this picture is more indicative of the kind of "hands-on" control our friendly squad leaders wield than of anything run from higher up the chain of command. This discussion could go on at great length, but will have to be continued elsewhere, for we've the Russian attack to consider.

The "big" question these Russian squad leaders must ask themselves is whether they should try for those two factories in the west, or bypass them and skirt around the defenses to grab the northern buildings. The circling move would probably allow the Germans to hold those two factories to the end of the game, thereby forcing the Russians to take all the other buildings (possibly minus one of the one-pointers); but the actual point values won't be known till game end so, in effect, all those one- and two-point buildings would have to be controlled to guarantee a win without the two factories. But if the weaker "1st-Line" contingent tries for these factories it could mean serious trouble for the Russian; the Elite troops fighting their way in from the east may not be able to offer much help by the time they reach the vicinity near game end. This Russian decision will determine the general flow of the play—and because I'd rather attack the factories from the west than from the aG2 building, I will usually go at the large factories right away. Furthermore, if I'm going for them, I will go in with everything at my command, which should be obvious from the illustration of my Russian set-up. The commander who opts to try for all the other buildings is not wrong to do so, for he might also reason that somewhere along the line he can slip into one or even both of these factories after the German has stripped their defenses and grab a win in that manner. But I am counting on my ability to confront the enemy and grind him down for eight turns, leaving him too weak to strike back on that last player turn. The quickest and surest way to accomplish that is to go straight at his line, where I know he will be. Lack of hard fighting will not be a problem.

Some of the special weapons will be great fun to use, odd thing for the Russians to have it seems. Three SU-85s with lowly HE7 and no MG armament may seem a bit useless, but my 9-2 commander is eager to direct these AFVs into position to make use of their s7 shells, a convenience sadly lacking in the Russian repertoire throughout most of the war. Once depleted, who cares much about a lousy 16 IFT attack; the SUs go into the line to bust fortified locations (read "Breach") or just to pave the way for the superior IS-2ms which follow to clean up. Another great weapon to open a path into these strongpoints is the DC. Here is a weapon which embodies brutal futility when it fails, for who among us has never expended the gaming lives of squads well in excess of those targeted attempting to detonate these 30 FP attacks? Often enough I have suffered more casualties trying to deliver the attack than the target hex contained and my attitude, shared by many, has become one of cautious speculation when contemplating actual use of the DC. After all, the effort might be exerted at a high cost to friendly forces and, upon the climactic DR, bring nothing in return. After hundreds of games, my opinion is that most DC never see use and against a fortified location an ineffective DC attack adds the insult that smarter use of the weapon would have at least created a Breach, leaving something to show for the energy spent. That may be especially true in a scenario such as "To The Last Man" in which attacks on the magnitude of 30FP abound; there is no need to rely on those DC for their FP as one might in a small scenario where a single 30FP attack can break the defense. Here, the DC will be even more useful against those fortified locations, and can be used in that manner (to create a breach), offering continued access for friendly troops in all subsequent turns.

But the weapon of glamour in this confrontation is the flamethrower. Able to cut through "+4" TEM at a single throw of the dice and sometimes available for use more than one time, an unmodified attack on the 24-column rightly strikes fear in the heart of all opposition. Even a long range 12 attack will often do the trick, and you can bet the German player will be keeping close watch on that FT counter. It has become common practice to operate the FT with a leader in situations where elite squads are scarce, but in this case it is the leaders who are more scarce than elite squads, so I would go with a squad to operate the weapon. Whoever the user happens to be will certainly attract fire; those Russian leaders are already target enough. Of course, what's really wanted is a Hero, since he could wrestle the FT into position and possibly still be able to fire it even after failing a MC (if lucky enough to be merely wounded). This is the kind of ability which makes the Japanese so tough with special weapons such as FT and DCs; they can take a hit or two and still deliver the attack. Like the rest of their western contemporaries though, the Russians must wait for a Hero to gain such super-human recklessness, but the likelihood of actually getting a Russian Hero does not warrant planning or hope. Therefore, the popularity of "making do" with a leader in place of a Hero. It's a good move to remember when the chips are down, but for hauling that "–1" DRM target around I'll use a squad this time.

My phone operator is in bB4 (2nd level) so he can scope-out the north boardedge. There are three prime areas he might bring the OBA down in: aL1/N1/O1/O2; aM4/M5/L4/L5; cN2/N3/O2. With the right circumstances, smoke in bD1 might even be useful, although it would probably entail an extra Black Card draw for want of a known enemy unit in the blast area, and so would be a rather rare choice. Smoke in aL1, however, is one reason I like this location for the observer in the first place. I believe this northern coverage is superior to other locations since this is where I am attacking. The only other unit above ground level is in bH2. He is

there just so I have someone looking over the wall into the factory area, can see over any roadblock on the road to a second roadblock along that route (what a coincidence, my Germans did put a second one there!) and to show a known unit to any broken enemy in the cH2 area. Who knows, this squad might even get a shot at a German unit trying to cross the row "H" road. At the very least, my man in bH2 (1st) puts some fire on the road leading off to the south in case any HIP Germans pop up and try to run around my flank.

I have twelve squads unencumbered with SW poised to move against the enemy defense. There will be no Prep Fire here after my SR attempt; the twelve squads move out singly to infest all locations they can reach without taking adjacent "–2" fire (or "–2" fire from the larger German stacks at all). No one enters Residual Fire. All the potential HIP spots will be cleared to pave the way for my LMG platoon to move to bB2 and the 9-1 led HMG and MMG platoon to move to bD2 via bC3. Both 8-0 leaders bide their time in place; the troops have been given the locations of these leaders so they know where to head during the Rout Phase. Finally the three IS-2m tanks move to bC2, bD2 and bE3, the one entering the factory benefitting from the fact that I now control the entrance location. The tank in C2 does risk a PSK shot from aK2, but knows this won't be a bloodless war in any case; this risk promises some fire from the 122mm MA on that location in return. If most of my force gets this far in Good Order, I may even be able to move the bC5 leader up to bB2—although against a different defense which might leave broken Russians in the street area this leader would stay put. If I don't already know it, my APh will prove bE1 is fortified and I'll know my first target. My HMG and MMGs can move within the factory without gaining CX status and so will be able to advance adjacent to bE1 without moving in a group with the 9-1. Coupled with infantry advancing into bF1 and bC1 as well, I am putting heavy pressure on this forward German outpost. To help support this move, the LMG platoon gets into bB1 to harass aM1, a location I will try to reach in order to bring encircling fire on bE1 next turn. Even though I expect much of my strength adjacent to the German 9-2 will break in the enemy Prep Fire Phase, I expect to have some return fire still...and although I may drop some of my HMG/MMG weapons adjacent to the enemy, it seems unlikely the SS boys will come out and grab these weapons in the face of three adjacent 122mm guns.

To the east—on the Elite front—the story ought to unfold in similar fashion. Seven unencumbered squads sweep forward to move through as many locations as possible and so clear the way for the men toting the SW. This will entail some rare Search attempts (rare for my style of play, at least) such as at dB3, dI4 and dL5. This is the best way to check the far side of the street, while any "holes" in the net left by failed Search rolls will be inspected by infantry physically moving through. My thirteen squads from dI2 through dM3 will push forward to occupy buildings dI5 and cE4 in order to reduce the defense of the factory and hex cE1. Meanwhile, five squads on the northern board-edge work into building dB4 to mount some threat from this angle. No risk taking will occur here; the objective is to maintain a presence so the Germans cannot forsake the area completely to bolster their line elsewhere. Two squads in dF2 move to dF4, both levels, to put a lock on cH3 once they have scouted the area for HIP units.

There aren't many places on this battlefield I can drive my AFVs where they won't be subjected to some kind of shot able to kill them, unless I were to hide and forfeit the advantage of actually using this armored might. The worst fear is the enemy's abundance of PF/PSK. On this rare occasion, I actually have five tanks which might be lucky enough to turn back a hit from these weapons, sure to draw a double-take or two whenever it occurs in competition. But counting on such luck on the TK Table is not as prudent as working for the best advantage on the TH Table. The way to gain all advantage on the TH Table is to drive my tanks into stone buildings and thus gain a +3 DRM. This, in fact, is what I will do in a few spots where the inconvenient prospect of rolling a Bog is lessened by the excellent field of fire from the potential Bog hex. I won't hesitate to drive a IS-2m into hex dH3 to help pressure the three eastern Factory hexes. I will position an SU-85 in dB3 (bypass, 5/4) in motion ready to plow into dB4 on Turn #2. Both of these stone building locations offer fine shooting for many turns to come should the AFVs bog down. Enemy return fire of SCW variety will be nearly pointless since juicier targets abound. I may fall through to the cellar 16% of the time (colored dr of "6"), but the other 84% of the time I will be putting unexpected pressure on the defense. The other AFVs look for best spots (like dG4 behind the roadblock to hit cG4, or in dI4 to hit cI4 and cK3) or work their way through to find bypass locations offering shots at such key hexes. Bogging I can tolerate, for it is surprising how rarely it actually develop into immobilization, and even while the Bog is in place the AFV will still be fighting. Some players never drive into buildings, but where else will the vehicles park on this cluttered battlefield? Likewise, later on they will be driving into enemy occupied buildings as well to thoroughly crunch the defenders, so what's the big deal?

Don't be fooled by the stacked might of this initial Russian set-up. When the Turn #1 MPh kicks off I won't be moving these as stacks, but as single squads one at a time. The only stacks which might move will be those large MG-armed troops, but even that will occur only after all the other squads have moved, and moved through potential HIP locations or else revealed any enemy by searching. At that point, the leaders will be happy to assist these two "killer" stacks forward with their overweight MGs. Even after these squads are up on the firing line, I will keep them dispersed as much as possible in order to avoid the enemy breaking a whole platoon with a single throw of the dice. Also, were I to keep three or four units in the same location and enemy fire forced me to roll the dice, that act would force additional chances of rolling the German SAN. At a SAN "6", this is an offer I cannot afford to make very often. Only in a few key spots will I be willing to stack units like this, such as with the –2 or –1 leaders directing the big MGs. Even this I will strive to keep to a minimum.

As always, there are certainly other options available to the Russians in this encounter. I would not, for example, scorn any Russian player who started that heavy MG platoon with the "–2" fire direction in a spot such as dC2 (2nd), for from here this fire group could hit all the German frontline positions in this set-up. Even against a concealed stack in a fortified stone building, this amounts to a 12(+2) attack, and once concealment is blown it's a 30(+2). The ROF potential is very fine as well, and you can expect the Germans to start "ducking" fire from this position early. In fact, one reason I like to move this large firepower group forward immediately is just because it is so domineering on the second level of dC2. The German will avoid offering targets, and may even set-up to try to hit the position with his HIP 75mm Guns. Maybe not a lot to fear, but as the Russian I do like the –2 leader bringing these troops forward right away, for there he can direct the assault right onto the principle enemy positions rather than be content shooting at whatever the enemy were willing to offer up to the dC2 firebase.

Conclusion:

An excellent three-player game (and not bad for four as well), this is a true *ASL* proving-ground for city fighting of the non-*RB* variety. Here is the desperation of the German Army in 1945 as well as the unstoppable forward grind of the late war Soviet Army. Parity in quality and equipment and overwhelming numbers, even versus these SS troops, give a realistic feel of how far the Russian military had come since 1941. ☆

Advanced Squad Leader

AREA TOP 10 ASL

Rank	Name	Rating
1.	Michael McGrath	2184HI
2.	Gary Fortenberry	2104ILE
3.	Perry Cocke	2076IJ
4.	Bill Conner	2014GH
5.	Ronald Berger	1996HKH
6.	Steven Pleva	1988DGG
7.	Bruce Rinehart	1929HG
8.	Marc Hanna	1892DGH
9.	Phillip Petry	1832NH
10.	Scott Orane	1825EIF

A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK!



By Guy Chaney

Let me start by saying that I like this month's ASL scenario G19 very much. It's fun to play, and I think it's balanced. I would play either side with no trepidation. I mention this as there has been talk among some players that A Tough Nut To Crack (TNC) favors the British. I disagree, but I will say that the Japanese player must play a smart game, taking advantage of all of his tricks and unique capabilities to win. A poor Japanese set up or an overly cautious defending player could easily spell doom for the Emperor's charges. The Japanese player must know when to pick his spots for counterattacks or tank killing ambushes. The Japanese player in TNC must use his troops to their fullest, including their set up bonuses (HIP, hidden fortifications, bunkers, etc.). This scenario is rated as difficult for that reason. The defender must be a seasoned player who is able to take advantage of the Japanese capabilities.

Japanese Attack

The Japanese player must keep the Victory Conditions in mind while contriving his set up. The British player must travel quite a ways to exit his squads, and against some very determined resistance at that. Realizing this fact, the Brits will probably try to capture some buildings and also some pillboxes to reduce the number of squads they will have to exit. The Japanese player should not make the British task easier by placing his pillboxes in forward or unsupported positions where they will be overrun and taken out with relative ease. Establish a strong defensive position around the victory point buildings. Connect your pillboxes with the buildings using the trenches. A very formidable ring of interlocked +3 defensive positions can be established here. The tough Japanese defenders can wait in this fortress for the British assault to throw itself upon your weapons. The Japanese player will also want to establish a strong line on board 37 to prevent an easy British exit in this area. Board 37 can probably be defended by a lighter force than board 35, at least initially. The terrain is such that many of your defenders should have ample time to react to any strong British move to exit board 37 en masse. By setting up the bulk of your forces far back from the British starting line, you preserve your force, deny the British easy victory points for taking out outlying pillboxes, and force the British to deal with formidable opposition to garner those building victory points. A few of your defenders, along with some dummies, can man forward positions to slow the British advance. HIP units are especially useful in this role as their hidden status protects them from being mass assaulted. Remember that stealthy defenders in kunai, jungle, or bamboo are not revealed solely by enemy movement through their location. This fact and the +2 drm for searching vs. Japanese defenders in this terrain, can enable HIP units to wait patiently to spring their traps. After the British assault has passed the HIP forward defenders, the Japanese player can bring these units out into the British rear. This will greatly hinder British rout paths, enable encircling fire on some British stacks, and threaten to reclaim any huts the British may have taken on their way forward.

The Japanese can rely on the pillboxes, the stone buildings, and the cluttered terrain to shield them from the British fire attacks. Their trenches will enable safe movement between defensive positions. A reminder here that a unit moving through a trench does not lose concealment due to the enemy observing his move and is also not subject to the FFNAM DRM for First Fire attacks while moving IN the trench. These can be important points in this scenario. The biggest worry for the Japanese are those six Stuart tanks. If not for the Stuarts, the Japanese would have no trouble dominating the scenario. The British infantry alone would have no chance of obtaining the victory conditions. The Japanese do not have many options available to deal with the Stuarts. They will have to be patient and wait for their chance to nail these armored monsters. The Stuarts are going to cause the Japanese some grief, but you just may be able to take a couple of them out due to the nature of the British attack. The British will have to use the Stuarts to break your line at some point, maybe repeatedly, during the scenario. Your defenders, and their cover, are just too tough for an infantry assault to push them out alone. When the Stuarts are close to point blank range to deal with your squads, make your moves to try for a kill. Your options include Reaction fire (no PAATCs are required for the Japanese), ATR rear and deliberate immobilization shots, DC and tank hunter heroes, and infantry CC assaults after some preliminary SMOKE from the Japanese light mortars.

You will certainly want to take your shots as they present themselves. Do not send any units on suicide runs, but be aware that you can definitely take out these tanks under the right circumstances. The terrain may aid your cause by bogging a Stuart or two at critical moments. This is especially possible for any Stuarts overrunning your trench complexes. Eliminating the Stuarts gains the Japanese victory points while also significantly reducing the British hitting power.

British Attack

This British force is very powerful and well equipped. As the British player you have a large number of squads (many of which are elite), excellent leadership, good machine-gun firepower, OBA support, and six Stuart tanks unopposed by enemy armor or Anti-Tank guns. The PTO terrain also gives your troops cover as they move forward to close with the enemy. It is good that you have all this help, as your troops have a long way to travel and some tough Victory conditions to fulfill. It is unrealistic to expect to exit 12 squads against a competent Japanese defender. Therefore your British are going to have to take some buildings and pillboxes to make up the difference. Ten turns is a long time for a scenario, but in this case the British player may still find himself pressed for time. The attack must be kept moving along swiftly, especially at the beginning of the scenario. It's going to take time to kick the Japanese out of the stone buildings and pillboxes. Hustle your army forward to get into attack position. Don't let the forward Japanese defenders slow you up too much. The British have enough squads, tanks, and Smoke that they should be able to blow by any isolated pockets of Japanese. Overwhelm any light forward resistance and take their pillboxes if they were generous enough to place them so far forward. Just be sure to be careful when moving your leader assisted stacks. There are HIP Japs out there waiting to bag your 9-2. Satisfy yourself that your intended movement routes are safe before moving those big stacks. Move units through the Orchard hexes to check for Japanese and search some of the bamboo and kunai if you like. Use the Stuarts for armored assault and their smoke dispensers for cover. Your squads also have a smoke grenade ability if you need it. The 80mm OBA and the light mortars that can lay down quite an extensive Smoke screen give the light breeze in the scenario. The OBA may be

(Continued on pg. 35)

SCENARIO BRIEFING...
(Continued from pg. 30)

best suited for Smoke missions given the impressive TEM the Japanese defenders enjoy versus HE OBA attacks.

The Stuarts are the key to your attack. To be effective they will have to be used in an aggressive manner. They are not the best gun platforms, but being AFVs they can ruin the Japanese infantry's day by attempting to run over their positions. Use the Stuarts to move into the enemy's hex thereby preventing that unit from firing on your advancing infantry. Motion status can be used to reduce the chance that CC or Reaction fire will dispatch the tank. If moving into the enemy's hex seems too dangerous (they may have a –1 leader, ATRs, or DCs with them), stop at one or two hex range and blast them for a few fire phases. This is often the best approach. I like to be as aggressive with my armor as anyone, but in this scenario about the only way the Japanese can take out your Stuarts is through CC of some sort. You may not want to oblige them by driving into their hex. Your own MG and 37mm shots may just knock the position out, especially if multiple Stuarts are firing on the same hex. If the Japanese are shrugging off everything you throw at them, the Stuarts may well leave to go ahead and run in on them. This will force the issue and either knock out the position or lose you a Stuart. Keep an eye on your timetable when making these sorts of decisions. Don't rush things, but don't let a machine-gun nest stop you cold for two or three turns either. The Stuarts' 37mm guns are fairly effective against the pillboxes as they do not pay the pillbox defense DRM on the To Hit roll when firing their AP ammo. Critical hits, resolved as a 4 even attack, may start to pour in rapidly. If your Stuarts can get behind the Japanese, they should be able to start encircling the enemy's positions (at least those not in pillboxes). Remember that being encircled does not lower a Japanese unit's morale level, but it will adversely affect their fire and movement. Try not to leave the Stuarts hanging out too far though or the Japanese may rush them to take them out with CC. A good combined arms attack, with the tanks roughing up the really stubborn pockets of resistance, is what is needed.

Well, that is a brief summary on A Tough Nut to Crack. I will now try to relate what happened in our game as best as I can remember.

A friend of mine played the Japanese and I had the British. His set up looked very heavily stacked around the board 35 buildings. Only a few defenders were arrayed in the forward area, mostly around the board 35 bamboo clump, and in the board 37 jungle. I lined the British up across board 35 with four or five squads and a leader starting near the board division and who were planning on heading east into the board 37 jungle on turn one. On turns one and two I moved forward through the orchard and the jungle near the board division. The tanks led the way. Some of the Stuarts would use armored assault to aid the infantry's advance while others raced around behind the enemy to encircle them and cut their retreat. All of the Stuarts would get as close as possible to the enemy positions to maximize their effectiveness. I chose not to try for any 50 mm mortar smoke or OBA as there weren't many targets around and I wanted to save both for the assault on the buildings and pillboxes. The Japanese around the bamboo were revealed to be dummies while those in the jungle were real. I lost a few half squads in CC in that area but generally just kept moving past the light enemy resistance. There were not any pillboxes in the forward areas. I tried to make large jumps with my infantry each turn. I was nervous when moving the 9-2. I was afraid of two Jap heavy machine-guns catching him on the move and cutting him down. I tried to keep him behind several hindrances while moving. No killer stacks materialized so my boys kept pushing forward.

At this point I decided I would attack up the board division and try to keep my options open. I could swing left into the main buildings or drive ahead on board 37 to exit the map in force. The kunai fields in this area really slow down your infantry, especially those moving without the benefit of a leader. Moving through the orchard is much faster, but I wanted my friend to worry about my exiting board 37. I didn't want to just throw myself at the strong point of his defense. As I moved up, I was able to kill a Japanese squad or two which did not have enough support from their friends. My tanks were causing trouble and providing the advance with cover. I did have to take several bog checks as I kept forgetting that driving next to swamp entails a bog DR. Luckily I was passing the rolls. My friend shifted some Japanese over to cut me off, as he had trenches running across the board division from the buildings. There was also a pillbox or two in the front of the jungle near the south edge of board 37. Most of my squads were in the area of the board division as we approached the main line of resistance. Some had moved forward on each board. I called in one OBA Smoke mission on the buildings to screen my movement. As my 8-0 radio observer moved forward after calling in his mission, a hidden Jap crew with a DC appeared in the bamboo clump I had avoided and chucked the DC at my leader. The resulting explosion KIAed the 8-0 and turned the radio into a twisted hunk of scrap. The crew, thanks to being Japanese, was merely flipped over after failing a high MC. No more arty for me. Some of the other Japanese I had left behind reclaimed a hut from my rear guard with the help of a DC hero. Boom! I just couldn't nail the guy before he put the explosives on my poor squad. My mortar crews and a trailing 4-5-8 squad with a DC became involved in a neat little sideshow struggle with these Japanese stragglers. I exacted a measure of revenge for my 8-0 leader by blowing up the Jap crew that killed him.

The main Japanese resistance was now in a trench line across the board division. The 10-1 was here along with both HMGs, an ATR, two mortars, and several manning crews and squads. I moved my 9-2 into position with the .50 cal and over a bit the 9-1 was directing my MMGs. Several Stuarts were also sighting in on this trench line. The Japanese mortar tried to Smoke us up but failed to get any Smoke. The other mortar was out of action as its manning half squad was broken. The British suffered a few broken MMC in the area, but return fire routed the HMG crews and wounded the 10-1. The whole trench may have been cleared but the .50 cal decided to break down and stay out of action for a few turns. The Japanese were threatening to reinforce the trench and recrew the HMGs. This is where the Stuarts stepped up. Two Stuarts drove through the Japanese line, each passing multiple bog checks. They surrounded some broken Japanese infantry and caused their elimination for failure to rout. The Stuarts were key in taking out the trench line. Even with their help it took several turns and was quite a struggle.

The delay was costly as I did not have enough squads in position to gain a win through exit alone. I was going to have to take some of the building hexes. I was running short on time. My army was still in decent shape, especially my infantry. Two Stuarts were eventually killed through Reaction fire and a normal CC attack. Of the remaining four, one was Recalled by a Sniper, and another had a broken gun. The Japanese were hurting, but still had fair strength in and around the victory buildings. The battle on board 37 turned into a stalemate as neither of us had enough strength left there to work into an advantage. My tanks couldn't penetrate the jungle far enough to get at the last Japanese defenders there and I didn't have enough squads in the area to simply walk over the Japanese. I was able to take a few building hexes, a pillbox on board 35 and another on board 37, and exit a few squads, but it was not enough in the end. The loss of the Stuarts subtracted from my total which was short of the required twelve anyway. Given a few more turns I would have accomplished the objective. In retrospect, my roundabout approach to the victory buildings cost me. I thought I might be able to exit enough squads to win, but realized too late this was not possible. I then went for some buildings, but ran out of time. Next time I would dive straight in for the buildings with a large portion of my force and the tanks in the lead. This is the best option for the British, those buildings represent a lot of points. Even if the Japanese defense is centered here, as my friend's was, the British have the power to push the attack home. Especially if the Stuarts are used well and enjoy a little luck in surviving. A smaller flanking force can be used on board 37 to threaten an exit and keep the Japanese spread out a bit.

We enjoyed the scenario and look forward to trying it again. With the vast set up possibilities for the Japanese, the scenario has a high replay value. I have heard some players bemoan the length of A Tough Nut To Crack. It took us six hours to play all ten turns (actually 9 1/2). This is not outrageous by any means. I personally prefer scenarios with some "meat" to them. Tiny scenarios do not hold much interest for me. I don't consider six hours overly long for an *ASL* match. If this one is taking you longer than that, you may want to consider speeding your play up a bit. *ASL* is more interesting for both players if it is kept moving along at a good clip. Our six hour play time did not include set up as my friend had set up the defense beforehand. Forty-five minutes would be a reasonable amount of time to set up the Japanese in this one. Thirty minutes would be quick but probably attainable in a repeat playing. However long it takes to play, this scenario is worth the time and comes highly recommended.

☆

OIL WARS

The Campaigns In Iraq and Iran

(Reference Notes to ASL)

By David Meyler

Political stability in the Middle East had never been in Britain's "imperial" interest. Arab nationalism had been a useful tool to use against the Ottoman Turks in WWI, but their hopes of a unified state afterward were to be disappointed. Instead, after the Great War the British and French ensured the region would be left fragmented. Only in Saudi Arabia was a measure of stable independence won, and this only after a long military struggle. In 1939, France controlled Syria, while British influence was maintained by treaty over Egypt, Palestine, Iraq and a series of Persian Gulf emirates. The region, of historic strategic importance in guarding the flank of British India, gained further significance with the opening of the Suez Canal and the growing dependence on petroleum. By 1940, Iran and Iraq were the world's biggest producers, that year alone pumping 8.6 million and 2.5 million tons of crude respectively.

In the crisis of late 1940 and early 1941, with Nazi Germany at the height of its success, the colonial fragmentation of the Middle East suddenly seemed a shortsighted blunder. Syria, under Vichy French administration, was now in the Axis camp (even if it was uncertain how far the French authorities there would cooperate with German dictates). Meanwhile, Arab nationalism, once focused against the Turks, was now directed at the British "oppressors". Iraq was a "hotbed of anti-British sentiment"; and if Iraq went over to the Germans, it was deemed quite likely to be followed by neutral Iran to the east. In early April, Churchill concluded that the Middle East was slipping under the "Nazi spell" and that only prompt British military intervention could prevent serious setbacks for the Allied cause. He proceeded to bombard General Archibald Wavell, Britain's Commander in Chief of the region, with cables calling for action. Wavell, facing the onrushing triumphant *Afrika Korps* to the west, demurred and delayed.

The difficulty in Iraq was a legacy of World War I. Resentful Iraq had been directly administered by the British under a League of Nations mandate until 1932. It was then made into a nominally independent kingdom, but ruled by a regent wholly dependent on British support. In preparation for the British withdrawal, an Anglo-Iraqi treaty was signed in 1930; by its terms, Britain retained two bases in the country, one at Basra and one at Habbaniya, as well as the right to transport troops across Iraqi territory. Meanwhile, a nationalist movement had begun to crystallize around the new Iraqi army. This "pan-Arabism" was initially focused simply against British policy in Palestine, which (officially at least) supported extensive Jewish settlement there, and against the continuing French occupation of Syria. But the British managed to make it much more.

In late 1940, Rashid Ali el-Gailani became the prime minister of Iraq through popular mandate. He had served expertly as premier in the early 1930s, and while an acknowledged supporter of pan-Arab nationalism he was not at this time expressly anti-British. In the rapidly deteriorating military situation of late 1940, however, London was not comfortable with this new premier, and put pressure on the current regent, Emir Abd al-Ilah, to dissolve the elected government and appoint a new cabinet and prime minister more to London's liking. After a round of political maneuvering, Rashid Ali was finally removed on 30 January 1941; but the Iraqi army, under the growing influence of the Golden Square nationalist movement, refused to accept what it saw as unwarranted British interference in internal affairs. What had started as an Anglo-Arab dispute over policy had now grown into a direct ideological confrontation between Iraq and Britain. Still, neither side was quick to provoke the other. The situation simmered for a month. Then, on 1 April, the Iraqi army staged a bloodless coup bringing Rashid Ali back to power, while the regent fled to Amman, the capital of his pro-British uncle, the Emir Abdullah of Trans-Jordan. Churchill's worse fears seemed to be coming true when Rashid Ali proclaimed a "government of national defense".

The Golden Square had indeed been in contact with the Axis for possible support against Britain, but not much had come of their tentative probes. Italy, itself a nearby colonial power, was not trusted by the Iraqis. Among the German foreign service and military establishment, Arab nationalism held low priority. (Nazi philosophy placed Arabs rather near the bottom of the racial list.) The immediate attention of the German policy-makers was focused on the Balkans and Crete, with long-term planning proceeding for the invasion of Russia. Only Ribbentrop backed armed intervention in the Middle East, but there was little advantage seen in investing any kind of significant force. Ernst Woermann of the German foreign office summed the situation up when he wrote, "...open resistance by Iraq against England could have only a brief success." The Arab "card", if it was to be used at all to German advantage, would only be played after the defeat of the Soviet Union.

But the bogey of an Axis conquest of the Middle East, and with that the threat to India, seemed real enough to the beleaguered British in early 1941—especially with Rommel's *Afrika Korps* crashing forward towards Egypt. Even the tentative contacts between the Golden Square and Berlin were enough to make the British determined to eliminate Rashid Ali. Still, there was not an immediate break. General Wavell even suggested reaching an accommodation with Rashid Ali, as all his military resources were tied down in North Africa. Any such suggestion was emphatically turned down. British colonial policy was founded on meeting any "rebellion" with force, based on the view that compromise would be seen as weakness. When the new British ambassador to Iraq, Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, recommended that the British garrisons at Basra and Habbaniya be reinforced, Churchill sent an urgent appeal to General Claude Auchinleck, Commander in Chief in India, since Wavell still claimed to lack the men to spare for such. Auchinleck responded by diverting Indian units bound for Malaya and hurrying them to Iraq by sea.

Everyone knew, Britain and Iraqi alike, that once these troops landed in the country they would stay there. Still, Rashid Ali complied with the terms of the Anglo-Iraq treaty and gave his approval for the landing. He hoped that his gesture would persuade the antagonistic British to recognize his government. On 17 and 18 April, an infantry brigade of the 10th Indian Division and some independent artillery batteries, about 3,000 men in all, disembarked at Basra. At the same time, some 400 troops drawn from the King's Own Royal Regiment were airlifted from India to Habbaniya. When British willingness to deal with the new prime minister was still not forthcoming, Ali was pressured by his military into informing the ambassador from the United Kingdom that no further British forces could land in Iraq until those already in the country had passed through. Acting on orders from Churchill, on the 28th Cornwallis smugly informed Ali that 2,000 more troops would soon be landed at Basra. In reaction, Rashid Ali responded in no uncertain terms that these would not be allowed to enter until the first contingent had left Iraqi soil. Cornwallis, now alarmed at Iraqi determination, ordered the evacuation of British dependents from the country upon the conclusion of the meeting. (About 230 British nationals managed to reach Habbaniya the next day; another 500 or so were trapped in Baghdad and took refuge in the American and British legations, where they would remain for a month.)

At dawn on 30 April, Iraqi units established Anti-Aircraft and artillery positions on 200-foot high plateau a half-mile south of the Habbaniya base. By evening the forces facing the British there had grown to 9,000, and Iraqi armored cars took up positions no more than 500 yards from the base. Habbaniya was under siege. Meanwhile, other Iraqi formations were cutting the roads around Basra. Although the landing of the additional British troops there was unopposed and no shots were fired, Basra too was isolated. The "Iraqi Revolt" had begun.

The Iraqi army was neither fully equipped nor trained, and many of its officers were not keen on an open confrontation with the British Empire, even in its current position of weakness. Yet the British government, beset by endless disaster, had fully expected the Iraqis to cave in to their demands and had not anticipated a new war. While his High Command argued about what to do, Air Vice-Marshal H.G. Smart struck a blow on his own. A night raid on 5 May by Assyrian levies (who had held a long-time enmity against the Arabs), was followed up by a full-scale assault by the King's Own Royal Regiment. The Iraqis had already been demoralized by repeated air raids (the small Iraqi air force having been rapidly suppressed) and withdrew to a major crossing on the Euphrates River at Falluja.

Meanwhile, the Indian troops at Basra had been ordered to break out and march the 350 miles to Habbaniya, raise the siege there, and then push on to attack Baghdad. But the spring flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates made that impossible. So the British Chiefs of Staff requisitioned manpower from their reluctant commander in Cairo. On 5 May, Wavell received a message from London which stiffly ordered him to send a relief force from the Palestine garrison across 470 miles of desert to Habbaniya; afterward it would march on Baghdad. This mechanized group from Palestine, dubbed "Habforce", duly set out. It was based around elements of the recently mechanized 4th Cavalry Brigade and a lorry-borne infantry battalion of the Essex Regiment, detachments of field artillery, anti-tank guns and engineers, the 2nd RAF armored car squadron, and some 350 Bedouins (in Ford trucks) from John Glubb's Arab Legion. (It is noteworthy that three squadrons of the mechanized Trans-Jordan Frontier Force refused to cross into Iraq to fight fellow Muslims.)

Not aware that the siege had been lifted, on 13 May the British forces crossed the border and raced east along the Iraq Petroleum Company's pipeline. Ranging far ahead of the main column, the Arab Legion scouted enemy forces and even took Rutbah, a massive stone fort where an Iraqi police garrison blocked the road 200 miles west of Habbaniya. Habforce avoided a brigade-sized Iraqi garrison at Ramadi, swinging around the southern shore of Lake Habbaniya, and eventually joined up with the KORR in front of Falluja on 19 May 19.

Here a three-pronged assault was planned. The main attack would be made over flooded terrain from the southwest by a company of Assyrian levies, supported by a battery of 25-pounders and Madrassi sappers. A flanking move from the north was to be conducted by the RAF armored cars from Habbaniya, a company of levies and a detachment of the 2/4 Gurkha Rifles, all motorized, after crossing the Euphrates farther upstream. Finally, a company of the KORR was flown in behind the town to cut the road to Baghdad and block any Iraqi reinforcements. (An Iraqi support

column was indeed on the way, but was dispersed by the RAF before it reached Falluja.) The Iraqi trenches covering the main bridge into Falluja were bombed and repeatedly strafed, and the Assyrians secured both the bridge and town in little more than 30 minutes.

But on 22 May, the Iraqis made a series of determined counter-attacks led by the light tanks of their mechanized brigade. The British line was driven in on the northeast and a company of the KORR was forced to fall back into nearby houses for shelter. Ironically, this was a replica of the training maneuvers carried out by the Iraqi army under British supervision the year before! As the Iraqis pushed through the streets, two of their tanks were destroyed, and the remaining ones pulled back. The next day, an even stronger Iraqi attack was made from the southeast. It again pushed the British back into the town before a counter-attack drove the Iraqis back.

The most sinister aspect of the fighting at Falluja was the strafing of the British forces, for it was carried out by twin-engined Me-110s; in spite of their Iraqi insignia, they were flown by Luftwaffe pilots. The very development that Churchill feared had come to pass: Hitler had belatedly decided to endorse Iraq's new government, and the Vichy forces in Syria had obligingly put their airfields and facilities at the Germans' disposal. The neighboring French were also shipping trainloads of munitions into northern Iraq from Aleppo. By the second week of April, 28 German planes had staged from Syria to Mosul, and three days after their arrival shot down a hapless RAF Audax over Habbaniya and bombed the field there. Churchill stepped up his pressure on Wavell to mount an immediate invasion of Syria. The war was escalating rapidly.

Falluja had showed that the Iraqi Army could fight, but it was to be its last major effort. The Iraqis fell all the way back to Baghdad itself, establishing a main line 18 kilometers west of the capital at Abu Ghuraib on the Washash Canal. The forward terrain was flooded and the main canal bridge covered by an anti-tank ditch. The British advance slowed and then stalled as it approached the natural barrier. A day-long attack on 30 May gained only 3200 meters of boggy fields, and the lead elements still remained more than a kilometer from the Washash bridge. Despite the victory at Falluja, things were not going well for the British. The brigades landed at Basra remained tied down there, while the Iraqis still had strong units at Ramadi and Kirkuk. As well, a British supply column had been ambushed and destroyed by an Iraqi force near the Palestine frontier, underlining the tenuous supply lines on which the British depended. Habforce was in a precarious position.

But in Baghdad itself, Iraqi morale was at its lowest ebb. Promises from the senior officers that major German help would be arriving were now known to be false, and after Falluja morale among the troops plummeted. This was further exacerbated by some very effective British propaganda, spread through a captured telephone exchange. Rumors that Baghdad was threatened by an entire armored division circulated among the populace. On the night of the 30th, after RAF bombers had attacked an Iraqi barracks west of the city, Brigadier Joseph Kingstone was awakened with the news that the Iraqis wished to discuss terms of armistice. On 31 May Rashid Ali was informed that the British had cut the road to Kirkuk (actually, only a detachment of the Arab Legion had set up a temporary roadblock) and he fled his capital for the haven of neutral Iran. On 1 June an armistice was arranged, and the regent restored. The "revolt" was over.

June was spent by the British in invading and occupying the Vichy French colony of Syria. But even as this hard-fought campaign ended in victory when Damascus was taken on 21 June, the German invasion of Russia the next day suddenly overturned the entire strategic balance of the war. Now neutral Iran found itself an unwelcome focal point, the only direct land-link between the British and Soviets. As the German panzers sliced deep into Russia, this link—not to mention the vital Iranian oil fields—appeared to grow increasingly vulnerable in Churchill's view.

Iran could be called the "China of the West"; an ancient civilization and one-time great power, the Persian empire by 1850 had sunk into semi-colonial status, effectively divided between the Russian and British spheres. The country was occupied by Turkey during World War I, but in 1921 Reza Pahlavi, a colonel in the Persian Cossack division, overthrew the effete Turkish Qajar dynasty and crowned himself *shah*. Thereafter, he followed a policy of cautious neutrality towards Soviet Russia, while limiting British influence without open hostility. In 1927 he secured through negotiation with the two the removal of the "capitulations", the special status enjoyed by Europeans in the laws of his country. He also restored the ancient imperial name of "Iran" in place of Persia. During the 1920s and '30s, the attention of the Iranian army was focused inward, suppressing the numerous semi-autonomous hill tribes and other internal threats to the Shah. Foreign policy attempted to eliminate, or at least balance, outside influence and interference.

The British and Soviet intervention in Iran was based on the "potential threat" posed by the presence of German workers and technicians (numbers are variously estimated from 800 to 3,000, the latter including the families). But it was only a transparent excuse for what amounted to an open invasion and military occupation of a neutral sovereign state. The Allied justification, that they were saving the Iranians from German intrigues has a disappointingly similar tone as German declarations in 1940 that they were "saving" Belgium and the Netherlands from Allied invasion. Pahlavi, though a patriot and extreme nationalist, had early determined that Iran would pursue a policy of scrupulous neutrality. His ports and lands were open to all who followed proper procedure, Iranian oil was sold to any who could pay and transport it, and the Shah's government maintained proper strictly proper relations with all nations, while insuring that none of the country's citizens did otherwise. There was virtually no support for Nazi Germany among either the politicians or the military. All were far more concerned with overseeing Reza's effort to reform and modernize his nation.

But this seems to have made little difference to Churchill, who was convinced that the Germans were secretly building up a fifth column of Iranian sympathizers. The British government, within days of the German attack on Soviet Russia, broached the subject of Iran to the Russians. A joint plan of action was worked out in late July. On 17 August, a British-Russian ultimatum was handed to Reza Shah Pahlavi, demanding that all Germans be expelled from Iran immediately. In reply, the Shah offered to reduce the number of German nationals in Iran, but insisted on retaining those technicians and communications experts who were involved in oil production. Churchill declared the response "an unsatisfactory reply", and ordered the joint invasion to begin. On 25 August, Allied forces moved into Iranian territory without a declaration of war.

The Soviet drive, along both sides of the Caspian Sea, were virtually unopposed. While the slaughter of Polish officers after 1939 by the Soviets was not to be confirmed until later, the Iranian officers must have heard reliable rumors of it and the Russian excesses in the Baltic republics, as they were determined not to end up as Soviet captives. Most of the Iranian units in the north withdrew *en masse*. The 40,000 Soviet troops, in three mechanized columns, met only sporadic resistance (much of this, ironically, from the tribesmen in the hills that Reza Pahlavi had sought to bring under control). Commencing with attacks on the 25th at Tabriz, Rasht and Qazvin, which caused great loss of civilian life, the Red Air Force bombed the capital of Tehran almost daily.

In the south, the British incursions saw rather more opposition. The 19,000 British troops, mostly Indian, had two objectives: the **oil fields** at **Abadan on the Persian Gulf**, and those farther north at **Nafti-Shah.** After being ferried from Basra, multiple landings were made around Abadan by the 24th Indian Brigade. Two Iranian gunboats were quickly sunk by British warships with a heavy loss of life. The landings of the 2/6 Rajputanas on the quays of Abadan were delayed by civilian shipping docked there, and the Indians were then held up at the dock area for most of the day with the constant fear that the refineries would be blown sky high by a chance shell. Farther upstream, the 1st Kumoani Rifles attacked via the European quarter against stiff resistance. It was not until 2,000 hours that the Kumoanis finally linked up with the Rajputanas, securing the refineries intact. A simultaneous assault on the naval barracks at nearby Khorramshahr was undertaken by a company of the Baluchi Regiment, supported by naval fire of the *HMS Falmouth* and *HMAS Yarra*. A land assault by elements of the 18th Indian Brigade took the town and fort that night, supported by units from the 24th Indian Brigade which had been charged with securing their flank. The 24th Indian Brigade itself had made a long looping drive across the desert, overcoming the fort at Qasr Shaikh which anchored the Iranian defenses, to drive on Khorramshahr from the north. That same night Australian and Baluchi contingents seized a number of Axis merchant ships in an "act of modern piracy".

Meanwhile, the 10th Indian Division thrust across the border near Khanaqin (Iraq) and secured the Nafti-Shah oil fields before the surprised Iranians could react. General W. J. Slim, recalled from Syria to take overall command of the operation, then began a long drive toward Tehran. The Iranians had a strong force at the Pa-i-Tak pass, and halted the Indians with heavy machinegun and artillery fire. The Warwickshire Yeomanry made a flanking drive to the south, striking the main road behind the Iranians and seizing the town of Gilan around noon. No doubt alarmed that their escape route was in danger, and faced with ammunition shortages and RAF bombardments, the Iranians withdrew during the night, leaving the pass undefended.

With Kermanshah, Slim's next objective in sight, on 27 August the lead regiment of the 9th Armoured Brigade, the Warwickshire Yeomanry, was ambushed at Zabiri ridge. Here the British advance was again halted. The village at Zabiri was cleared, but accurate fire by Iranian heavy guns combined with long-range machinegun fire halted the British when they tried to move up the highway from it. The modern 155mm Iranian guns outranged the old British field pieces, and a frontal assault was planned by Slim's staff for 28 August to clear the hills above the town. For their part, the Iranians had elements of two infantry divisions in place and were planning a counterthrust, to be begun by a sabre charge by a full cavalry brigade. But the test of strength never came. At 0830 hours on the 28th, General Muqadam, commander of the Iranian forces, received the Shah's orders to cease resistance and arrange a truce as part of the general cease-fire.

Whether by policy or simple indecision is not clear, but the Shah had never ordered full mobilization. In fact, the frontier units received no direction from Tehran, and resistance was left up to the local commanders on the scene. Some 30,000 reserves were called up during the week between the ultimatum and the invasion, but were not sent to the active units. Reza Shah was apparently still trying to hold a middle road, putting up only enough resistance to satisfy the Germans should they win the war, but without resorting to a full conflict that would devastate his country.

The British, even as they began a "victory march" to Teheran (entered on 17 September), were desperate to find a replacement for Reza. But their best candidate, the young heir of the deposed Qajars, could not speak a word of Farsi. Worse, such a move would be widely resented by the Iranians, who hated the Turk-

ish-descended house. Shah Pahlavi, however, solved their dilemma for them by abdicating in favor of his 22-year-old son (Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, who ruled until deposed by the 1979 revolution) and a new prime minister who agreed to cooperate fully with the Allies. The elder shah went into exile on the island of Mauritius. The British advance proceeded without hindrance, meeting the Russians at Qazvin on August 31.

A strong garrison of three to four Indian divisions was left in Iran for the duration of the war. Ironically, the German threat to the region had completely evaporated by the end of 1942, when the Indian forces could have been of considerably more use in North Africa or Burma. Long years of hindsight, with numerous wars and continuing regional instability, also asks the question if Allied long-term interests might have been better served by less heavy-handed tactics grounded in the out-dated colonial policies. But there is no denying that the British got what they had wanted from the campaign: control of both the land-link to the Soviet Union and of the rich oil fields.

The Forces of the Oil Wars

The whole Iraqi Army was a wholly British creation. It comprised four infantry divisions with a mechanized brigade, in total about 50,000 men. The 1st Division, stationed at Baghdad, had two first-line infantry brigades, a field artillery brigade, a mountain artillery brigade and a cavalry squadron. The 2nd and 3rd divisions each had three infantry brigades, two field artillery brigades, one mountain artillery brigade and a cavalry squadron. The 2nd Division was based at Kirkuk, while the 3rd was based at Baghdad. The 4th Division, at Diwaniya and Basra, had one first-line and two second-line infantry brigades, with one mountain artillery battery attached. The mechanized brigade comprised two mechanized infantry battalions, one mechanized machinegun company, a light tank company, an armored car company and one mechanized artillery brigade. It was the 1st and 3rd Divisions with the mechanized brigade that bore the brunt of the fighting in May 1941.

A first-line Iraqi infantry brigade had a brigade HQ (with two Lewis MG, five officers and 20 men) and three battalions. A battalion comprised an HQ and four rifle companies (each with three rifle platoons and one LMG section). The normal complement of two Bren guns per section was being increased to three even as the war began. A second-line battalion had three rifle companies, each with three platoons; instead of a support company there was one MG platoon with four Vickers and one AAMG section. Organization and equipment was otherwise identical to standard British patterns (albeit older equipment). The main role of the Iraqi army was to provide internal security. During the period of their mandate, the British had not wanted to build a force that could pose a threat to neighboring colonies. With the outbreak of war, the Iraqi army was soon starved of equipment and supplies. One of the Golden Square's requests to the Germans was for British anti-tank rifles and .303" MG rounds, none of which the bemused Germans could supply of course.

In terms of air support, the tiny Iraqi force in November 1940 had only 57 serviceable aircraft, including seven Gladiator fighters, four Breda 65 fighter-bombers and four Savoia 79 medium bombers. The German military commitment to Iraq consisted of just 14 Messerschmidt Bf-110s and seven Heinkel He-IIIs, which arrived May 15. The Italians belatedly sent over 12 CR-42 biplane fighters, these arriving on 27 May.



Iraqi forces are represented by Axis Minors counters with British weaponry. All weapons and ordnance are inter-changeable with British ones, and the usual restrictions on the use of captured weapons would not apply in scenarios involving British versus Iraqi forces. Principal ordnance included 18-pounder guns, 3.7" howitzers, 2.75" mountain guns and 3" mortars. The standard light tank was the obsolete Mk II, an early version of the Mk VI, while the armored car companies likely used Rolls Royce or similar model British-built vehicles.



The Iranian army, or *artesh,* was the personal creation of Reza Pahlavi. Before the 1921 coup, there had been no central army. The Qajar "army", aside from a small royal guard, was largely an agglomeration of semi-independent tribal levies (not that much different from the Persian armies that faced Alexander the Great). In 1921, when the Pahlavi revolution came, there were three effective military formations in the country. The Swedish gendarmerie, 8500 men, had been established in 1911 as a relatively neutral security force to guard the royal court, but it soon fell under German domination. British interests in the southern gulf region were secured by the 6,000-man South Persia Rifles, raised in 1916 and led by British officers. Finally, there was the famous Persian Cossack Division, established in the 1870s as a brigade. Officered by Russians, it effectively gave Czarist Russia control of northern Persia until the 1920 Civil War, when the last Czarist Russians left and the unit, by default, came under the control of Iranian officers.

It was not surprising that Reza Pahlavi, a military man, should use the army as his main base of power, both for political purposes and his nationalist reforms. His goal was to centralize the still largely feudal administration, and to eliminate both the internal divisions and external influences that wracked his people. He disbanded the Swedish gendarmerie and the South Persia Rifles (the latter a direct blow against the British, an act for which their Foreign Office never really forgave the Shah). Using the Cossack Division and the remnants of the South Persia Rifles as a cadre, the Shah built up the skeleton of a new army and immediately set about breaking the power of the tribes. This was accomplished in a series of long, grim campaigns in the 1920s. By 1930, the Iranian army numbered 80,000 men. Some 300 officers had been sent to French military schools (and a few to German ones to provide balance) by the government. National conscription was introduced, uniforms were designed, and standardized unit organizations established. The army also served as a model for the Shah's program of "Iranianization", with all military ranks and terms translated into Farsi in 1936.

In 1924, again at the Shah's insistence, Iran began to manufacture its own small arms. Arms were also acquired from Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Germany. AFVs included fifty Czech CKD AH-IV RH tankettes armed with two MG. In 1937, a further fifty CKD TNH light tanks were delivered (an early export version of the LT vz .38, armed with a 37mm Skoda anti-tank guns and two HMG). From 1931 on, Iran acquired armored cars from Britain, with four Rolls Royce and 33 Marmon-Herringtons in service in 1941 (equipped with 37mm ATG and one MG).

By 1941, the Iranian army had 3,200 officers and 116,000 men in fourteen mixed divisions, one mechanized brigade and five independent brigades. There was also a new gendarme corps comprising seven regiments and fifteen independent battalions. Allied intelligence reported the Shah had considerably raised the standard of efficiency of the Iranian troops, but a lack of funds still hindered his modernization efforts, with shortages of spare parts and ammunition common. There was some disaffection against the Shah among his colonels due to his increasingly autocratic rule, and a few garrisons outside Tehran were reported to have suspect morale. Dispersed into regional garrisons and caught by surprise, the army proved incapable of stopping the massive Anglo-Soviet invasion. The army's main role had been social and political, while national defense was given a lesser priority. It was essentially geared to deal with any local threat and no deployment might have saved Iran in 1941 when faced with a combined British-Russian attack, the age-old strategic nightmare of Persia. Nevertheless, some units fought with distinction and honor.

Principal units in Abadan included the 11th and 13th Infantry Regiments, and from the 6th Division the 43rd Regiment and a unit of gendarmes. Ahwaz was the HQ for the 6th Division, garrisoned by the 30th Regiment. Kermanshah was the base of the 12th Division, with the 38th and 39th Infantry Regiments, 14th Cavalry Regiment and the 14th Artillery Regiment located between Kermanshah and Naft-i-Shah.

The typical infantry regiment (or *hanq-i-piyade* in Farsi) had a total of 18 Brno HMG, 54 LMG, six 81mm medium mortars and six 37mm Skoda ATG, with 68 officers and 2070 men (fighting strength usually averaged 1600 men). It was organized into three *qurdan* (battalions) with an HQ company (with engineers, hospital troops, etc.) and a close support company (a platoon each of six ATG and six mortars, divided into two-gun sections). A *qurdan* comprised three *qurahan (i.e.,* rifle companies) and a machine gun company (three platoons each with two Brno HMG). The rifle companies had three platoons with a somewhat unconventional organization. There were three rifle sections of eight men armed with rifles and two rifle-grenade launchers, and two LMG sections, each based on one Lewis or Bren LMG with crew.

Mobile troops comprised 22 sabre regiments (*hanq-i-savar*), the traditional Persian elite. In addition, there were three camel regiments and the mechanized brigade. The horse and camel regiments had similar organization, with four sabre squadrons and a HMG squadron (two troops, each with four HMG in two sections). The sabre squadron held four troops, with each troop made up of two sabre sections and one LMG section. The mechanized brigade had a unique organization of four regiments. The first comprised one light AA battery with sixteen 15mm BESA guns carried on lorries and six four-gun batteries with 75mm Bofors AA towed by Marmon-Herrington tractors. The 2nd Regiment was made up of two tank battalions, the first with 50 CKD AH-IV RH tankettes and the second with 50 CKD TNH light tanks, and one armored car battalion (19 4×4 Marmon-Herringtons, 14 6×4 Marmon-Herringtons and four Rolls Royce cars). The 3rd Regiment comprised 1100 infantry carried in fifty armored carriers (each carrying a two-man crew, one officer and 20 men) and fifty Belgian motorcycles with a Brno LMG mounted on the side car. The 4th Regiment contained six four-gun towed batteries equipped with a Bofors 105mm gun.

Principal artillery pieces included the "short" Skoda 105mm gun (12 four-gun batteries), "long" Skoda 105mm gun (18 batteries), Bofors 75mm mountain gun (39 batteries), Schneider 75mm guns (ten batteries), Aboukoff 75mm field guns (two batteries), a battery of British guns and 11 batteries of Bofors 75mm AA. Each artillery regiment generally had one field and three mountain batteries. The mountain batteries were carried by pack mule, the remainder horse-drawn—except for the mechanized regiment which used Marmon-Herrington tractors for towing.

Use Axis Minor squads and weapons to represent Iranian forces, with all the general rules for the Axis Minors applied.

The main British units committed in Iraq and Iran were the 6th (26th, 27th and 28th Brigades), 8th (17th, 18th and 19th Brigades) and 10th (15th, 24th and 25th Brigades) Indian Divisions, plus the 2nd Brigade from the 1st Indian Armoured Division (shortly thereafter renamed the 31st Armoured Division) and the 9th

(Continued on pg. 16)

OIL WARS...*(Continued from pg. 13))*

Brigade from the 10th Armoured Division (still called the 1st Cavalry Division when it entered Iraq). These forces were all equipped and organized along the usual British/Commonwealth patterns.

The 1941 British armored brigade held three tank regiments and one motor brigade. Divisional support units included an armored car regiment, a lorried infantry battalion, engineers, an anti-tank gun regiment and an artillery regiment. The 9th Brigade included the 1st Household Cavalry Regiment, the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry and the Warwickshire Yeomanry. The regiments of the 2nd Indian were 14/20 King's Hussars, 4th Lancers and 14th (Prince of Wales's Own) Cavalry. The 13th Lancers (an Indian armored car regiment) was attached as needed to various formations. Both British and Indian tank units in the Middle East used the Mk II light tank, although some sources state Mk VIs were used. It is possible some of the newer light tanks had been received shortly before or during the Iraqi and Iranian campaigns. As the 10th Armoured Division was at the time being converted from a cavalry division, none of its units had yet received tanks, its "armored" regiments having to make do with 30-cwt lorries. Indian armored car units used a native conversion, usually a Crossley armored body on a 4x4 Chevrolet chassis. British units had just been upgraded to the Marmon-Herrington, but some other earlier models were still in use. The RAF base garrisons in Iraq used Roll Royce cars.

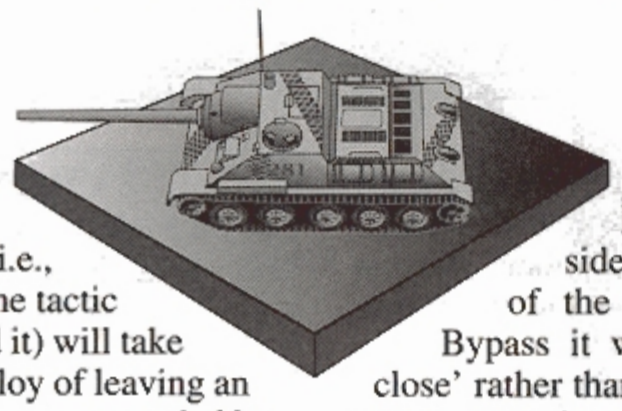
While the Soviets relied on mass in Iran (their forces numbered 1,000 medium tanks), the British hoped to avoid heavy fighting, their forces totalling but 50 light tanks. The British were faced by a combined Iranian force of 30,000 men, with only eight light tanks and eight tankettes. Still, the modern Czech light tanks used by the Iranians were far superior to anything the British fielded, and the British and Indian units were extremely wary of engaging Iranian armor. In fact, the first advance on Ahwaz turned into a panicked retreat merely at the sound of approaching Iranian tanks.

For the irregular units, I'd suggest the usual partisan rules and counters apply to the surviving tribal forces active in Iran. The main groups included the Kurds, Azeris and Luristanis in the north and west, the Qasqai and Bakhtiaris in the central mountains, and in the south the Tangistanis and Baluchis. At their height, the powerful Qasqai and Bakhtiaris each fielded 30,000 warriors. By 1941, however, no single tribe counted for much more than 1,000-2,000 armed men. Many of the tribes were expert horsemen. Their numbers probably increased after the collapse of the shah's government, but they were again suppressed. The Kurds were in revolt almost as soon as the Allied invasion began. Most of the tribes were as hostile to the British and Soviets, however, as they were to the central government in Tehran. A number of skirmishes did occur between the tribesmen and units on both sides during the invasion of Iran. There are also unconfirmed reports that some groups received active German support. Locating reliable sources for scenario design incorporating the irregular forces might, however, prove insurmountable. ☆

Taking a Bite Out of a Hunk of Cheese *or* How to Counter An AFV in Motion Bypass

By Don Clouse





This article is intended in the spirit of friendly competition. As such, I trust that no one (i.e., whoever first came up with the tactic nor those who later embraced it) will take umbrage. I first ran into the ploy of leaving an AFV in Motion VBM in an enemy-occupied hex at the *ASL* Oktoberfest in 1993. I don't know who first came up with the idea, but it's a rather inspired application of the rules. I was, indeed, rather stunned (but not Recalled) the first time it was pulled on me. However, not being one to sulk and whine (well, not for more than three or four days), I decided to discover what could be done to at least ameliorate its effects. I owe thanks to long time *SL/ASL* comrade, Jim Collier, for valuable insights on Delay MP and the requirements for ending a MPh in Motion status, and to Bob MacNamara for several helpful suggestions.

Pulling an AFV into a Location containing enemy Infantry in order to prevent them from firing out of that Location (A7.212 Target Selection Limits) is a time-honored tactic. The practice of doing this by putting the AFV in Bypass is more recent, and isn't specifically prohibited by the rules. Indeed, it has been codified by a question and answer published in the 1992 *ASL* Annual. The reference is quoted below for those who may not have access to that Annual.

- **A7.212** If a Bypassing friendly AFV occupies a hex that contains an enemy unit at a higher level, do the firing restrictions of this rule apply to that enemy unit? Do they apply if a BU friendly AFV, regardless of whether or not it is in Bypass or is OT, occupies a Location that contains an enemy unit?
- **A.** Only if the AFV is CE/OT. Yes.

Incurring Target Selection Limits due to an AFV's being in Bypass of an enemy-occupied hex seems to me to be less realistic than incurring the same restrictions for being in the hex in non-Bypass mode. When the AFV is in the hex in non-Bypass fashion, it can be considered to be actually in the midst of the enemy. However, when in Bypass it would seem to be just 'very close' rather than actually in the 'midst' of the enemy. Keep in mind that a hex is over 130 feet (40 meters) in width. However, I guess I can buy it. But leaving an AFV in Motion in Bypass and incurring Target Selection Limits? This seems to me to be just a big cheese ball gamesmanship tactic (hence the rather metaphorical title of this article). I was somewhat incredulous the first time this was pulled on me. It left a sour taste. (Well, yes, I suppose it could be called sour grapes.) However, it seems to be perfectly legal and within the rules as written. Therefore, it must be lived with (and yes, I've even used it myself, I'm ashamed to say). So, the question becomes "What can be done to combat this rather odiferous ploy?" The answer is "Quite a lot, actually." Specifics follow.

This article doesn't deal with obvious "realistic" defenses involving directly combating the vehicle, such as the various forms of Defensive Fire. If the vehicle has been able to close with your troops, you probably don't have any effective ranged antitank defense, while Reaction Fire versus a Motion AFV (especially if CT and BU) has only a moderate chance of success at best. Appropriately, the best "defense" against this tactic can often be a counter-application of rules. As a first step, someone employing this tactic must be held to the letter of the rules. The two main defenses, then, are D2.3 and D2.4.

D2.3 says that a vehicle may use VBM only if the clearance between the hexside and the obstacle being bypassed is at least equal to the thickness of the counter. The rule is very specific as to how the measurement is to be made. The vehicle counter should be placed on-edge parallel to the hexside such that the entire thickness of the hexside is visible, with walls and hedges being considered extensions of the hexside (i.e., as part of the hexside). If the counter touches any part of the obstacle being Bypassed, then the hexside cannot be Bypassed. If it looks even close, make your opponent do the measurement. (This comes under the heading of fighting cheese with cheese, or limburger with cheddar. The former really smells, but the latter can taste so good.) Pick any board (well, not a desert board) and take a minute to do a few of these measurements yourself. You may be surprised at how much space is actually required to accommodate D2.3. If there is insufficient clearance, the vehicle must be returned to the hex from which it attempted to enter the obstacle hex and (drum roll please) expend a Stop MP! Furthermore, the MPs spent attempting VBM are considered spent in the hex the vehicle was attempting to exit and must be announced. All these MPs spent, along with its now being a Stopped target, may allow a nice Defensive First Fire shot that perhaps wasn't available previously. (If, for example, late war Germans are the Defender, then this could be a propitious opportunity to have the troops rummage about for a PF, a convenient means of conjuring a toasty bonfire on a cold winter day on the Russian Front, and just the thing for cooking, wait for it, grilled cheese.) The vehicle may, of course, expend a Start MP and begin moving again, assuming it has any MP remaining by this time. Also keep in mind that, in addition to the doubled COT in the hex for VBM, other MP costs (e.g., SMOKE or a move to a higher elevation) are doubled as well.

D2.31 provides a list of specific situations in which VBM is not allowed. VBM is prohibited along any hexside directly attached to a roadblock hexside or along any hexside already containing another Bypass vehicle or wreck. VBM is also prohibited in any hex containing a terrain blaze or rubble.

Assume that you've dutifully required the enemy player to make the hexside-to-obstacle distance measurement (with him no doubt muttering unkindly about rules lawyers during the entire procedure, at which point you may wish to interject your own comment, something involving pots and kettles perhaps) and have, albeit reluctantly, conceded that sufficient clearance exists to allow VBM. Is your .50-cal HMG team now doomed to sit helplessly as hordes of enemy Infantry march relentlessly across the wide open spaces of board 19 thumbing their noses as they stroll by? Hardly. Read on.

Three specific rules citations are necessary to set up the 'defense' used during any Movement Phase in which an enemy AFV begins the turn in Motion and Bypass of a hex occupied by your Infantry. D2.4 states in the next-to-last sentence that a vehicle which begins its Movement Phase in Motion must expend at least one MP, even if just to Stop. The second sentence of D2.4 says that the only way a vehicle can end its MPh in

Motion *without expending all its MPs* is if the next hex to be entered requires more MP than are available. Further, D2.17 states that Delay MP can be expended only if the vehicle is Stopped or using Platoon Movement. (Also keep in mind D2.1, which says "A vehicle which ends its MPh with MP remaining is assumed to use all MP in that hex.") The point of all this is, of course, don't let an enemy vehicle just sit in Motion status, especially in Bypass in a hex with friendly units. Make them either Stop or move. If it Stops, then it is, of course, an easier target for both Defensive (First) Fire and Close Combat. It could, of course, Stop, spend a number of Delay MP, then restart with its final MP and remain in Motion along the same hexside without having moved at all. It will, obviously, be an easier target during the portion of the MPh in which it is Stopped. If the enemy vehicle does not elect to Stop, then it must move. The vehicle may merely drive to a different hexside of the same hex. (One cannot help but summon a mental image of, say, a BU SU-85 careening madly in a tight circle around about a small clump of trees as a group of stunned Volksgrenadiers look on. Circled wagons and a war party come to mind also, but I digress.) Even driving around the same hex the AFV will still, in many circumstances, have to spend a Stop MP followed by sufficient Delay MP such that after restarting it has insufficient MP remaining to enter a new hex or hexside. Remember D2.4? It can remain in Motion only if it has insufficient MP to enter another hex (or presumably hexside), so in many cases (i.e., when the next hexside is not traversable, or a high probability of bog would be incurred) it will have to expend excess MP to remain in the hex, and it cannot spend Delay MP while in Motion (D2.17). These are the only ways under these circumstances (i.e., beginning the MPh in VBM Motion) in which it could remain in the same hex and regain Motion status in that hex at the end of the MPh. True, the vehicle could just exit the hex, turn around, and reenter the same hex and remain in Motion. However, during all this maneuvering the vehicle may become more vulnerable to Defensive First Fire from other units, may be required to take Bog checks, or may not even have enough MP to complete the maneuver.

Before ending this article, I should note the effects of rule F11.74, which in some instances will increase the options available to a Bypassing AFV. Rule F11.74 (the part with a gray bar in the margin) states that "a vehicle is not prohibited from expending more MP to enter a hex than the minimum required ..." This, by extension, applies to hexsides as well. Therefore, the Bypassing AFV will in many cases have the additional option of expending excess MP's simply by "moving slowly."

These, then, are two main defenses against an enemy AFV remaining in Motion and Bypass of a friendly occupied hex: **hexside-to-obstacle distance**, and **the requirements for gaining Motion status**. You have all the necessary ammunition (the cited rules) to carry it off. Just remember this as the M&M defense (measurement and motion). The opponent's entire game plan, not your key defensive positions, will melt away (well, sometimes). Too bad I couldn't come up with a closing cheese metaphor—or perhaps not, the whole situation being cheesy enough as is. ☆



TACTICS 101

13 Steps Closer to Improving Your ASL Game



By Mike McGrath

There you are sitting across from the legendary Bill "Fish" Conner in the finals of the AVALONCON *ASL* tournament. You are the fluke, out of No-name, Montana, no one else has ever heard of, you've crushed the likes of Mark "call me Irwin" Nixon, Guy "Chainsaw" Chaney, Mitch "Balicquidator" Baliki, Steve "Elvis" Pleva and other assorted *ASL* rabble. You have also badly beaten Eric "Barker" Baker but no one is really impressed by that. This is your first tournament and you're having a great time. You have been playing *ASL* for 72 hours without a break; with no food for at least 64 hours, and you have been listening to Pat Jonke whine about his luck for what seems like forever. You think to yourself, "Poor Pat, from the sound of it, he hasn't rolled less than a ten in three days."

You snap out of it as Fish asks you what scenario you want to play. Your attention focuses on the "Fish"–the scraggly beard, the keen eyesight, the stupid t-shirt "The Grofaz." What the hell is a Grofaz?! He asks you again what you want to play. You think to yourself, "I don't know, I have only been playing *ASL* for about a week, I just don't know." After much circling and sniffing, you and the "Fishman" finally agree on the big scenario. As you are setting up, you think "I'm going to get smashed, I've only been playing a week and Fish has been playing *ASL* for almost 60 years." Well, never fear because after reading this article, you'll have taken Tactics 101.

Okay *ASL* fanatics, I often read in letters to the editor about people who are just starting the game or have only been playing *ASL* for a short time wanting *basic tactics*. Here are 13 suggestions to rapidly improve your game. I must stress that not all players will agree with them. All of these suggestions have hundreds of exceptions to them. That's the great thing about *ASL*; every situation is different, even in repeat playings of the same scenario. Most of these are valid 80-90 percent of the time but there are always situations where they will not be.



1. KNOW THE RULEBOOK. I cannot stress how important it is to know the rules. I try to read the rulebook cover to cover once a year. Keep a copy of the list of *ASL* questions and answers which clarifies the rulebook. The rulebook itself will tell you a lot of the tricks of the trade and let you know when your opponent is violating them. A friend of mine recently lost two games in a tournament because he didn't know that you can breach a fortified building with a DC. He lost another because he didn't know SMOKE negates FFMO from a firelane attack.



2. DON'T STACK. Contrary to what you read in *ASL* articles for scenario setup, never stack units. Unnecessary stacking is a recipe for certain disaster. Never stack squads when possible, always spread out and form firegroups. It is better to have one squad in a stone building and another in the woods than to have both together in the same location in the stone building. Use upper levels when possible to avoid stacking. By not stacking, the most your opponent can hurt with a single attack is one squad. My rule of thumb is one squad with a –1 leader and two squads with a –2 or better leader. Situations may dictate changes in this policy, but players who constantly stack their squads are asking for trouble.

3. BE AGGRESSIVE. This is as valid for the defender as it is for the attacker. Being too passive is the most common mistake the beginner makes. I have seen many games where the attacker sits at his starting point and prep fires every unit every turn until the end of the game, then loses because he hasn't taken enough ground even though he has killed 10 times what he has lost. I have also played games where my opponent has the chance to really hurt me by taking a small risk, but doesn't because he has conditioned himself to never take a chance. Always be on the lookout for opportunities to nail your opponent. Being able to decide when a risk is worth taking is the mark of a good player.

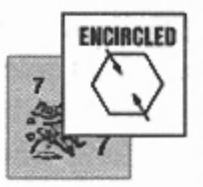
4. DON'T BE TOO AGGRESSIVE. This is especially important with armor. Someone much wiser than myself once said "Remember, tanks don't rout". If you don't need to take a chance then don't. Foolish recklessness is a sin. Each move you make during the game should bring you closer to winning. Don't do something "for the hell of it." Think before you move. Before moving that big stack through the open, make sure it's safe to do so. Be sure the line of sight to that enemy HMG is blocked. If you are not absolutely sure, find another route or move one unit at a time. If you have a lot to gain, then take risks. Otherwise, play it safe.



5. MOVE. Moving is perhaps the single most important feature of the game. Before you move any unit, know where it is going and how it is going to get there. Always move units individually, never move in a stack unless you need the leadership bonus. If you are attacking, try to move so that the defender in his turn cannot move without being fired upon in the DFPh. Attempt to limit the defender's defensive fire opportunities. Get a unit close to his firegroups so that they will not be able to use SFF against your units which are further away. Recognize when you may be able to overwhelm a defending unit with sheer numbers. Sometimes you can take out a position by running at it instead of shooting at it. This can be dangerous though and is not always the right answer.



6. REDUCE THE LUCK FACTOR. As a player you can reduce the importance of luck considerably; don't stack, this helps reduce the possibility of one lucky roll taking you out; try to retain concealment, assault move if you are only moving one hex, always use terrain; use smoke; don't move in the open if possible, etc. Don't rally units that need a "2" to rally unless you must have them in the next phase. This is especially true for broken conscripts under DM. Even if you rally them with that "2", they will most likely disrupt, or berserk and charge to their death. Never try to fix a tank's MA unless you need it to shoot at another tank. Tanks have too many other valuable functions to risk losing them to a single dr.



7. WHEN YOUR OPPONENT IS DOWN, KICK HIM. When I play, I'm always looking for a way to screw my opponent. As soon as one of his units break, the first thought through my head is "how can I kill this guy through failure to rout"? If possible, when prep firing shoot at units you can eliminate or take prisoner after the MPh if possible. Whenever there is a broken enemy unit on the map, always try to put it under DM if it can rally in the next RPh. If you can't kill a broken unit with a fire attack, try to put it under DM in your APh instead—so that it can't rout away.

8. PICK THE CORRECT TYPE OF ATTACK. There are several different types of

attack. Matching the correct one to the scenario greatly increases your chance of winning. Sometimes you want to concentrate your forces to attack at a single point (Scenario 8—The Fugitives), other times you want to attack on as wide a front as possible to force the defender to spread out (Scenario 9—To The Square) and still other times you want to grind slowly forward mostly prep firing and advancing (DASL 1—Guryev's HQ).



9. INFANTRY. Always look for an advantage. If your squads are stealthy, try to get into CC. If your range is better than the enemy, try to get into firing positions where you are at full FP and he is halved. Never move into a hex where if you break you will surrender or die unless you really have to. If you have a lot of leaders around, 8-0's make great FT and DC units. When on the attack, always set up a prep fire attack group with your best modifier/lowest morale leader (i.e., 9-2 or 8-1 instead of 10-2 or 9-1, unless you expect to be shot at a lot, then use your highest morale leader) and most of your high ROF MG. The logic behind this is that the higher morale leader should be out in front with the assault troops. His higher morale will help him pass the MC the enemy will surely force him to take. His Leadership DRM will then help the squads with him to pass their MC as well. Meanwhile, the lower morale leader with the firebase still has the same modifier to direct attacks with. When stacking, always make correct stacks–everyone but Germans should stack HMG with HMG and MMG with MMG. Germans should mix and match to achieve higher firepower columns. When setting up firegroups, try to get correct columns (i.e., 2 squads and 2 LMG to get a 12 column). Don't forget to use spraying fire, assault fire, dash and snap shots where applicable. Spraying fire is especially useful for placing residual firepower. It can also be deadly when directed by a –2 or –3 leader. A good leader like this can direct his boys to mow down two enemy stacks at once if using spraying fire.



10. ARMOR. Having been taught the ins and outs of armor by the finest *ASL* armor commander I've ever known (Guy Chaney), I shall attempt to pass along some of the lessons I've learned at great expense. The most important thing about armor is its immunity to small arms. Tanks should always be used most aggressively (except against Germans with PFs) to drive into opponent's locations, use sD and grenades, cut off broken units rout paths, bounding fire, etc. When you drive into a unit's location and survive, the enemy can't fire out enabling your infantry to move forward blasting away in the AFPh. Stay in motion with the vehicle as this adds +2 to any reaction fire attack. If you prep with a tank, that is all it does. If you move with him, you can first try a smoke grenade or sD, then bounding fire, and then move into his hex all in one MPh. The ability to prevent enemy units from firing out of an AFV occupied location is the single most important factor in a combined arms attack. A potent stack can be neutralized if a single vehicle can enter their location and remain alive. When on the attack, look for opportunities to hose people with this. You may not want to risk a Panther in this manner, but lesser tanks should not hesitate to volunteer for this mission. On the defense, look to minimize the chance of someone pulling this on you. Have AT weapons near your good stacks or place the good stacks in terrain which AFV's cannot easily reach.



11. MORTARS. If possible, always use light mortars in the direct fire mode. Use heavy mortars (81mm) in direct fire if you can, but only if they are relatively safe from return fire. If you can, always shoot at units in woods. Remember that even the light mortars can be very effective against armored vehicles. Mortars can also be very effective at laying SMOKE because they can lay SMOKE and still retain their ROF.



12. MISCELLANEOUS.

A. Always take prisoners except a 9-2 leader +. Shoot those guys.

B. Never shoot a broken unit that is not eligible to rally in the next rally phase or will die in the rout phase—you could rally them by HOB.

C. Always DM units if they will be able to rally the next rally phase.

D. Never take off dummy ? counters even if your opponent knows that is what they are. They can do two things–deny enemy ? gain and go search out the enemy sniper counter to absorb an attack.

E. Rarely shoot enemy ? counters if you don't know what they are. Bounding fire your heavy groups and run forward a couple of HS into the enemy unit's location. This comes under being aggressive. Don't allow a couple of ? counters stop your attack.

F. Never search a ? counter because you can very easily end up dead. Instead, run into its hex. You may die, but it's more likely you'll end up only broken and the ? will be removed.

G. Suppose you have two concealed squads two hexes away from an enemy squad with terrain between you. My favorite way to attack this guy is to assault move one squad next to him. If he shoots, you are concealed and assault moving–about as good as it gets. If he doesn't, move the next squad into his hex to force him to lose concealment–then jump on him in CC if you have the ambush advantage or 2:1 or better odds.

H. Never get into CC unless you have the advantage. CC makes for a very chancy affair. Also remember if he ambushes you he can withdraw to a hex within PF range of the tank you may have parked nearby.

I. Shoot into melees if it is your turn and you can Advance more units into it; unless you already have an overwhelming advantage.

J. Use SMOKE a lot. The only exception is a unit with a SMOKE exponent of 1. These units get SMOKE so rarely you will probably never want to waste the MF to throw SMOKE; unless you're crossing a bridge or other choke point.

K. If you are trying to throw SMOKE on an enemy unit throw WP instead. The number is one less, but you just might break him. I would only try this if I needed a two or less for WP or if I really didn't need the SMOKE that badly. If you have a tank, gun or mortar and you are putting SMOKE in an enemy unit's hex always try for WP first.



13. MORALE. Last but not least is your morale as a player. Every player at one time or another has broken and started to try rash maneuvers in hopes of salvaging an apparently lost cause. As things start to go poorly, some players, rather than regrouping and reevaluating the situation, begin whining about their luck and trying reckless things. They then seem amazed that their 4-3-6 didn't stand up to that 30(-4) IFT attack. His morale has broken. When a player's morale breaks, he starts contemplating and doing things that are incredibly risky. Ten percent of the time it will get him back into the game; 90 percent of the time he will dig his own grave. Many an IF shot, thrown out in anger over the inability to get a hit, has come back to haunt the firer. This is not to imply that at some point you may have to do very risky things, but it is not on turn 2 after a bad turn 1. If you ever start doing things and hoping your opponent rolls an eleven or twelve, your morale has been broken. The best thing to do is get a fresh coke or beer, take a bathroom break and when you get back pretend you are starting a new game in which you have a disadvantage. I know it's hard to do, but don't be reckless when things go sour, it just makes it that much harder to get back into the game. Regroup and try again on the attack. On the defense, cut your losses and fall back to the next line of resistance.

Well that's it for Tactics 101. I hope this proves to be of some help to the "FNG". I am not sure that these tactics are valid against "Fish" though, since he has beaten me the last 37 times we've played. I strongly hope that you will try to attend as many *ASL* tournaments as you can, as they really are a great time.

Good gunning and remember "Just Say No" to stacking! Commander, out.

☆



COMMANDO

British Commandos For ASL

by Steven C. Swann

At the start of World War II in 1939, the British Army did not have any specialized units for small scale raiding or other special tasks. During the spring of 1940, eleven Independent Companies (Ind. Coy) were formed by Major Holland, an engineer working in the General Staff's Research Section dealing with small combat actions. These units were numbered from No. 1 to No. 11 Independent Companies and were the first units of what would eventually become known as commandos. The eleven companies had been formed from volunteers of the British Territorial Army along with a few regular soldiers and reservists. Each company **(Table 1)** had 20 officers and 270 enlisted men in platoons with sections (squads). These early companies were armed with only rifles and a few Bren Light Machineguns. As a comparison, a normal British rifle company had 124 men in three rifle platoons and a Headquarters (HQ) section. The rifle company's HQ section had control of an AT Rifle and the 2" mortars.

TABLE 1 Independent Company–1940

Company	(20/270)	
Company HQ	(8/64)	
HQ & Staff	(3/15)	1 9-2
		2 2-4-8 HS
		1 HS Motorcycle Counter
		1 Car
Service Section	(30)	2 4-5-8
		1 30-cwt Truck
Sapper Section	(1/17)	1 4-5-8
		1 2-4-8
		3 DC
Medical Staff	(1/6)	No ASL Equivalent
Armorer	(4)	No ASL Equivalent
3 Platoons	(4/66)	
Platoon HQ	(1/8)	1 9-1/8-1*
		1 2-4-8 HS
		1 LMG
3 Sections	(1/18)	
2 Rifle Squads (ea)		1 4-5-8

Between May 4 and May 9, 1940 five of these Ind. Coy, were landed in Norway in the Mo-i-Rana and Bodo areas. Their mission during the Norway Campaign of 1940 was to provide a defensive screen south of the main British landings at Narvik, thus preventing the Germans from reinforcing their garrison at Narvik. Here, amongst the flash floods and mud from an early spring thaw, the Independent Companies fought a series of skirmishes with German paratroops and infantry, and were even able to ambush a German counter-landing from the sea.

The first combat action in the Norwegian campaign for the Ind. Coy occurred on May 10, 1940, about ten miles south of Mosjoen, along the Bjornaa River. Here the 5th Ind. Coy, assisted by two depleted Norwegian companies, set-up an ambush to defend a railroad bridge that crossed the river from east to west. During the morning, a complacent German infantry bicycle column approached the bridge without using any type of point or flank protection. As the Independents and Norwegians opened fire about fifty Germans fell almost at once, while the rest of the German column withdrew as best as it could from the valley. Then afterwards, in accordance with their orders and fighting style, the 5th Ind. Coy moved back and established new positions out of sight of the Germans.

While the 5th Ind. Coy was fighting in the Bjornaa River valley, another German force made up of a reinforced Gebirgsjager company, was making an opposed seaborne landing at the village of Hemnesberget, which was defended by a platoon of the 1st Ind. Coy along with a few Norwegians. Against such overwhelming force the independent platoon was soon forced to evacuate the village after some intense street fighting.

After nearly a month of fighting, the "Independents" were withdrawn from Norway along with the British 24th Guards Brigade and a few Norwegian troops. As the British forces received their baptism of fire in Norway and suffered casualties, these lightweight Independent Companies were used more and more as line infantry. As they were equipped very lightly in support weapons, their use in the line was less than justified and cost them more in injuries than was necessary.

On June 4, 1940, after the final evacuation of what remained of the British Army from Dunkirk, the first outlines of a fledgling commando force was placed in writing by Lt. Col. Dudley Clark in London. This outline described, as a base, the fighting methods used by the Boer farmers against the British in South Africa from 1899 to 1902. Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, gave his endorsement to the concept and then forwarded it on to Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Great Britain. On June 8, the concept was approved with but two limitations. First, that no existing military unit could be diverted from the defense of the British Isles and secondly, the unit was to be of the light infantry type and equipped as such. The name of this unit was taken from the early name used by those Boer farmers in South Africa...they would now become known as COMMANDOS.

The first parent organization was named the Special Service Brigade and was established during the summer of 1940. Originally it was disguised as a charity organization which held its meetings in a private house. By the end of 1940, the Special Service Brigade was commanded by Brigadier J.C. Haydon DSO, OBE and reported directly to the Director of Combined Operations. In 1940 the brigade's Order of Battle (OB) was set as five battalions of two Commandos each **(Table 2)**. Each Commando (the size of a reduced battalion) was composed of ten troops of 50 men each. The Brigade had to provide for their own training and outfitting, and any combat actions had to be coordinated with Combined Operations and any other service branch with which they would be operating.

TABLE 2 Special Service Brigade–1940

Brigade		
5 Battalions (ea)	(1000)	
2 Commandos (ea)	(500)	10-2
		10 DC
10 Troops	(50)	9-1/8-1*
Troop HQ	(4)	2-4-8
2 Assault Sections	(23)	
Section HQ		
Rifle Section		4-5-8
Bren Section		6-4-8
		LMG

The Commando training set up in 1940 was a three month course that provided intensive training and live practice in close combat (both hand and weapons), field craft, demolitions and physical fitness training. Later as they grew proficient in small unit warfare some courses were dropped as other courses were strengthened to meet the changing conditions of modern warfare. As the program was streamlined, the length of the training course was reduced to seven to nine weeks. The first two weeks, held at Hermitage Camp, Wrexham, was entirely taken up with a stringent medical examination followed by intense physical training to build strength and endurance. This period also included training with all types of infantry weapons ranging from pistols and rifles up to mortars and even AA guns.

After passing through this basic training the trainees would then be transported to Achnacarry, Scotland for the more specialized training. Besides the normal close combat training, courses on knife fighting, boxing, small unit tactics, and even fencing (to improve footwork) were covered. Extra emphasis was placed on house-to-house combat in anticipation of city fighting in NW Europe.

Field craft covered subjects like map reading, night navigation by star sightings, cooking, and field sanitation. Support functions within the commandos were held to a minimum by each man filling several slots within the Commando unit with infantry as their primary job, thus allowing every man in a commando troop to fight. The use of demolitions included blowing up trains, bridges, harbor equipment, and fuel dumps. This training even had a session on how to drive a train and making bore-holes.

Officers, NCOs and specialists would then attend an extra two weeks of training dealing with leadership, tactics and combat intelligence. Between missions these same officers would act as trainers to keep the troops in peak physical condition. For the commando units destined to fight in the Far East against the Japanese, the urban combat training was replaced with jungle survival training.

As the commando training schedule was being developed, the men from the Ind. Coy were being used in small reconnaissance and intelligence raids. The very first raid into occupied Europe went ashore during the night of 23 June, 1940. Here one hundred twenty men in three groups hit the beaches at the same time and started a Commando tradition for the unexpected. Some German soldiers were killed and a German seaplane base was entered where the commandos attempted to attack the planes. Unfortunately the German sentries were alerted and opened fire on the British raiders. This raid was speedily followed by another on the channel island of Guernsey in July.

Due to the primary defensive needs of Britain against the German air attacks, the training and equipping of the Commandos would be slow going for the rest of 1940. Time was needed to perfect their training methods and to build up the kind of commando force that would be necessary for the future raids envisioned. Three commandos, Nos. 7, 8, and 11, were ordered to Egypt for middle east operations during the autumn of 1940.

EUROPEAN THEATER

During 1941, ten raids were carried out by commando units all along the coast line of northwestern Europe. *(Due to space limitations and the capabilities of the ASL game scale, only the raids possible to place in an ASL scenario will be mentioned in this article.)*

(Continued on pg. 48)

COMMANDO...*(Continued from pg. 13)*

The first raid was the first for the year as well as the new organization's first large scale raid. On March 4, 1941 No. 3 and 4 Commandos made a joint raid on Lofoten Island off the coast of Norway. In an almost bloodless raid the commandos destroyed 800,000 gallons of oil and petrol stores, 11 small ships were sunk, and 60 Norwegian Quislings captured along with 255 German prisoners. By the end of March, 1941, the Brigade had grown to include eleven trained Commandos.

In August the island of Spitzbergen was raided by a battalion of Canadians with some commando style training. Rescuing about 2000 Russian miners and providing them with transport to Russia, the raiders then proceeded to destroy the coal mines and coal processing plants on the island. In October 1941, the command for Combined Operations passed from Sir Roger Keyes to Naval Commodore Lord Louis Mountbatten. December saw the year ending with two back-to-back raids designed by the new commander of Combined Operations. The first, was a second raid on the Lofoten Islands which was to be a diversion for a heavy raid on the island of Vaagso, Norway.

No. 12 Commando landed unopposed on Lofoten Island and captured a German garrison satiated on their Christmas celebrations. For the second time in a year, the German Army had lost its garrison on Lofoten Island. While this raid was drawing German attention, a much heavier raiding force made up of the entire No.3 Commando along with two troops from No.2, Royal Engineers from No.6, and additional medical personnel from No.4 Commandos was on its way to Vaagso Island.

The Vaagso Island raid was a test of operations for the commandos since this would be the first assault ever made against a defended port in World War II. The Germans had established a four-gun battery on Maalory Island just across the bay as well as several defensive points located in the town of South Vaagso. Under cover provided by both Naval gunfire and bombings by the RAF, the commandos would take and destroy the Maalory Island battery as well as all fish oil processing plants on the island.

1942 started with a bang when the fledgling British Paratrooper force joined with the Commandos for a daring raid at Brunevel, France. It seems that the Germans had developed a new type of RDF (Radio Direction Finding) device and was operating it from a isolated location along the coast of France. During the night of February 27, 1942, men of the 2nd Parachute Battalion made their air drop behind the German coastal defenses and was able to take the RDF site from its few guards. Quickly disassembling the RDF while under fire, the Paratroopers then made their way down to the cliffs overlooking the beach to await their relief. To provide protection for the LCA (Landing Craft, Assault) as well as covering fire for the Paratroopers, No.12 Commando had traveled across the channel with the LCA flotilla. Without the assistance of the commandos it is doubtful if the paratroopers would have been able to disengage from the Germans long enough to get aboard the LCAs for their return to England.

The next major operation, perhaps one of the most famous in World War II, would be the raid by the H.M.S. Campbelltown, a destroyer of the British Navy packed with five tons of explosive. The object of the raid was to destroy the locks that connected the ocean with the largest drydock along the Atlantic coast of France. Providing distractions, some small covering attacks, and some additional damage would be the mission of No.2 Commando, who would land along side the docks and destroy as much equipment as possible in the time allotted. Some covering fire would be provided by a small flotilla of British Gunboats and Motor Launches. *[This raid is represented very well in the game RAID ON ST. NAZAIRE, and should be played in its own right.]*

Raiding was now growing apace with Lord Mountbatten wishing that he could mount a raid every fortnight. If you were to add all of the small scale raids, and recon missions being performed by the Special Boat Service (SBS), Combined Operations Assault Pilotage Party (COPP) and the Small Scale Raiding Force (SSRF), then it could be said that Lord Mountbatten got his wish. Within a month of the raid on St. Nazaire, another powerful raid was staged against the German's Atlantic Wall garrison. During the night of 21-22 April, 100 men of No. 4 Commando along with 50 Canadian commandos landed from six LCAs at Hardelot, France conducting a reconnaissance in force. Afterwards, Lord Lovat believed that the raid was successful more due to the poor training of the German garrison, than the excellence of his commandos.

"Both Army and Royal Marine Commandos would be in existence for the remainder of World War II and they both followed the same procedures in their methods of operations and training."

Lord Lovat's statement would bring about better and more intensive training during the next few months for the commandos, making their training program the best in the world at that time. At the same time, the increasing penetrations of the German defenses along the Atlantic incited Hitler to spend much of his resources in a vain attempt at making a real "Atlantic Wall". *(As we all know, the Atlantic Wall was never finished and was easily taken on June 6, 1944, D-Day at Normandy.)*

The last major commando operation in Europe in 1942 was supporting the Dieppe Landings by the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division. To assist the Canadians, Nos. 3 and 4 Commandos would land ahead of the main force on either side of Dieppe and eliminate the German coastal artillery batteries. Lovat's 4 Commandos would land in two groups, one near Ste. Marquerite and the other at Vesterival-sur-Mer. After landing, the two groups would then move towards each other squeezing the German battery between them. In an almost classic example of fire-and maneuver, Lovat's commandos overcame several German outposts, took and destroyed the gun battery, burned all the battery's buildings and then executed a perfect amphibious withdrawal.

Unfortunately, 3 Commando ran into hard luck right from the start. The MTB carrying the Commando's commanding officer was destroyed in a sea skirmish by a German night patrol craft. Only four of 3 Commando's LCAs were able to reach the shore and deposit their human cargoes. Command was immediately assumed by Major Young (2 i/c 3 Commando), who was still determined to carry out his mission with only 50 of his own commandos. Joined by four French commandos of 10 Commando, Young and his men sneaked into the darkness of the French countryside. Moving up to within 200 yards of the gun battery the commandos were able to place steady small arms fire on the German gun crews. The Germans attempted to swing the guns and lay direct fire on their attackers, but found that the big emplaced guns could not be depressed enough to shoot at a 200 yard range. Taking the battery by fire, Young's men spiked the guns and destroyed the ammo dump as well as an artillery observation post nearby. Returning to the beach, his luck turned again as the commandos found themselves in a minefield just as German reinforcements approached. Continuing their move, 3 Commando waded out to several waiting LCA, while being covered by a machinegun-armed ML.

Even though the assault landing at Dieppe was a strategic failure, it brought about many changes in the concept of amphibious warfare which would pay excellent dividends in June of 1944. The commando portion of the Dieppe operations also proved that Commandos, small lightly armed units, could operate as part of a larger operation and could lead the assaults by raiding preinvasion targets. The world would see the commandos again at Normandy performing just these types of operations.

In 1943 the Brigade was composed of a HQ Troop, a Signals Troop, eleven Army Commandos, two Royal Marine (RM) Commandos, an Inter-Allied Commando, (made up of refugees from many of the nations overrun by the Nazi war machine) and a Special Boat Section known as the 101 Commando. Several Training Commands had been established and also were under the command of the Brigade. As the brigade had grown, so had each Commando unit in firepower and capability. As their successes grew, so did their allotment of weapons as Britain slowly replaced her heavy weapon losses in France. This newly found combat wealth led straight to the reorganization of the commando brigades.

When the Special Service Brigade was reorganized in 1943, the Army Commando was changed to meet the new objectives of the brigade. Overall each Army Commando (**Table 3**) was reduced in manpower from 500 to 461 officers and men as the ten 50-man troops were re-configured into a HQ Troop, five Rifle Troops and a Weapons Troop. The HQ Troop had 92 men with the actual HQ showing four officers along with a Staff & Driver section of 67 men. The Signals Platoon was composed of 21 officers and Other Ranks (OR) and was responsible for radios and other methods of communications.

TABLE 3 Army Commando–1943

Commando	(461)	
Commando HQ	(92)	
HQ	(4)	1 10-2
		1 9-1
Staff and Drivers	(67)	4 6-4-8
Signal Platoon	(21)	2 6-4-8
		Radio
5 Rifle Troops (ea)	(66)	
Troop HQ	(6)	1 9-1/8-1*
		1 3-3-8 HS
		1 LMG
		2 DC
2 Sections (ea)	(30)	
Section HQ	(2)	1 3-3-8 HS
2 Sub-sections	(14)	2 6-4-8
Weapons Troop	(39)	
Troop HQ	(6)	1 9-1
		1 3-3-8
3" Mortar Section	(17)	
3 Mortar Crews (ea)	(3)	1 2-2-8
		1 76mm MTR
Drivers & Support	(8)	3 Carriers*
MG Section	(16)	
2 MG Crews (ea)	(3)	1 2-4-8 HS
		1 MMG
Drivers & Support	(7)	2 Carriers*

Each Rifle Troop now had 66 men divided into a Troop HQ of 6 officers, aids, and runners, and two Rifle Sections of 30 men each. The Rifle sections were subdivided into a small HQ unit and two Rifle sub-sections of 14 men. The Weapons Troop was where the real growth in firepower per Commando occurred. As the commando raids became larger and more violent, so too the need for supporting weapons grew. By 1943 several commandos had acquired additional weapons

in some manner, so it was made "Official'' by the creation of a Weapons Troop within each Commando. The Troop HQ had six officers and OR while the bulk of the Troop was composed into two sections, a mortar section and a MG section. The Mortar Section was made up of three 3-man mortar crews with their weapons and a Carrier for each crew. The MG Section was organized similarly except there were only two MG crews, weapons and carriers per troop.

In October, 1943, the Special Service Brigade was reorganized as the Special Service Group under the command of Major-General Sir R.G. Sturges. The change from brigade to group was made to reflect its larger size and functions. At this time the structure of the Commando was changed. Until now all commando units received their volunteers from any of the services as well as foreign volunteers from allied countries. Now there would be only two types of commando units in the field for a few years.

This year it was decided that the Army Commando units would be phased out and that all commando units created in the future would consist of the conversion of the Royal Marines (RM) battalions into commandos. The British Royal Marines had a total force of nine battalions plus some shipboard detachments. At this time, therefore, all Commandos created from the Royal Marines would be numbered from 40 to 48.

The Royal Marine Commandos followed basically the same structure as the Army with a HQ Troop, five Assault (Rifle) Troops, and one Weapons Troop but with only 431 officers and men per Commando. The HQ Troop was identical with the Army Commando with 92 officers and OR. The Weapons Troop had the same manpower but was equipped with two 3" mortars instead of three. The MG Section remained the same with two MMG per section. The RM termed their infantry troops as "Assault Troops" with each troop composed of 60 officers and OR. Besides the Troop HQ, there were two sub-sections, one for assault and one for support. The support section carried both HE and Smoke for the 2" mortar and several of the section's personnel were trained engineers for demolitions work.

This program of phasing-in the Royal Marine Commandos would take place across several years into the late forties. Until this was completed, replacements for the Army Commando units would come from other Army Commandos as they received battle reductions and had to be disbanded.

Both Army and Royal Marine Commandos would be in existence for the remainder of World War II and they both followed the same procedures in their methods of operations and training. As an example, look at the ammunition requirements for a three inch mortar and how it was supplied in an assault. Bombs for the 3" mortar are heavy and the Commando unit rarely went ashore with their vehicles during an assault. For there to be enough 3" bombs in the assault, each man was required to carry one to four 3" mortar bombs along with his own gear. In this manner, each assault troop would carry 60 bombs, providing the Commando's mortars with an initial supply of over 300 bombs.

In an amphibious assault, the crews and weapons of the Weapons Troop would be spread amongst the Assault Troops thus preventing excessive weapons loss in the event of a LCA being hit by opposing gunfire. By also dispersing the ammo, the weapons that did get ashore would be assured of a decent beginning supply. All officers and NCOs of a Commando were plentifully equipped with flare pistols and flares for both signaling and night work.

During this major restructuring of the commandos (1943), no major raids were carried out in NW Europe. Broken into small teams, many reconnaissance and ambush raids were sent into France. Each month saw at least one raid, which totaled 19 raids for the 1943 year. Commando raids in NW Europe were called off during the first 5 months of 1944 while all units were training themselves for the upcoming invasion of Europe.

"Commando activity in the Mediterranean theater during 1942 was at a low ebb for most of the year. While there were several raids and reconnaissance forays made, most were by small four to ten-man groups whose purpose was not to fight, but to disrupt German supply routes with mines and booby traps. Several small recon missions were also carried out to acquire information concerning German fortifications, beach conditions and shore defenses."

In March, 1944 the Special Service Group was again expanded to include four "Commando Brigades". Because of the association of the initials "SS" to Germany's Gestapo, the Special Service title was dropped and each brigade would be known hereafter as a Commando Brigade. The expanded group was now a totally self contained military unit with its own support, communications and maintenance units. The commando training units were also under this unified command structure. In preparation for D-Day, all British Commandos worldwide now belonged to one of the four brigades. The First and Forth Brigades would still be based out of the United Kingdom, while the Second and Third Brigades would be posted overseas. The Second Brigade would hereafter operate in the Mediterranean theater and the Third Brigade was posted to the India-Burma Command for operations against the Japanese.

Each Commando Brigade had the same structure with a HQ and Brigade Signals Troop, a Light Aid Detachment (medical unit), and four Commandos. The 4th Commando Brigade had one additional Commando for its part in the D-Day operations known as the No. 10 (IA) Commando. The initials "IA" stood for the words "Inter-Allied" and was a special commando made up of men from many of the nations conquered by Germany. There were Belgian, Dutch, Norwegian and French troops, and even a troop made up of German speaking me,n some of whom were German nationals. These men joined Britain's commando operations in order to strike back against the Germans and provided interpreters and guides to many British Commando units during raids.

By the time of the Normandy Invasion (June 6, 1944) each commando that was to be operating in the field in northwest Europe was outfitted with a basic allotment of transport. This vehicle pool would typically include a Staff Car, 18 Jeeps and/or Carriers (for the weapons), eight 15-cwt trucks, three 3-ton trucks, a 15-cwt water truck and 35 bicycles. Even though the commandos would be operating with the Allied 21st Army Group they were still expected to be self contained and to take care of themselves.

Eleven commando operations were carried out in 1944, of which two were major events. The first was part of OVERLORD, commonly known as D-DAY, where commandos landed on all three British beaches. Sword Beach, the easternmost assault area, had the greatest concentration of commandos ever to see action together up to this date, all of the 1st and part of the 2nd Commando Brigades. Three, 4, 6 Commando, two troops of 10 (IA) Commando and 45 (RM) Commando landed between La Breche and Franceville with orders to break through the beachhead and relieve the British Airborne 6th Division along the Oren River and the Cane Canal (ASL Scenario G11). While they were running a little behind schedule, Lord Lovat's 4 Commando was able to reach Pegasus Bridge just before a German counterattack. They were soon joined by 3, 6, and 45 (RM) Commandos and the support sections of the 1st Commando Brigade.

The 4th Commando Brigade provided commando units for the rest of the British beaches. The 41 (RM) Commando also landed on Sword Beach but on the opposite side, as its orders were to move west forming a link-up with the Canadian 3rd Division and the 48 (RM) Commando who were landing on Juno Beach (Deluxe ASL Scenario A9). No. 46 (RM) Commando landed on Juno Beach on June 7th and led the advance along the Mue River for five days. Adjacent to Juno was Gold Beach where the British 50th Division and 47 (RM) Commando were landing. 47 (RM) Commando was ordered to land at le Hamel and move west to provide a tactical link with the U. S. 1st Infantry Division landing at Omaha Beach.

While their British counterparts were making their links and supporting the airborne units, two French troops of 10 (IA) Commando had the task of taking a German fortified town of Ouistreham just west of the mouth of the Orne River. While under intensive gunfire these two lonely troops (about 120 men) attacked the German infantry, AA Guns and artillery gun in a fortified building. Taking heavy causalities, the French Commandos finally succeeded after a couple assisting shots from a nearby tank.

After completing their assault assignments, both the 1st and the 4th Commando Brigades were assigned to the famed British 6th Airborne Division covering the left flank of the allied invasion beachhead. Finally, the 1st brigade was withdrawn from France on September 7, 1944, after 83 days on the line, and returned to England for training for campaigns in the Far East. In October, the 4th was relieved from the line and moved back to Ostend for amphibious training. Supported by LVTs, DUKWs, Flail Tanks, AVREs and joined by engineers, the 4th Commando Brigade was built up to be the assault force for the Walcheren Landings.

Antwerp was taken by British forces on September 4, 1944, but is forty miles inland from the sea along the Scheldt. Ever mindful of their lengthening supply lines, both the British and American commands saw the need for the port at Antwerp. In mid September, General Eisenhower stressed the importance of clearing the Scheldt, for the Antwerp docks could not be used until the island of Walcheren with its powerful coastal batteries was occupied.

Walcheren was a manmade island, recovered from the sea by the Dutch. To inhibit German reinforcements, the large seaward dikes had been blasted by the RAF's Bombing Command, flooding most of the island from the west. Landing at the western-most point (Westkapelle) of the island on November 1, 1944, were Nos 41, 47, and 48 (RM) Commandos supported by engineers, tanks and LVTs. Landing on the narrow and unflooded strip of land the Royal Marine Commandos assisted by two troops of Dutch and Norwegian commandos moved along the dike reducing one gun emplacement at a time.

(Continued on pg. 51)

COMMANDO...*(Continued from pg. 49)*

The 4th Brigade left Walcheren November 12, and was provided a short rest period behind the lines. During the period between December 1944 to May 1945, the 4th Brigade operated with the British 116th Infantry Brigade, a Belgian battalion and a group of Dutch resistance fighters. These small units staged a series of raids and small scale operations against many German outposts in northwestern Holland which had been encircled as the allied armies moved into Germany. Sometimes the Commandos would make the raids while at other times they would act as a mobile reserve.

The German Ardennes Offensive in December, 1944, changed the plans of the 1st Commando Brigade, causing the unit to be recalled to Europe, arriving in January, 1945. From this date until the end of the war, the 1st Brigade would operate under the command of various British Divisions in their drive across Europe. Some of the 1st Brigade's operations included penetration of the Siegfried Line, crossing the Rhine at Wesel (March), taking Leese and Essel (April), crossing the Elbe River in Buffaloes, and reaching the Baltic Sea at the end of April, 1945. The 1st Commando Brigade was disbanded in 1946.

MEDITERRANEAN THEATER

As mentioned earlier, three commandos were shipped to Egypt late in 1940. Due to wartime shipping constraints and convoy scheduling, these commando units did not arrive until March of 1941. Once in Egypt, Nos. 7, 8, and 11 Commandos were joined by Nos. 50 and 52 Commando, both locally raised and trained in Africa. All five commando units were placed under the command of Col. R. E. Laycock and the entire unit known as "Layforce."

The first raid undertaken by a Layforce unit was a raid on Bardia by No. 7 Commando, assisted by a small detachment of tanks from the Royal Tank Regiment on the night of 19/20 August, 1941. Making a quick night raid, the commandos caused enough consternation among the Germans that most of a German armored brigade was pulled from the line at Sollum to protect the fragile German supply line. While the raid wasn't much tactically, it was considered a strategic success, since it relieved some of the pressure on the British defensive line.

After this first success, a series of raids was planned along the entire German line of communications, but were never allowed to be carried out because of another outbreak of fighting. Giving another example of Blitzkrieg warfare, the German assault on Greece in April, caused the British army in Egypt to ship several divisions to Greece in its ill-fated attempt to stop the German tide once again. During the British withdrawal from Greece, all available shipping was needed to transport the army back from Greece to Crete and Egypt. As a precautionary action, No. 11 Commando was ordered to Cyprus to reinforce the British garrison.

During early May, 1941, the Germans made a determined air assault on Crete and was able to reinforce its assault units with a German Gebirgsjager Division. As the British forces were pushed southward into the small port of Sphakia for yet another seaborne withdrawal, the remaining four commandos were ordered into Crete as a fresh holding force. Arriving on the night of May 26, 1941, the commandos moved immediately into the mountains surrounding the port and established blocking positions along the mountain track leading into Sphakia (ASL Scenario A43). The only support weapons that the commandos were able to bring with them were a few LMG, but by clever use of the terrain and pure stubbornness, the commandos were able to hold back the German mountaineers, buying time for the British troops to withdraw.

Three tanks that could not be ship loaded, were supplied to the commandos on the 28th. By the 31st, most of the British and Greek units had been evacuated from Crete, but at a cost so high in ships that the commandos were left with almost no means of saving themselves. While many were captured, some made their way into the hills of Crete while others found a less conspicuous method to cross the Mediterranean Sea and returned to Egypt. By the end of the Balkan Campaign, the commando units of Layforce (in Crete) had suffered almost 75% casualties.

Gathering 75 men from what was left of No. 8 Commando, an abbreviated raiding force was sent to Tobruk to begin small scale raiding against the Italians manning a portion of the Axis lines encircling Tobruk. One notable raid was made during the night of July 18, 1941 against an Italian infantry/artillery position on two nearby hills known as the "Twin Pimples." Making an encircling march through the Italian lines, the commandos were able to gain an advantageous site right behind the Italian guns. As a prearranged demonstration was made by the 18th Indian Cavalry to draw the Italian attention, the commandos made a dash into the rear of the Italian artillery battery. After over-running the position, the commandos destroyed several ammo dumps and heavy mortars.

Remember No. 11 Commando in Cyprus? Even as the rest of Layforce was being decimated at Crete, the men of No. 11 were being prepared for their next assignment. Syria, in 1941, was a mandated territory administered by Vichy France. Pressured by Hitler, the Vichy government was allowing a slow buildup of Axis air power in Syria. Fearing a German attack on their weakly held eastern flank and rear, the British command (at the prompting of the Free French) decided to occupy Syria with Australian and Free French forces. After an initially rapid advance, the Vichy French were able to stop the Australians along the heavily defended Litani River.

It was decided that No. 11 Commando would make three landings along the Syrian coast north of the Litani River, flanking the Vichy French and freeing the Australians to continue their movement on Beirut. Two groups were able to make night landings north of the river and accomplished their missions after brief but heavy fire-fights. The third group was mistakenly landed south of the river, and were compelled to make an assault directly across the river in broad daylight. Though taking heavy casualties from French 75s (artillery), the commandos effected a crossing in small boats confiscated from native villages. With commandos in front and behind them, the Vichy French positions were taken by the end of the day and the Australians were moving northward again. No. 11 Commando took over 123 casualties (about 25%) but fulfilled the high expectations the British command had come to expect.

After the almost total destruction of Nos. 7, 8, 50, and 52 Commando on Crete and the heavy casualties suffered by No. 11 Commando in Syria, it was decided to disband Layforce in the late summer of 1941. Some of the remaining officers and men of the dissolved Layforce were rejoined into another commando unit entitled "Middle East Commando" (MEC) and was attached directly to the British 8th Army. By this time there were a couple of other special purpose units also operating in the western desert, namely the "Long Range Desert Group" (LRDG) and David Sterling's 62 Commando. The No. 62 Commando was developed expressly for desert raiding on a very small scale. After a couple of less than spectacular raids, this commando would be reconfigured and would become the very successful "Special Air Service" (SAS). The story of the LRDG and SAS units will have to wait until another time and another issue.

In November, 1941, General Rommel of the Afrika Korps was believed to be in Beda Littoria, where the 8th Army intelligence section had mistakenly placed his HQ. Disembarking from two submarines during the night of 13 November, 1942, several commandos were lost and some left on the submarines in bad weather. After spending Friday drying out their equipment and resting, LTCP J. Keyes led a reduced force of 39 officers and men on the raid. Moving stealthily across the desert for two days, Keyes and his raiders were finally at his objective. Starting at 1800 hours the raiders moved through a covering thunderstorm towards their final target. Their attack was timed to coincide with the 8th Army's November, 1942 offensive in an effort to paralyze the German command structure. After a short but intense fire-fight, LTC Col. Keyes discovered that this was not Rommel's HQ, but only a supply center and not a very important one at that! Retreating for two days back to their seaside rendezvous, the commandos arrived just minutes ahead of the Italians, only to find that the sea was running high and was too rough to embark the troops. The Commandos were finally found and attacked by Italian Arab levies reinforced by arriving Germans. Dividing the party into small groups, LTC Laycock ordered each group attempt to make their own way back to the British lines. After 41 days of hiding and walking LTC Laycock and his party returned to British lines.

Commando activity in the Mediterranean theater during 1942 was at a low ebb for most of the year. While there were several raids and reconnaissance forays made, most were by small four to ten-man groups whose purpose was not to fight, but to disrupt German supply routes with mines and booby traps. Several small recon missions were also carried out to acquire information concerning German fortifications, beach conditions and shore defenses.

One notable raid, and the last on North African shores, was attempted on the oil storage facilities at Tobruk in November, 1942. Here, some 300 miles behind the German lines (at El Alamein), the Middle East Commando supported by a contingent of Royal Marines would attempt to destroy the oil tanks and thus cripple the Germans ability to resist the upcoming British offensive at El Alamein. To aid the commandos, the SAS would also stage an attack at Benghazi while the Sudan Defense Force would raid the Giallo Oasis.

The advance shore party's radio signal was not detected by the Royal Marines, causing confusion in whether the Royal Marines should land or not. At 0210 hours the order was given to land a Marine party anyway, but this too was delayed by problems with the landing craft. Eventually the first wave was dispatched to shore and the support ships moved out to sea during the 30 minute landing time. When the ships returned, expecting to disembark a second wave of Marines, all they found was just one landing craft that had broken down. Closing in on the coast at 0415 hours, it was observed that fighting had broken out on shore between the first wave of Marines and the Axis defenders. With the mission already compromised and day starting to break, the mission was canceled as the raiding ships pulled back out to sea.

It was about this time that the primary mission of Commando units was changed from isolated raids to special assault troops who would lead any amphibious assault made by the Allies. Their first mission in this new role was "Operation Torch," the Allied invasion of French North Africa. As the U.S. 1st Ranger Battalion was landing at Arzew, British Commandos led the way at Algiers. The assault forces were composed of British and American units including No. I and No.6 Commandos shipped from England for employment in the Mediterranean theater. This was the first combined Allied operation and unit integration was a prime requirement. Integration of Allied units was very successful in the Algiers landings. Several rifle companies of the U. S. 168th Infantry were joined with No.l and No.6 British Commandos and the U.S. Ml Garand rifle was issued to the two Commandos. *(The Ml rifle was retained by these two commandos throughout the rest of the war.)*



4 Commando, having spearheaded the assault on Flushing, marches off on 4 November to cross the Flushing Gap and rejoin the 4th Commando Brigade in the dunes between Flushing and Westkapelle.

At Algiers, Algeria, the landings were, for the most part, peaceful and unopposed. This was just as well since the British LC crews had a rough time handling the American-made LCVP (landing craft) and the boats came ashore dispersed and spread across several hours with the last making landfall well after sunrise. Three boats loaded with commandos made a landing on Ilot de la Marine, a small rocky, fortified strongpoint inside the harbor where they were taken under fire by Vichy French defenders. The troop's Commanding Officer, Major A.S. Ronald was killed along with several commandos. After a short, intense fire-fight the rest of the commando troop was captured by the French.

Two days after the taking of Algiers, the commandos again were out in front as they took the airfield at Bone, Algeria just in time to allow the landing of the British paratroopers of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Parachute Brigade. One week later, No.6 Commando was moved into Tunisia by train while No.1 Commando sailed from Bone to Tabarka, Tunisia. The composite No.1 Commando, six British Troops, and four American Troops (168th Infantry) began the first of many raids outflanking and turning German and Italian positions. During these raids the composite unit controlled 125 miles of coastline up to five miles inland cutting a major portion of the Bizerte to Mateur highway and playing havoc with German logistic efforts. Several times these commandos resisted major German efforts to reopen the road with one crossroads battle lasting three days near Lake Garaet in Tunisia.

While No.1 was enjoying itself near the sea, No.6 Commando had been trying to take a German redoubt known as Green Hill east of Tabarka. After taking heavy losses and achieving nothing, assistance was provided by nearby British forces with no better results. This one German strongpoint never fell to any direct assault by Allied forces and was later abandoned by the Germans as they withdrew from North Africa. After being in continuous action for better than thirty days, the Commandos were reorganized back into 6-troop Commandos and all but 65 Americans, who joined the Commandos, were returned to the U.S. 168th Infantry.

January, and most of February, 1943, was spent in extensive patrolling by the Commandos. A small attack by sections of No.6 Commando was ambushed in turn by two battalions of the Herman Goering Jager Division on February 26 just as a major German counter offensive was starting along a fifty mile front. Along with a few armored cars, the commandos were able to resist the German attack until a battalion of Grenadier Guards along with a few Churchill tanks could re-stabilize the front.

After four months of combat, both units were below strength and were withdrawn from Africa in April, 1943. They were replaced by No.3 Commando, rebuilt after the Dieppe assault, and by No.40 and No. 41 Royal Marine (RM) Commandos who would lead the assault in the invasion of Sicily.

The Allied forces landed along the southeastern coast of Sicily on July 10, 1943, with the American 7th Army on the left and the British 8th Army on the right. The extreme left of the British army would be covered by the Canadian 1st Infantry Division with the Marines of No.40 and No.41 Commando covering the division's left flank near the village of Pachino. Making an uneventful landfall, except for some confusion with the LC, the Royal Marine Commandos were soon defending their small beachhead against a determined counterattack by the Blackshirt Battalion of the 206th Coastal Defense Division supported by heavy mortar and antitank fire. The Italian attack threatened to separate the commandos from the Canadians, but the initiative was recovered by the commandos with some assistance from a Canadian mortar battery. Quickly mounting their own counterattack, the commandos pursued the Blackshirts and were able to capture an Italian horse-drawn artillery battery and large quantities of ammunition. The next day the Royal Marines were withdrawn back into 8th Army Reserve.

In the northeast, the objective of No. 3 Commando was to land on the right flank of the British 5th Division and eliminate several machinegun positions overlooking the 5th Division's landing beaches in the Gulf of Noto. Finding the MG positions abandoned, the Commando immediately pushed on toward their secondary objective, a battery of guns northwest of Cassibik. Approaching the gun battery in the pre-dawn darkness, the Commandos used their 3" mortar to illuminate the battery as they poured small arms fire into the surprised defenders. The Italians put up a stiff fight that only ceased when the commandos breached their wire defenses and charged in amongst them.

After successfully occupying the southeast corner of Sicily, General Montgomery decided to make a breakout to Catania with a combined air-land-sea attack. With a massive land attack by the 50th Infantry Division, the 1st Parachute Brigade would make a night airdrop directly on Primsole Bridge south of Catania. In support of both operations, the men of No.3 Commando would make a seaborne assault at the mouth of the Simeto River. Landed by the Royal Navy at 2230 hours on July 13, the commandos quickly chased off the small detachment of Italian guards at the Malati Bridge, and immediately began setting up their defenses for the expected counterattack.

The counterattack did occur, and was much more violent than the commandos expected. In a day-long attack by an elite Italian Motorcycle Company, supported by an AT battalion and elements of the 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, the Commando suffered heavy casualties and had run dangerously low on ammo and supplies by mid-afternoon. Not seeing any relief in sight, Col. Durnford-Slater ordered his commandos into small groups to make their way back to British lines as best as they could.

A seaborne landing was made by No.2 Commando on August 15 at Cape D'Ali in an attempt to cut off retreating German units. Landed at the wrong beach, the Commando assisted by tanks and self propelled artillery, moved inland in their vain attempt as the Germans had already evacuated most of their forces. This ended the last commando action in Sicily by the British 8th Army, and the Commando was withdrawn back into army reserve.

Next was the invasion of Italy itself, and No.40 (RM) Commando along with two troops of No.3 Commando spearheaded the landing of the British 231st (Malta) Infantry Brigade at Port San Venere. Landing on September 9 against little opposition, the commandos led the infantry in the first major assault on Italian soil. Over at Marina Cove, west of Salerno, No.2 and No.41 (RM) Commandos landed without opposition and moved into the hills overlooking Marina, capturing six artillery guns along the way. Receiving some additional support in the form of six 6-pounder AT guns and an American 4.2" Mortar, the commandos spent the next six days repelling many German attempts to reinforce their lines at Salerno where the main Allied landings were made.

Another seaborne landing was made on October 3, 1943 by No.3 and No.40 (RM) Commandos at the small Adriatic port of Termoli. In a surprise assault, the commandos captured over 500 prisoners found sleeping on a train. Relieved that evening by regular infantry, the commandos found themselves called back into the lines the next day to assist in resisting a counterattack by the German 26th Panzer Division. Fighting against overwhelming odds for three days, the commandos held on to the town until additional relief arrived.

The 2nd Commando Brigade, composed of Nos. 2, 9, 40 (RM) and 43 (RM) Commandos with the Belgian and Polish troops of No. 10 Commando attached, was formed officially in November, 1943. During the campaign in Italy, the British 8th Army was destined to fight its way up the east coast of Italy while the commandos of the 2 Commando Brigade would spend the rest of the war making seaborne raids against various German positions in the Greek and Yugoslav islands and the Albanian mainland. There would be some exceptions (such as the loaning of No.9 Commando to the American 5th Army for a diversionary raid near Naples on December 29, 1943).

In January, 1944 No.9 and No.43 (RM) Commandos along with American Rangers spearheaded the landing at Anzio. Meanwhile, No.2 Commando with some regular army troops with AA guns were detached from the 8th Army and formed into "Force 133" for action in Yugoslavia. Force 133 arrived on the island of Vis January 16, 1944 and started a series of raids on German outposts along the Dalmatian coast, often in conjunction with Yugoslavian partisans.

Three major raids were made in the islands, one on Solta Island (March) by British commandos and 100 Americans from the Special Operations Group. The second raid was in early June when the Commandos

attacked the island of Brac with 1300 partisans. A major action even took place at the village of Himara in Albania (July) where a German outpost survived the Commando's onslaught for three days before the commandos returned to Vis. Elements of the 2 Commando Brigade returned to Albania in September to harass the Germans until the Germans pulled all their units out to help defend Germany in north-west Europe. With no transport of their own to pursue the Germans, the brigade returned to Ravenna in February, 1945.

The Brigade then spent six weeks fighting on the line so that many of their replacements could gain combat experience. A raft-borne assault was made across the Comacchio Lagoon (Po River valley) on 1 April 1945 and a wide spread of watery flats near Agenta, Italy was cleared by the 2nd Brigade during April, easing the way for a push by the V Corps through the Agenta Gap into northern Italy just before the German surrender on 2 May, 1945.

INDIA-BURMA THEATER

The British far east forces, fighting the Japanese, were the last to receive any commando units directly from England. Before the arrival of the commandos, special operations had been carried out by the famed British Chindits and the American Galahad long range patrol unit in the India-Burma theater and the Australian Independent Companies in the SW Pacific area. There were two small locally raised commando units in Burma. The first was established in 1942. It was called "Burma II Commando" and consisted of about 30 men. This small unit made the first commando raid in Burma on March 17, 1942 and destroyed Japanese installations at Henzada, Burma. Another unit was known as No. 142 Commando and was formed by volunteers from the Burma Rifles. While making no raid of their own, No. 142 Commando did accompany Brigadier Wingate's Chindits during their 1943 march into Burma.

The 3rd Commando Brigade was formed in November, 1943, and included Nos. 1, 5, 42 (RM and 44 (RM)) Commandos. The Brigade sailed from England that same month for the Burma theater. The transport ship carrying No. 1 and No. 42 (RM) Commandos suffered near-miss damage during a German bomb attack on the convoy and had to put in at Alexandria, Egypt for repairs. This caused a delay of several weeks, while the rest of the brigade continued on into the Indian Ocean.

At this time the British government decided that the French possession of Madagascar would have to be occupied and defended against a possible Japanese attack in the Indian Ocean. Along with several battalions of regular infantry, the commandos of No.5 were selected as assault troops since they were already in the area and were heading to India anyway. At 0430 hours on May 5, 1944, the commandos led the assault without encountering any opposition to the landings. Occupying Windsor Castle in the morning, the commandos moved overland to the outskirts of Diego Suarez village. It took an additional 36 hours to subdue the Vichy French forces and disable the gun battery on the north shore of the bay.

On the south side of the bay, the British regulars had been stalemated by stubborn French defense. An end-run was decided on, and 50 Royal Marines from No.44 (RM) were selected. Making a high speed run, a destroyer swept into the harbor and deposited its Marines in the town of Antsirane behind the French lines. Attacking anything and everything they saw, these Marines caused a disturbance. Losing their rear to the Marines, the French lines were broken and British troops swept into the town. The next day, the last two French forts surrendered and Madagascar was now a British port.

Nos. 5 and 44 (RM) Commandos reached Bombay, India in January 1944 and were assigned to the XV India Corps for acclimation of jungle conditions. Beginning on March 23, 1944 No.5 Commando made a series of patrols behind Japanese lines near Maungdaw, Burma. These patrols destroyed Japanese machinegun posts spread across several hills.

No.1 and No.42 (RM) Commandos landed in Ceylon in September 1944 and rejoined the 3rd Commando Brigade in November. Both of the newly arrived Commandos spent time with the XV India Corps in Burma while learning about jungle warfare and gaining experience in Japanese tactics. The entire brigade of four Commandos was now to see action together for the first time.

Rangoon, Burma was the prize, but to get there the British forces would have to take major portions of the Burma coast from the India border to Rangoon. For the first step, the island of Akyab would have to be secured. The 3rd Commando Brigade landed as a unit in the first wave leading the assault on Akyab Island off the Arakan coast in Burma January 2, 1945. Quickly establishing a beachhead, the commandos were relieved by the 26th Indian Division. This would be the first of a fast series of commando landings. The next landing was only ten days later.

Part of the British strategy in 1945 was to prevent the escape of the Japanese 54th Division through the An River Delta. To accomplish this mission, a small Japanese force on the Myebon Peninsula had to be isolated so they could not interfere with the main amphibious operation at Kangaw, Burma. Landing on January 12, the brigade cleared a path for the 74th Infantry Brigade to clear the Myebon Peninsula.

The beaches had been prepared with anti-boat obstacles of coconut logs, but a gap had been created by British demolition teams known as COPP. Using air delivered smoke bombs to cover the landings, the leading wave of No.42 (RM) Commando was able to get ashore suffering only one hit by a Japanese 75mm gun. The commandos advanced into the jungle toward Myebon Village until they ran into tougher Japanese resistance near a small hill code-named "Rose." Getting tank support from the 19th Indian Lancers, the men of No.5 Commando made a dawn assault the next morning, acquiring the hill.

No.1 and No.42 (RM) Commandos passed through No.5 Commando and continued the establishment of the beachhead by taking the village of Kantha and several of the hills nearby, preventing Japanese observation of British activities. As soon as the 78th Infantry Brigade was able to occupy their defensive positions, the Commandos were embarked back onto the waiting ships for their next assault nine days later.

Landing at 1300 hours on January 22 near Kangaw, No.1 Commando moved quickly between two small streams toward a height known as "Hill 170." Assisted by air strikes and some shelling from the Royal Navy, the commandos had taken all but the northern part of the hill. Meanwhile, No.5 had moved up behind No.1 as the Marine commandos attempted to occupy the flooded lowland below the hill. A series of Japanese counterattacks began the very next day and a detachment of No.44 (RM) Commando was forcibly removed from a nearby hill known as "Pinner." Despite heavy pressure from the Japanese the brigade defended Hill 170 for ten days and held the entire ridge against a day-long suicide attack on January 31.

After Burma, the brigade was withdrawn to India for refit and training for operations in Malaya. Just as the brigade was about to sail, the operation was canceled when British authorities were notified that an atom bomb was to be dropped on Japan. After the Japanese surrender, the brigade was shipped to Hong Kong for occupation duties.

FITTING THE COMMANDOS INTO ASL

Independent Companies—Fitting Britain's Independent Companies (Table 1) within the ASL system is extremely easy since they were almost a pure infantry force without any supporting units. As can be seen from Table 1, the HQ section would have a few squads representing the HQ staff, service and engineer troops. Vehicles for the entire company can be represented by a HS of motorcycles, a staff car and one 30-cwt truck. The three DCs allowed in the HQ company provides a small amount of HE support. There is, of course, no ASL equivalent for the company's Medical Staff and Armory sections.

Each Rifle Platoon which had four officers and 66 OR was divided into a HQ and three sections with an unusual number of men each. ASL squad MMC represent squads from about 8 to 13 men, but here we have a unit of 18 men with one leader. Just to keep things on an even keel in the ASL system, I have decided to use two 4-5-8 squads to represent each section since most British squads at that time had 8-10 men. The platoon HQ is also a bit large, but will only be represented by a 2-4-8 HS armed with a LMG. The whole platoon is led by an 9-1 or 8-1 SMC which can be determined by a random dr with a 1-2 providing a 9-1 SMC; otherwise, a 8-1 SMC should be used.

These units were outfitted with winter gear and camouflage uniforms for their Norwegian campaign and should be allowed winter camouflage [E3.712] capabilities. As always, the SAN should be influenced by the scenario design, but should generally start at 3 or 4 depending on whether the unit is attacking or defending. While the Independent Companies were not officially commandos, they had received commando style training and should be allowed commando benefits as per Hl.24.

Scenarios dealing with the Independent Companies should always be placed in Norway in May 1940. Ground Snow [E3.72] will almost always be in effect and the Independent Companies should be defending except in unusual cases. Only one Independent Company should be used in a scenario at one time. While sometimes they would be fighting with other British units, most of the time the only assistance allowed to an Independent Company should be Norwegian using the Allied Minors counters.

Special Service Brigade (1940)—The commando organization from 1940 to 1943 is extremely easy to mimic due to the simplicity of the command structure. The Special Service Brigade was composed of five battalions of two Commandos each, providing the British with ten Commandos. Each Commando had ten Troops of 50 men divided into a Troop HQ of four men and two Assault Sections. The first Troop would be led by the Commando Commanding Officer and would be represented by a 10-2 SMC. Ten DC are shown in the Commando and can be allotted throughout the troops as the leader sees fit. The HQ of each Troop is represented by a 9-1 or 8-1 SMC for leadership and a 2-4-8 HS. Leader SMC

"Any scenario based on actions of 1 and 6 Commando after November 1942, could accurately use the U.S. Marine 6-6-8 MMC [G17] as British Commando squads, substituting British National characteristics [A25.4], since both of these Commandos were equipped with the American Ml Garand rifle."

should be selected by random dr, with 1-3 = 9-1; otherwise, use an 8-1 SMC. Each Assault Section was subdivided into a Rifle section and a Bren Gun section. Each of these two sections would be well represented this early in the war by using the 4-5-8 MMC for the Rifle section and a 6-4-8 MMC with a LMG for the Bren Gun section.

You may have noticed by now that there is a real scarcity of SW in this lean team. This was caused by the restrictions placed on them by the British leadership during the early years when times dictated that most weapons be used for the defense of Britain's shoreline. SW can and should be used by commandos for scenarios during the early years, as each commando could draw weapons from a pool for their mission. An example is shown by the use of 3" mortars by No.3 Commando during the Vaagso Island raid in Norway.

Since marksmanship received heavy stress during training, the SAN of the Commandos should begin with a 2 and be increased by 1 for every troop used in a scenario OB to a maximum of 5. *(Notice that troop sizes change in 1943.)* Normal OBA would not be allowed, but Naval OBA [G14.6] could be used during any Commando Raid in Norway. Ground Snow [E3.72] will always be in effect during any raid in Norway or its islands.

Army Commandos (1943-45)—After the reorganization of 1943, each Commando decreased in manpower but was strengthened in its overall firepower. Each Commando (Table 3) now had 461 men in it divided into a HQ Troop, five Rifle Troops, and a Weapons Troop. The HQ Troop totaled 92 men, including a HQ (4 men), a HQ staff and drivers (67 men) and a signal platoon (21 men). Representing the HQ leadership, a 10-2 and 9-1 SMC would be selected along with six 6-4-8 MMC and a Radio for the HQ troops.

Each Rifle Troop of 66 men would have a Troop HQ section of six men and two Assault Sections of 30 men each. In each section would be two subsections of 15 men. Troop leadership would be shown by a 9-1 or 8-1 SMC selected by random dr (dr 1-3 = 9-1; otherwise, an 8-1 SMC) guarded by a 3-3-8 HS. SW shown in the HQ are a LMG and two DC usable by any member of the Troop. Because of the large number of men in a subsection, I selected the 6-4-8 MMC as the best representative of the Commando squads. The Weapons Troop had a HQ section of six men shown by a 9-1 SMC and a 3-3-8 HS, a 3" Mortar Section with three mortars and Carriers for transportation and a Machinegun (MG) Section with two MG and again two Carriers for transportation. Obviously, the Mortar Section would include three 76mm MTR with their attendant 2-2-8 Crews and three Carriers (Vehicle Note 67). The MG Section would have two MMG mounted on two MG Carriers (Vehicle Note 65) along with their crews. Because MMG crews usually only carried side arms with maybe one or two rifles, I selected two 2-4-8 HS as MMG crews. It should be noted that Commandos would be able to dismount their MMG with no loss of capability.

Royal Marine Commandos (1944-45)—The RM Commandos **(Table 4)** were modeled after the Army Commandos of 1943 so there would not be much difference. The HQ Troop is exactly the same with a total of 92 men and its ASL values would be identical. The Weapons Troop is also identical except for the number of 76mm MTR in each Weapons Troop with the RM only receiving two 3" mortars. The carriers for the Weapons Troop would be the same as those for the 1943 Army Commando. A difference in organization can be seen in the Assault Troops of the RM. With six less men, they show an increase in firepower that is demonstrated by the difference in tactics used by Army and Marines. The Troop HQ is the same, but the two sections are broken down into an Assault Subsection of 11 men shown by a 6-4-8 MMC with a LMG, and a Support Sub-section of 16 men represented by a 6-4-8 MMC armed with two DC and a 3-3-8 HS with a 2" MTR.

TABLE 4 Royal Marine (RM) Commando–1944

Unit	Manpower	ASL Equivalence
Commando	(431)	
HQ Troop	(92)	1 10-2
		1 9-1
		6 6-4-8
		1 Radio
5 Assault Troops	(60)	
Troop HQ	(6)	1 9-1/8-1*
		1 3-3-8 HS
2 Sections	(27)	
Assault Sub-section	(11)	1 6-4-8
		1 LMG
Support Sub-section	(16)	1 6-4-8
		1 3-3-8 HS
		1 2" MTR
		2 DC
Weapons Troop	(39)	
Troop HQ	(6)	1 9-1
		1 3-3-8 HS
3" Mortar Section	(17)	
2 Mortar Crews (ea)	(4)	1 2-2-8
		1 76mm MTR
Drivers & Support	(9)	2 Carriers*
MG Section	(16)	
2 MG Crews (ea)	(4)	2 2-4-8 HS
		MMG
Drivers & Support	(8)	2 Carriers*

*See Article

Some common characteristics to all Commando units would include the SAN which would be determined as it would be for the 1940 Commandos. Both OBA and Naval OBA would be allowed the 1943-45 Commandos (Army and Marine) using their normal rules. Air strikes [E7] would not only have the normal HE and Napalm (in 1945) but would also have SMOKE laying capability (White 5/8" Smoke Counter in target hex, normal Smoke rules apply after Smoke is placed).

All units listed here receive all Commando Benefits as described in H1.24 of the ASLRB. All commando organizations described should also receive an ELR of 5 unless historical references indicate otherwise. Of course any commando operation would have to be matched to its proper chapter for weather; the Mediterranean theater to Chapter F and the India-Burma theater to Chapter G.

[A special note: Any scenario based on actions of No.1 and No.6 Commando after November 1942, could accurately use the U.S. Marine 6-6-8 MMC [G17] as British Commando squads, substituting British National characteristics [A25.4], since both of these Commandos were equipped with the American Ml Garand rifle. Nos. 50 and 52 Commando scenarios should use the 1940 OB and be placed in the Mediterranean theater only.]

The Landing Craft of choice for all Commando actions (except D-Day at Normandy), should be the LCA (LC Vehicle-Note 2) and the LCI(S) (LC Vehicle-Note 5). For D-Day and all seaborne actions in NW Europe after May 1944, the U.S. LCVP (LC Vehicle Note 3) as well as LVTs and DUKWs (British Vehicle Notes 73 & 75) would be available. All Landing Craft (LC) [G12] and Seaborne Assault [G14] rules apply except that Commando LC Crews are never considered Inexperienced [G12.113]. In Italy, in 1944-45, some lake and river actions would allow the use of Assault Boats [E5.11] as well as Rubber Rafts [E5.12] and of course the Commandos would always be experienced in their use.

Commandos believed in getting the job done with a minimum of paperwork and fuss. Often in late 1944 and 1945, they were ordered to move long distances in a short period of time but were not allotted the transport necessary for the job. Not taking the time to submit requisitions, the commandos would readily appropriate whatever vehicle they found nearby. With this trait in mind, you should always allow any soft-skin vehicle, AC, and SC to be used in a NW Europe or Italian scenario without regard to nationality. Penalties for inexperienced Use and Captured Use would still apply.

As usual in my articles, a Standard OB **(Table 5)** is provided for the scenario designer or DYO player. Entire Commando units were and are very strong units in the ASL game system. As can be seen, any Commando will use a large number of squads and HS. Historically the entire Commando would often be used in any assault, but the actual fighting and mission assignment was broken down by Troops. I would also recommend that this type of breakdown be used by any scenario designers.

REFERENCES

If you want to read even more detailed information about the exploits of British Commandos, I recommend the sources below:

Controller of His Britannic Majesty's Stationary Office, Combined Operations, Kingsport Press, Inc. (US reprinting), Kingsport, TN, 1943.

Gregory, Barry, British Airborne Troop 1940-45, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, NJ, 1974.

Harvey, Marice, Scandinavian Misadventure; the Campaign in Norway 1940, Spellmount Limited, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, United Kingdom, 1990.

Hastings, Max, OVERLORD, Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, NY, 1984.

Howe, "Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West," U.S. Army in World War II, Department of the Army, Washington, DC.

Ladd, James, Commandos and Rangers of World War II, St. Martins Press, New York, NY, 1978.

Mitcham and von Stauffenberg, The Battle of Sicily, Orion Books, New York, NY, 1991.

Moulton, Maj. General J.L., Battle for Antwerp, Hippocrene Books, New York, NY, 1978.

★

TABLE 5 Standard ASL Commandos OB

Ind. Coy 1940	Commando 1940	Army Commando 1943	RM Commando 1944
9-2 SMC	10-2*	10-2	10-2
3x 9-1/8-1 SMC*	9x 9-1/8-1*	2x 9-1 SMC	2x 9-1 SMC
21x 4-5-8 MMC	20x 4-5-8 MMC	5x 9-1/8-1 SMC*	5x 9-1/8-1 SMC*
6x 2-4-8 HS	20x 6-4-8 MMC	26x 6-4-8 MMC	26x 6-4-8 MMC
3x LMG	10x 2-4-8 HS	16x 3-3-8 HS	16x 3-3-8 HS
3x DC	10x LMG	2x 2-4-8 HS	2x 2-4-8 HS
1x HS Motorcycle		3x 2-2-8 Crews	2x 2-2-8 Crews
1x Staff Car		2x MMG	2x MMG
1x 30-cwt Truck		3x 76mm MTR	2x 76mm MTR
		5x LMG	10x LMG
		10x DC	10x 50mm MTR
		1x Radio	1x Radio
		5x Carriers*	4x Carriers*

*See Article



ASL WINTER '95 ERRATA
The Official Corrections/Changes

The DASL Overlays

The *DASL* Overlays included with the Winter '95 Annual were printed a little small. As such, they do not fit the DASL mapboards properly. Therefore, the Avalon Hill Game Company gives you permission to color-copy these overlays for personal use only. In addition, Issue 30-3 of *The GENERAL* will include a correct set of these overlays.

Scenario Changes

Scenario A69 *Broich Bash*—The north arrow should be pointing down, not up.

Scenario A72 *Italian Brothers*—The Republican "Balance" should read: "Delete SSR 5."

Scenario A73 *Not out of the Woods Yet*—The Americans move first; the Germans set up first.

Scenario A76 *Night Drop*—The American "Balance" should read: "Delete SSR 5."

Scenario A77 *Hide & Seek*—Rotate board 14 180°.

Scenario A81 *They Fired On Odessa...*—The Russians enter along the west edge.

Scenario A82 *Orange at Walawbum*—Add three 50mm Mortars to the Japanese OB.

Scenario A84 *Endless Struggle*—Only hexrows B-FF are playable.

Scenario A85 *Airborne Samurai*—Game length is 7 ½ turns. Also, delete the first sentence of SSR 3.

Scenario A87 *The Grand Canal*—Victory Conditions should read as follows: "The Japanese win if they Control ≥ 30 printed stone buildings at game end; the 41U5 bridge is the equivalent of five printed stone buildings."

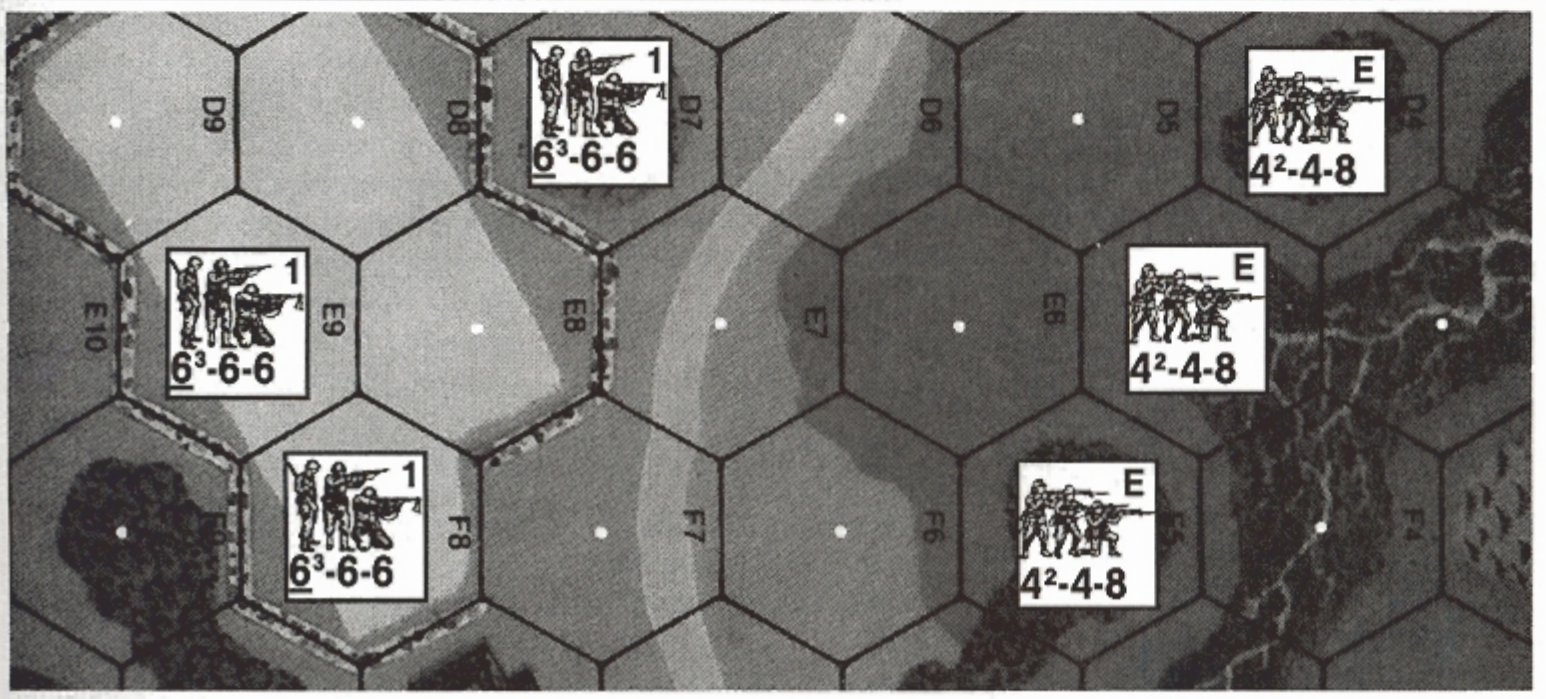
Scenario A88 *Surprise Encounter*—Rotate the north arrow 90° to the right, and board 34 180°.

The Annual 93b Q&A

The 93b Annual Questions & Answers were accidentally left out of this issue. An entire compilation of *all* Q&A will appear in the next issue of the Annual.

Scenario Credits

Bob McNamara, Brent Pollack, Laurent Forrest, and Jean-Luc Bechennez were accidentally left off the scenario designer's list.



The SOLITAIRE ASL Chapter S Divider

Entirely unrelated to this errata, but a problem we feel must be addressed, is an error on the Chapter S Divider of the newly released *ASL Solitaire*. The Squad Replacement Table on that divider is missing the text. When referring to this table, please see rule S17.82, which has the correct information.

GENERAL Scenarios for *ASL*

The following are all *ASL* scenarios which have appeared in the pages (usually on the insert) of The *GENERAL* to date. *30-2 Scenarios aren't listed.*

Scenario	Title	Issue
GEN-A	The Guards Counterattack	22-6
GEN-B	The Tractor Works	22-6
GEN-C	The Streets of Stalingrad	22-6
GEN-D	The Hedgehog of Piepsk	23-2
GEN-E	Hill 621	23-2
GEN-F	The Paw of the Tiger	23-5
GEN-G	Hube's Pocket	23-5
GEN-H	Escape from Velikiye Luki	24-1
GEN-I	Buchholz Station	24-4
GEN-J	The Bitche Salient	24-4
GEN-K	The Cannes Strongpoint	25-2
GEN-L	Hitdorf on the Rhine	25-2
GEN-M	First Crisis at AG North	25-3
GEN-N	Soldiers of Destruction	25-6
GEN-O	The St. Goar Assault	26-1
GEN-P	The Road to Wiltz	26-1
GEN-Q	Land Leviathans	26-2
GEN-R	Burzevo	28-3
GEN-S	The Whirlwind	28-4
GEN-T	Pavlov's House	29-6
GEN-G1	Timoshenko's Attack	23-3
GEN-G2	Last Act in Lorraine	23-6
GEN-G3	The Forgotten Front	23-6
GEN-G4	First Action	24-3
GEN-G5	Six Came Back	24-3
GEN-G6	Rocket's Red Glare	24-6
GEN-G7	Bring Up the Guns	25-3
GEN-G8	Recon in Force	25-5
GEN-G9	Sunday of the Dead	25-6
GEN-G10	Grab at Gribovo	26-2
GEN-G11	Pegasus Bridge	26-5
GEN-G12	Avalanche!	27-1
GEN-G13	A View from the Top	27-5
GEN-Gl4	Tiger, Tiger	28-3
GEN-G15	Bone of Contention	28-4
GEN-G16	Alligator Creek	28-5
GEN-G17	Hakkaa Paalle	29-2
GEN-G18	Goya	29-2
GEN-G19	A Tough Nut To Crack	29-3
GEN-G20	Camp Nibeiwa	29-3
GEN-G21	Cat's Kill	29-4
GEN-G22	A Day By the Shore	29-4
GEN-G23	Habbaniya Heights	29-5
GEN-G24	Mt. Comes to Mohammed	29-5
GEN-G25	The T-Patchers	30-1
GEN-G26	Parker's Crossroads	30-1
DASL-A	To the Last Man	24-1
DASL-B	The Kiwis Attack	29-6
HASL-A	Ghosts in the Rubble	27-1
GEN-T1	Gavin Take	24-2
GEN-T2	The Puma Prowls	24-2
GEN-T3	Ranger Stronghold	24-2
GEN-T4	Shklov's Labors Lost	24-2
GEN-T5	The Pouppeville Exit	27-2
GEN-T6	The Dead of Winter	27-2
GEN-T7	Hill 253.5	27-3
GEN-T8	Aachen's Pall	27-3
GEN-T9	The Niscemi-Biscari Highway	28-1
GEN-T10	Devil's Hill	28-1
GEN-T11	The Attempt to Relieve Peiper	28-2
GEN-T12	Hunters from the Sky	28-2
GEN-T13	Commando Raid at Dieppe	28-6
GEN-T14	Gambit	28-6
GEN-T15	The Akrotiri Peninsula	29-1
GEN-T16	Strayer's Strays	29-1



AMERICAN EAGLES

An Historical Look at US Paratroopers for *ASL*

By Steven C. Swann

We turn our attention again to the historical recitals of Steven Swann. Here, Steven takes us through the exploits of the US Paratroopers during WWII. At the end, Steven provides information on how to view and use American Paratroopers in *ASL*.

The first practical use of parachute military forces was developed by the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Here, in a defeated country torn by revolution, some of the most modern combat precepts had been developed, tested and proven correct. As described in "DESANTNIKI" *(General 26-2),* the Soviets showed off their new-found military skill in a series of war maneuvers held near Kiev in 1935. Of the military observers, only the Germans immediately saw the practical combat use of parachute forces. The British and American army officers decided that the use of air-landed forces had no practical application in modern combat. After the German use of parachute infantry in Norway (1940), the British started to seriously develop parachute forces, but the US Army would only "investigate the use of..." in a small way with the creation of the 501st Parachute Battalion (446 officers and men) in the fall of 1940.

CREATION and ORGANIZATION

In May, 1941, the Germans again demonstrated the use of massive airborne forces in their assault on Crete. Again the US Army allowing its thinking to be guided by General McNair, head of Army Ground Forces procurement and training, who felt that there was no need for special units within the US Army. General McNair believed that any normal army unit could be trained for special operations, and should be so trained only by the theater command. This training should only occur after a full investigation had been performed to determine the exact need. It should be obvious to most readers that it would be hard to have a "force in readiness" with this type of thinking.

The United States was slow in forming its own airborne divisions and many top commanders insisted (along with McNair) that there was no need for any parachute unit to be larger than battalion strength. They could then be parceled out or combined as the need arose in the different combat theaters. Luckily for the US Army, these ideas were embraced by some daring general officers who were able to learn from studying Germany's use of airborne troops.

In February, 1942, the War Department authorized the creation of an Airborne Command. The first four battalions were formed for training between March and September, 1942. The Airborne Command produced parachutists and began the training of glider troops. While the airborne division was recognized on paper, it was not thought of as a true division but as a collection of special purpose regiments and battalions that could be organized into "task forces" to meet a need.

After taking part in the planning and discussions for a cross-channel invasion of Europe, General McNair, in March 1942, was finally convinced that there was a real need for a formally structured airborne division. Two such divisions were authorized in August 1942. The first was to be created and renamed from the existing 82nd Infantry Division, and the second created and designated the 101st Airborne Division. The first parachute regiments were established from four battalions—raised from the 82nd Infantry Division. The first four Parachute Regiments were numbered after the four battalions then in training: the 501st through 504th Parachute Infantry Regiments. Each regiment had a manpower of almost 2000 troops and next to no vehicles.

A Parachute Division of 1942 (15-OCT-1942 (TO&E-7)) officially included a Divisional HQ, a HQ Company, MP Platoon, Quartermaster Company, Signal Company, an Ordnance Company, and a Medical Company for non-combat support functions. The combat arms of a Parachute Division included a Parachute Engineer Battalion, an AA/AT Battalion, an Artillery Regiment, one Parachute Infantry Regiment (with 1960 men), and two Glider Infantry Regiments (each with 1608 men).

The Parachute Engineers were organized like a normal Engineer unit except it was parachute-trained. Heavy engineering equipment was designated as glider transportable and arrived in the landing zone with the other glider units, while most of the LC platoons dropped into the combat zone alongside the parachute units to which they were attached.

The AA/AT Battalion **(Table 3*)** as it was originally created was composed of a battalion HQ, three auto-weapon batteries of AA guns or AT guns, and three batteries of AA machineguns. One of the machinegun batteries was converted to a AT battery in the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions since both of these divisions had four regiments assigned after D-Day.

Each auto-weapon battery had a manpower of 74 men and eight each of jeeps, trailers and guns. The guns were designated in the TO&E as 37mm AT guns or 40mm AA guns even though these weapons never saw combat with the airborne divisions. By the time the 82nd Airborne Division saw combat, its weapons had been replaced with the 57mm AT Gun. August 1944 saw the addition of motorcycles to the HQ and batteries and in December, 1944 the manpower jumped from 74 to 116 men per battery and the number of jeeps doubled.

The machinegun Batteries had 75 men per battery equipped with twelve .50 caliber heavy machineguns with six jeeps and trailers for transport. Scooters and hand carts were also provided to the batteries as an alternate means of ground transport. Even though the jeeps were removed from the TO&E in the August, 1944 reorganization, they were reinstated later in the revised December, 1944 TO&E.

The Divisional artillery assets included one regiment of three field artillery (FA) battalions. Two of these FA battalions were to be glider-borne while the third battalion would be parachute capable. All airborne artillery units were initially equipped with the MlA1 75mm Pack Howitzer. Structure within each battalion was varied and depended on the whim of the battalion commander. Some battalions used three four-gun batteries while others formed two six-gun batteries. As the war continued, a few battalions picked up some extra artillery pieces and were able to equip four four-gun batteries, like the 376th Parachute FA Battalion. A very few glider FA battalions were later outfitted with the M3 105mm Howitzer, which had been designed to be air-portable.

(*all Tables can be found at the end of this article on page 48.)

Rocket Launchers (Bazookas) were initially issued to the divisional artillery regiment, but this arrangement was not satisfactory since the Bazookas weren't much good behind the infantry front lines. After February 1944, almost all Bazookas were carried within the infantry organizations and the number of Bazookas available to the division was increased from 182 to 263.

A Parachute Infantry Regiment (**Table 1**) under the 1942 TO&E included a HQ Company, a Service Company and three infantry battalions. Regimental vehicles included a light car, thirteen jeeps, sixteen 2 1/2 ton trucks, and two ambulances, all assigned to the Service Company. The Service Company was not meant to be air transportable and was to link-up with the regiment after ground elements created a passage to the airborne units. Each regiment was assigned approximately 70 medical personnel. At the time of the Normandy Invasion, each regimental HQ company was equipped with four .50 cal. machineguns.

The early 1942 Glider Infantry Regiments (**Table 2**) each had 1608 officers and men organized into a Regimental HQ, a HQ Company, a Service Company to handle supplies, and two Glider Infantry Battalions of 558 officers and men. Each battalion was composed of a battalion HQ and three Glider Infantry Companies (127 men) with a Weapons platoon and two Rifle platoons. The Weapons platoon included both light mortar and machinegun sections and each rifle platoon had its own mortar section.

Because of a lack of transport aircraft and gliders during the early months of World War II, the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions were reorganized with two parachute infantry regiments instead of one, and the Glider Infantry was reduced to just one regiment. The other three airborne divisions, (11th, 13th, and 17th), were established using the official TO&E of 1942 until they were reorganized under the December 1944 TO&E. The 11th Airborne Division was destined to see combat action in the South Pacific under the command of General MacArthur's SWPA Command. The 13th Airborne Division arrived in Europe so late during the war that it would be the only American Division to enter Europe and never engaged in active battle. The 17th Airborne Division included the 507th, 513th Parachute Infantry Regiments and the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment.

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

In 1942, it was decided that there should be an American parachute unit in the European theater, so the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, was shipped over to Britain. It would be the only American parachute troops available to the Allied command for a while. Early in the summer of 1942, **OPERATION TORCH** was designed to bring about the invasion of North Africa. The 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment (already in England), was chosen as the American representatives in the airborne portion of the assault. They would board 39 C-47 transport aircraft in Cornwall, England and then fly directly to North Africa and jump on two French airfields at La Senia and Tafaraoui during the early morning hours of the operation.

After an uneventful take-off (Nov. 6, 1942) and flight to the Bay of Biscay, the transport formations began to break up and scatter as they were flying through Spanish airspace. As the flights rose to pass over the mountains in Spain, only about three aircraft were left in each original flight of nine. By the time the transports reached Algeria, ground fog conditions destroyed any possibility that the 2nd Battalion would jump together and then act as a single unit. The planes and the battalion would eventually be re-united but now were scattered and landing in locations like Spanish Morocco (4 planes), French Morocco (2 planes), and Gibraltar (1 plane). Of the 32 aircraft that did reach Algeria, six planes dropped their troops in rugged terrain while another 12 aircraft placed their troops in the Lourmel far to the south of their target area. Three planes were forced down by Vichy French fighters and the paratroopers were captured as prisoners. The largest group, 16 C-47s, landed on a dried salt lake near Oran, and set up defensive positions on the spot. Only 300 of the 2nd Battalion's 556 officers and men could be mustered for their advance into Tunisia. Obviously, the American paratroopers did not shine on their first combat mission, but most of the problems were inherent to the type of long distance planning that was in vogue with senior US officials at that time.

The 2nd Battalion learned well from these foul-ups and proved itself to be a better unit when it made its second combat jump on November 15, 1942. This time the reduced battalion was on-time and on-target as the paratroopers stepped out over a small airfield named Youks-les-Bains near the Algeria-Tunisia border. The French reception was a lot friendlier here than it had been earlier in the month, even to the point where the American paratroopers and the French soldiers fought side-by-side against Italian elements of the Africa Korps on November 17, 1942.

"The US 5th Army landed in Italy in the Gulf of Salerno on September 9, 1943 with units of the US Rangers. The 82nd Airborne Division was held in reserve for the initial landings but was called into Italy a few days later to assist US forces that were under heavy counterattack."

On December 24, 1942 a small raiding party of paratroopers selected from the now independent 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion (formally the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Regiment) made a night jump on a sabotage mission deep behind German lines in North Africa. Lieutenant Dan De Loe led 29 paratroopers in an attempt to destroy a bridge used by Rommel's supply railroad at a hamlet near El Djem. After blowing up the railroad span, the paratroopers split into pairs and tried to make their way back to Allied lines. Only eight of the original 30 paratroopers returned (including Lt. Dan De Loe).

For the invasion of Sicily, code-named **OPERATION HUSKY,** the 82nd Airborne Division was attached to the US 7th Army which was part of the 15th Army Group. The attack plan called for two American parachute drops at night, Husky 1 and Husky 2. Husky 1 would drop the 505th RCT (Regimental Combat Team) just before midnight on July 9, 1943. The 505th was to take and hold the high ground around Piano Lupo, seven miles northeast of Gela, and disrupt the Germans communications and reinforcement attempts in any manner possible. The 504th Parachute Battalion would jump over Sicily as part of Husky 2 during the night of July 10-11, and was supposed to be dropped into the same area as Husky 1. The third regiment of the 82nd Airborne, the 325th Glider Infantry, was not scheduled to be used in Sicily since all available Gliders had been turned over to the British for their portion of the attack.

A combination of factors (poor wind conditions, inexperienced pilots, and lack of night training), forced the transport wing delivering the American paratroopers to Sicily to fail its mission. The Americans were scattered from Niscemi in the west to Santa-Croce Camerina at the extreme eastern end of the American landing areas. At least twenty-three plane loads of US paratroopers landed in the British sectors, costing them several days delay before rejoining their units in the west. Many paratroopers were injured with broken ankles, legs and arms.

This misplacement of the paratroopers may have indirectly aided the invasion. Not knowing where or how many paratroopers had been dropped demoralized the Italian and German defenders. With reports from so many scattered areas and further confused by thousands of dummy paratroopers, General Guzzoni (commanding) believed that he was being assaulted by three or four airborne divisions numbering up to 50,000 men, when in fact only one American regiment had been dropped.

While most American paratroopers were dropped in the wrong zones, there were some troopers that actually landed where they were supposed to, albeit in smaller numbers. Colonel Arthur Gorham, CO of the 1st Bn/505th, collected what few men that could be found in the dropzone and attacked his objective, capturing two Italian AT Guns, which were then used to bolster the paratrooper's slim defenses *(ASL Scenario T9).*

The 504th Parachute Regiment was dropped as planned on the night of July 10-11, but it was even worse for them than it had been for the 505th. Besides the problems mentioned above, there was a new factor in Sicily now, the US Anti-aircraft Artillery Battalions that accompanied each infantry and armor division. Even though General Patton had issued orders and instructions that the planes would be coming over from the sea, the skittish anti-aircraft gunners opened up on the slow moving transports anyway. *(Their reaction was somewhat justified since they had just undergone a bombardment by the German Luftwaffe.)* Transports and paratroopers were shot down in a blaze of tracer fire that lit up the entire American area. Some paratroopers were killed while still in their harness. When the sun rose on the

11th, only 400 men out of 2304 troopers of the 504th could be found in the Gela area. Twenty-three of the 144 C-47 Transports were destroyed in the air after most of them had discharged their paratroopers, while another 37 aircraft suffered heavy damage. After this disaster all airborne operations were ordered to cease by the Supreme Allied Commander, General Eisenhower, until a full investigation could be made.

On July 11, the Axis forces on Sicily began their first counterattacks against the Allied invaders. In the hills overlooking the American western sector, the Italian Livorno Division and the German Herman Goring Panzer Division led the counterattack on a broad front with the object of retaking the port town of Gela. Even before the Italians and Germans could reach the main US forces, they had to first make their way past dozens of small units of the 82nd Airborne. While most of the paratroopers could only harass the Germans and Italians, there were a few exceptions, like Hill 41. Here, the 2nd Bn/16th Infantry had joined up with the paratroopers but without their heavy weapons. Setting up the best defense possible, this combined American force was able to repel elements of the German Panzer Division after some very heavy fighting.

And so it went in Sicily. As the first days wore on, the paratroopers gradually found their parent units and became a coherent division again. On July 18, the 82nd Airborne was combined with the 3rd Infantry and 2nd Armored Divisions into the Provisional Corps for the march on Palermo. Fighting as leg infantry, the paratroopers entered Palermo on July 23 with their "Corps." After the conquest of western Sicily, the 82nd Airborne had to assume an unusual role for such elite troops, that of placing the Sicilian towns under military governorship. Doing their usually superb job, the paratroopers were able to provide a semblance of normalcy to the civilian population within a few days. In August, 1943, the parachute elements of the 82nd were recalled from the front lines and rejoined with their glider regiment.

The US 5th Army landed in Italy in the Gulf of Salerno on September 9, 1943 with units of the US Rangers. The 82nd Airborne Division was held in reserve for the initial landings but was called into Italy a few days later to assist US forces that were under heavy counterattack. The 82nd Airborne Division remained a part of the US 5th Army in Italy until it was withdrawn to England to begin its training for Operation **OVERLORD,** the invasion of France.

During September, 1943, the independent 509th made a battalion-size jump some 25-30 miles behind the German lines at Salerno, Italy in order to help relieve the pressure on the US 5th Army. After being dropped over a 400 square mile area, the battalion quickly took on the Germans wherever they found them in fire-fights ranging in size from squad to company.

As part of the US 5th Army's attempt to bypass the German's defensive line at Cassino, the 509th Parachute Battalion went ashore at Anzio in January, 1944. It was through the lines of the 509th that the 1st and 3rd US Rangers passed in their fateful assault on Cisterna that destroyed the Rangers (Darby's Rangers, *General* 25-5). During their stay within the Anzio Beachhead, the paratroopers fought as ground infantry supplemented by support units from the US 3rd Division.

Back in England, the 82nd Airborne had infantry components consisting of the 504th and 505th Parachute Infantry Regiments and the 325th Glider Infantry Regiments prior to June, 1944. During preparations for D-Day, it was found that the 82nd Airborne Division would be unable to use the 504th, leaving the division under-strength by one regiment. After Anzio the 504th Parachute Regiment was sent to a refitting camp and would be unavailable for the massive air drop preceding the Normandy Invasion on June 6, 1944. The 82nd Airborne Division was brought up to excessive combat strength with the addition of two parachute regiments, the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment and one other.

"The American airborne portion of D-Day began at 0130 hours when the first paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division stepped out of their transport aircraft over Normandy France."

The 101st Airborne Division, now a four regiment division, included the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment, and the 501st, 502nd, and 506th Parachute Infantry Regiments. Both the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions would continue using their own TO&E of three parachute infantry regiments and one glider infantry regiment until the end of the war.

The American airborne portion of D-Day began at 0130 hours when the first paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division stepped out of their transport aircraft over Normandy France. The 82nd were close behind their compatriots as they began jumping at 0230 hours. As in previous air drops, the paratroopers were scattered over most of Normandy in small packets, and as usual, the paratroopers didn't wait for any direction, but took the war to any and all Germans wherever found.

Over the period of June 6th and 7th, the glider elements of both airborne divisions were brought into Normandy, rapidly building up the number of guns, infantry and recon units. These airborne units would spend the next 33 days fighting as ground infantry before being relieved from the front lines and allowed to rest and refit. Rather than go through a long description of the Normandy action, I am going to refer you to the *ASL PARATROOPER* Module (Scenarios ASL 11 to ASL-18) and to scenarios ASL-T1 and T5. The D-Day invasion of Europe is one of the most written about campaigns of World War II and information is easy to find on this subject.

The Allied assault against the German 19th Army in southern France came on August 15, 1944. For this operation, called **OPERATION DRAGOON,** the First Airborne Task Force (FABTF) was created. The FABTF, using the code name "Rugby Force," was a collection of independent and attached units combined just for this operation. The FABTF included the reinforced 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 550th Glider Infantry Battalion, the 551st Parachute Infantry Battalion, and the British 2nd Independent Parachute Brigade.

The 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, making its first combat jump, was supported by the 460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, the 596th Parachute Engineer Company, an AT platoon from the famed 422nd Infantry Regiment (Nisi: Japanese-American) equipped with British 6-pounder AT guns and Company D, 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion equipped with 4.2" mortars. The 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment had the 463rd Parachute Field Artillery Battalion attached while both the 550th Glider Infantry Battalion and the 551st Parachute Infantry Battalion had a platoon from the 887th Engineering Company attached. The British 2nd Independent Parachute Brigade was supported by the US 2nd Chemical Mortar Battalion. All FABTF units except the actual parachute infantry were to be inserted into southern France in American and British gliders.

The primary objective of the FABTF was to occupy and fortify the town and surrounding area of Le Muy, France. Le Muy was a major crossroads junction for the area just behind the invasion beaches where the main American forces would come ashore. By taking and holding the Le Muy area, the FABTF would be able to disrupt any reinforcement attempt by the German 19th Army.

An ill-wind seemed to be blowing the parachutists' way, as the first wave of paratroopers were split up by wind and fog and dropped across a 30 mile stretch of southern France. The second wave fared just as poorly as the first. Only the glider units were able to arrive in their landing zones relatively intact, but suffered many injuries from anti-glider stakes planted in the open field around Le Muy. Working in small groups and picking up stragglers wherever they could. The paratroopers began a war of terror and nerves against the skittish Germans along the coast. As these paratroop units picked up more and more lost men from the countryside, they began to take on larger German units until the German rear area defenses were paralyzed. Even though the American paratroopers did not achieve their objectives as planned, their resourcefulness and individual aggressiveness allowed them to accomplish the same thing. Reorganizing after being relieved by the regular infantry, the British were removed from the FABTF but were replaced by the 1st Special Service Force with orders to secure the remaining southern coast of France (*ASL* Scenario K).

For **OPERATION MARKET-GARDEN,** two American airborne divisions, the 82nd and 101st, were assigned to the British 1st Airborne Corps which included the British 1st Airborne Division and the Polish 1st Independent Parachute Brigade. The US 101st Airborne Division was to capture four bridges over the Aa River, as well as the bridges over the Zuid Willemsvaart Canal (at Veghel) and the Wilhelmina Canal (at Son) and the town of Eindhoven. The 82nd Airborne was to capture three bridges, one over the Maas (at Grave), another over the Waal (at Nijmegen), and the third over the Maas-Waal Canal.

The transport portion of the operation went much better than any previous airborne operation. The aircraft formed and were guided to Holland via radio beacons. As they arrived over German occupied territory, several dozen aircraft were lost to German flak, but in comparison to the total operational aircraft the number was very small indeed. In fact, most aircraft were able to deposit their human cargoes just as planned since there was no German resistance in the air. The entire leading wave of paratroopers and gliders were dropped on time and on-target on September 17, 1944.

On Monday, the German II SS Panzer corps was directed against the 82nd Airborne in the Nijmegen area. On September 20, 1944, elements of the 82nd Airborne supported by British tanks were finally able to force their way across the Waal River and capture the bridge there (*ASL* Scenarios 25 & T10).

The 101st Airborne was dropped just north of Eindhoven only a few miles from the HQ of General Student, commanding the German 1st Parachute Army. The three regiments of the 101st were to capture a 15 mile stretch of highway that ran from Eindhoven to Veghel. In a series of tense battalion and regimental struggles, the American paratroopers were able to open the highway to British traffic (*ASL* Scenarios A32, A34, & A36).

The massive German armored assault of December 16, 1944, broke through the weak US lines and once again the Germans began a march to the sea that would soon become known as the *Battle of the Bulge*. Immediately after the Germans had broken the front lines, the 101st Airborne Division received orders to move into the area around a small city known as Bastogne. While en route, the 101st picked up, scrounged, collected and was assigned a mixed bag of attached units, making it the strongest self-contained airborne unit in the war to date. Some of these units included 40 tanks from CCB, 10th Armored Division, the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 35th Engineer Battalion, two battalions of 155mm Artillery and "Team Snafu." Team Snafu was a rag-tag collection of lost troopers, and stragglers collected by the 101st and formed a replacement pool of personnel. Units included in the stragglers list would be elements of the 9th Engineer Battalion, twelve guns of the 73rd and the 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalions. Contact was made between the American paratroopers and the advancing Germans during the night of December 18 just three kilometers east of Bastogne. The two opponents would remain in contact until the German offensive petered out in January, 1945 (*ASL* Scenarios 23 & 24).

The separate 509th Parachute Battalion joined the battle on December 20 when it was ordered from France to the "Bulge." By December 22, the 509th was joined with the 1st Bn/517th Parachute Regiment to defend a line running from Soy to Hutton (7 miles) on the north flank of the bulge. With little more than side-arms and bazookas, the battalion held off armored elements of the *2nd SS Panzer Division,* suffering heavy casualties in the process. Later the battalion fought a couple of bitter actions at Sadzot, Belgium, on December 27 and 28. The 509th participated in the retaking of St. Vith from January 13 to 23, 1945. Unfortunately, these last few actions would cost the battalion its existence as a unit. At the end of the Ardennes Campaign, seven officers and 48 men were still left in the battalion of 745 men who had entered the battle on December 20, 1944. The 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion was officially deactivated on March 1, 1945.

Another independent parachute unit, the 551st Parachute Infantry Battalion was called from southern France to Belgium in December. The 551st had taken part in the invasion of southern France but was desperately needed to assist in the reinforcing of the American lines in the Ardennes. By December 21, the 551st was attached to the 30th Infantry Division near Stavelot, available to fill in for any unit which had to be pulled due to casualties. The 551st was then transferred to the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne on December 26, 1944. During the night of December 27-28 the battalion raided the German 62nd Volksgrenadier Division in the tiny hamlet of Noirefontaine. On January 3, the battalion participated in the offensive against Basse Bodeaux again fighting elements of the 62nd Volksgrenadiers as well as a less than impressive 669th Ost Battalion (a unit of pressed Russians).

"The 17th Airborne was in England at the start of the Battle of the Bulge and was moved over into Holland to be used as a strategic reserve beginning on December 17, 1944. After contact had been made by Patton's armored divisions with the "Battered Bastards of Bastogne," the 17th Airborne (along with the 11th Armored Division) headed for Bastogne."

On January 7, 1945, the 551st Parachute Infantry Battalion was ordered to take the village of Rochelinval, Belgium from the defending 183rd Volksgrenadier Regiment. These Germans were backed by a 88mm flak regiment and a battalion of 105mm artillery. When the American artillery preparations did not appear, the CO of 551, Colonel Joerg, requested a cancellation of the attack. Ordered to attack anyway, the 551st started across the open snow-covered ground into the face of intense German resistance. The village was taken along with over 200 dead Germans and 400 German prisoners but had reduced the 840 man parachute battalion to only 114 officers and men. On January 8, the 551st repulsed a German counterattack by the *18th Volksgrenadiers.* The 551st Parachute Infantry Battalion was relieved from the line on January 8, and only 98 men left the Ardennes using their own power of the over 800 men that had arrived on December 21, 1944. On February 10, 1945, the remaining men of the 551st were disbanded and turned over to the 82nd Airborne as replacements. The 551st was no longer a viable unit.

Meanwhile, the 82nd Airborne had been ordered to a small village known as Werbomont on December 17, 1944. On December 20, the 82nd Airborne made their first attack against *Kampfgruppe Peiper* (*KGP I* Historical Module) to seal the German bridgehead at Cheneux and were actually able to clear the Germans from the bridgehead by the afternoon of the 22nd. The Panzers of *Kampfgruppe Peiper* also ran into the American paratroopers at La Neuville and Trois Ponts but were repulsed by the paratroopers, whose only support were their own engineers. While the two parachute regiments were taking on the famous kampfgruppe, the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment was protecting the 82nd's backside from the 2nd SS Panzer Division moving west from Houffalize.

Though the 82nd Airborne did not share in any of the glory at Bastogne, they did get their fair share of fighting in during the Battle of the Bulge. Deployed in the Cheneux area of Belgium, the 82nd would prevent any penetration of German units westward of their positions during the entire campaign (*ASL* Scenarios G6 & TI1).

The 17th Airborne was in England at the start of the *Battle of the Bulge* and was moved over into Holland to be used as a strategic reserve beginning on December 17, 1944. After contact had been made by Patton's armored divisions with the "Battered Bastards of Bastogne," the 17th Airborne (along with the 11th Armored Division) headed for Bastogne. Even though they missed being in any major engagement, the 17th Airborne Division was able to take part in some of the mopping-up operations as the *Battle of the Bulge* began to taper off in January, 1945. Attached to the 17th Airborne was the famous 761st Tank Battalion, which helped reclaim the villages of Gouvy, Hautbillian, and Wattermal.

There was a TO&E (TO&E-71) change that occurred in December 1944, which brought about massive manpower changes to the airborne divisions. A recon platoon and a parachute maintenance company were officially added to the division's TO&E, and the division's infantry complement was changed to one glider infantry regiment and two parachute infantry regiments. While this change did not affect the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions (they were deep in the *Battle of the Bulge*), it did cause some confusion to the other three airborne divisions, especially the 17th Airborne Division which was in the last stages of preparation for its combat jump across the Rhine River into Germany while remaining ready to assist in the Ardennes.

The December, 1944 divisional recon platoon **(Table 4)** was a small unit of 64 officers and men outfitted with armed jeeps. Jeeps were the only vehicle of choice for the paratroopers since they could be easily transported in the standard gliders by the airborne divisions. To provide better protection to the Recon personnel, the front aspect of these jeeps was covered with armor plate and each jeep was armed with either a machinegun or bazooka. Each Recon Platoon included a HQ Section of 16 men, and two Recon Sections of two squads each. Each

Recon Section had a HQ group of six men and each squad was composed of nine men. Support weapons supplied included .50 caliber machineguns and Bazookas.

A US Airborne Parachute Infantry Regiment as established under the new December, 1944 TO&E, included a manpower of 2364 officers and men divided into a regimental HQ, a HQ Company, a Service Company and three parachute infantry battalions, each with an authorized 706 men. Each parachute infantry battalion (**Table 1**) was composed of a battalion HQ and HQ Company and three parachute rifle companies each of 176 men. Each company was equipped with a HQ of 35 officers and men and three 47-man rifle platoons of three rifle squads, a single mortar squad, and a small platoon HQ section.

The US Glider Infantry Regiments saw a manpower increase to 2978 officers and men set up similar to the parachute regiments with a HQ, HQ Company, a Service Company, and three glider infantry battalions (**Table 2**) of 863 men. Besides the normal three rifle companies, a glider infantry battalion also included a weapons company of 81mm mortars, an AT Gun company including three AT gun platoons and a AT mine platoon. Each of the three glider infantry companies formed a HQ platoon, a weapons platoon equipped with machineguns and mortars, and three rifle platoons of three squads each. With the TO&E change, all support weapons came under the command of the HQ platoon within the company.

In Europe, **OPERATION VARSITY** was a planned Allied assault to cross the Rhine River south of Rees, Germany. Unlike previous airborne operations, this attack was planned around the use of airborne forces after the initial assault by ground units had begun. After nightfall on March 23, 1945, the British 2nd Army began their crossing of the Rhine River using LCVP and LCM landing craft. The German reaction was immediate but was brought to a crawl when the British 6th Airborne and the US 17th Airborne Divisions made their air attack on the morning of March 24th. Unlike many earlier airborne operations, this time the entire airborne force, American and British, were dropped and/or glider landed all at the same time providing the massive impact that would dominate their respective battlefields.

The paratroopers' goal was to seize the high ground, known as the *Diersfordterwald*, a few miles east of the Allied bridgehead to deny the Germans any observation of the British troop movements, and to capture the bridges north of Wesel which would cut off German reinforcements. The 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment dropped just to the south of the forest (Diersfordterwald) while the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment landed east of the forest near the Issel River and assisted the British 12th Devrons in the capture of Hamminkeln (*ASL* Scenario T12). The 194th Glider Infantry Regiment made their landfall just east of the Issel River. It is felt by many historians that Operation Varsity was an airborne operation that did not justify the casualties the paratroopers suffered since the Germans were in full retreat by the end of March 24. In this operation the US paratroopers had the opportunity to establish a working knowledge of British armor methods as the 17th Airborne joined with the British Guards Armored Division for the last few days of Operation Varsity.

By April, 1945, the 101st Airborne Division had been deployed along the west bank of the Rhine River facing the Ruhr pocket at Dusseldorf, while the 82nd Airborne had be deployed in like manner from Worringen to Bonn. The biggest problem that the paratroopers had during this deployment was trying to keep track of the 10,000 freed Russian prisoners who were marauding around the German countryside looting and pillaging the German civilians. The 82nd Airborne was destined to cross the Rhine River, but as "leg" infantry later in April, 1945. One attempt was made by the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment at Hitdorf, Germany (*ASL* Scenario L).

The 17th Airborne Division, as part of the US 9th Army, fought as ground troops in the campaign to reduce the Ruhr Pocket which began on April 6, 1945. One regiment of the 17th Airborne was joined with some cavalry vehicles and a couple infantry divisions to create a fast moving task force known as "Taskforce Twaddle." On April 7, this task force cut through the German defenses capturing Gelsenkirchen, followed by the capture of Hamm on April 8. Two days later, after a run-in with the 116th Panzer Division, the task force rolled into Unna, Germany. The paratroopers themselves captured the German city of Essen.

During April and May of 1945, the 13th Airborne Division was assigned to the US Sixth Army Group as it over-ran the last German resistance in the southern redoubt area of Germany. The movement of the veteran ground units was so rapid that the 13th Airborne Division never saw combat as an entire unit, even though the division had planned two different parachute operations in support of the 6th Army Group. In both cases, the ground troops reached the objectives before the planning stages of an airborne operation was completed.

PACIFIC AIRBORNE

Out in the Pacific, parachute forces started making their appearance with the arrival of the 503rd Parachute Regiment. After the conclusion of the Kokoda Trail/Buna campaign in New Guinea by a combined Australian-American force, General MacArthur turned westward along New Guinea's northern shore in a determined assault against the Japanese air base at Lae in Northeast New Guinea. As part of this campaign, it was decided to air-lift the Australian 7th Division for most of the distance so that it could arrive in a relatively fresh condition. For this, an airfield was needed, and an old emergency airstrip at Nadzab a few miles west of Lae was chosen. On September 5, 1943, elements of the rebuilt and independent 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment made an air drop over Nadzab, in a joint operation with Australian parachute artillery. The quick capture of the airstrip by the 503rd Parachute Infantry allowed the Australian 7th Division to begin its airlift the very next day, and relieved the paratroopers two days later. For the Australian artillerymen, this was their first jump and they were considered honorary parachutists by the 503rd thereafter. The 503rd then assisted in the capture of the Japanese air base at Lae which fell to Allied forces on September 16, 1943.



On July 3, 1944, American paratroopers of the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment advanced Allied forces to the western end of New Guinea with an uncontested air-drop at Noemfoor Island. After August, 1944, minor changes were made to the TO&E of the Airborne Divisions, but these changes only affected the amount of equipment allotted to each division; it didn't choose the manpower of the fighting units.

The 11th Airborne Division had (by now) arrived in the Pacific. This division was composed of the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment and the 187th and 188th Glider Infantry Regiments supported by the 162nd, 457th and 462nd Parachute Field Artillery Battalions. The 11th Airborne, being a new unit, was held in 6th Army reserve during the initial landings on Leyte (Philippines) on 17 October, 1944. This landing was soon followed by the assignment of the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment to Task Force "Western Visayan" for the December 15 assault on the island of Mindoro as a part of the preliminary operations that would allow the approach of MacArthur's command to the main island of Luzon. Mindoro was occupied by roughly 1,000 Japanese troops from the Japanese 8th and 105th Divisions. Actual combat troops numbered two companies of the 105th while the rest were support troops and survivors of ship sinkings.

By November 21, 1944, the 11th Airborne had made landfall on Leyte and relieved the US 7th Division in the Burauen area, where soon they were to met their Japanese counterparts, the paratroopers of the Japanese Army. For the next week the 11th fought in a ground role as they contributed to the US drive in the Ormoc Valley. The night of November 26, was the beginning of a new offensive by the Japanese 11th Army, known as Operation WA, and it opened with a air-landed assault by Japanese airborne engineers, some of whom crash landed near an outpost manned by the 11th Airborne troops.

The next brush with the Japanese paras came on the evening of December 6, 1944, when parachute units of the Japanese 3rd and 4th Parachute Regiments jumped over the Buri and San Pablo airfields, near Burauen. At the San Pablo airfield about 250-300 Japanese landed and were able to take the airfield in minutes from ground personnel of the U. S. 5th Air Force. After landing they ran up the runways to the north end of the strip, burning liaison planes, a jeep, several tents and a gasoline dump on the way. They were immediately taken under fire by a small detachment of the 127th Airborne Engineer Battalion, assisted by the HQ battery of the 11th Airborne's artillery. Even as reinforcements were being collected by a frantic American command, the Japanese paratroopers left undetected during the night and joined their comrades at the Buri airfield.

Eighty Japanese jumped into intense defensive fire from Company E, 152nd Airborne AA Battalion at Buri, but were still able to occupy the airfield for a short while after joining elements of the Japanese 16th Division (about 150 men) which had infiltrated through the American lines. By the end of the day the 1st Battalion, 187th Glider Infantry had arrived, reinforcing the beleaguered garrison. After the Japanese from San Pablo joined their units at Buri, the Japanese hold on the airfield was even stronger, especially when they were able to put several US .50 caliber machineguns into action against their former American owners. At dusk on December 7th, the airborne had been joined by battalion elements from the 149th and 382nd Infantry Regiments which spent most of the 8th consolidating their positions. In a yard by yard fight, the Americans began taking the airstrip back on December 9th in an assault that lasted until the evening of the 10th.

Not knowing that they would be missing the chance of fighting their Japanese counterparts, the 511th Parachute Regiment had meanwhile struck westward from Burauen on November 25 to take part in a drive to link up with the 32nd Infantry on the west side of the mountains. Fighting nature instead of the Japanese, the paratroopers finally reached Mahonag, about midway, on December 6. Here they ran into strongly entrenched Japanese slowing down their advance by days. In the end, the 511th was assisted by the 32nd Infantry from the western coastline as well as the 187th Glider Infantry, who after finishing the airfield battles joined their fellow airborne in the mountains.

Participating only in ground combat was the destiny of the 11th Airborne for the remaining Leyte operations. Near Mount Majunag, the 11th encountered a enemy force well-entrenched on the southern slopes. Bitter hand-to-hand fighting was the rule of the day, but eventually these last Japanese forces were destroyed. The 11th Airborne was given just a few days to recover its strength before being told of the next assignment. . . Luzon.

On December 15, 1944, the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment along with the 19th Infantry Regiment landed just north of Mangarin Bay on the west side of Mindoro. Landing without opposition, the 503rd had expanded its beachhead to seven miles by the day's end. The Mindoro operation lasted until January 31, 1945, and was restricted to small combat actions against isolated Japanese units around the island. After securing Mindoro, the 503rd was rested and re-fitted for its next assignment... the return to Corregidor, "the Rock."

The 11th Airborne, now assigned to the 8th Army, arrived on Luzon by a combined sea-air landing. The 11th Airborne now numbered only about 8200 men with approximately 2000 men in the parachute regiment and about 1500 men in each of the two glider regiments. Both glider regiments were missing their regimental AT and Gun companies. The artillery group included two battalions of 75mm pack howitzers and one 105mm howitzer battalion. Also included in the artillery group was an AA battalion equipped with 40mm AA Guns and .50 caliber machineguns.

The two glider regiments landed via sea at Nasugbu Bay against no resistance on January 31, 1945. After landing, the glidermen were to advance toward Tagaytay Ridge near a village of the same name. The second part of the operation included the 511th parachute element which would jump on the ridge and catch the Japanese in an envelopment maneuver. Following the usual problems, the 511th found its units scattered all around the plains surrounding the village of Tagaytay; and, to add insult to injury, they were almost met by their own glider troops. The 11th Airborne Division fought as part of the 14th Corps in southern Luzon.

By February 4, the 11th Airborne had fought its way to just three miles south of Manila. Here, it ran into one of the best Japanese units in the Philippines, the 1st and 3rd Naval Battalions, well-armed with large numbers of AA guns and artillery pieces. On the morning of February 5, the airborne soldiers forced the crossing of the Paranaque River and started for Manila. In two days of fighting, the 11th was only able to advance 2000 yards against numerous hidden emplacements. Against their Japanese adversary, the 11th had only a few 75mm Pack Howitzers, so much of the work was done the hard way...man-to-man using demolition charges and flamethrowers. Their most common support was the reliable 60mm mortar which was used constantly.

This was soon followed by the unusual jump of the independent 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment over the small island of Corregidor on February 16, 1945. Corregidor's cliffs and well established defensive position, which had been substantively strengthened by the occupying Japanese, precluded a seaborne assault without unacceptable losses. The selection fell on the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment to make the initial airborne assault with a follow-up seaborne landing made two hours later by battalion elements of the 34th Infantry at the South Docks. At 0830, the 3rd battalion of the 503rd attempted to jump into the very small Jump Zones near the parade ground and the old Golf Course of Corregidor. Quickly digging in a perimeter and command post, the 503rd's 2nd Battalion jumped in to join their companions at 1244 hours. During the next few days the regiment, joined by the 1st Battalion, cleaned up the Topside area and began the thankless task of flushing out the numerous caves that had been dug into the sides of Corregidor's cliffs.

The parachute jump on to Corregidor could have had serious repercussions to American forces. The US Army's intelligence service believed that Corregidor was garrisoned by only about 850 Japanese soldiers, when the actual number approached 5,000 men including a large contingent of Japanese Marines. The only thing that saved the 503rd Regiment from decimation was the complete lack of Japanese communications which allowed the American paratroopers to fight the Japanese in small groups without reinforcement from other nearby Japanese units.

By February 14, the 11th Airborne had trapped the Japanese "Abe" Battalion at Mabato Point outside Manila. On the 18th, the paratroopers, assisted by artillery, tank destroyers and marine aircraft, besieged the Japanese in a five day struggle. The 11th Airborne was able to kill at least 750 Japanese while losing only 10 men killed and 50 wounded. During the entire battle for Manila, the 11th Airborne lost 210

(Continued on pg. 46)

AMERICAN EAGLE...
(Continued from page 24)

men killed and suffered 865 wounded. The first week in March was almost a rest period for the 11th, as it was assigned mopping-up duties in the area around Manila Bay, as the 6th Army's engineering units strived to create a massive supply base using the harbor facilities.

Beginning the second week in March, the 11th Airborne (along with the 158th Infantry Regiment) was sent into southern Luzon to eradicate the 7000 to 10000 Japanese that had been bypassed in the American's drive on Manila. By now the division was down to about 7000; thus, the reduction of some of the Japanese hold-outs was impossible even with the help of native guerrillas. In some cases, the soldiers had to be content with bottling up the Japanese 2nd Surface Raiding Base Force until sufficient American forces could be called in to help. By the end of March, the 11th Airborne had suffered additional casualties and its combat effectiveness was near the bottom as its strength was about 50% of the regulated manpower of an airborne division.

Even in the Pacific, the speed of ground forces movement was proving parachute operations were too slow, due to the planning time involved. In the Northern Luzon Campaign, reinforced battalion elements of the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment were supposed to drop behind the Japanese at Aparri, Philippines and provide a block to retreating Japanese. By the time the paratroopers arrived and jumped, they were greeted by the 11th Infantry Battalion (Philippine Army). This was the first time that gliders were used by SWPA forces to bring in artillery elements with the paratroopers in the Pacific war. For the rest of the war, the 11th Airborne Division fought as ground troops in northern Luzon.

FITTING AMERICAN PARATROOPERS INTO *ASL*

Parachute units across the world have one thing in common: their sense of adventure. This sense of adventure attracts some of the best men (officers and enlisted) to any armed force and it is well reflected in the *ASL* system. American paratrooper leadership has been defined by the numerous scenarios already published as having a Morale of at least 8 and most times with a negative modifier. For this reason, I would consider the leadership LG# be changed from 5.5 to 5 for airborne DYO purposes. This would allow DYO play that would correspond to the same level of play already established in the published airborne scenarios.

Airborne manpower is partly set by rule A25.31 and the paratroopers are easy since the American Paratrooper is already defined as a 7-4-7 MMC, and like all other *ASL* paratroopers, has an ELR of 5 (Morale underlined). Glider infantry should also be considered as an Elite force, as it takes just about as much courage to float along in an unpowered aircraft while someone is shooting at you. Except in very unusual circumstances, I believe that all glider troops should be represented with the 6-6-7 Elite MMC with a 5 ELR (Morale *not* underlined).

Taking a look at an American Parachute Infantry Battalion **(Table 1)** we can see that there wasn't much change from the starting T/O (Table of Organization) and the final battalion T/O used at the end of the war. While there were numerous small changes occurring during the war only one change (December, 1944) drastically affected the parachute battalion. Comparing the two we see that in *ASL* terms, the battalion HQ and HQ Company would remain unchanged all through the war while the December 21, 1944 change increased the manpower within the rifle companies by adding one 7-4-7 squad to each of the three rifle platoons and the company HQ section.

Since both parachute battalions have the same HQ and HQ Company, we'll start there. Battalion leadership has been set using 10-2 and 9-1 leaders. The leadership of the HQ company is a single 8-0 SMC since the real leaders are the commanding officer (10-2) and his executive officer (9-1). The HQ company is well equipped in both manpower and equipment with ten 7-4-7 MMC to operate two MMG and two BAZ. Battalion artillery support is available from the 81mm MTR unit with up to four being available in a scenario.

The 1942 rifle company had a HQ section which includes either a 9-2 or 9-1 SMC commanding, assisted by a 8-1 and 8-0 SMC. HQ troops in 1942 should be shown with only a single squad and HS as combat effectives. After the Dec.'44 increase, the number of effectives would increase to two full squads. The rest of the increase in the HQ section would be made up due to the transfer of the platoon MG squads to the HQ section, providing the company commander with three MMG and three 3-3-7 HS. As can be seen in **Table 5**, the total SW Allotment did not really change from the reorganization, only the location of the equipment. Both companies had three rifle platoons, but the 1942 platoon had only two 7-4-7 rifle squads and a mortar squad consisting of a 3-3-7 HS and their 60mm MTR. The Dec.'44 platoon was increased to three 7-4-7 rifle squads with the same single mortar squad. After Bazookas became available, each parachute rifle platoon was authorized one and these are shown in the platoon HQ section. Each platoon had a MMG until Jan.'45.

A close look at **Table 5** will reveal that we have exceeded the SW Allotment for both the 1942 and the Dec '44 parachute companies. My reasoning for this departure from my normal practice is simple: firepower. My tables were developed with the idea of designing airborne scenarios where the attacking player enters the mapboard area by either parachute and/or glider. In these type of scenarios, it would be rare indeed to see any type of ground reinforcement or heavy weapons showing up in the scenario, therefore the airborne units should have just a little addition to their firepower. Balancing parachute scenarios is hard enough without any player seeing all of his SW parachutes drifting off-board and losing just because of a missing four FP MG or a BAZ to enable the paratroopers to have a chance at tank-busting. By having a few more SW in a paratrooper OB, there is less of a "fate" factor in planning a parachute drop. In scenarios where the airborne are attacking as ground troops, I would still suggest using the official SW Allotment table on page H45 in the *ASL* Rulebook. Perhaps it should be mentioned here that the light mortar of choice for all airborne units is the M19 60mm MTR.

Just a quick glance at the Glider Infantry table **(Table 2)** shows large changes to their organization. Only the Battalion HQ would remain the same between the two, showing a 10-2 or 9-2 as commanding along with two 6-6-7 MMGs to keep him safe. In 1942, a glider company had a HQ with only a 9-1 SMC, but he is in charge of the company's weapon platoon. The additional leadership in this company would come from the weapons or rifle platoons in the form of some 8-1 and 8-0 SMC. Each Weapons Platoon had an MG section, shown with two 3-4-7 HS armed with two MMG. The early glider company had only two rifle platoons each equipped in *ASL* style with either a 8-1 or 8-0 SMC, three 6-6-7 squads and a 3-4-7 HS. Each platoon was armed with their own 60mm MTR and BAZ. From its creation in 1942 until December 1944, the Glider Infantry Battalion would not "officially" have any heavy mortars or anti-tank guns.

After Dec.'44, the Glider Infantry Battalion grew immensely stronger, with an increase in manpower, equipment, and the addition of both a Weapons and Anti-tank companies. Battalion HQ remained the same as before. Within the Glider Infantry Company, the HQ grew with the addition of two 6-6-7 MMC equipped with a BAZ each. These BAZ squads were parceled out to the rifle platoons as needed. The Weapons Platoon grew in two ways: (1) a .50 caliber HMG was added, providing some AA protection and (2) the Mortar Section increased from two mortar squads to three (but was still outfitted with the 60mm MTR). The Rifle Platoon actually shrank in firepower since their mortar squad was pulled out and placed in the weapons platoon. Some of the extra men became the BAZ squads shown in the HQ. The infantry component of the platoons remained the same with three 6-6-7 MMC and a 3-4-7 HS led by either an 8-1 or 8-0 SMC.

The battalion Weapons Company was essentially a 81mm mortar platoon providing a heavier artillery component to the battalion commander. The platoon had two mortar sections each with two 2-2-7 crews, two 81mm MTR and two jeeps for transport. Like the battalion, these units were delivered to the battlefield by gliders.

The Anti-tank company added some real firepower to the battalion and provided real AT protection. The Company HQ has a 8-0 SMC and two 6-6-7 squads, for local security. Transport is provided by two Jeeps and a 1.5-ton truck as the supply wagon. The AT company had three AT gun platoons and one AT mine platoon. Each AT gun platoon would have three AT gun squads each outfitted with a 57mm AT gun and a jeep to tow the gun and carry its 2-2-7 crew.

The AT mine platoon is an unusual unit and caused me some problems in its creation. Its organization is easy with a platoon HQ and three AT mine squads, each made up of two 3-4-7 HS

and two jeeps. The problem is the equipment that should be issued to the squads. Since there are no counters representing AT mines, I decided to just show that each squad would be equipped with a certain amount of AT mine capability, in this case 5 Factors. In the event that this unit is used in a DYO situation, the US players should receive two HS and Jeeps for the AT capability purchased. An alternative is to allow this unit to place 1 AT mine capability in the same manner as "Setting" a DC [A23.7], with the exception being that the minefield would then be known, and the opponent would know the risk of moving into that hex. The platoon's HQ is simple with a 8-0 SMC, a 3-4-7 HS, a BAZ and a Jeep.

Like all parachute troops in the *ASL* system, the parachute rules of E9. are used with only one thing particular to the Americans: Drift [E9.2] is Normal and Paratroopers are allowed to drop their Ml9 60mm MTR with the squad, instead of using a SW parachute counter. This means that all other US SW must be dropped with its own Parachute counter and must be dm if possible [E9.11] .

An Airborne AA/AT Battalion **(Table 3)** included a HQ unit which would not really have any application within the *ASL* system. Since the auto-weapon batteries had been replaced by the AT gun squads by the time that they ever saw any combat, these units are shown with the standard 57mm AT gun, towed by a Jeep with its 2-2-7 crew. The machinegun batteries were the actual AA defense of the division, where the .50 caliber MG was also a crewed weapon and transported by jeeps. The triangular organization allowed one battery to be attached to each regiment which allowed two sections per battalion giving each company about a 66% chance of having its own .50 caliber MG. Given the number of squads within a company **(Table 5)**, this supports the SW Allotment as given for the US Army on page H45 of the *ASL* Rulebook.

The Airborne Recon Platoon **(Table 4)** is easy to outfit, except you may run out of Jeep counters if the entire platoon is used in a scenario. Since Recon units required a high degree of self-determination and initiative, I decided to provide good leadership to the Recon platoon with a 9-1 as platoon leader assisted by a 8-1 SMC. Elite HS were selected for all infantry components of the platoon due to the PP capacity of the jeeps. The use of the late war Recon platoon in a scenario should include a SSR that provides for the special armored jeeps used by the platoon. Each jeep is considered to have an 0 AF (Zero AF) in its VCA *only* and is treated as a AFV for any fire through its VCA. Eight of the jeeps used in a Recon platoon scenario should be MG equipped and the remaining unarmed jeep units should all carry a BAZ of the proper year. This Recon platoon should not be used in any scenario before December, 1944.

OBA allowed normally from battalion and divisional resources would be 81mm MTR, 75mm+ ART, and/or 105mm+ ART. In the event that Battalion 80+ MTR OBA is being used, then 81mm MTR counters should not be in play. When historical references describe corps and/or army artillery assets, these could include 155mm+ ART and 107mm+ MTR OBA. Unlike most other American OBA, the ammo situation allowed to airborne units immediately after a drop/landing should be designated as Normal Ammo and sometimes Scarce Ammo (within the PTO) conditions, depending on the historical reference.

In many cases when the airborne units were finally relieved, they were only allowed a short time to regroup before being placed back in the front lines. Because of the weak firepower inherent to an airborne division (a type of light division), some heavy reinforcement was usually assigned to the division when it was used in a ground role. This would most often be a selection of GHQ tank and tank destroyer battalions available for independent operations. Remembering this could make a big difference in some scenarios where the airborne are making major ground assaults. For PTO scenario designers, remember that the 11th Airborne was understrength in all battles following their initial use on Leyte and many times, they had to operate without their artillery and AT guns, since they lacked the kind of transport needed to haul equipment through the jungles of the SW Pacific Area.

Rule E9.42 Injuries, gives a list of European Terrain types which can cause injuries to air-dropped parachutists, but for North Africa and PTO parachute operations, each terrain type will have to be looked up (or use the table on page 47/48) since there is no comprehensive list for Desert and PTO Landing DRM like there is for Europe.

Rule E8.23 Crash dr, provides a list of DRM to be applied to Glider crashes, but I think that the list was written before considering the desert or the PTO. Some items on the E8.23 list will apply all over the world (like walls, hedges, streams, etc.). But, there are other terrain types that will also cause the canvas gliders some worry. Most of the terrain listings is just a directly transferred list from the rulebook to the chart. There are a few exceptions though. All Glider Crash DRM entries marked with a superscript "1" are my recommendations since there was no directed DRM listed within the rules as I believe there should be.

Hammada: According to Chapter F footnote 5, Hammada is an area of loose stones and rocks. If these stones and rocks are of such sharpness and size to cause vehicles to become Immobilized, imagine what those same rocks can do to a canvas covered glider; therefore a +1 Crash DRM. Hammada would have no effect to normal *ASL* parachute operations.

Dense Jungle: If all Woods (+3 Crash DRM) become Light Jungle what should Dense Jungle be? An additional +l, of course!

Bamboo: Sharp pointed spikes that Panjis are made of, except there are a couple of thousand of them in a 40 yard hex. How would you like to face thousands of bamboo spears with only a canvas shield?

CONCLUSION

There it is...the story of the airborne divisions of the United States Army in World War II. The entire ground combat history of all the airborne divisions was not presented since I wanted to concentrate on the parachute and glider assault aspects of these tough units. I have a lot of respect for these units, as I mentioned before. It takes a lot of guts to jump out of a "safe"airplane. Here's a listing of historical references you might like to read someday.

Bauer, (Cornelius, THE BATTLE OF ARNHEM, Zebra Books, New York, NY, 1967.

Breuer, William B, DROP ZONE SICILY, Jove Publications Inc., New York, NY, 1985.

Breuer, William B, OPERATION DRAGOON, Jove Publications Inc., New York, NY, 1988.

Eisenhower, Dwight D., CRUSADE IN EUROPE Avon Books, New York, NY, 1968.

Flanagan, Edward M. Jr., WORLD WAR II (Magazine), Rock Force Assault, July, 1988 Issue Page 42.

Gelb, Norman, DESPERATE VENTURE,, Marrow and Company, New York, NY, 1992.

Greefield, Palmer & Wiley, United States Army in World War 11, THE ORGANIZATION OF GROUND COMBAT TROOPS, Historical Section, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., 1947.

Gregory, Barry, BRITISH AIRBORNE TROOPS, Doubleday and Company, Garden City, NY, 1974.

Griess, Thomas E., ATLAS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR: ASIA AND THE PACIFIC., Avery Publishing Group, Wayne, N.J., 1985.

Hastings, Max, OVERLORD, Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York, NY, 1981.

Hamlin & Cannon, United States Army in World War 11, LEYTE: THE RETURN TO THE PHILIPPINES, Historical Section, Department of the Army, Washington, D. C., 1954.

Halcomb, Steven C., MILITARY DIGEST, Organization of the United States Airborne Divisions, Issues: Vol. 13, No.2, No. 3/4, & No.5, page 42, Parts 1-3, 1986.

Kessler, Leo, THE BATTLE OF THE RUHR POCKET, Scarborough House/Publishers, Chelsea, MI, 1989.

King, Michael J., GREAT BATTLES Magazine, "Success While Others Fail", April-May Issue, WPS 36405.

Ladd, James, COMMANDOS AND RANGERS OF WORLD WAR II, St. Martin's Press, New York, NY, 1978.

MacDonald, Charles AIRBORNE, Ballantine's Illustrated History of World War II, Weapons Book No. 12, Ballantine Books, New York, NY, 1970.

Mitcham & Stauffenberg, THE BATTLE OF SICILY, Orion Books, New York, NY, 1991.

Mitchell, Col. Ralph M, THE 101st AIRBORNE DIVISION'S DEFENSE OF BASTOGNE, US Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 1986.

Moore, William, WAR MONTHLY, "Rhine Crossings 1945", Issue 42, Page 1.

Parker, Danny S., BATTLE OF THE BULGE, Combined Books, Conshohocken, PA, 1991.

Robert, Ross & Smith, United States Army in World War II, TRIUMPH IN THE PHILIPPINES, Historical Section, Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 1963.

★

ASL Crossfire

The Kiwi's Attack

(DASL Scenario B)



By Robert Banozic and Rich Summers



GERMAN
(Rich Summers)
Rating: 50–50

Advantages: Rubble: AT Weapons; Fortifications; 9–2; Rain

The Kiwis have a fairly short distance to go and ample time and firepower to support their move. Because of this, the Fallschirmjäger are going to have to rely on more than sheer guts and determination to win this contest. Rubble, which neither breaks nor routs, is a potent tool in the German arsenal. *Hexes* with a printed stairwell symbol have an upper level, and rubble counters placed in these hexes during the pregame 'Rubble Phase' will automatically fall into a randomly determined adjacent hex (SSR 3). This allows a particularly destructive German to generate at least 10 rubble counters on the board (more if rubble tumbles into an adjacent stairwell causing a domino effect). Ruin of this magnitude will slow Kiwi movement, block the attacker's LOS, and, if concentrated around the board b north-south road, channel the Allied AFVs into prepared positions on board d. The AT weapons that bristle about the German defense are the Fallschirmjäger's second threat. Not only do these elite defenders tote their standard complement of 18 PF (albeit with just one hex range since it's only March '44), but they also have two Psks, a 75L AT gun, and a StuGmG. Just as important as the high "To Kill" probabilities that these weapons enjoy over the Sherman V's paltry 8 frontal armor is the fact that all but the 75L AT gun are mobile. Furthermore, German Close Combat and Street Fighting against the AFVs will benefit from ATMMs. The fortifications, particularly the fortified buildings, also figure prominently in the German plan. With their immunity to Close Combat (provided that the occupants are at least an unpinned, unbroken full squad equivalent), these buildings will allow the Fallschirmjäger to make a protracted stand at a key spot on the board. A 1+5+7 pillbox, two trenches, and a tunnel round out the available fortifications, and each will help to delay the Allied advance. The 9(-2) leader will start out making Kiwi lives miserable by directing the fire of a German HMG/MMG combo. Twelve FP with multiple minus modifiers and the potential for ROF is a good source of K/ and KIA results. Later in the game, the 9(-2) may find himself directing a Psk or PF to take out a rampaging Sherman. Either way, this guy is going to have an impact. Finally, no doubt about it, the German wants to fight this contest in the rain. Unreliable as the weather can be, there is only a 9 per cent chance that it won't start raining at some point during the scenario, and while it is raining the Kiwis can't place Smoke (except for grenades placed within a building). Entry and exit of the board d gully will also be more difficult (E3.54), even if the rain stops. I didn't list the Sniper, but he'll help too.

Disadvantages: Outnumbered; Smoke and Close Combat; Game Length

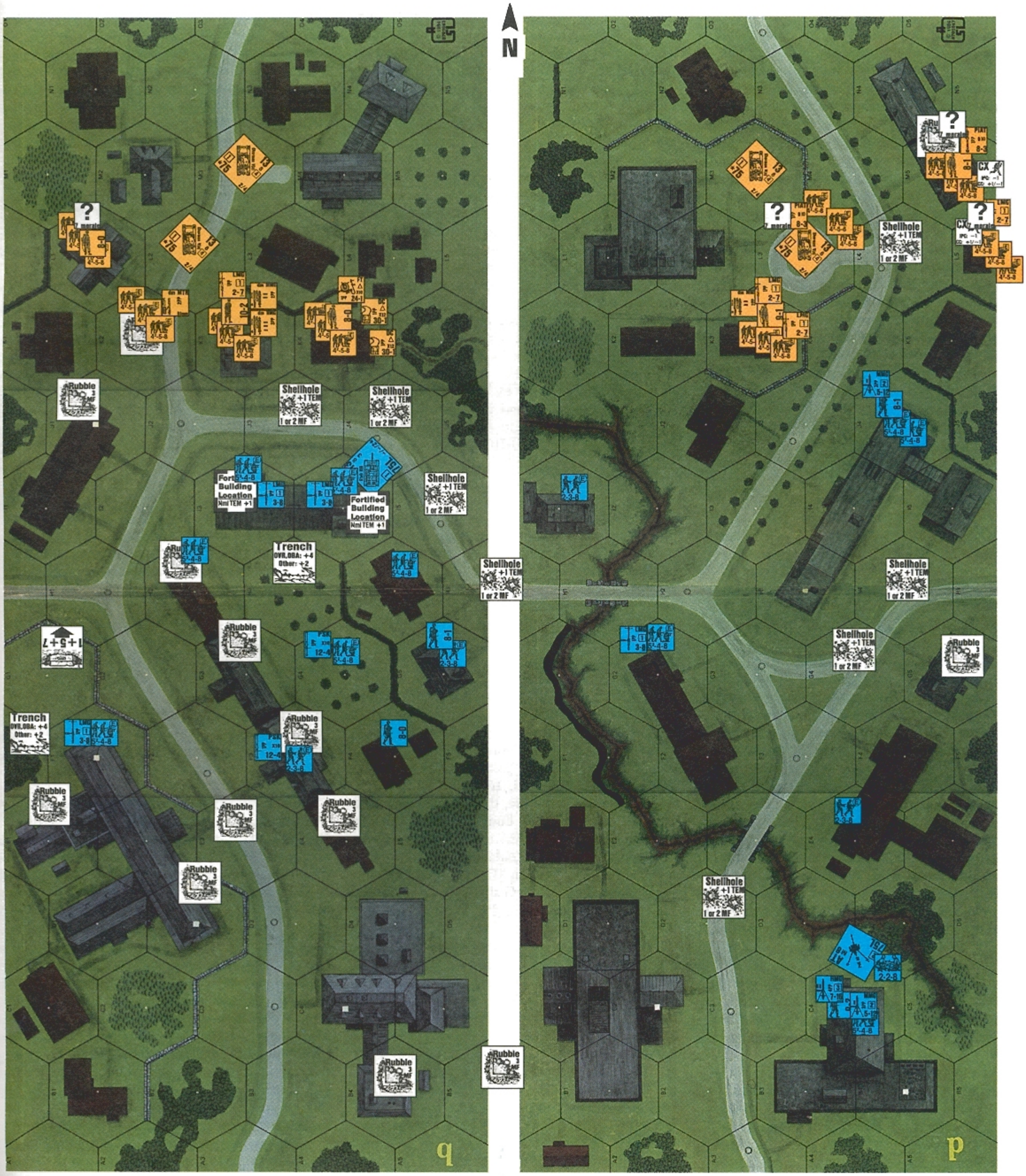
I don't think it's sour grapes to complain about the relative squad ratio, 2:1 in favor of the New Zealander, or the absolute number of New Zealand squads (24). These are significant Allied advantages. Never mind that they also have a 10-2 leader, some DC, a couple of PIATs, an FT and AFV support, the sheer number of Kiwis gives the attacker the unusual ability to build very strong support *and* maneuver elements. The German will have to be at the top of his game to deflect the many barbs that the Kiwi can throw at him. Adding insult to injury is the New Zealander's Smoke generating capability. The Shermans have s8 and sD6, there's a 51mm mtr with s7, and the squads all have a smoke exponent of 2. Nothing would delight the New Zealander more than to move forward unmolested under a shroud of smoke, hoping for a chance to engage in a little Close Combat. With their numerical superiority and ANZAC stealth, these guys can afford a few bad CC DRs, but the German can't. In fact, under most circumstances I will voluntarily break and rout rather than risk Close Combat against anything stronger than a CX HS. Broken Germans can still obstruct Kiwi progress, dead ones can't. Lastly, even with a good defense, 6 and a half turns is going to seem like a long time when you're up against so many well-armed adversaries, and the final one and a half turns are where this game will be won or lost. The key is to maintain an orderly withdrawal in the face of superior firepower, realizing that on the last turn, even broken units on the exit hexes can deny victory. It's not going to be a pretty finish for the gallant Fallschirmjäger, but the win doesn't have to be pretty.

Rubble and Shellhole Placement: Players alternate placing 4 rubble (R), 4 shellhole (S), and then a final rubble counter on the board. German goes first: G: R-dM5; NZ: R-bH2; G: R-bD2 falls bE3; NZ: R-bG3; G: R-bJ1 falls bK2; NZ: R-bF3; G: R-bE1; NZ: R-bE4; G: S-dL4; NZ: S-bJ3; G: S-dD2; NZ: S-bJ4; G: S-dH4; NZ: S-bI5; G: S-dG4; NZ: S-bH5; G: R-bB4 falls bB5; NZ: R-dG5.

German	Set Up:
bI3:	5-4-8, LMG, Fortified Location
bI4:	5-4-8, LMG, HIP: StuGmG (VCA: 2, BS: bJ3), Fortified Location
bH2:	5-4-8
bH3:	Trench
bH4:	5-4-8
bGl:	1+5+7 Pillbox CA: 2
bG4:	5-4-8, Psk
bG5:	8(-1), HIP: 2-3-8
bF0:	Trench
bFl/1:	5-4-8, LMG
bF3:	HIP: 2-3-8, Psk
bF4:	8(0)
dJ4/0:	2 x 5-4-8, MMG, 8(-1) BS:dK4
dIl:	HIP: 2-3-8
dG2:	5-4-8, LMG
dE4:	HIP: 2-3-8
dC4/0:	HIP: 2-2-8, Pak40 (CA: 2, BS: bO5)
dC4/1:	5-4-8, MMG, HMG, 9(-2) BS: bJ4, BS: bJ4
bA4-dBl:	Tunnel

When I first saw The Kiwis Attack in issue 29, no. 6 of *The GENERAL* , I was intrigued by both sides potent orders of battle, but wondered if the scenario wasn't an Allied blowout—the tanks alone are worth enough points for victory, and then there are all those Kiwi squads. Nevertheless, the challenge to craft a defense around the well-armed Fallschirmjäger was overwhelming, and now, two playings later, my Fallschirmjäger have yet to lose. Mind you, the victories have been close and my respect for the numerical superiority of the New Zealanders has not faded, but it is obvious that the German has what it takes to stand up to the Kiwi's attack.

The game starts with a rubble and shellhole placement phase. Because rubble is key to the German defense, this phase is quite important, no matter how unrealistically it reflects the heavy bombardment that Cassino received prior to this attack. For the Fallschirmjäger, all rubble is good, but rubble blocking at least one of the north-south roads is best. This will corral the Allied tanks, making placement of the 75L AT gun that much easier. Board d, because of the gully and a fair amount of open ground, is the easier board to defend, so the board b road should be the focus of German destruction. Stairwell hexes bC4 and bD2 are the obvious first choices since each has a 50 per cent chance of falling into the road (bC4 actually gives better odds—if the rubble doesn't fall directly into the street, there is still a 33 per cent chance it will fall into bB4 which might itself fall into the street). If these hexes don't fall as desired, then bFl offers a 33 per cent chance of success.



The illustration shows German set-up positions and New Zealander positions after their first move. Hidden Germans are shown. New Zealander positions assume no effective defensive fire.

Finally, the stairwells in bJl and bK3 provide a last ditch opportunity to muck things up, but rubble this far forward can work to the Kiwi's advantage—the Shermans can usually find a route around it and rubble here provides some cover for the opening stages of the Kiwi assault. Nevertheless, in a 'falling rubble frenzy' before this match, I turned bJ1 into rubble even though the road had already been blocked farther back. Hopefully I won't have to pay too dearly for this mistake. Once the road is blocked, the German can focus the remainder of his destructive energy on sealing the flanks or blocking some key LOS.

I am fairly happy with the destruction that I have wrought. Rubble in dD2 fell nicely into the road, and better still, linked up with the debris from the bH2-bE4 row house that Rob systematically eliminated, forming an obstacle that cannot be Bypassed. Taking advantage of this, smashing bE1 sealed the west flank and completed the obstruction of board b. On the east flank, the demise of dM5 eliminated a quick Kiwi bypass route to the front line. Two of my choices, however, were less well thought out. The collapse of bB4 into bB5 was nice, but not a priority, and destroying bJ1, as mentioned above, was a bad move given that the road was already blocked. Fortunately, I was spared the horror of having bJ1 fall into either bJ2 or bI2 which would have given the Kiwi infantry excellent cover to cross one of the roads. Hindsight being 20-20, I should have leveled dK2 blocking the east side LOS from dK3 into bH3.

Players alternate placing their rubble and shellhole counters, so the order of placement can be important. It's a treat if your opponent creates rubble for you, since this frees up a counter to be used elsewhere, and Rob's rubble in bH2 was one of those cases. I had planned to choose this hex to block the LOS from the west side of the board into bH3, but by waiting until late in the phase, Rob saved me the trouble.

Shellholes don't have as dramatic an impact on the board, but because these special shellholes cost double the normal entry price, they can slow things down a bit. Pock marking dL4 will prevent all but cx, leader-led New Zealanders from legging it into dK5 on turn 1, while movement across the dE3 bridge will be slowed by the craters in dD2. Shellholes can also be the difference between life and death for a routing Fallschirmjäger, providing an escape route out of some of the front line positions. Cratering dG4 and dH4 served this purpose, enabling broken units to rout safely out of the dJ4 building. Of course, Rob may also get some use out of these shellholes if he drives down the east flank, but I can't afford to lose any men for Failure to Rout.

The playing area is only fifteen hexes deep, and the Kiwis will cover at least five of these on the first turn. Consequently, the Fallschirmjäger must start out as far forward as possible. Against superior firepower, however, their positions won't last long, so they'll have to be sited to allow easy retreat, even for broken units. A couple of strong points will give the defense a spine, but for the most part I plan to stage a controlled withdrawal, ceding one or two hexes a turn. Conservation of manpower is the rule because the last turn will see every unit mustered along the south edge denying exit to the Kiwis.

The New Zealander's attack almost has to develop along a broad front since the Kiwis must enter 24 squads, 5 leaders and 4 tanks across a playing area that is only ten hexes wide. This of course means that the German must be prepared to do battle everywhere. The main Allied attack, however, will come just west of the gully through hex grains 3 and 4 of board b (and you thought only the Allies broke codes during the war). Not only has Rob telegraphed this intention of making rubble out of the board b rowhouse and cratering the bJ3-bH5 road, but the terrain more-or-less dictates this axis of attack. In this sector, only one road needs to be crossed at bJ2-bJ4, and the approaches to and exits from the crossing points are well-covered. Moreover, the New Zealanders can reach the bK3 and bK4 jump off points on turn 1, meaning that post bombardment dust will still be in effect to cover their turn 2 crossing attempt (an audacious Kiwi can actually get some of his flock in the road on turn 1). To counter this, the main German line will be established just south of the road, anchored by fortification of the bI3/bI4 building. A squad with an LMG (l6 FP Point Blank) will occupy each of the fortified hexes, and the HIP StuGIIIG will join the squad in bI4, bore sighting the bJ3 crossing point. The adjacent crossing point in bJ4 will be bore sighted by the 9(-2) directed HMG/MMG combo that will be perched on the first level of dC4. Each of the crossing points are thus backed up by Fortified Buildings and covered with 28 FP (more if the StuG should get a Critical Hit in its bore sighted location or the 9(2) directed MGs retain rate). Against this the Kiwis will only be shielded by the +l shellhole DRM, and for a brief spell the +l LV DRM. A good stand here by the Germans, and too much time will have passed for the Kiwis to cut through the remainder of the German defense. To protect the flanks of this position, a squad and an LMG start out on the first level of bFl. Later, they will move into the 1+5+7 bunker in bGl via the trench in bF0, allowing them to place a firelane down the bHl-bJ2 road. In future games, if I don't turn bJl into rubble, these troops will start out HIP directly in the bunker (B30.7), eyeing the bypass vertex of bM4 to prevent any hasty moves by the New Zealander. I might also replace the LMG with an MMG, although I have other plans for the MMG this time. A squad in bH2 and a HIP HS with a Psk in bF3 round out the defense on this side of the strongpoint. On the other side, a squad sits in bH4, backed up by a HIP HS in bG5, and a reserve squad with a Psk is in bG4 ready to replace any casualties. Finally, two leaders, an 8(-1) and an 8(0) in bG5 and bF4 are prepared to Rally the troops that get knocked back, and a nuisance HS is HIP in dll to delay any attempts that Rob might make to jump off from here. To prevent the Kiwis from moving up to the start line concealed, the squad in bH4 has instructions to keep an eye on bL4, while the squad in bI3 is charged with looking after bL3. Without concealment, any Kiwi that steps out into the street will be set up like a duck on a pond.

While its task lies elsewhere, the 75L AT gun is hidden on the ground floor of dC4 and has an LOS to everything that the 9(-2)-led MG team can see, which includes buildings bK3 and bK4 and the bJ4 crossing hex. The gun won't lend its punch to the defense right off, however, because its greatest value is to keep the New Zealander's tanks in line. Not until the Kiwi armor threatens the 9(-2) group will the gun make an appearance. Of course, if the Allied commander discerns that my MG nest is in dC4, he might go after it right away. So much the better. Any tank that tries to engage this position will have to weather two fire phases of 75L attacks—not a likely prospect—and then the gun will be free to turn its attention to the defense of the Fortified Buildings. I've bore sighted bO5, hoping that the tank commanders think this is a 'safe' hex from which to drop Smoke onto the MG nest. The gun also sees the bypass vertex of bN4, and across from the Fortified Buildings, it will nail any Sherman that comes lumbering through the bK3/bK4 bypass hexside.

To the right of the gully, my defense is a bit lighter and more flexible. The muscle of the defense is right up front. Two squads, an MMG, and an 8(-1) leader are positioned on the ground floor of dJ4. With 30 FP Point Blank, these defenders plan to turn back any early thrusts along the east edge. A squad with an LMG in dG2 will support this position by firing down the street in front of the building. The remainder of the defense on this side consists of a lonely HS HIP in dE4. Odd as this location seems, these five men will play a crucial role later on as my frontal positions inevitably crumble under the weight of the Kiwi assault. At some point, the remnants of the two squads in dJ4 will find themselves broken and unsupported around dE5, easily surrounded and eliminated. The HIP HS will prevent this debacle by keeping open a rout route through the gully-woods to the safety of the MG nest in dC4. With only three and a half squads dedicated to the defense of this flank, it might seem like the Germans are asking for trouble. Yet, the terrain itself, especially the gully-woods and gully-brush hexes on the far right flank, provide a considerable impediment to Kiwi progress, and ultimately this flank is anchored by the machinegun nest and AT gun in dC4. It is tough for the Kiwis, no matter how hard they try, to exit many men on this flank.

The German defense is completed by the placement of a trench behind the Fortified Building bH3 and a tunnel that connects dB1 and bA4. The trench was necessitated by my failure to make rubble out of dK2. During the defense of the Fortified Building, bH3 is going to play a central role as a staging area and hiding place. Unfortunately, only a hedge hinders the LOS from dK3, severely compromising the value of this hex. Units entrenched behind the hedge, however, cannot be seen from dK3, so they will be able to hide and gain concealment here. If dK2 had been turned into rubble, I might have placed the trench in the bF5 woods to command the gully. Adding to the value of this position, units in the trench would have been able to slip directly into the gully during their Movement Phase to avoid enemy fire and then reoccupy the trench during the Advance Phase, all without having to enter or exit the trench as a separate action (F8.6). The tunnel, on the other hand, was dug to command the two road exit routes. With luck, the Fallschirmjäger will still control both roads on turn 6, but if one has fallen, the tunnel will allow men to sneak back unhindered to solidify the turn 7 defense.

Because I'm the Scenario Defender, all of my units start out concealed and my front line soldiers will think twice before losing this valu-

able advantage. Indeed, I hope to keep a reserve of concealed squads behind the Fortified Buildings so that I can shuffle these men into the garrison, greatly increasing their staying power. Finally, with no enemy units on the board, the sniper can go anywhere, so I'll start him out in bG3. If I'm right about the main axis of the Kiwi attack, their captain should be showing up over here shortly.



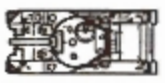
NEW ZEALANDER
(Robert Banozic)
Rating: 60% Pro-N.Z.

Advantages: Numbers, Tanks, Smoke, Time

The 2:1 advantage which my Kiwis possess over Rich's Fallschirmjägers is a healthy start, particularly as my elite troops are about equal in quality to those of the enemy. The Shermans are a key asset; they are fairly effective anti-infantry weapons, but their real attraction comes in the form of their Exit VP value and generous Smoke potential along the way. Plenty of Smoke will go far toward easing the path for this swarm. With 7 turns to cross only 15 hexes to exit, I can practically crawl across the board and still meet the VC.

Disadvantages: Rain, Thin armor, SSR 3

Rain kills most Smoke (E3.53), so any inclement weather will cancel one of my biggest advantages until the storm passes. And although the offensive potential of my tanks is considerable, their armor is far too thin to dependably ward off any of the various German AT weapons in this scenario. The Rubble and Shellholes placed via SSR 3 are also a serious impediment, notwithstanding that I place half of them myself. The nature of this battlefield is such that I'm even more concerned about finding rubble/shellhole locations that won't hurt me than I am about utilizing hexes that will actually assist my attack.



NEW ZEALANDER ATTACK:

It's tempting to have the Kiwis put rubble into various Level 1 hexes with a view to denying these Locations to the German defenders. However, the important ones are adjacent to the roads, and the risk of having fallen rubble block the later advance of my armor makes this inadvisable (in fact, I think the Germans would be well advised to use all their rubble placements on Level 1 hexes in the hope of spilling as much debris into the roads as possible). I chose to make rubble of the row houses from bH2-bE4 because they are one of the most difficult terrain types to attack through, and these hexes also pose no risk of falling rubble. I shellholed the road where I thought I might be able to take advantage of the TEM while crossing the board without unduly slowing my movement per SSR 3 (note that if a unit begins a phase in a shellhole hex, it can claim the TEM even if it did not expend MFs to enter the shellhole, B2.4). Finally, my last rubble placement at dG5 is intended to deny Rich any Fortification or tunnel in this hex, while also cutting off LOS north from dF5 and from dF4-H4 or J4. Meanwhile Rich's 3 tries at Falling Rubble are all more or less ideal, with two blocking a road and the third covering bB5 to impede last-minute runs down the center to exit.

As I write this portion I don't know the whereabouts of Rich's HIP units or the contents of his concealed stacks. I suspect that either the StuG or the AT gun is at dG2/2, and the other 75L will be at dE4/2. Hex dG2 commands a vital central portion of the board including the Gully approach, while dE4/2 nails down the German right flank and also has a long LOS all the way down the hex grain to bN4. The rubble-free roads of board d appear to be the most inviting route for my tanks, and the apparent lack of infantry on this board suggests that there must be something more threatening there under cover of HIP. If the 75Ls are anywhere else they will take me by surprise, but since I believe that any other placement would be inferior I have planned my attack with these assumptions in mind. Similarly, the concealed unit at bF4 is probably a leader but looks suspiciously like it might be occupying one end of a tunnel that empties into either bI3 or I4, while the unit sheltering in the orchard at bG4 is almost certainly a Psk team.

Because I have 24 squads advancing on a front only 10 hexes wide, there is essentially only one way to attack: across the entire board. Although this is probably mandatory simply because there isn't enough elbow room for a battle of maneuver, this approach also yields the positive side-effect of keeping the pressure on the outnumbered Germans practically everywhere on the board.

I will begin my attack by moving a squad CX dO5-N5-M5. I fully expect this guy to be gunned down in N5 by a HIP MG in dJ4/1, which may be Bore Sighted on N5. But there's only one way to find out, and if that MG is up there I want to know about it, and ideally exhaust its ROF. If that first squad makes it to M5 two other squads will follow with an LMG. Other squads, with a PIAT and an 8-1, move singly 05-N4. If nothing too awful has happened, a stack of 3x458, 9-1, 2xLMG & MMG(dm) move with a Sherman using Armored Assault dO1-N1-M2(bypass)-M3-L3/5. Maybe we'll find out what's in that big German stack at dJ4/0, albeit with a +3 DRM (+1 Orchard, +2 Wall,1 SSR 6, -1 FFNAM) barring any leadership or Bore Sighting DRMs. three more 458s with a PIAT Armored Assault 03-N3-M3/5 with another Sherman.

On board b, my kill stack with the 10-2, 3x458, HMG(dm), MMG(dm), & LMG enter 04(bypass)-N3(bypass)-M4-L3. The assault stack with an 8-0 ~T, 3x458 & 2xDC enter 04(bypass)-N3(bypass)-M4-L4. A stack with an 8-0, 3x458 and the MTR (dm) move O1-NO-M1-L1. Three more 458s move O1-NO-M1, and the other two Shermans enter on 03 and park at L2/5 and M3/5. In the APh my stacks each advance an additional hex (see accompanying illustration).

Perhaps the most unconventional element of my attack is that I have moved most of my force forward in stacks. I have done this because I wanted the leadership MF bonus and/or Armored Assault TEM. But with the exception of the move through dN5 — where I was moving squads singly, not stacked — I don't think I have given any good shots to the enemy. The TEM of stone buildings, or Armored Assault + Orchard Hindrance(s), together with the added protection of SSR 6 (a special 2-Game Turn +1 LV Hindrance) should shield my troops from too much harm. Notice I have stayed completely out of the dE4-bN4 hexgrain due to the HIP 75L I expect to find at dE4/2. Of course, if Rich is able to bring some significant FP to bear in my MPh — for example, if a squad does get drilled at dN5 — some of the rest of my movement will be altered to conform to the threat. However, I believe that most of what I've planned is quite safe and Rich can do little to stop it.

By the end of turn 1, I expect to have much of my force on the K hexrow — nearly a third of the way across the board — with nearly all the rest only one hex behind. I expect Rich to skulk (move back, advance forward) in his portion of the first turn to avoid my fire. Therefore, the scene will probably not have changed much when I resume the offensive on turn 2, except that all my dm weapons will now be assembled. Provided it isn't raining, I plan a tank Smoke barrage into hexes like dJ3, dK4, bI3 & bF1, while the MTR might Smoke bI4. The 10-2 kill stack might also suppress some enemy center of resistance, in dG2 for instance. This should pave the way for assaults into buildings dI4, bI3 and bI1. If it's raining, or if the Smoke isn't otherwise available, my attack will depend more on Prep Fire/Opportunity Fire while sacrificial squads move forward to draw fire and force loss of concealment by the Fallschirmjägers. Without Smoke to cover an attack into building dI4, my 9-1 stack at dK3 might shift to the center via K2-J1 and then an advance into dI1. And because I fear a tunnel attack into bI3 or I4, I will try not to end the turn with more than a single squad in either, while other units shelter in the shellholes of bJ3 and J4 until their advance can proceed on turn 3. I particularly intend to avoid hex dJ2, which I fear may be Bore Sighted by a 75L, and VBM movement through bK3/1, because the CAFP at K3/6 would be along the LOS of a HIP 75L at dF4/1. Rich's failure to rubble bK3 makes this opening just a little too inviting, at least until I have learned more about the enemy's dispositions.

By the end of turn 2, I plan to have a foothold as far south as the I hexrow — just one hex short of the halfway mark, and with 5 turns left to go. Of course I expect the enemy to be taking some action to slow this steamroller, and occasionally he might even succeed. With so many units and so much time, I think that the Kiwis will be hard to stop.

New Zealand Positions, End Turn 1A

(assumes no effective Defensive Fire)

dL5:	3x458, LMG (CX and Concealed)
dM5:	8-1, 3x458, PIAT (CX and Concealed)
dK3:	9-1, 3x458, MMG(dm), 2xLMG
dL3:	Sherman V(a) (VCA: 5)
dL3:	3x458, PIAT (Concealed)
dM3:	Sherman V(a) (VCA: 5)
bK4:	8-O, FT, 3x458, 2xDC
bK3:	10-2, 3x458, HMG(dm), MMG(dm), LMG
bK2:	3x458, MTR(dm)
bL2:	Sherman V(a) (VCA: 5)
bM3:	Sherman V(a) (VCA: 5)
bL1:	3x458 (Concealed), 8-0
bH3:	Sniper



GERMAN RESPONSE

Rob has launched a balanced attack with twelve squads and two tanks on each board. While he has not concentrated quite as strongly

on board b as I had imagined, his big money players, the 10(-2), an HMG/MMG combo, the FT and all the DCs came charging down hexrows 3 and 4 of the board as expected. His best men will now go head-to-head with the bulk of my defense. This is good. I should be able to tie up his game breakers for a couple of turns here. On the other side of the board his attack is a little stronger than expected and this has me worried. The terrain over here favors the German, but my front-line units are outnumbered 4 to 1. Time for some quick Deployment. Finally, I guess my AT gun and StuG are going to surprise Rob, although not fatally at this point since he wisely kept his Shermans off the front lines. I obviously disagree with his assessment of possible set up locations, although I suppose either dG2 or dE4 would be okay for the StuG since it might be able to motor out once things got hot. The AT gun isn't moving, however, and any competent Kiwi will make sure that dG2 and dE4 have fallen to infantry long before a Sherman makes an appearance. To a different degree than most scenarios, this one really revolves around the end game, and I want my Pak 40 with its 2 ROF present when the Shermans are finally forced to make their breakout. Moreover, it's not like dC4 is a compromise position. This hex commands a substantial portion of the playing field.

Now for the details. Rob's opening moves are well thought out and safe, but he is wrong to assume that there is little I can do to interfere. First, the three squads and the 9-1 that Armored Assaulted to dL3 will have to weather a 12(+2) shot from the MG group in dJ4. Armored Assault was a nice touch for crossing the open in dM3, but, because the tank's TEM is not cumulative with the wall around dL3, it's not relevant for this attack. This will be my best shot of the phase, and there's nearly a 60 per cent chance that his stack will be rolling some MCs. This attack will give me four chances to activate my Sniper and a good chance to bust some Kiwis.

Next, the three squads and the 10(-2) in bL3 will be treated to an 8(+3) shot from the squad and LMG in bI3. There's a 42 per cent chance of putting the dice in Rob's hands and the possibility of four more rolls to activate the Sniper or maybe generate a fatal boxcars. Not that the 10(-2) took any unnecessary risks, but a plum like that is just too juicy to pass up. I'll also take the 4(+3) shot from bFl/l versus the units moving into bL1. There's only a 28 per cent chance that Rob will have to roll this time, but I'd be happy with just a Pin back there behind the rubble, and the guy in bF1/1 won't need his concealment once he enters the pillbox anyway (B30.7).

Finally, the StuG comes onboard and acquires bK3. It doesn't look like the StuG's going to have a chance to surprise any Shermans with that Kiwi flame-thrower moving up. If it hasn't started raining by my turn, the assault gun will take a page out of the Allied text book and Smoke bK3 during Prep Fire. That will neutralize the hex for two turns, allowing me to concentrate all my fire on bK4. It will also interfere with the Sherman's fire from bL2 into bI3. Note that Acquisition is needed to get my Prep Fire, Smoke To Hit number up to 8, the StuG's depletion number. This is because the two hex range -1 DRM is not applicable to fire on the Area Target Type (C6.3). The BU +1 and the dust LV +1 negate the TH# increase for firing Smoke. The rest of my boys will sit tight.

During my Rally Phase, the 8(-1) in dJ4 will create some bodies by Deploying one of the squads. The 9(-2) in dC4/1 will also Deploy his machine gunners to give them more flexibility and to increase the number of units in the hex should a sniper make a move. As the game progresses, I will look for other opportunities to Deploy, because having men to occupy terrain is the key to stopping Kiwi forward progress.

Prep Fire will begin with the StuG firing off its Smoke rounds, followed by the MG nest opening up on dK4 with a 12(+2) shot and the chance for ROF. If the flame-thrower team is there, they'll be hit with a 12(+1). That will be the sum of my Prep Fires this turn, and throughout the game most of my men will lay low, minimizing the damage that Rob can do for free during Defensive Fire.

The Movement Phase will see the squad in bF1/1 move into the trench in bF0, advancing into the pillbox later. Next, to avoid the strongest enemy fire, the concealed squad and LMG in bI4 will assault move into the trench in bH3, followed by the concealed squad in bH4, and then the unconcealed squad and LMG from bI3. Rob's men in dK3 could pop off a 4(+1) shot against either of the concealed squads, leaving l factor of Residual Fire, or they could hit the last guy with an 8(+1). My failure to rubble dK2 is coming home to roost, and while I'll probably make it through these shots, things could get ugly. Once I'm in the trench, I'll be safe. At least two Good Order, unpinned Fallschirmjäger squads have to end the MPh Adjacent to the Fortified Building so that I can reoccupy it in the Advance Phase. Fortunately, I've got five squads over here, and the likelihood that Rob will break or Pin the first three squads with a 4(+1) and two 1 (even) shots is less than 1 per cent. Nevertheless, I'll do whatever it takes, including overstacking dH3, to make sure that men are available to Advance into the building. On the other hand, Rob may not even take the 4(+1) shot, which is why these guys moved early, forcing him to make his decision before he knows what else is going to happen. Next, the 8(-1) in bG5 assault moves to bG4, and then advances into the trench, turning this position into a backstop Rally point. The 8(0) sits tight in bF4.

My toughest decision revolves around the fate of the men in dJ4. While I've got enough men here to make a one-turn stand, they would probably face Close Combat and death on turn 2, especially with that concealed Kiwi platoon lurking in dL5. I prefer to make my stand behind less inviting terrain for the attacker. I'll abandon the building, pulling a squad and a half, the MMG and the 8(-1) back to dG5. One HS will duck into dH4 via dI5 and then advance to a rearguard in dH3. The Kiwis, of course, will now storm into the building on turn 2, blocked only by the rearguard and the LMG team in dG2 (who will have skulked into dF2 during the MPh). If not already broken by Rob's fire, the rearguard HS will then voluntarily break and rout via the dG4 shellholes to dF4 rather than face sure annihilation in Close Combat. As turn 3 begins and the dust clears, I will prepare for a stand behind the cratered road with the squad and MMG in dG5, a HS in dF4, the 8(-1) in dF5 to pick up any casualties such as the broken rearguard HS, and the HIP HS in dE4. For a while, some flank support will also come from the LMG team in dG2 or dF2 (who aren't too shy to move into the gully if necessary, even though it means they'll become CX advancing out). Once it gets hot, though, they'll fall back across the gully into the dD1 building. From turn 3 onwards, the Fallschirmjäger will give ground grudgingly on board d. I will try to keep one step ahead of Rob because the German can ill afford to lose men. As soon as it becomes apparent that a unit might get cut off (i.e. be unable to Rout if broken), I'll pull it back to a better spot, only one or two hexes in the rear I hope. If the board d contingent can fall intact back south of the gully, then, even if broken, they will have an excellent chance to stop the Kiwis cold. The MG nest and gun in dC4 will be brought to their aid. Against the dwindling and increasingly impatient Kiwis, a brutal firefight will develop, and the value of the gully in defense will become apparent as the Kiwis find all their maneuver options negated.

On board b, the big fight starts early, as I intend to stand in the Fortified Building until evicted. The front-line men will continue ducking into the trench during the MPh, only to Advance back into the buildings later. Meanwhile, the StuG and the MG nest will pelt Kiwi positions at every opportunity. If I have the luxury, I'll gain concealment in the trench, so that some of my men can take their positions later with this added protection. Of course, Rob's Prep Fires will eventually hammer the heroes in the Fortified Building, but if the Kiwis intend to keep the Fallschirmjäger out, they are going to have to cross the street and occupy the building themselves. The StuG and the MG nest are going to have a few things to say about that. My men Rally pretty quickly, and I've got a short term excess over here. This battle should be a see-saw for a while.

When the Fortified Building finally falls, the defenders will begin a slow, nearly non-fighting withdrawal. The MG nest can't support any of the rear areas and the Kiwis will now be operating from excellent terrain. The Fallschirmjäger's strategy will shift to one of obstruction. Good Order and broken units alike will occupy all of the +3 terrain in front of the Kiwis, flushing them into the open. With -1 and -2 DRMs, even the shreds of my once proud defense will still ruffle a few feathers. Thus begins the scrappy phase of the German defense. With luck, the Fortified Building will have held out long enough to give the survivors a fighting chance. The value of the rear-area HIP HSs now also becomes apparent. My men can fall back and Rally behind this intact and unsuspected screen, gathering a second wind and bracing for the final Kiwi thrust.

The biggest threat to German success is the Allied tanks due to their high CVP value. At least one must be knocked out, but two KOs are recommended. The Germans probably have won the moment the third Sherman goes down. Therefore, the Fallschirmjäger must look for every opportunity to take out a tank. The MG nest/AT gun combo was one trap to sucker the Kiwis. Even though Rob didn't fall for it here, he'll still have to run the Pak 40 gauntlet later. The StuG also must think offensively. Late in the game, if Shermans still abound, the assault gun will have to make a charge, hoping that its small size and decent armor give it a chance to kill one. The Psk teams also should be in hunt mode. Contrary to all other unit orders to duck

fire and hold out, these men should look for opportunities to engage the enemy armor. Suicide missions are not envisioned, but with the Psk's long range, a lucky break or a poor allied move might allow a Psk team to move up and explode one of those big tanks. Lastly, I won't forget my PFs, Street Fighting, ATMMs or APCR.

NEW ZEALAND RESPONSE

I don't blame Rich for taking some of the few shots which I have offered him on turn 1A. Yet, as he notes, the best of these has something like a 40 per cent chance of not even scoring a MC, and the high morale of my troops and favorable leadership DRMs should deflect most possible damage. I can't say that I am too worried about these shots. In fact, I will be pleased to see the Germans lose some of that Concealment. Even the early materialization of the StuG will relieve some of the initial suspense overhanging the Kiwi HQ.

I think that the German HIP placements are less than ideal. The AT gun apparently will remain silent for much of the battle until my own troops close in upon it. By that time, I expect to have knocked-out the 9-2 directed MG teams, which are the only thing that could stop my infantry from overwhelming the gun. Whether the StuG is well-placed will depend on the availability of my Smoke. No Smoke for me, and the StuG will make it very difficult for the Kiwis to get into Fort Summers at bI3/I4. If I manage to Smoke bI4, that StuG will have a net +1 TH DRM on the J3 crossing point (+4 Smoke, +1 BU, +1 SSR 6, -2 Bore Sighting, -2 PBF, & -1 FFNAM). It will need a '7' to hit, which may or may not have any effect with only 12 FP against my '8' morale troops, but would leave no residual FP because of the +4 Smoke. The presence of the StuG will force a PAATC before I can advance into its hex. Once I'm there, the Germans are penalized with a +2 Ambush DRM for the AFV and my Kiwis get to attack first using sequential Close Combat (A11.31), even if I don't get the Ambush. I also have doubts about the wisdom of utilizing the German HIP allowance on four HSs. Although this does allow more coverage, I don't think they have enough sting to be truly worthwhile. I would have preferred two, or maybe only one, HIP position that has the potential to really hurt somebody. The PSK guy at bF3 is a bit curious, since the adverse consequences of backblast/desperation apply to units in rubble (C13.8-.81; for an excellent discussion on the use of SCWs, see Perry Cocke's "Taking Some Heat" article in issue #2 of *Backblast*).

The odds are on my side for good weather, when I prepare to attack on turn 2A. There's a 58 per cent chance that it will not have started to rain when I begin my PFPh. (If rain had started during turn 1, there would have been an additional small chance that it would have stopped by 2A.) If I can't use Smoke because of rain, those storm clouds have a silver lining: the Mist LV Hindrance will affect fire from the German 9-2 directed MG teams from dC4/1 into my bK3/K4 jumping-off point. This could be +2 for heavy rain, in addition to the +1 DRM for SSR 6. If it's going to rain, I hope it comes down in buckets.

Naturally, my turn 2 attack is dependent on the conditions prevailing at the time, namely whether my men have successfully withstood the few German shots thus far, whether the StuG Smoked bK3, and whether I got the Smoke I wanted, particularly on Fort Summers. If things have gone well, my attack proceeds as planned and I use the Smoke-immune DCs to ideally at least Pin the occupants of Fort Summers and perhaps capture this center of resistance on turn 2. When I do advance into the StuG's hex, an additional advantage, beyond those that I have already mentioned, is the fact that the StuG won't be able to attack back in Close Combat, since its only CC weapon, the AAMG, can't be used while BU. As long as I'm in the AFV's location, it can't fire outside of the hex (A7.212). Meanwhile my 8-0 FT guy advances into bJ3. (Question: If I fire the FT at the StuG while my unit is in Melee with it, do I affect my own unit? I guess not, since the AFV must be pre-designated as the target per A22.34. Presumably, it is no different than ordnance, which would also have to Pre-designate the AFV as the target for a TH attempt and would not affect any other unit in the Melee.)*[Correct.—GF]*

If things are going badly, my attack will shift its emphasis a bit and I will attempt to outflank Fort Summers from the shattered remains of building bI1 via H1, I2 and J2. In this event, my kill stack would advance out to K2, forcing the StuG to change VCA to remain effective (with the possibility of Bog consequences per D8.2) or else to leave the hex. If this approach is necessary, I wouldn't capture the Fort until turn 3, and then only after weathering some 8(+1) or 16(+1) shot(s). To try these shots, Rich will have to stand and fight, and I fully expect to be able to return a much larger volume of fire. Once past this obstruction, the Kiwis should be able to advance solidly on board b, so that even a turn 3 capture of the Fort will not substantially throw me off my timetable. I think it's highly unlikely that the Germans can hold out longer than that in this position. On board d, Rich has conceded me the I4 building. If I get the smoke in the road, all my troops will gather there for a little family reunion before pushing into the shellholes and across the G4/H4 street on turn 3. If I don't get the Smoke, my 9-1 stack will head toward building I1 via K2-J1, as mentioned above. Here, Rich's HIP placement will score its biggest surprise of the game as his I1 HS gets a 4(-1) and a 2(-1) SFF shot at a whole stack, if I needed the leader's movement bonus to avoid CX into the gully due to rain. Yet, even those are not likely to be terribly devastating against my high-quality troops. Any unpinned survivors will still get to I1. If that HS doesn't prudently rout away, it will surely pay with its life.

Through all this my tanks will be hanging back, waiting until my infantry has verified that the AT gun isn't lurking in dG2, E4 or F4. Of course, when I learn that these hexes are gun-free zones, I will know that the 75L must be somewhere else, so the Shermans will still not be too adventuresome until the AT gun is located. At most, the Pak may bag one tank. If I do feel the need to apply pressure with my armor, I wouldn't bunch two tanks together while that 75L is lurking somewhere. However, I really expect my infantry to be able to take it out before my tanks switch into high gear for their final-turn drive off the board.

Although Herr Summers appears to believe that my armor is fairly well blocked from exiting on board b, I have to disagree. I don't think that the German rubble placement has done enough to block the board b road to my tanks. From my Sherman's position at bL2/5 — where one tank ends turn 1 — I can exit board b in just two turns via K3-I2-I3-E5-D3-A3, using VBM and CE movement as necessary. Of course, I don't expect that my end-game run will be starting from way back at bL2. The rubble is certainly a nuisance, but it is not the armor-blocking engineering feat that it could have been if, say, D4 had been made into rubble, or maybe C4 with rubble spilling into C3, D3 or D4.

I think in the 20 per cent or so of the games where the Kiwis have sufficient Smoke available and the Germans don't have great DRs with their decidedly mediocre attack opportunities in the early going, the New Zealanders should win handily. Even in the remaining 80 per cent of the games, it ought to be a close fight, because the combination of lots of squads, good leadership and favorable attack terrain will be a challenge to the German OB. Thus, I think that my overall evaluation of this scenario as 60 per cent pro-New Zealand is very reasonable, and I'd be willing to listen to an argument that this is a bit low.

GERMAN CONCLUDING REMARKS

Rob and I have very different views regarding how the Germans should take on the overwhelming number of Kiwis. The Kiwi commander seems to advocate a stronger, more aggressive, more forward deployment of the HIP troops. While this would certainly lead to spectacular fireworks at the beginning, such a deployment plays right into the New Zealander's hand by allowing him to bring his terrific weight of fire upon the maximum number of Germans as early as possible. Even with great DRs, the Fallschirmjäger aren't going to win this contest by killing Kiwi infantry, nor are they going to weather too much concentrated Kiwi fire. Instead, German victory rests on having as many men as possible along the south edge for the last couple of turns of the game. Without even firing a shot, a continuous line of German MMC stretched across the board edge would prevent any Kiwi infantry from exiting, and a still functioning AT gun and a few Psk and PF shots would take out at least one tank, guaranteeing victory. While this ideal is difficult to achieve, it is the goal toward which the German should work. The dispersed, backfield placement of all of the HIP units, except for the mobile StuG, is a critical part of this strategy.

Similarly, while it is true that I might have used rubble better to block board b, in this contest my falling rubble DRs were pretty favorable. Many games might not see even this level of success due to the vagaries of building collapse. This shouldn't worry the German player, because any rubble serves to channel the Kiwi units. As long as the Fallschirmjäger are still on the board at the end of the game, blocking the obvious exit routes, victory is attainable. For this playing, the StuG, both Psks and most of the German infantry are on board b (in spite of the concentrated ruin) to take on any tanks that try to weave their way through the wreckage along paths similar to the one that Rob outlined above. Backblast from the Psk and PF is no big deal. A moving Sherman at one hex range will be hit

(Continued on pg. 56)

ASL Crossfire...(Continued from pg. 51)

with a 7 TH DR from a PF or an 8 TH DR from a Psk. The danger of an MC is immaterial given the good chance to take out a tank. While I am not willing to trade HS or squads with the Kiwi infantry, I am more than willing to trade them for tanks. Furthermore, broken Germans rout, dead Shermans don't.

Finally, Rob has risked many guys by moving in stacks with leaders. At one level, I applaud this aggressive use of infantry, given the good covering terrain and the Kiwi numerical superiority. At the same time, this tactic can lead to disaster, if good German luck meets poor Kiwi fortune. Those stacks will draw fire and whole platoons could be taken out of action, giving the Fallschirmjäger just the breather they need. Big stacks attract deserved attention and I'd look on this tactic guardedly, especially when the enemy has HIP capability. One case in point is Rob's proposed move into the gully, using a leader-led stack to avoid CX status if it is raining. Not only would these guys have been hammered by the HIP HS without a second thought, but also the big stack would have caught the eye of the 9(-2)-directed MG nest which could squeeze off a 6 (even) snap shot (+1 dust, +1 rain, -2 leader) when the platoon enters the gully. Look out for the DR 2 = lKIA with rate. We all know how that works. In my book, many Kiwis are being asked to take MCs in the opening phases of this game because of the use of stacks.

KIWI CONCLUDING REMARKS

I don't blame the German commander for wanting to fight to a goal-line stand at the edge of the world (er, board). Yet, I don't think that a more forward defense on board d is incompatible with that strategy. Slowing or holding the Kiwi assault for a turn or two in building dI4 should be an integral component of the German plan. I don't believe Rich has enough troops in the immediate vicinity to get the job done. A 75L at dE4/2 could have made a significant contribution to this holding position.

From the foregoing discussion, I think that it is clear that my big-stack movement is only likely to be used much on turn 1, and then with favorable TEMs as discussed above. For the most part, my MMCs will need to average less than 2 hexes of forward progress per turn after that. The leaders' MF bonus will seldom be required later. Of course, I won't hesitate to take advantage of any holes which may be blown in the defensive line. Even if I do run into the wall of Germans that Rich is hoping to construct on the board edge for turn 7, an Ambush or two might allow me to exit the winning VP margin south for the victory. Now, that would be an exciting finish. ★

Breaking Down The Numbers

Figuring the Odds of Malfunction or Disabling of Your Weapon in ASL



Low Ammo B# -1

By Mike Clay and Morgan Samuels

You've just captured an enemy Panzerschreck (PSK), its previous owner having been eliminated for failure to rout. A good stroke of fortune for you, since the Germans have a Jagdpanzer V on top of the hill that you must take, and your own PIAT will not be able to defeat its frontal armor, barring a Critical Hit.

As you maneuver the squad into firing position, you wonder how many shots you can expect to get out of this new acquisition to your arsenal. You wonder which will happen first, a hit and a kill on the Jagdpanther, or rolling the breakdown number for the PSK and its removal from your armory.

This situation occurred in a recent game, and we bet many similar situations have happened to you. Every support weapon in ASL is subject to the possible misfortunes of malfunction (B#) or elimination (X#). We would all like to peer into a crystal ball and know when we are going to roll that B# or X# for our valued support weapons (SW) and guns. Well, we have no such crystal ball lying around, but we have the next best thing, a table of the average number of shots expected for every combination of breakdown number, elimination number and repair number. Using the accompanying table, we can check how many shots we are likely to get before any SW or gun is removed from the board, whether due to having rolled its X# or having rolled its B# followed by rolling a "6" on a repair attempt (R#).

In the case of SW and guns with an X#, consult Table 1. For example, that field phone that your platoon sergeant has been talking about has an X# of "12" but no B# or R#. Looking at the row for X#12, we can see that it will average 36 calls to Lieutenant Reinsch of the battalion's mortar company before that field phone will be removed from the board for having rolled boxcars. Considering that radio contact or maintenance could be attempted twice per game turn, this means that we probably won't see the demise of the field phone due to having rolled a "12" on the contact or maintenance attempt in a typical ten-turn scenario.

Table 1. Longevity of Non-Reparable Weapons (those with original malfunction numbers)

Modified Elimination Number	Average Shots Before Removal from Play
X12	36.0
X11	12.0
X10	6.0
X9	3.6
X8	2.4
X7	1.7
X6	1.4
X5	1.2
X4	1.1
X3	1.0

That flamethrower which Corporal Kreiser used to such great effect against remnants of the Soviet 138th Rifle division in Stalingrad got twelve shots before it ran out of fuel in one scenario. Considering that the average number of shots for an X10 weapon is six, Corporal Kreiser was doing a lot of damage with a very light pull on the trigger. Maybe it is time for his promotion to an 8-0!

A captured PSK (X8) would be expected to get only 2.4 shots before its removal from play. Make the most of every shot for such a short-lived weapon! For that matter, you might well want to *not* use it, but instead keep it around as a threat.

How about some SW that have both a B# and a R#? How will they stand up? How many shots can we expect from that German heavy machinegun (HMG) that we have pointed down the road? Take a look at Table 2 for the answer. Since the HMG is a B12 and R3 (see the column marked "X# none"), we see that the average number of shots before it is malfunctioned and subsequently becomes disabled is a whopping 144! Considering that we are playing an eight turn scenario, even if we get much better than average rate of fire, it is unlikely to see the HMG removed from the board during the course of the scenario for having been disabled after a malfunction (if we don't use sustained fire during the course of the scenario).

Table 2. Longevity of Reparable Weapons (average number of shots of those with original breakdown numbers)

Original breakdown numbers and repair numbers of weapon:

B12			B11			B10		
R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3
72	108	144	24	36	48	NA	18	NA

Net Modified Breakdown Number	Original breakdown number becomes elimination number when penalized								
	X12			X11			X10		
	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3
B11	18	22	24	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
B10	10	13	16	8	9	10	NA	NA	NA
B9	7	9	11	6	7	8	NA	5	NA
B8	5	6	8	4	5	6	NA	4	NA
B7	3	5	6	3	4	5	NA	3	NA
B6	3	4	5	3	3	4	NA	3	NA

What if we do use sustained fire? What then can we expect from our meat-chopper? Well the German HMG using sustained fire falls into the category of B10/X12/R3 (see Table 2). We can see that the average number of shots expected falls from the superb 144 down to a much more fragile 16 shots! Frequent sustained fire shots from this weapon could mean its removal from the game in even a moderately short scenario. The lesson here is that even the best SW are removed from play with a much more alarming frequency when used with lowered breakdown numbers (e.g., ammo shortage, inexperienced infantry, sustained fire, extreme winter). Use sustained fire sparingly! If that same German HMG were subject to both the sustained fire and ammunition shortage penalties, it would be a B9/X12/R3, giving us a measly 11.1 shots per game. Heavy and medium machineguns are always more reliable for the same breakdown number than any SW or gun with an R1 because their higher repair number makes them more likely to be repaired than the R1 weapon.

Speaking of repair, what effect does malfunction play into the results presented in the accompanying data table? Table 2 reflects the exact average number of shots that you would get from these weapons with unlimited time. Of course, in a real scenario we don't have unlimited time, nor can we expect "average" luck, and it often takes several rally phases to repair a SW once it has malfunctioned. In a short scenario, we might never get the weapon repaired once it malfunctions, and so we might have gotten only two or three shots from it in the course of the scenario. Don't expect your opponent to be sympathetic!

When we start a new scenario, we always look over the OB to get a feel for how long the SW and guns in both orders of battle are likely to last. We want to know things like how many shots we can expect from our flamethrowers. This will help us to decide if we want to risk long range shots with them or shots versus concealed units, or if we want to take only full firepower shots. Or when our German MMG and manning squad ELR break to conscripts and then later rally, should we wait a turn and transfer the MMG to a non-inexperienced MMC? Or should we go ahead and fire the MMG now at a target of opportunity, risking a greater chance of malfunction? On the attack, there is a reasonable chance that the defender's artillery piece might fall into our hands. When it does, we want to know how many shots we can expect from it. The breakdown number, and thus the expected number of shots from that captured weapon, depend on who is manning the gun. Is it worth moving a crew up to man this captured weapon, or will a half squad suffice? Should we use this gun strictly against enemy vehicles, or take a shot at enemy infantry moving in the open? The data in Tables 1 and 2 can help you to decide these tactical decisions. We hope that you find this data useful in helping you make judgement calls with your SW and guns in ASL. ★

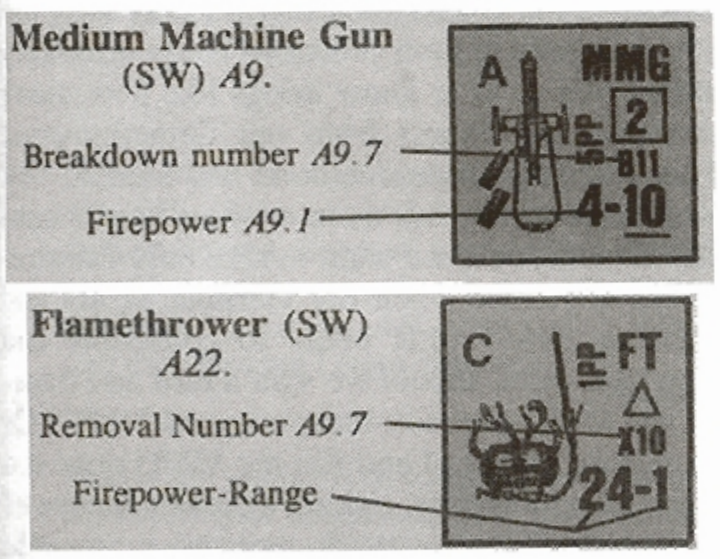
***ASL* SCENARIO ERRATA:**
G30 *(The GENERAL* Vol. 30 #4):
After "GERMAN Moves First" add: [0]
The die roll in SSR 3 must be less than *or equal* to the circled number on the Turn Record Chart.

WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD WEAPONS

How Weapons Break in ASL *By Perry Cocke*

Upon firing a weapon, it may become accidentally broken in two ways.

You can either roll greater than or equal to its elimination number (X#), which means it is disabled (removed for good) or you can roll greater than or equal to its breakdown number (B#) but less than its elimination number, which means it has malfunctioned, but may be repaired. Some weapons have a breakdown number on the counter (for example, a B11 means it malfunctions when you roll an 11 or higher while firing it). Others have an X# (for example, X10 means it is removed when you roll a 10 or higher while firing it). Still others have a Low Ammo B# (LA#—D3.7) as signified by having a circled B# shown on the counter. These weapons malfunction on a roll of 12, but have a Low Ammo counter placed after rolling greater than or equal to their LA#. Thereafter, they have an X# equal to their original LA#, and a new, regular B# one lower than that original LA#. Weapons without any B# or X# shown have a B# of 12.



A weapon's inherent B# or X# can be lowered due to various reasons, all of which are cumulative (A.11). Any of these reasons which lowers a weapon's B# also turns its Original B# into an X# (A.11). Sustained fire, intensive fire, capture use, non-qualified use and non-Finnish Axis extreme winter usage all reduce a weapon's B# or X# by two. A German MMG being fired by an American unit would have its B# reduced by two—and would be removed on a roll of 12. If it were being sustained fired, its B# would be reduced to 8 but it would still disable on a 12, its original B#. No matter what penalties are incurred, a German machinegun's original B# is a 12 , and its X# will never be lower than that.

A circled B11 gun suffering non-qualified use penalties would disable on a 12 (its original B#), malfunction on a 10 or 11 (two lower than originally), and would have a Low Ammo counter placed on an 11. (There is no provision for lowering the LA#.) If it was also using intensive fire, it would disable on a 12, receive a Low Ammo counter on an eleven, and would malfunction on 8 through 11.

Inexperienced use and Russian extreme winter use lower the B# or X# of a weapon by one. A Russian LMG being fired by a conscript would have its B# reduced by one, to 10, and would disable on an 11 or 12. A Panzerschreck being fired by a German conscript would have its X# reduced by one, to 9; one fired by a Russian conscript would have its X# reduced by three, to 7.

Ammunition shortage lowers the B# or X# of a support weapon by one (and turns its original B# into an X#), but it affects guns much differently. It changes a gun's inherent B# into a LA# one lower than the inherent B#, although guns with an original LA# instead start off with a Low Ammo counter in place. During an ammunition shortage, a gun with an original B11 would disable on an 11 or higher and have a Low Ammo counter placed on a 10, after which it would disable on a 10 or higher and malfunction on a 9. If it were also using intensive fire, it would disable on a 10 or higher and malfunction on 7 through 9. During an ammunition shortage, a gun with an original circled B11 would begin play with a Low Ammo counter and thus would disable on an 11 or higher and malfunction on a 10. If it also suffered unqualified use penalties, it would malfunction on an 8.

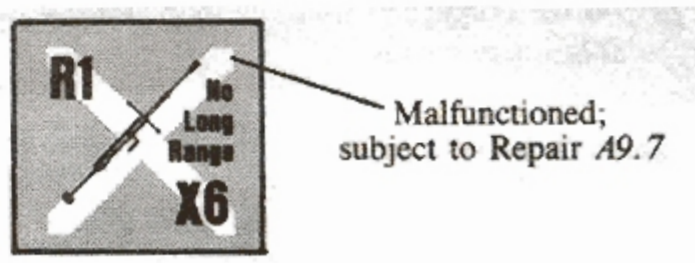
These issues are *not* crystal clear in the *ASL* rule book. I have interpreted them several different ways over the years. The other editors of *Multi-Man Publishing* and I struggled long and hard before coming to the conclusions above. Below are some of my thoughts on the subject.

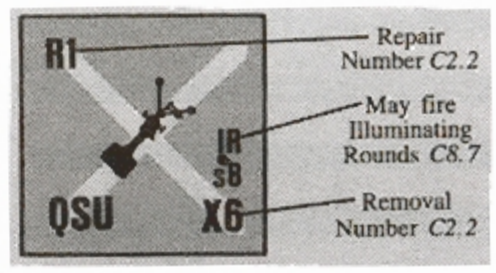
Plenty of players (myself included at times) have applied the cumulative effect of increased Breakdown frequency to both the weapon's B# and its newly acquired X#. When intensive firing a captured gun, for instance, we would first change the original B# to an X# and lower the B# by two, making it a B10/X12 Gun, and then change the B10 to an X10 and drop the B10 by two more, making it a B8/X10 Gun. The problem here is that a weapon only has one *original* B#. Whatever penalties are incurred by a German HMG, its original B# will always be 12. So when A.11 says to change the HMG's original B# to an X#, that new X# will always be 12, no matter how many times the B# is lowered by other penalties.

I have also had a tendency in the past to confuse a gun's original LA# with its original B#. The wording of D3.7 probably had something to do with this, but the two are separate. Indeed, they have separate listings in the index. All guns with a circled B# have an original B# of 12 (i.e., they malfunction on a 12). When these guns suffer one of the usual breakdown penalties (such as for intensive firing), their LA# is unaffected, while their original B# of 12 becomes an X# and their regular B# is lowered by two, to 10. Only after they have a Low Ammo counter placed on them, does their original LA# (by the grace of D3.7) become an X#.

I have on occasion, in the heat of battle, placed a Low Ammo counter on a circled B11 gun that rolled a 9 while intensive firing, but this was wrong (see a correct example above). There is no indication anywhere that a gun's LA# would *ever* be lowered. B#s and X#s are lowered, and LA#s can become an X# or a lower B#, but none of the penalties affect the LA# itself.

There is little doubt that, given the chance, I once may have said that a B11 gun during an ammunition shortage would not only start out with a Low Ammo counter in place but would also have its LA# reduced by one. Reading A19.131 might lead one to this belief when it says "all vehicles and guns are considered to have a circled B# (D3.71) one lower than their inherent B# during an ammunition shortage." On careful reflection, however, I believe that if that were the case, the following sentence would read "In addition, those which already have a circled B# start play with a Low Ammo counter already in place." I am sure the reader would be more confident of my interpretation if the sentence started "Instead..." but I am convinced that during an ammunition shortage a LA# gun does not have its LA# lowered, but only starts out with a Low Ammo counter.





★



Hill 253.5



By Robert Banozic and Rich Summers

For those of you unfamiliar with Crossfire articles, the authors simultaneously and separately analyze a scenario from opposite perspectives. They then exchange notes and simultaneously write responses to their counterpart's comments. While no game was actually played (such as with a Series Replay article), the commentary is often as incisive as those in Series Replays. This time Rob and Rich analyze an Advanced Squad Leader tournament scenario found in volume 27, number 3 of The GENERAL.

—SKT



RUSSIAN
(Robert Banozic)
Rating: 75% Pro-Russian

Advantages: Fortifications, Time, Victory Conditions

The biggest attraction for the Russian player in scenario T7, "Hill 253.5," is easily the generous provision of mines and wire. In a relatively small playing area, these obstacles—combined with the protective terrain effects modifier (TEM) of the Foxholes, which all Russian units receive—are a very difficult challenge for the enemy to overcome. With only eight turns on the clock, I don't think that the Germans will usually have enough time to do so.

The VC provision, allowing a Soviet win if a single Good Order Russian multi-man counter (MMC) occupies a level 3 hex at game end, means that the Russian player can win simply by advancing onto a level 3 hex in the last Advance Phase (APh) of the game, with no opportunity for the Germans to respond. This may be seen as a bogus way to win, but it is legal and explains much of my rationale for maintaining that this scenario is strongly pro-Russian.

Disadvantage: Armor

It's difficult to identify too many real disadvantages facing the Russians hunkered down on heavily-fortified Hill 253.5 (hereafter referred to by the mapboard 2 designation "Hill 621"). Including the reinforcements, the orders of battle (OBs) are roughly equivalent in numbers, FP and morale. The Germans have an edge in leadership, but not an excessive one, given that they are on the attack. In fact, the allocation of leaders is very good, for a Russian OB. While the German MMCs slightly out-range my troops with their inherent firepower, the expected close-quarters fighting plus the liberal Russian supply of MGs, offsets much of that advantage. The only real deficiency in the Russian OB is their tanks, which are completely outclassed by the opposing Panzers. I tend to think of the reinforcing KVs as *Stuka* bait which might distract some attention from the newly arriving infantry. They are certainly not of much use in tackling the thick-skinned German machines.

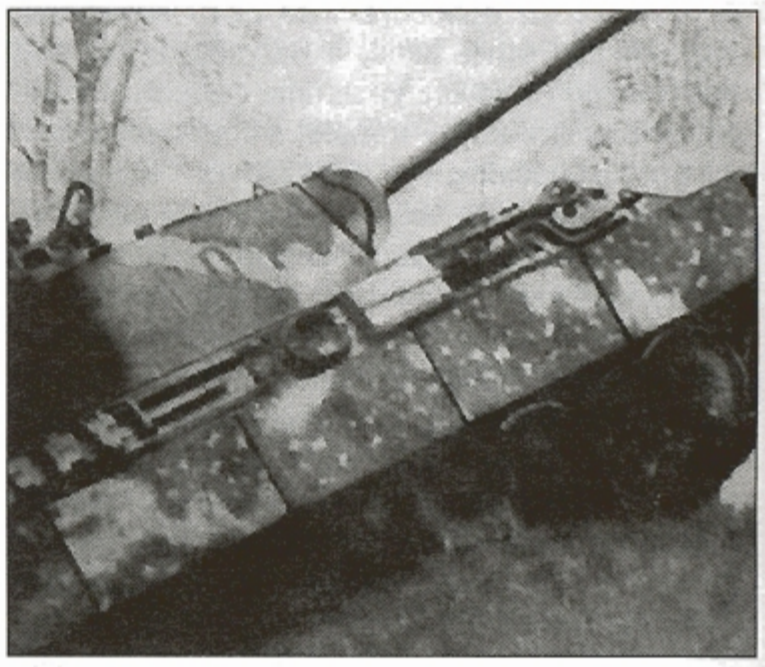
Russian Setup*:

U5	6 A-P Mines
T3	Wire
T5	6 A-P Mines
T8	8 A-P Mines
S3	8 A-P Mines
S5	2-2-8 w/ 76L ART (CA: 1)
S8	Wire, 1 A-T Mine
S9	Wire
S10	Wire
R1	Wire, 1 A-T Mine
R3	2-2-8 w/ 76L ART (CA: 1)
R7	1 A-T Mine
R8	2-2-8 w/ 45L AT (CA: 1)
Q1	Wire, 1 A-T Mine
P2	1S Foxhole, 6-2-8 w/ FT
O6	1S Foxhole, 6-2-8 w/ DC
N3	2S Foxhole, 8-1, 2 x (4-4-7 w/ MMG)
N5	2S Foxhole, 9-1, 4-4-7 w/ HMG, 4-4-7 w/ LMG
N7	1S Foxhole, 4-4-7
N9	1S Foxhole, 8-0 w/ Radio, 4-4-7 w/ LMG

*All mines, wire and guns set up HIP per A12.33 (I have deliberately chosen to place foxholes onboard, thus keeping their contents out of view). All eligible units gain concealment per A12.12.

It is tempting to start some of the Russian MGs with line of sight (LOS) to Hill 538 and the approaches to Hill 621. However, doing so will subject those positions to the full effect of an initial burst of German prep fire. Instead, I have chosen to hide much of my non-HIP force from any initial German LOS and so gain concealment for these units. The few hexes from which I can be damaged at the outset, such as U1 and R0, risk retaliatory fire which might deter Rich from making use of these at all. This might make any hurt worthwhile by yielding some mangled Germans in the early going. I am relying on the mines, wire and HIP guns to slow the initial German onslaught. Unless they choose to climb the cliffs (B11.4) it will not be possible for any German unit to reach the level 3 hexes without first moving through mines or wire or both. In addition, most of these impediments are covered by fire. Hence clearance attempts will be very difficult, although I don't think that the Germans have much time to try those anyway.

Besides covering the mines and wire against infantry assault, the primary task of the HIP guns will be to stop the German Panzers with deliberate immobilization shots. Sure, I'll go for a kill if I can hit a Panther's side or rear target facing, and then the APCR potential may prove useful. I am hoping that the 76L at S5/1 might get a side shot at a German AFV starting at U1/5 (targeting P2), but I don't expect to get those



opportunities often. If I had placed more units in LOS of the German starting positions, I might have put a 76L at X8/6, which can produce very satisfactory results against German armor which often starts at W5/5. This naturally leads to early loss of the ART. In any event, by hiding my units from view, I have eliminated any German incentive to start on level 2 of Hill 538, except perhaps for their off-board artillery (OBA) observer.

My own radio man is positioned to bring down harassing fire on the eastern portion of the board if the enemy should approach here. If this appears to be Rich's plan, I will immediately attempt to place a spotting round (SR) where it has a good chance of landing in LOS—trying for hexes like Q6 or O8, for example—and then walk it down to the target area three hexes at a time. I won't wait until I can see the enemy before converting to fire for effect (FFE). I will be seeking to use the 5-hex-wide harassing fire blast area as an additional obstacle to limit German forward movement. The woods around T9 create some nice air burst potential, too. One great thing about harassing fire is that you can convert to FFE and catch enemy units in the outer ring of the blast area when none are known, and you do *not* have to make the additional C1.21 chit draw (provided that there are not also non-HIP, non-known enemy units in/adjacent to the SR *hex* with none being known to the observer).

My flamethrower (FT) team is placed so as to bring some Bolshevik heat to bear against any fascists who might stumble into LOS via the western board edge, while the demolition charge (DC) boys plan to throw their charge into P6 should any blue counters take up housekeeping there. The big stack at N5 covers both flanks, particularly drawing a bead on the inviting but false shelter of the mine-ridden building at T8. Another powerful stack at N3 waits for the enemy to close in the end game—if he gets that far. The 8-1 stands ready to rescue the FT when its current user ultimately breaks and routs.

My plan is not focused on preventing the Germans from controlling four level 3 hexes at game end, although they will have to work hard just to achieve that. My goal is to slow the German attack sufficiently to allow me to advance that one MMC onto a level 3 hex in the last APh. The primary task of my reinforcing infantry will be to get into position for this game-winning maneuver. The battle for aerial supremacy could play a role here; the small possibility that *Stukas* might rule the skies is a factor in my allowance of a 25 per cent chance for a German win. However, in general I expect my fighter-bombers to be a match for Rich's *Stukas* and/or assaulting infantry (and they even have a small chance of hurting the Panzers).

The only thing that's more fun than the planning is watching it happen.



GERMAN
(Rich Summers)
Rating: 55% Pro-German

Advantages: Leadership, AFVs, Firepower

The Germans may have a few hurdles (or should I say wire counters) to cross to win this scenario. Yet, with their excellent leadership and AFV support, they have more than enough to take their objectives in the eight allotted turns. The officer corps is the German's biggest advantage. Five leaders, including a 10–2, 9–2 and 9–1, guiding just 12 squads means that few foot soldiers will be spending much time off the front line. More importantly, in the countryside around Hill 253.5, those "–2" modifiers will rip even the best protected Russian positions. Compare these officers to the three Russian leaders with a *total* "–2" DRM.

The AFVs rate highly, too. This scenario depicts the operational debut of the Panther tank and the super heavy Ferdinand tank destroyer. They run up against some reinforcing, once-formidable KV-1s. From this matchup, it's clear who's winning the arms race (never mind that the Panthers do self-destruct from time to time). The German AFVs will deliver more than just firepower. These beasts will also blaze trail breaks through minefields (B28.61) and might even take out some wire (B26.53). Most important, however, is the cover that they and the halftracks will provide for the infantry. Armored assault movement (D9.31) will negate moving in the open. The vehicle's stationary TEM (D9.3) will provide protection for the German fire bases and safe, routing terrain for the inevitable broken units.

The final German advantage is firepower, including a couple of flamethrowers and some demo charges. For the first four turns, the Germans have a raw rate-of-fire-adjusted firepower advantage of nearly 50 per cent over the Russians (268 vs. 184). (If you're curious how this is calculated, Mark Nixon introduced the concept in volume 28, number 2. Basically, it's just the sum of the total firepower, ignoring To-Hit (TH) probabilities, but taking into account the fact that some weapons average more than one shot per phase.) The German will dominate the battlefield at the point of contact, given the Russian need to disperse his units across the front, the edge in firepower, the excellent leadership and the standard German range advantage.

Disadvantages: Fortifications, Russian Moves Last, ROF and Artillery

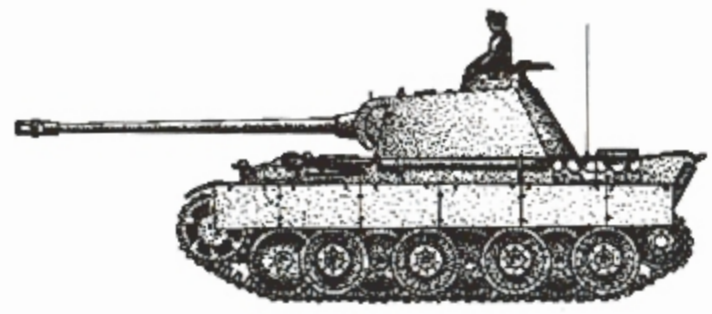
Historically, of course, Operation Citadel ran afoul of the heavily fortified and deeply echeloned Russian lines. Those same elements are the key to keeping the Russian in this game. With 40 factors of mines and six wire counters to span a front just 10 hexes wide, no doubt the *Wehrmacht* is going to get a little hung up. Its fair to say that German skill at negotiating the fortifications will go a long way to determining the outcome here.

Next, the Russian has six weapons with a rate of fire (ROF) of two or greater, whereas the Germans have none. This gives the communists the potential to wreak some real havoc if the dice gods smile on them. On the flip side, when these weapons inevitably fall to German fire, the Russian defense will lose its sharpest teeth.

The Russian artillery can also have a big, if somewhat unreliable, impact that the German counterpart does not fully negate. The Germans will be moving under fire while the Russians will be dug-in. Consequently, finding and neutralizing the Bolshevik observer should rank high on the German priority list.

Finally, the Russian moves last. Because a Good Order Russian MMC or AFV on a level 3 hill hex will deny German victory, the VC are a little more difficult than they appear at first glance. A single Russian squad hiding out of LOS, could steal a win by advancing onto the hilltop at game end. A last ditch suicide charge might also swing the contest to the Soviets. For this reason, its not really enough for the German to control the minimum four level 3 hexes. To ensure victory, the Germans must plan to take the entire hilltop.

One final note, which sort of qualifies as a disadvantage: the German setup restrictions have been clarified from the original misprint and the *ASL Annual 93a* scenario errata. The Germans now must set up north of the road, not "on north" or "on/north." This always seemed obvious, because Russian fortifications can be placed in the road. For those of you who used to set up in the road, the game is now a little bit tougher.



German Setup:
R0: Panther (CA: 4), 10–2, 2 x (4-6-7 w/ LMG), 4-6-7
S1: Elefant (CA: 5), 9–2, 2 x (8-3-8 w/ FT)
T0: Halftrack (CA: 5)
T1: 8-3-8, 8-3-8 w/ DC, 9–1 w/ DC
U1: Halftrack (CA: 5),7-0 w/ Radio, 2 x (4-6-7 w/ LMG), 4-6-7
V6: 8-0, 4-6-7, 2 x 2-4-7
Y4: Panther (CA: 5)

GERMAN ATTACK PLAN

From a quick glance at the board, one might conclude that a frontal assault or an attack through the woods on the eastern flank offers the most secure route to the crest of the hill, especially when compared to the narrow jumping-off area on the western side. Yet, this view is misleading. The eastern woods provide no more cover than an AFV (even less against artillery) and, because of the curving path of the road, the setup options in the center and east are more than a turn's movement farther removed from the victory hexes than the options in the west. Worse yet, having worked forward to good positions on the eastern flank, you must still cross considerable open ground to get up the hill. The center is usually the site of the most extensive fortifications. It is true that both the center and the east provide more room for maneuver initially. However, with tanks for cover and top notch leadership, the shorter western route seems to be the better route. Indeed, it is only eight hexes from R0 to the most distant level 3 hex. After breaking out in the west, the forces can disperse nicely.

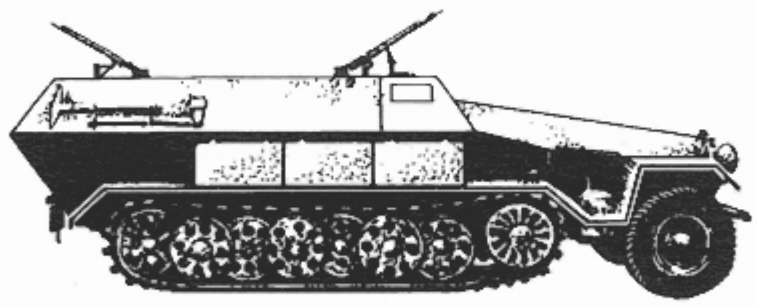
The visible Russian defense does not sway this analysis. Rob's men seem evenly spread across the board, with the big stack in N5 covering both flanks—no doubt the lair of the 9–1 with the HMG. Rob has also chosen to place his foxholes on board in order to use them as *ad hoc* concealment counters, because stacks can't be inspected prior to play (A2.9). Of course, the height of the stacks underneath the foxholes, and the foxhole size gives me a pretty good idea of what my men will be facing. Most important are the four counters in the 1S foxhole in N9. With this many counters in a 1S foxhole, I'm inclined to think that I've found the artillery observer, probably supported by a squad armed with an MMG. This could be a trick—its possible that there's just a single squad with three SW—but that seems unlikely. A logical spot for the observer is N9, having a clear field of view to the row T woods line that's ideal for air-bursts. In this case, I think Rob has given me more information than he should have. I might have HIPd the foxholes and placed a squad on top of the four counter stacks. These would then look identical, making it harder to locate the single-man counters (SMC). Both sides can always rearrange SW during the Rally Phase, so there's little risk to this maneuver (unless, like me, you sometimes forget to rearrange your stacks).

With the Russian artillery in the east, there's no question whatsoever about the German route of attack. Still, the narrow western front will confine my men for the first few turns, forcing me to build some dangerously large stacks. Plus, I'm scheduling most of the troops to pass through Q1 where a few defenders could easily bottle things up. Overwhelming German firepower, however, should take care of that problem.

To deal with the expected wire and minefields along the flank, the lumbering Ferdinand will lead the charge. Entering wire will entail a 42 per cent chance of Bog, but there's also a small chance (17 per cent) that the wire will be eliminated. More importantly, trail breaks will be placed into any minefields, allowing attack-free entry by the infantry or any follow-up AFVs (B28.61). Hex Q1 could be as far as the big tank destroyer gets in this scenario. Bog, mines and deliberate immobilization (C5.7) will each conspire to minimize the thrust of this armored monster. That won't be a big setback, because, even immobile, this behemoth will provide valuable cover and from Q1 the 88L will be sited to hit every level 3 hex of the hill. On the flip side, if the Ferdinand isn't stopped, who knows where this beast might end up? With DC in the OB, I also have the option to place a couple of bangalore torpedoes (B26.51) to clear any wire.

Once through the Q1 gap, I don't intend to head directly up the hill, but plan to send my men south, dispersing along the wooded board edge down to the M1 building. From here, I'll launch a broad flanking move to take the hill. There are a number of reasons behind this strategy. First, the near west flank of Hill 253.5 is so close to the start line that I expect it has been mined. Plus, the Bolsheviks in N3 look strong, probably the 8–1 and a couple of MGs. I don't really want to fight through mines in open ground at short range with the Russians. On the other hand, I doubt if much of the board edge or the rear of the hill has been fortified. Second, with the German range advantage, there's no reason to close immediately. It is better to wait until the Russian is a bit worn down. The board edge also provides decent cover for movement and rally. The flanking penetration will help isolate the hill from the Russian reinforcements, allowing the initial defenders to be mopped up casually. Finally, the wooded cluster around M3 is an excellent staging area that's easily accessible from the board edge.

Rob's defense is well-prepared to counter a thrust through Q1. The positions in P2 and N5 can pour fire into this hex, and the clever communists even dug most of their foxholes out of LOS of my possible setup locations. Yet, they can't avoid Krupp steel altogether. A halftrack, three 4-6-7 squads, and two LMGs (21 FP) on the hill in U1 have their cross hairs on P2, and I'm more than a little curious what's in this hex. The FT team here could really close down the flank if they're not cleared out promptly. My artillery observer is also in U1, and he'll call in a spotting round on R3. Notice that most of the possible scatter locations will still be visible from here. Later, I can move the artillery back to M3, threatening to blast or smoke any Russians that decide to defend in the woods. Alternatively, I can drop smoke on P2 if I need more



cover early on. The 10–2, three 4-6-7s and two LMGs in R0 have an LOS to N5. What I presume to be the big money players in N5 will be treated to a 12 (even) shot to kick off the action. A Panther provides cover for the 10–2, and will also contribute its MGs (6+2) and main armament (MA) to the attack. The 9–2, two 8-3-8s and the FTs in S1 will squeeze off an 8 (even) shot into the vacant woods in S3. While S3 is a pretty risky place to put a Russian gun, the Ferdinand sitting in S1 surrenders a side shot (better safe than sorry). The 9–2's movement options are sort of limited right now anyway. Two more 8-3-8s, the 9-1 and the DC are next door in T1. If needed, these guys can contribute fire into S3. Otherwise, they'll just join the general move forward. The 8-0, a 4-6-7 and two 2-4-7s start in V6. The 2-4-7s plan to work across the front of the hill as a diversion. If they're not stopped by mines or wire, they'll crawl onto the hilltop. The 4-6-7 and the leader will leg it into the eastern woods where the squad will advance forward to keep an eye on the contents of N9. Finally, a Panther in Y4 sits in overwatch ready to interdict Russian movement on the hill. There's even an LOS into J4, in case this tank decides to spend the rest of the game here.

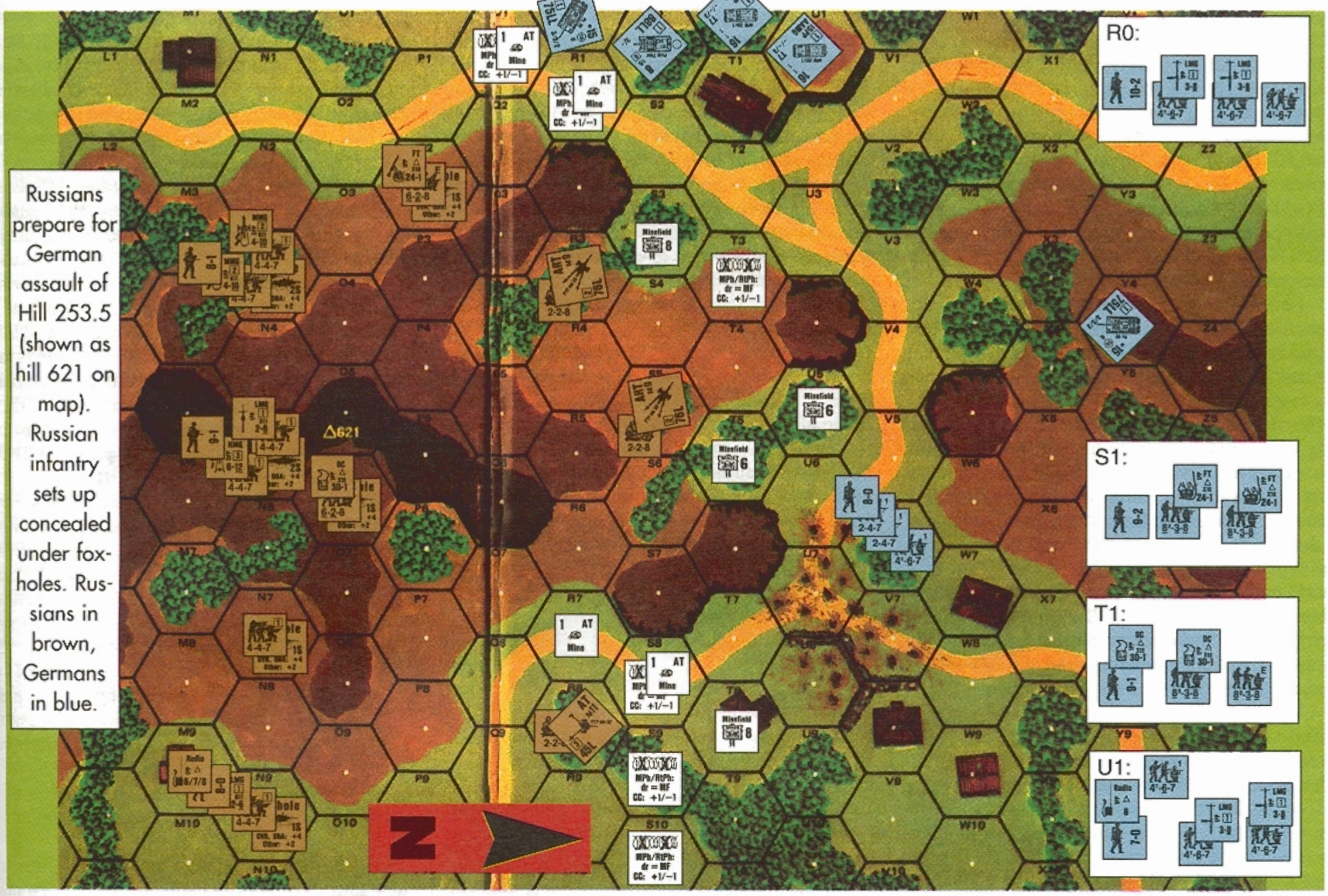
Once my units get onto the board, I can see more of the Russian fortifications. As expected, wire is strung across the western flank, but I'm a little surprised that S3 is open, especially because T3 is blocked—mines perhaps await? Taking advantage of the narrow flank, Rob put his FT team up front in P2. The prep fire phase (PFPh) will determine whether this pays off well for him, but if these guys break they're hung out to dry, as they'll suffer interdiction from U1 when they rout back to N3. Finally, there are no surprises in N5, except maybe for the presence of an LMG instead of an MMG.

I've got eight turns to cover eight hexes of territory. Thus, with no pressing engagements, I'll put my firepower advantage to work early to soften up the Russian positions. This pays the double dividend of minimizing return fire at the same time that my guys avoid those nasty negative movement dice roll modifiers. The main attacks will be: a) the 20 (+1) from U1 versus the FT team in P2, b) the 10–2 leader-directed 12 (even) shot into N5, followed up by the Panther's MGs, and, if necessary, MA and c) the 8 (even) into S3 from S1. If this last shot reveals anything (83 per cent chance of success), the FTs can squirt in a couple of 12 (even) shots. My heavy firepower commitment assures me a better than 50 per cent chance of *breaking* each target. With Rob starting with 30 factors of visible firepower that can hit R0 or Q1, I should be facing less than 15, after the PFPh.

With but a few units to move, I start things off with the Ferdinand rolling past the Panther in R0, pivoting and then churning to a halt in the wire in Q1. What happens next is anybody's guess, but unless the Russian FT survives Prep Fire unpinned and incinerates the tank destroyer (less than a six per cent chance overall), at worst I've got a pillbox in Q1. Otherwise, the burning wreck will provide even better cover for infantry.

Next, the 8-0 and 4-6-7 in V6 make their run to the woods through V8, retaining concealment, because of the three blind hexes behind the cliff. A half squad (HS) from the same location crosses the road and moves up onto the hill. I'm intrigued by the lack of wire in S3, so the other HS goes CX to T2 and searches. I'd also like to know if any anti-tank (A-T) mines are in the T2 and S2 road hexes. On its way, the HS will also trip any possible, but unlikely, anti-personnel (A-P) mines. To open the road for later, both DCs will be placed on the wire in R1, one by the 9–1, the other by an 8-3-8. (While I've never seen it done, I suppose the squad or leader alone could place both DCs provided they had the MFs to do so.) There's a 50-50 chance that the two DCs will clear the wire (no doubt, the first DC will clear the wire so that I'll feel like a heel for placing both, but that's okay). After initial hesitation, it didn't seem worthwhile to hang onto the DCs, especially because the plan is to engage the Russians from a distance. Of course, they could have found a use against the KVs. The wire removal attempt seemed to offer the best chance of success, given the Russian tank's thick armor and the need to pass PAATCs (Pre-AFV Attack Task Checks) to place the charges (unless placed by a SMC). Plus, I've got the half-track in U1 and the Panther in overwatch for later maneuvers, and they'll need access through R1.

Advances put the 10–2 group on the wire in Q1—shielded by the Ferdinand and taking advantage of any trail break that might have



Russians prepare for German assault of Hill 253.5 (shown as hill 621 on map). Russian infantry sets up concealed under fox-holes. Russians in brown, Germans in blue.

been placed. This move goes ahead even if the FT is still in action. In this case, Rob will have to choose his target, either the AFV or the infantry, and if the soft target gets the call, I expect the 10–2 to pull some of his men through the ensuing long-range attack. Even if he doesn't, Germans that break on the wire can rout beneath it and may be able to remain in the hex (because the Ferdinand negates open ground), if they don't pass their wire die roll with enough MF to reach the S1 woods (they'll stay on a die roll of 3 or higher due to rout phase overstacking in R0). With all the well-trained leaders in the vicinity, I expect my busted guys will be back on their feet in no time, with some on the Russian side of the wire!

Backing up the vanguard, three 8-3-8s and the 9–2 advance under the Panther in R0, while the other 8-3-8 meets up with the 9–1 in R1. In the east, the concealed 4-6-7 takes his spot in T9, staring down the N9 foxhole. If the radio is here, its owner will have to dodge some bullets to get up onto the hill. The fire group in U1 will check the foxhole in P2 before advancing. If the FT is still intact, they'll sit tight and dust it off in the Defensive Fire Phase (DFPh). Otherwise, they'll crawl down into T0, joining the half-track that's been parked there. If the wire is gone in R1, the overwatch Panther will unbutton, preparing for some road movement next turn.

I don't expect too many turn 1 casualties from the visible Russian defenses. To illustrate the impact of the initial German fire, a fairly tedious odds calculation indicates that about 16 per cent of the time all three squads in N5 and P2 will be broken. Only ten per cent of the time will the Russians come out unscathed, while the remaining 74 per cent of the games will see one or two Russian squads flipped (and this ignores pin results). Even in the worst case, the best shot I'll have to survive is an 8 (even) into R0, and this has less than a 40 per cent chance of breaking each of the squads there. One, maybe two squads will go down *in the worst case.*

The Russian guns, however, are another story. I'm sure Rob justifiably is counting on them for support. Yet, by focusing on a very narrow sector of the front, I'll be surprised if I trigger more than one initially. Assuming the worst—a 76L in O1 or N0—the lead platoon will get hit again. Fortunately, the decision to sit and shoot from under the Panther will limit the devastation. Nevertheless, including ROF and TH possibilities, the 76L's attack will be more-or-less equivalent to a 12 (even) shot. One or two squads could go down. Finally, Russian prep fire might hit a couple more squads, though some earlier casualties may have rallied and the Ferdinand now contributes a hindrance to ground level fire. The German vanguard is backed by strong elements. A gun in O1 or N0 will face another 20 firepower. The R0 Panther can also bring a gun under fire. The Ferdinand will keep the HMG out of the game by pounding N5.

In about half the games, the Germans will get a bit hammered on turn 1. Don't despair, the Russians will be taking losses, too. The difference is that the German officers will quickly get their men back in the game. Whereas, as each Russian position falls, it may be gone for good. By turn 3, the Germans should be operating around 85 per cent effectiveness and mostly through the wire. On the other hand, the Russians should be down to about 65 per cent, including the loss of several of their high ROF weapons. This won't be enough to stem the field gray tide, especially as the surviving AFVs start putting their mobility to work, encircling positions and forcing failure to rout eliminations. To avoid minefields, the AFVs will initially plunge into the rear by sticking close to the board-edge woods before turning up onto the hill. The Russian reinforcements, cut off from the hill, will be too little and too late.

RUSSIAN RESPONSE



My ability to contest the enemy's opening moves will naturally to some extent depend on the sturdiness of my own men under fire. True, I may take some casualties from the Germans' initial blast of prep fire, but this was not unexpected. The woods in N6 are ideal rally terrain for my kill stack at N5 and I expect to cycle units between these positions on a regular basis. The unemployed squads at N9 and O6 will hop on that merry-go-round for lack of anything better to do, and so keep the HMG in action. The potential damage I can inflict on R0 is greater than Rich has suggested. The true worst-case scenario for those Germans

is that the HMG survives the initial prep fire and then maintains ROF to eliminate an entire stack! Of course, this is unlikely, and I am not counting on this result, but the point is that the enemy could be hurt by more than just one or two broken squads in R0. Naturally I would prefer that the FT-equipped 6-2-8 at P2 should survive unscathed, but if it does go down to Rich's 20(+1) shot, I will simply low crawl back to Q3 with the expectation that my 8-1 can jump out from N3 in my first APh to reactivate the FT in the ensuing RPh.

I am not worried about early loss of the FT, because I believe that the threat from U1 will be quickly eliminated. My ARTs are well-positioned for this task. Although there is no Panther to explode in U1, the targets which Rich has offered up are even better. With both guns blazing away and ROF possibilities, I have a real chance of lethally mangling the German Infantry which start there, while the HT will still be around for an easy kill in my upcoming PFPh. If I don't hurt the German OBA observer directly, he will probably at least be compelled to rout back out of LOS with some broken troopers, thus taking the enemy artillery out of the game temporarily. The devastation that I plan to visit upon U1 will have repercussions throughout the balance of the game.

The marauding 2-4-7 charging through T5 does not concern me either, as it is likely to be stopped by my mines. I will probably place my 76L at R3/1 on board (concealed) to force loss of concealment on Rich's 8-3-8 as it assault moves into S2, though I will be holding my fire in favor of the juicier targets at U1. I am hoping that my A-T mine at Q1 might stop the Elefant, if not physically then perhaps psychologically. I like to use 1-factor A-T mines, because they allow better coverage while their minimal value remains undisclosed unless I should happen to attack with a die roll of '2' yielding no effect. On any other die roll the enemy cannot know for sure just how many A-T mine factors are in the hex. Rich, by searching, might detect the minefield in S3—which managed to attract some useless German prep fire. However, the A-T mine at R1 will apparently go undiscovered. Perhaps it will serve as a little surprise for a later move forward by that overwatch Panther.

I have to question the wisdom of Rich's use of the DCs. I think it an extravagant expenditure to burn both of these to remove one wire counter (with a 50 per cent chance of no result). I don't think the value of these weapons lies in their uncertain ability to clear wire, nor in their anti-armor potential. The DCs should be used to deliver the *coup de grace* to broken units which would otherwise rout away, or to attack units which have already final fired or have been frozen by an AFV per A7.212. This is particularly true when there are so many high-morale leaders around to serve as DC delivery boys.

My own radio man will begin looking for some battery access right away, although I am not enthusiastic about squandering this on the lonely German squad attacking through the eastern woods. Nor do I have any intention of running the observer onto the crest of Hill 621 where he would only be gunned down ignominiously. Instead, he will stay put and try to place an SR on whichever level 3 hex appears to yield the greatest advantage—probably K5. I will need an accuracy die roll of '1' to achieve this, but I have plenty of time and not much else for that 8-0 to do. Once positioned, I will leave the SR until the Germans approach, and then bring the FFE down as harassing fire. (Rule C1.33 seems to say that I will have to give up radio contact in order to keep the SR in place. However, the Q&A to C1.335 in *ASL Annual '93a* states that correcting or canceling the SR is not required, and thus implies that the observer can leave the SR where it is—even if radio contact has been maintained.)

I foresee the Germans struggling to get through the mines and wire (don't overlook the B26.31 "+1" infantry fire table/to-hit DRM *not* referenced on the counter). Even then, they will have to scramble to take out the guns. Rich's battle plan doesn't contemplate sending substantial forces into the area occupied by my 76Ls, but he can't simply bypass these. Those crews could be the game-winning units occupying a level 3 hex on the last APh of the game. The necessary adjustment will soak up more time in a scenario that is already too short for the attacker. He will also have to overcome the crew of the 45L, which may be HIP still as turn 8 begins. The single squad in the east may not be up to the job.

By opting for an attack up the western slope, Rich has sacrificed much of his ability to bring enfilading fire to bear from the north along both sides of the ridge. I think this is to my advantage, as my units will be able to find rally positions on the eastern slope free of DM fire. In this manner, I hope to be able to cling to reverse-slope positions on the eastern side of the hill for that last-turn advance to win the game. That is, if I haven't already won with the same maneuver by my reinforcements, or the gun crews, or maybe even an unopposed KV lumbering atop the hill on turn 8. There are so many ways for the Russians to win, and so little time—for the Germans!

GERMAN RESPONSE



Seventy-five percent pro-Russian! I had to check to make sure Rob and I were playing the same scenario. It seems we are, never mind his use of the board designation Hill 621 (scenario E, "Hill 621," may well be 75 per cent pro-Russian) when referring to Hill 253.5. Nonetheless, I don't doubt that the Russian commander has gotten good mileage out of his defense. It is well designed to take the psychological staying power out of an opponent whose forces are actually superior. With so much Russian HIP stuff, it is the nature of this scenario that the German forces will be caught off-guard from time-to-time. Rob's forward placement of all of his HIP capability guarantees that he'll be surprising the German from the outset. Yet, the German's have a hitting and staying power, due to their excellent leadership, that the Russian simply can't match. Eight turns, in my book, is actually a long time for a single-board scenario. As long as the German sticks to his plan and keeps pushing forward with whatever is available, the Russians will be worn ragged.

The arrival of the *Stukas* can be particularly important, if the opposition has jumped out to a good start. These birds should drop their eggs at the first opportunity on whatever seems to be the problem of the moment—there's certainly no point holding out for better targets with *Sturmoviks* on the horizon. German artillery, especially performing a smoke mission, can also turn around a bad beginning, although I don't think I'll have that option here, because my observer is definitely in harm's way.

In this contest, the west edge offensive should pay off handsomely, because the Russian guns aren't really in sites to contest it. After the debacle that is U1 (more on that later), the Russian ordnance threat will be all but over, leaving my best men and whatever armor makes it through the wire and mines to tackle a patchwork defense. True, the bypassed gun crews are a threat to charge the crest, but the German plan to occupy the entire hilltop should limit their mobility. Of course, someone will have to be perched in Q6 just in case a crew puts on its hiking boots and tries to scale the cliffs.

German turn 2 movement options will be limited by the fortifications and some uncertainty about the position of the third gun. Plus, the HMG in N5 will probably still be in Russian hands (barring any bobbled recovery attempts), because Rob wisely backed up this position with a spare squad. Of course, N5 will be buried under "-2" acquisition counters from the R0 Panther and the Q l Ferdinand, both of which will open up in prep fire as needed. Otherwise, everybody else pretty much work their way cautiously through the wire. The leaders in Q1 and Rl guarantee that their moves will succeed. Each unit that rolls less than a six to get through the wire will make the move as an assault move (B26.4).

In the advance phase, the surviving infantry will start to fan out into Q2, Pl and P0. To provide cover for the boys in Q2, the overwatch Panther will move up into this hex (provided that the wire in Rl was blown by the DCs—otherwise the Panther will have to move through Rl the old-fashioned way, spending the MPs and risking Bog). The A-T mines in Rl will be a problem. About 30 per cent of the time I'll be abandoning a tank here to fight on as a crew and an LMG. Rob's point about squandering the DCs on the wire is well taken. Maybe if I hadn't started the Panther in overwatch I'd agree, but the opportunity to have the tank on the hill in Q2 is irresistible. Plus, I'm a little hard pressed to find another setup location for the Panther, although T 1 has some potential.

With Germans now showing up on the other side of the wire, the firefight begins in earnest. While Hitler's finest will still have to eat some lead early, their leadership, morale, dispersal and the absence of movement modifiers will continue to make the job as hard as possible for Stalin's expendables. Backing up the infantry, the Panthers and the Ferdinand will be hurling high explosives into the Russian positions, especially N5. When the Bolsheviks inevitably falter the flood gates will open.

Russian turn 2 is likely to be the Bolshevik high water mark. Conversely, right about now the goose-steppers will be feeling their lowest. I imagine that Rob picks up a fair number of victories at this point, either from outright surrenders, or more likely from bonehead German play spurred on by panic. Yet, the Russian should be hurting too. Those broken 4-2-6 conscripts (after ELR replacement) are next to useless, and the

German still has plenty of time to rally his troopers and push them forward. Small *sturm* teams that weather the fire on the enemy side of the wire will be working their way south along the board edge and preparing to engulf the hill.

At the same time, the last of the assault force will be passing out of the Ql-Rl bottleneck. Mobile AFVs will begin to join the breakout, while the trackless ones provide fire support. In this playing, I expect that both of my halftracks are history due to Rob's setup of the 76Ls. In addition, a little bit more than one of my other AFVs will probably be stopped by mines, wire or transmission troubles. In some contests I may only have one AFV operating south of the wire, but coupled with the infantry, this should give my team the edge they need. Aggressive use of the armor, especially in concert with the FT squads, should give the Russian fits, particularly when a couple of AFVs make it south of the barricades. My forays into enemy occupied hexes will be restricted, however, by the enemy's Molotov Cocktail (MOL) capability. Yet, notice that this Russian option has its limitations, because a unit marked with a first fire counter cannot make a MOL attack (*ASL Annual 93a* rules errata for A22.611). Consequently, any Bolshevik that fires on my infantry risks having a tank in its face, only to be followed by a FT attack in the advancing fire phase (if I'd kept my DCs, they'd work nicely here too). In desperate situations and toward the end game, my tank/FT teams will take the offensive against strongpoints that have not first fired. After all, a Russian squad has only about a 14 per cent chance for a MOL kill versus a non-stopped AFV [50 per cent to possess MOL, net "+1" DRM to the To-Kill (TK) roll (A22.612)].



Shifting gears, my setup in Ul was a boondoggle. While my prolific use of stacking in this contest already breaks a cardinal rule of good ASL play, the situation in U1 serves as an excellent reminder why stacking is so dangerous—so much can be taken out so fast by so little. Because of the narrow western front and the need to clear out the Russians in P2, I still favor the three squads and halftrack in Ul. Whatever is left of the squads will be back, and the half-track might even turn a 76L hit into a miss. However, it was foolhardy to put another big ticket item—the artillery—in the same hex, no matter how excellent the lines of sight are. Next time, the 7-0 and radio go in Sl and the initial SR drops on R2 (55 per cent of the possible scatter locations can be seen, yielding an overall 70 per cent chance that the SR will hit the board and be seen, usually with a minimal need for correction). So, Rob should score big in U1. Fortunately, while the tail-end of my attack will be mangled, the *schwerpunkt* should remain intact. That'll be more than enough to dominate the battlefield.

Looking at the defense, Rob's setup seems solid overall. The commitment of both big guns in the center, however, is going to hurt him this time. When playing the Russian, I like a gun in Ol both for the west flank protection and the ability to spray many of the hill hexes—my 45L frequently ends up here. I also would have tried to get the Russian artillery more aggressively into the game, possibly advancing out of the N9 foxhole and then trying to leg it to a position that overlooks the western flank of the hill. Admittedly, my German setup has done a lot to make that move difficult, with the squad in T9 threatening to blow the observer away and the Ferdinand is well-situated to hit any of the level 3 hexes that this guy might want to occupy. Still, offensive operations are tough to carry out under artillery fire, and I'm very happy that the artillery set up store in N9.

Finally, there's no way I'm buying the heavy pro-Russian rating. The German OB is just too strong, as long as their commander has the persistence to match. Moreover, while I've tried to develop a case for a west edge offensive, this is not by any means the only way to win as the German. As with any scenario, the attacker should choose his approach with an open mind, in this case steering as best as possible around the perceived Russian artillery threat. The armored assault option makes an east flank attack feasible, if you can spring the AFVs, possibly by putting a trail break through the T9 woods (B13.421). Note that the "+3" Bog modifier (D8.21) does not apply when a fully-tracked AFV expends all of its MP to enter woods. Of course, that's not to say that a Panther shouldn't risk crashing through with 1/2 of its movement point allotment—there's almost a 60 per cent chance of Bog-free success.

I strongly disagree with Rob about splitting the German offense. This guarantees that every Russian trap will be sprung, and the German will have to eliminate each threat with less than full fire support. If the *Wehrmacht* spearheads aren't backed up strongly, the Bolsheviks will just butcher each German thrust. Perhaps, this is why Rob finds the scenario so pro-Russian.

In many ways, "Hill 253.5" captures the essence of Operation Citadel. If the Germans, with the help of airpower and artillery, can penetrate the fortifications in decent strength, then their firepower and mobility will carry the day. If not, the war is over.

RUSSIAN CONCLUSION

I don't think that Rich fully appreciates the ongoing threat posed by my 76Ls. I agree that the German goal has to be to dominate all of the level 3 hexes and their approaches, but this will be even more difficult with the ARTs firing from the north. The S5 gun, in particular, can target 05, P5 and Q6, as well as all of the non-cliff routes to Q6. I can get similar service from the other ART if I manhandle it to R4, although I wouldn't try this maneuver if there's a *Stuka* circling about in search of a victim. I don't see much hope for a German win at all, if the 76Ls aren't effectively countered.

This brings me to the last item which I believe is deserving of a bit more attention. Air support (E7) is rare in *ASL*. One of the most distinctive features of "Hill 253.5" is that both sides enjoy this luxuriant firepower. I think that in this context my fighter-bombers (FBs) are clearly superior. On average the *Stukas* should arrive a bit earlier, and their bombs are formidable. Yet, those one-shot weapons will have difficulty actually hitting my static and entrenched troops (my reinforcements are admittedly more vulnerable). However, the superior MG factor of the FBs is reusable each turn (although the auto-pin ability of the *Stuka* MG is nifty for point attacks). The odds favor the Soviet planes in aerial combat (E7.22). Most importantly, my men will generally be sheltered in woods or foxholes—with adverse sighting task check and/or infantry fire table (IFT) DRMs for the *Stukas*. Meanwhile, the storm troopers are obliged to cross open ground with its associated casualty-producing DRMs. Unless the *Luftwaffe* achieves numerical superiority in the air war, the Russian craft should dominate. Then, Rich will find out the validity of that 75 per cent pro-Russian rating.

GERMAN CONCLUSION

I don't doubt that the bypassed Russian guns will still have an impact on the game, but here is where the VCs actually come to the German's aid. Only four of the level 3 hexes have to be in *Wehrmacht* control at game end. Thus, the storm troopers can win without ever setting a hobnailed boot in 05, P5 or Q6, provided that the Russians are kept out of these hexes. (I do not recommend this course of action—a HS at least should challenge the guns and work down the crest.) A free AFV could also be tasked with manning these posts to keep the Bolsheviks out. Hence, I'm not worried too much about the guns. Once they're on the board, its pretty easy to maneuver around their sphere of influence. Hex P4 is a nice place to hide my forces, allowing last turn advances into 05, P5 and Q5 to block the Russian. If the hill is swarming with Germans, as it should be, no communist, not even a gun crew, is going to be too successful in the movement department.

Air power probably does favor the Russians. In many playings, the *Sturmoviks* will rule the sky for the final turns, but I hope that the *Stukas* can keep them tied up in a dogfight for a good chunk of the battle. Moreover, by game end, Russian presence on the hill should be minimal and it'll be the storm troopers that are sheltered in the woods and foxholes. Eight turns is simply too long for the brittle Bolsheviks to stand up to the relentless punishment that the Germans will deliver.

Okay, Rob, let's play this one out!

★

HYPER SNIPER

A SANe look at this threat in *ASL*

By Mark C. Nixon

The length of this article runs a risk of misleading the reader to suspect that I attribute far more importance to sniper activity than is due. After all, in *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER (ASL)* your opponent's Sniper Activation Number (SAN) often appears low enough to warrant little fear, and who needs added worries in an already complex game? However, is the question really one of preparing for the *average* expected enemy sniper activity?

Many of us can remember games in which, despite a low SAN of 2 or 3, the number seemed to roll more often than was probable and at the most inopportune moments. We can recall games in which these SAN have been followed by a good many more sniper attacks than the average 33 percent (for a die roll of 1 or 2) and by a good many more die rolls of 1 than of 2. With this in mind, perhaps the entire sniper panorama can be better understood if we try to answer the question, "What can be done to protect against the enemy sniper and to enhance our own sniper activity, *without making harmful sacrifices elsewhere?*"

TABLE 1. SNIPER POSSIBILITIES

(Expected sniper attacks per 100 SAN-capable dice rolls)

SAN:	2	3	4	5	6	7
SAN Frequency in 100 DR	2.77	5.55	8.33	11.11	13.88	16.66
Chance of Sniper Attack	.92	1.85	2.77	3.70	4.62	5.55
Chance Sniper Attack dr of 1	.46	.92	1.38	1.85	2.31	2.77

The relatively low frequency of actual sniper attacks, especially a sniper 1 attack, is a profound fact to consider before assigning disproportionate significance to SAN considerations. Still, it's just that single sniper attack die roll of 1 which can ruin your plans.

This article divides comments on snipers into four sections: Sniper Abatement, Sniper Attacks, Anti-Sniper and General Principles. Probably all players are aware of tactics which can be used to thwart the enemy sniper (abatement). Some of these are valuable strategems, while others are extreme to the point of near uselessness—and can even be detrimental by virtue of squandering valuable energy and resources for little or no gain. Less obvious are the methods available to encourage your own sniper to get off his duff and join the battle (sniper attacks), as well as anti-sniper measures and some additional general principles to consider. This article investigates possible tactics in order to make intelligent choices, but knowledge of when and how rigorously to employ sniper procedures is key. Thus, I conclude each of the following sections with a recommendation. At times, this advice can hurt you. Do not follow it blindly. Individual perspective is part of the beauty of the game. I will be delighted if you consider my recommendations, but when you sit down to play, use your own discretion.

SNIPER ABATEMENT

PILING ON

Most players embark upon a sniper abatement regimen after noticing that any 9-2 or better leader (hereinafter termed "Rambo") seems to suffer a disproportionate number of sniper hits. The ideal countermeasure would be to eradicate the enemy sniper. The best we can usually hope for, though, is keeping our best units from taking a sniper hit while less useful units take the heat instead. Welcome to the world of sniper abatement activity. The initial move is usually to stack extra units with Rambo. This can be an excellent choice for it combats the sniper while also enjoying the other benefits associated with close proximity to -2 and -3 leadership. Piling ever more and more units onto this stack, however, soon loses its effectiveness in helping protect Rambo. At the same time, the massive stack is aligning itself to attract a big hit. Beware of figuring that, if two squads help keep the sniper away from Rambo, six half squads, a 7-0 and an 8-0 will do even better. You have overlooked the predicament you will face if Rambo *does* take the hit, despite all this security, bringing down the whole stack in a torrent of Leader Loss Morale Checks (LLMC).

Our Rambo stacked alone suffers 100 percent of the snipers which hit his location. Stacking with one other unit protects him from only 41.7 percent of the hits (since we must expect the enemy to choose Rambo on any Random Selection tie). This leaves Rambo to take 58.3 percent of the hits. Table 2 shows Rambo's diminishing exposure with additional covering units. Note that, no matter the number of units stacked with Rambo, there is always a 16.6 percent chance that he rolls a "6" on his Random Selection die roll and is selected for the hit.

TABLE 2. THE REALITY OF "PILING ON"

Number of units in stack	Percentage of shots hitting Rambo
1(Rambo)	100
2	58.3
3	42.1
4	34.0
5	29.2
6	26.1
7	23.4
...	...
Infinity	16.6

As units pile onto this stack, each lends additional protection to Rambo, yet progressively less than each previous unit. Exactly how many units are ideal to stack with Rambo is a personal decision, but somewhere exists an invisible ceiling above which additional units "piled on" become wasteful—the manpower would surely prove more beneficial elsewhere for some other game tasks. Think also of the enticing target you present the enemy as units pile higher and higher. This is an open invitation for your smiling opponent to throw all available fire at this one location to try to score a major coup (not in a frantic bid to generate a SAN, but in a reasonable attempt to break the stack), the magnitude of which can easily surpass the relatively insubstantial issue of sniper generation.

RECOMMENDATION: Put two units with each -2 and -3 leader when not moving. Use three units sparingly, and only with at least +2 Terrain Effect Modifier protection or when you just "have" to form that one hard hitting firegroup. Avoid three squads stacked together as a general rule and when faced with large enemy firegroups. (This advice is actually geared to utilize that Rambo Dice Roll Modifier more than to safeguard against the sniper.)

SNIPER BAIT

Step number two in the quest for sniper protection is to station units as sniper bait in hexes near or adjacent to Rambo. This does a better job of guarding against the sniper than overloading Rambo's own location, at least on the first sniper attack rolled. In fact, if you properly utilize the TEM and GEO techniques discussed below in conjunction with bait, you can make it impossible for the first sniper to harm Mr. Rambo (so long as you are willing to avoid putting him in certain hexes). Furthermore, you can bar subsequent sniper attacks against him aside from a Direct Hit (when the Sniper Random Location dice roll lands directly on Rambo's hex). Even when a Direct Hit (DH) is possible it should occur on only one of thirty-six Sniper Location dice rolls (DR). The worst case is with a SAN of 7 (16.6 percent probability), followed by the requisite 1 or 2 Activation dr (33 percent probability), and then the sniper still must roll a DH (2.7 percent probability). Gentlemen, we simply are not playing the game to exercise concern over the net 0.15 percent chance of this occurrence.

The most notable aspect of bait is that it provides an ideal use for dummy stacks because a sniper will attack dummies even after the opposing commander has long since deduced the subterfuge at play. Picture Rambo directing a heavy machinegun (HMG) in a level 2 building ready to spew death upon all attackers. During setup, the defender places a stack of seven dummy counters nearby. In his first Movement Phase (MPh), five of these dummy counters move away, one at a time, allowing each to add a concealment counter on top of itself to form five new dummy stacks, leaving two of the original dummies behind to make a total of six dummy stacks totally surrounding Rambo. This accomplishes the equivalent of twelve original dummy counters and now Rambo is completely insulated against any sniper other than a DH—all for the low, low price of seven dummy counters.



Figure 1. Barring a direct hit, the leader has a fairly effective screen of sniper bait.

Let us extend this thought just a bit. Players new to the game are quite often fooled into wasting game time and manpower resources countering dummy stacks. Experienced players, however, are only rarely hindered by dummies, and you may as well abandon all hope that an expert might be inconvenienced by dummy stacks. For the experts, then, the use of dummy counters as sniper bait is actually a more meaningful advantage (because they lack other worthwhile uses for them). New players have a better chance that their dummy stacks might serve the meaningful purpose of deceiving their equally green opponents.

RECOMMENDATION: Use dummy stacks for bait as much as possible. On occasion, use for bait some loose half squads, weak leaders (wounded leaders are great) and maybe even a squad here and there (Conscripts are good). The real troops, however, are usually needed elsewhere.

GEO

GEO is an abbreviation for the geometric characteristics of sniper defense. This tactic exploits the predictable sniper pattern to align Rambo so that a sniper, from its current location, cannot settle directly on him. Figure 2 shows an example. The essential GEO considerations are either linear or proximity. Six hexrows, each six hexes long, radiate from the sniper counter and demark that which the sniper can strike with a DH (these hexrows are known as kill lanes). Notice the hex with the sniper counter itself is immune to a DH. You are employing GEO technique whenever you deliberately avoid the linear kill lanes or stay further from the six-hex sniper range than other potential sniper targets (avoiding proximity to the sniper).

Unfortunately, GEO techniques can only guard against the *next* sniper attack. Once the sniper's original location is altered by a sniper attack which moves the sniper counter to a new hex, you are facing a whole different sniper geometry. Exercising concern about the impending sniper, however, seems more perceptive than fretting about one or two hits down the line. The GEO techniques may actually be more rewarding with a low enemy SAN than with a high one because you are less likely to see more than one sniper attack with that lower SAN in play. Regulating your GEO/sniper relationship will by itself do absolutely nothing to safeguard Rambo if a sniper attack is rolled and finds him the only unit in play. This means GEO is worthwhile only when used in conjunction with sniper abatement tactics such as TEM and bait. Although you can ensure Rambo is not cleaning his weapons while sitting on a sniper kill lane, unless there is some bait out there, preferably in more vulnerable terrain, the sniper will strike Rambo nonetheless. The tangible value of GEO is that it can prohibit an initial DH and also can be used to help decrease the amount of bait needed to provide Rambo a reasonable sniper cushion.

RECOMMENDATION: Stay off the kill lanes if an equal position is available, but do not give up a +3 TEM for a +2 TEM just to avoid a kill lane.

TEM

The most eloquent sniper abatement tactic happens to be complemented by sniper rules written to guide you exactly where you almost always want to go—high TEM locations. What better place to establish Rambo with that HMG firebase than in a +3 stone building? Assign lesser units like that 8-1 Nixon bum to handle lower TEM positions (acting as a black hole for enemy sniper attacks). In fact, put Rambo in a stone location with merely two dummy bait stacks in adjacent lesser TEM on opposite sides of his hex and he is protected from the next sniper on everything but a DH. Go nuts and station six dummy stacks in lesser TEM all around Rambo as in Figure 3 and the sniper will have to knock out at least three of them before anything other than a DH could get to Rambo on an unbelievable—nay, mythic—fourth sniper attack.

All that aside, let's consider what is most likely in our everyday *ASL* routine. Whether on attack or defense, the most common place to find Rambo will be in a high TEM location. The situation is so basic to good *ASL* play, we often remain oblivious to it in the sniper context. Good tactics put Rambo in the highest TEM and the sniper rules cause most hostile sniper attacks to strike elsewhere. Here is an ongoing, game-generated reward for expert play.

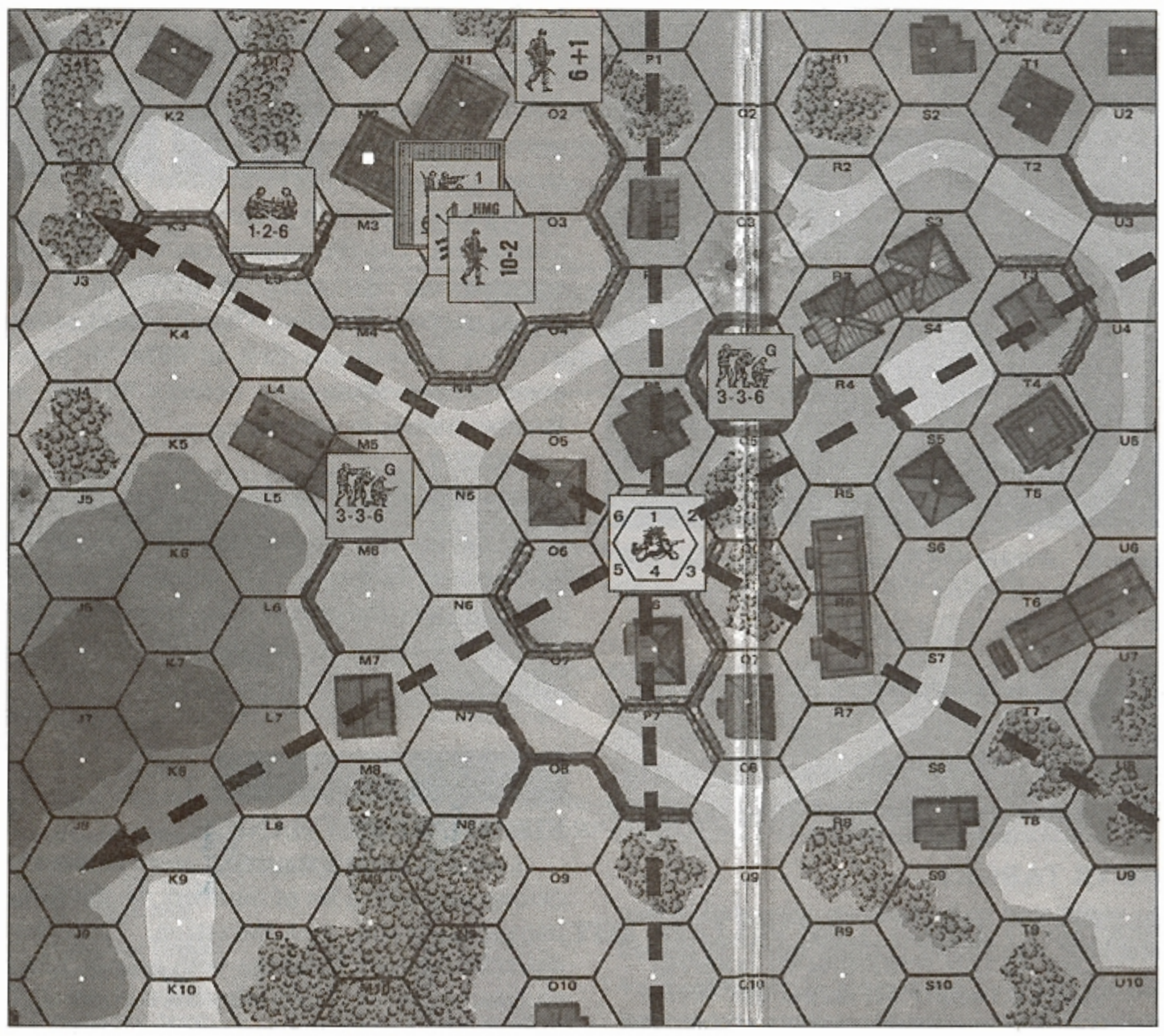


Figure 2. Even though Rambo (the 10-2) is a mere four hexes from the enemy sniper, he cannot possibly suffer a sniper hit on the next attack due to the combined use of GEO and bait.

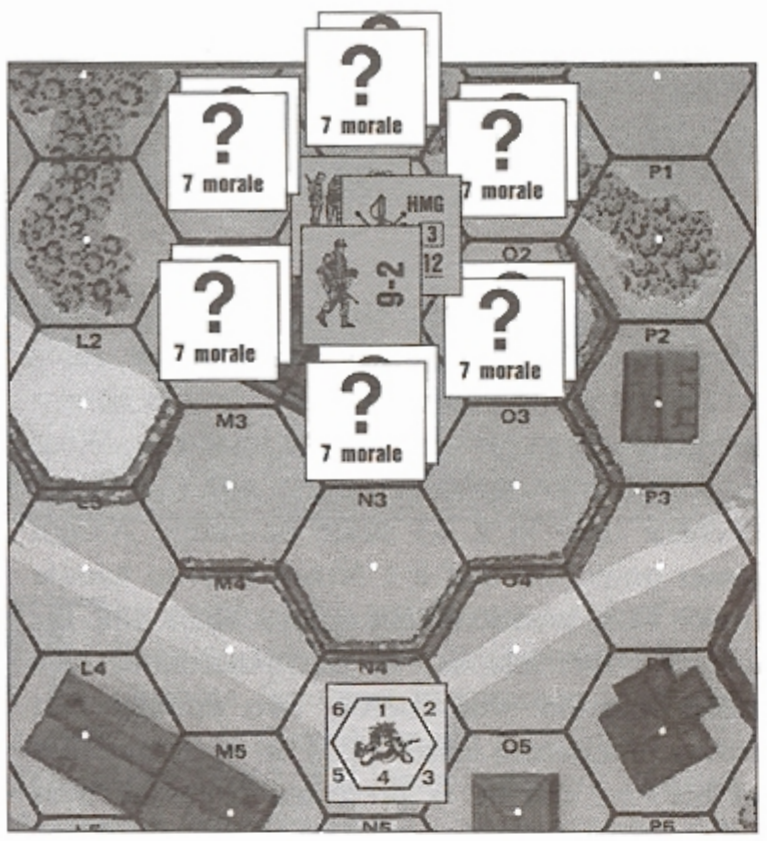


Figure 3. A complete screen of sniper bait precludes a sniper hit on Rambo (the 9-2) given any Random Location DR other than a Direct Hit. If the SAN is 7, the sniper in this situation should normally strike Rambo only once every 655 SAN-capable DR (SCDR). Since half of these would be a sniper 2, Rambo's location would take a sniper 1 hit only about once every 1310 SCDR! Without that sniper bait in place, Rambo's location would take a hit about every 18 SCDR. If the SAN is 2, Rambo's location is shot at only once every 3,890 SCDR (or once every 7,780 for a sniper 1), whereas the sniper would zero in on his location about once every 109 SCDR with no sniper bait in the way! Even after all of the above, any units "Piled On" to protect Rambo might save him from actually taking the shot himself.

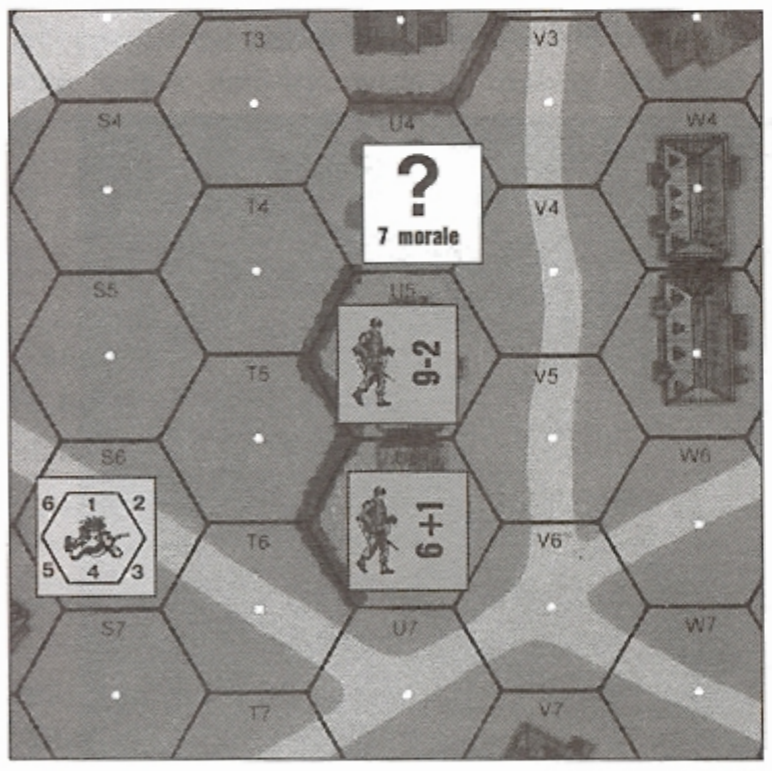


Figure 4. A mere two hexes of bait, coupled with Rambo's stone building TEM, preclude a sniper hit on anything other than a Direct Hit.

RECOMMENDATION: Use the highest TEM available for Rambo. Toss in some bait when possible and glance at your GEO once in a while, but TEM is the cornerstone.

ELUSIVE TARGET

At game start and whenever relocated in lieu of attacking, the sniper counter must be placed within six hexes of six targets, if possible. Here is an opportunity to wield as a weapon the exact opposite of everything else sniper abatement has taught us with one tactic which can safeguard Rambo more surely than everything else (short of elimination of the enemy sniper). In any scenario with enough geographic space to permit, position Rambo far enough away from all clusters of six sniper targets to guarantee a sniper-free environment. This is markedly easier to accomplish at scenario start than to maintain as the game progresses.

The tactic should be fairly common practice for specific scenario setups, when the desire is to keep the sniper away from one force, no doubt sporting Rambo. "Point of No Return" (ASL 42) comes to mind because I suggested using this exact tactic in a past *GENERAL* article ("Desert Sands, Part II" Vol. 26, No. 1) to protect the German 10-3 leader, but there are plenty of other examples.

RECOMMENDATION: Give a thought during setup to whether you can create a sniper-free area for safely positioning a key leader.

FAST RAMBO

Whether shooting or moving, Rambo gets first consideration. He may find himself in a good or bad position relative to the enemy sniper. If all else remains equal, Rambo can use the timing of his fire and movement to avoid possible sniper shots. For example, suppose it is the beginning of the Prep Fire Phase (PFPh) and Rambo intends to direct a big attack. If the enemy sniper counter is nearby and Rambo finds himself exposed to sniper attack (it is shocking to consider, but Rambo has been inexplicably ignoring sniper abatement strategies), you may want to take his shot immediately to ensure it occurs before a sniper catastrophe strikes. On the other hand, if Rambo appears secure it might be advisable to fire other important, yet more vulnerable, units first. In the Movement Phase (MPh), it might likewise prove beneficial to move Rambo away from the hostile sniper before Defensive First Fire against other moving units gets a chance to generate a SAN and score a sniper hit. The flip side occurs when Rambo is sniper-secure but plans to move to a more sniper-exposed location. Then it would be better to move lesser units first in order to provide some sniper abatement defense in the area Rambo intends to approach.

RECOMMENDATION: Be attentive to fire and movement sequencing considerations. Remember, however, that the enemy sniper is not the most dangerous thing out there—hostile HMG fire with negative modifier leader direction is still the bigger threat.

SNIPER ATTACKS

FIREFIGHT MECHANICS

I want to make a statistical point without burdening you with a lot of numbers, so the following is a broad generalization. Consider a defender in stone buildings with a SAN 5 facing an attacker in +1 TEM who has a SAN 3. The defender has arranged his troops one per location, whereas the attacker has stacked squads in order to gather firegroups large enough to overcome the +3 TEM of his opponent. At the outset of this firefight, if each player rolls an equal number of SAN-capable DR the defender can expect to benefit from twice as many sniper attacks with his SAN 5 as can the attacker with his SAN 3. His sniper expectation, however, should actually be much higher for several reasons.

Because the attacker has stacked his units, every effective shot at those stacks will entail several SAN-capable DR. Since these stacks are in lower TEM, effective shots should come more frequently than similar effects against the defending units. On the other side of "No Man's Land," with a single unit per location, only one SAN-capable DR per effective shot is rolled against the defense, and because of the +3 TEM such effects should be tougher to obtain. As we can normally expect the attacker to field more squads than the defender, the attacker's stacked squads may be taking more shots than the dispersed defender. Each extra shot adds another SAN-capable DR.

To emphasize the point, consider this example at its extreme. The defender gets double the possible sniper attacks due to his SAN 5 vs. SAN 3 advantage. Double it again due to his stacking advantage and double it a third time due to the TEM differential. In this case, the defender can expect roughly eight times more snipers than his opponent! Of course, he will still be getting just the "face value" double number of snipers per 100 SAN-capable DR, but because of the mechanics of this particular firefight (he rolls little and his opponent rolls a lot) his advantage of *actual* sniper results has geometrically leaped to a very potent strength. Take it one step further and allow our defender a SAN 7 vs. an attacker with SAN 2 in this situation. The face value of six times more snipers doubled for TEM and doubled again for stacking advantage yields an expected twenty four times more snipers! SAN values inherent in the scenario, combined with tactical doctrines employed by these two combatants, have elevated sniper activity to a level the defender might realistically expect to dominate the scenario.

The conclusion to draw from this example, however, is nowhere near as extravagant as this big number might suggest at first glance. The situation of one side wielding a sniper which is 24 or even eight times more potent than the other should probably never occur throughout the duration of an entire scenario. I believe isolated instances of it might occur at isolated times within scenarios. It is, however, specifically when you find yourself in the midst of a scenario facing sniper odds at such high magnitude that you should feel most strongly drawn to the sniper abatement tactics discussed previously.

RECOMMENDATION: Making a lot of small or mid-sized attacks against stacked enemy units (rather than just a few large attacks against single units) is the correct procedure if you want to generate sniper attacks against your opponent. At the same time, the more attack DR we make the more likely our own troops will suffer retaliatory enemy sniper attacks.

(Continued on pg. 18)

SAN INITIATIVE

A player can control his game to the point of gaining SAN initiative only in his own player turn, and can do so during either the PFPh, the MPh or the Advancing Fire Phase (AFPh).

The phasing player controls this initiative because it is his option to either Prep Fire at the enemy or to move. Considered from a tunnel vision perspective of sniper considerations to the exclusion of all else, a player in the PFPh facing enemy units arranged in stacks while his sniper is zeroed in to nail the enemy Rambo might be enticed into firing at those stacks not only to try to break them, but also to reap the ancillary benefit of directing a sniper to dance on the enemy Rambo's head. In this situation, the sniper is another weapon in your arsenal, albeit not a very potent one. On the other hand, when Prep Fire fails to offer such fine SAN opportunity, the moving player might interpret this as some slight enticement to forego Prep Fire in order to move into an alignment more favorable to sniper activity.

At times, the advantage may be so insignificant as to be meaningless in comparison to other game events and the player should not feel compelled to needlessly fault his own play for an exceedingly remote bad stroke of luck which brings a devastating sniper attack upon him. Yet, at other times conscious manipulation of SAN initiative might prove decisive.

RECOMMENDATION: There are more meaningful reasons for Prep Firing or not Prep Firing, moving or not moving, but Sniper Activation most certainly must take its place in the spectrum.

ANTI-SNIPER

SNIPER VS. SNIPER

There are two ways the sniper vs. sniper battle rages. Most obvious is the ability of one sniper to eliminate the other. Obviously, if you knock the enemy sniper out of the game with a KIA, there will be no need to concern yourself with hostile sniper worries for the duration of that scenario. If you Pin him, you will have gained at least a momentary respite from his evil ways.

Much more common, however, is the likelihood that your sniper counter itself will step into the fray and be subjected to enemy sniper attacks. It has happened for and against all of us and can be much more than just a random piece of good (or bad) luck. It is common practice among *ASL* players to position a sniper counter to purposely disrupt enemy sniper strikes.

The ability of your sniper counter to draw repeated enemy effective sniper attacks with die rolls of 2 can prove a godsend. The risk is that your opponent might generate a die roll of 1 and your sniper is killed. When those enemy sniper die rolls of 1 occur, we must question our decision to locate our sniper as bait. Ineffective as he might be, an active SAN 2 still retains a chance for a major league hit on the enemy Rambo. Losing your sniper to an enemy sniper attack would relinquish this offensive strike capability while possibly doing so little as sparing a HS from breaking or so much as saving the life of your own Rambo. It could be inconsequential or it could be the game. Making a conscious decision to place a SAN 2 sniper counter in harm's way runs the risk of total loss of sniper potential, while a higher SAN sniper that is killed is reduced but still around. Therefore, it may be wiser to limit yourself to utilizing a higher SAN sniper counter for such a purpose.

That said, it is also true that a sniper counter represents both an uncertain strike capability and a known defensive deterrent for enemy sniper attacks. It is not surprising that common practice among many *ASL* players is to chose the latter in favor of the former. The thinking here is take a known strength, reduce the luck factor, and try to move closer toward a game which can be decided on skill. With this line of reasoning, use of your sniper counter as bait might be regarded as a conscious, aggressive, defensive tactical move. This makes it easier to categorize as a passive act any decision to leave him floating in space in the hope of a meaningful strike against the enemy.

RECOMMENDATION: This one is a toss-up that must be judged according to the situation and how lucky you feel.

SNIPER ACTIVATION

It should be obvious without too much emphasis here that you should monitor events and know well what does and what does not allow a Sniper Activation attempt. There is no mystery in this; it is simply a matter of reading rule A14.1 (1992 version). Make sure your opponent does not get away with rolling for Sniper Activation on To Kill rolls and other activities such as Excessive Speed Breakdown, Crew survival, sD usage and Bog DR which we have all seen some players *mistakenly* lump into the general "Task Check" category of SAN-capable DR. Look carefully at the definitions; if the activity is not specifically listed as SAN-capable, then you are not susceptible to Sniper Activation.

RECOMMENDATION: Ensure that your opponent does not roll any mistaken Sniper Activations by knowing the rules!

SNIPER CHECK

Rolling a Sniper Check to nail that sniper is an uncommon luxury. A player must have unaffected Good Order units in the location attacked by the sniper. Further, these units must have neither moved nor fired that player turn and (because they will become Temporarily Immobilized) must not be needed for conducting any more meaningful activities the rest of the player turn. It is rare enough for commanders to field such a stack of units, let alone that the enemy sniper selects it as a target. The practice of keeping units dispersed in order to avoid the hazards of stacking plays right into the sniper's hands. He can usually find exactly what he wants—a solitary unit which will be unable to retaliate after the sniper attack. Of course, when the sniper does go after a bigger target, there is the insulating fact that players habitually have bigger and better plans for their killer stacks than to attempt the low odds DR required for a successful Sniper Check. As a final note, beware the unique capability of the Japanese squad to withstand an effective sniper attack die roll of 1 and still roll an immediate Sniper Check!

RECOMMENDATION: Roll 'em when you can, but that will not be very often. Your most likely Sniper Check chances will come during your opponent's player turn when you might have units with no targets. Given the option to move, shoot or roll a Sniper Check, I almost always skip the check.

SAN EROSION

During the playtest of the *RED BARRICADES (RB)* campaign games, playtesters noticed one worthwhile tactic was to eliminate the enemy sniper early in the campaign with a series of Sniper Checks conducted by large stacks of squads (easily assembled into "sniper hunter packs" with the quantity of squads available). Once the enemy SAN was reduced below two, the balance of the campaign could be fought without sniper worries—quite a significant advantage in such a lengthy encounter. Although that flaw was amended to provide a means of rebuilding SAN strength during a *RB* campaign, the lesson is one worth remembering in other long scenarios where your opponent has a relatively low SAN.

RECOMMENDATION: In some long scenarios (such as "The Last Bid"), the tactic of nailing the enemy sniper early can prove quite profound.

LIGHT MORTARS AND OTHER FOOLISH SHOOTING

Short of killing your opponent's sniper, it is impossible to completely eliminate enemy sniper activity. Sniper abatement procedures do nothing to limit enemy sniper operations, they merely hope to diminish the painfulness of results. Avoidance of foolish shooting, however, will curtail the probability of hostile sniper attacks as well as lessen your own frustration over suffering SAN results created by your own ill-advised shots. Of course, if you never shoot you will endure fewer sniper attacks than other *ASL* players, but you will probably never win a scenario. Somewhere there exists a line separating legitimate shots from foolish shooting, and it is the advanced squad leader's responsibility to identify that frontier.

The definitive example of foolish shooting involves use of Light Mortars against troops in high TEM. Here is a weapon with Rate of Fire (ROF) 2 or 3 which might have been provided to your troops by the enemy sniper school. The enemy *wants* you to shoot these weapons as often as you can, because your results against that squad in a stone building will typically call in a sniper attack on your own Rambo long before any effect is registered against the enemy. Firing such light weapons merely to gain Acquisition is another symptom of the foolish shooting syndrome, especially during Defensive Final Fire when the acquired hex will easily be vacated by advancing enemy troops. (Of course, used in conjunction with Air Bursts, these mortars assume a greatly enhanced battlefield presence.) A foolish shot which hits paydirt, though,

(Continued on pg. 56)

HYPER SNIPER...*(Continued from pg. 18)*

becomes a brilliant attack. No matter what I write here, someone will eventually roll a light mortar Critical Hit (CH) on your stone building location and KIA the Randomly Selected Rambo with the resulting 12(-3) Infantry Fire Table (IFT) DR. *ASL* is simply a great game!

Other foolish shooting typically includes many Advancing Fire attacks we may roll "just to see what happens" when there is practically no chance of anything happening. Granted, a leader-directed 4(+4) shot at Rambo or that one key enemy position might be worth the risk, but in most average situations there would not be much point in such an attack. One of the best times to avoid foolish shooting arises when the enemy target is already in such bad shape that its demise is assured. Maybe it is Pinned and nearly surrounded. You know your opponent will deliberately break and rout away, so why shoot? A Pinned, Counter Exhausted (CX), surrounded enemy unit is facing Close Combat (CC) from your concealed and leader-led overpowering force. Avoid the shot (and any possibility of a sniper). Instead, use your Ambush advantage to nail the unit in CC and withdraw into a more advantageous location.

On the other hand, there are also activities you can explore which might actually generate friendly SAN at no risk of enemy SAN opportunity, such as tossing White Phosphorus (WP) grenades on broken enemy units (heh, heh!). In this case, you make no SAN-capable DR but your opponent does.

RECOMMENDATION: Watch your shots; avoid needless headaches caused by foolish shooting.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

NON-TARGETS

Just as it is vital to guard against mistaken enemy Sniper Activations, you must also be alert to disallow sniper attacks against non-targets. This one is easy. Just read rule A14.22. Some things simply are not vulnerable to the sniper.

RECOMMENDATION: Read and stick to the rules.

MOBILE SNIPER

Think how many times you or your opponent have rolled up an effective sniper attack and then immediately, without really giving it another thought, automatically rolled the Random Location DR. This is potentially wasteful, for as the tides of battle fluctuate across the playing area your sniper may find himself positioned to hit only enemy units of low value. Perhaps there is a slim chance he could hit something worthwhile ("Please, oh please, oh spirits of the dice, let me roll a '6,6'!!!"), but just how often will that slim chance occur? Would it not be better to move the sniper counter?

It is much easier to convince yourself to move your sniper counter when: 1) you have rolled a "2" sniper attack, 2) your SAN is 6 or 7, 3) it is early in the scenario, 4) it is a large scenario or 5) your sniper has no worthwhile targets.

Careful consideration of these five characteristics of your sniper environment will usually help you decide whether you should move your sniper counter. This need not be a process which requires more than a few seconds either, but the point is to *take* the casual glance and the time to consider rather than automatically rolling that Random Location DR.

RECOMMENDATION: Plain and simple—take a quick look before you roll.

SCENARIO SIZE AND DURATION

The size of a scenario often warrants special sniper attention. Consider two extremes: one six-turn scenario with only a few units per side (a small scenario) and a scenario of ten turns with twenty or more squads per side (a large scenario). Because we can expect more SAN activity in the large scenario, most aspects of this sniper analysis assume greater significance there than in the small scenario. In short, there should be more SAN-capable DR in the large scenario and, therefore, more sniper attacks. Also, the large scenario is more likely than the small scenario to contain Ramboesque units, so a single sniper attack might be more likely to nail one of those guys in that encounter.

All is not safe on board the small scenario either, though, for a single sniper attack may nail the *only* valuable unit in your OB. Rambo may be off in another part of the war and not even on board for this small engagement, which only means some poor 9-1 or 8-1 or such is in charge and assuming, by default, attendant Ramboesque attributes. The demise of this Ersatz Rambo at the hands of enemy sniper activity might be an even more severe blow than the loss of True Blue Rambo in a large scenario, simply because Ersatz Rambo is more desperately needed here. Meanwhile, in the larger scenario another Ersatz Rambo might be available to fill the void created by the death of old True Blue.

Furthermore, the sniper abatement tactics of "piling on" and bait might be less useful in the small encounter because your few units are already stretched with other commitments. In this case, GEO and TEM assume greater significance while Elusive Target and Fast (Ersatz) Rambo attain paramount importance.

RECOMMENDATION: By all means, if you are going to pay any attention at all to snipers, some of the most vital criteria are scenario size as well as the game situation of the moment.

CE OR BU—TO DARE OR TO HIDE?

Armored Fighting Vehicles (AFV) deserve special sniper consideration because they can be so valuable and, when Crew Exposed (CE), so vulnerable to sniper activity. Some players will simply *never* fight CE, preferring the invulnerability of being Buttoned Up (BU), and for them the following considerations may have no meaning. However, those of us who wish to eke out every last possible advantage will often employ our AFV in CE mode.

As I have said, sniper considerations are not very often the most meaningful circumstances which will determine our action, and the same holds true for CE/BU status of properly utilized AFV. There are times when the benefits of CE are great enough to offset all sniper thoughts and other times when a general lack of meaningful CE benefits ordains that the only profound result of fighting CE in close proximity to the enemy sniper counter could be a Recalled, or at least Stunned, AFV.

One of the most influential ingredients in my CE/BU decision-making process is the number of available AFV. In a scenario which fields six or seven AFV for my force, I will not hesitate to fight CE. Potential loss of one AFV due to CE status is far outweighed by the advantages gained from six CE AFV. This will be most true in a strong armor-to-armor confrontation in which there is less chance that infantry fire might harm the CE commander. It is also more true if the AFV in question has a good Anti-Aircraft Machine Gun (AAMG) as we see on many American tanks. Against the Japanese who offer light firepower but like to swarm or Banzai AFV, the "all-around" protection of that AAMG demands its use.

With all that said, and notice none of it so far even considers sniper activity, there will be times when those few AFV closest to the enemy sniper might opt to BU. Rare, solitary or highly valuable AFV in particular warrant extra caution when in the vicinity of enemy sniper activity.

RECOMMENDATION: Be aware of the enemy SAN and the location of the enemy sniper counter when you have CE AFV. CE advantages can be tremendous, but they are usually not worth undue sniper risk. Screen any such CE AFV with some sniper abatement.

FINAL REMARKS

At this point, I think we would all agree that there are a great many ways to suppress enemy sniper activity and to enhance our own. Much of what has been discussed above at some length approaches the absurd. It is certainly not my intention to endorse, merely by their mention, every tactic described in this article. I merely wish to present as complete an account of sniper concerns as possible.

The most important matter to decide is just exactly which techniques should be used and which ignored, and at what times. Like so much in the game, the answer will vary according to specific game situations. For example, I cannot affirm that a 10-3 directing a HMG-topped, 24 Firepower stack in a large scenario is always more valuable than a 7-0 leading a lone half squad in a small encounter. *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* is so very complex that any unit at any certain time can emerge as the game winner, thus assuming, even if only momentarily, importance far beyond any other Ramboesque pretender.

The entire panorama of snipers in *ASL* can be a bit involved and a most intriguing aspect of play. Yet, it is a segment of the game which does not actually require much playing time, and usually not very much thought either. Though I believe it is vital for players to comprehend and practice winning sniper techniques, these procedures should become second nature, once learned.

★

Alone and Confused
Solitaire ASL and the Novice Player

By Matthew Ellison

Okay, for whatever reason, you finally decided to buy *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER (ASL)*. The only problem, if you are in the same situation as I, is that you don't have anybody to play on a regular basis. You play it by yourself, but it is difficult to pretend that you don't know there is a hidden 10-2 leader with a squad and a heavy machinegun bore-sighted on the hex you just decided to avoid. Then, along comes *SOLITAIRE ASL (SASL)*.

WHAT SASL IS NOT

It does not provide rules for playing existing scenarios in solitaire fashion. Maybe someday someone will adapt old scenarios for that purpose. Also, *SASL* is not like playing *ASL* against a real opponent. The artificial intelligence (AI) for the enemy forces (provided by a series of tables) are not the same as a live person sitting across from you, either at a table or computer monitor for play by email. A tactic that works in *SASL* will not necessarily work in a real game. A real person would not be constrained by the limits which are set upon the enemy forces in the *SASL* missions. The AI controlling the enemy units is not likely to maneuver to cut off rout paths or create kill zones. It's also more likely to send squads out into the open in range of your machineguns.

Also, *SASL* is not designed to help you learn the rules. For the easiest method to learn *ASL* rules, I recommend Jim Stahler's programmed rules article " Eight Steps to *ASL*" in volume 30, number 1 of *The GENERAL*. *SASL* adds another twenty pages of rules to read and understand. You must be at least familiar with chapters A-D of the *ASL* rulebook before you can play *SASL*. If you misread or misunderstand a rule, there will be no one to correct you.

WHAT GOOD IS THIS MODULE?

It is quite good when used for the purposes and intentions for which it was designed. You do not need a live opponent to sweat over what the Suspect counters [the *SASL* version of concealment] hide. You never know if a machinegun will open up when you run your squads out into the open. The long range activation can make it dangerous to cross open ground when the nearest Suspect counter is 16 hexes away. *SASL* takes the fog of war concept to a new level. In most regular *ASL* scenarios, you know whether your opponent has an antitank gun before you even start moving your armor. You never know what might pop up in *SASL*.

The concept of command control is also important in *SASL*. You are never quite sure until the dice are rolled, if your squads will do what you want them to do. It is quite possible to have a large portion of your company immobilized by panic. They are not running away, but they are not moving forward or firing either. Leaders can help as long as they too don't panic. This makes even the 7-0 and 8-0 leaders important to have near the front. While losing half of your company to panic is frustrating, it does help to even the odds against the AI.

While it is easy to fall into erroneous play habits with *SASL*, you also have the opportunity to look up rules at your leisure without annoying your opponent. Thus, you don't need to have complete understanding of the rules before you play. Take sniper activation numbers (SAN) as an example. As long as you know when to check for it and what to look for, you can then look up the rules to find out more detail, such as determining the target and performing sniper checks. Also, if some section of the rules confuses you, such as off-board artillery (OBA), you can ignore events utilizing such sections, or you can use them and step your way through the particular rules section. This is the great thing about *SASL*: you can use whatever you want (within reason). If you want to try a night scenario, go for it. If you want to concentrate on infantry combat, then don't play the Tank Attack mission and re-roll any random event/activation check that calls for AFVs. In other words, you can proceed at your own pace.

Finally, the part of *SASL* that I liked best was the campaign aspect. *SASL* campaigns are not historical (in the *Historical ASL* sense), but involve the use of a given company in a series of missions. How your company does in a given mission influences what improvements it makes and replacements it gets. Therefore, it becomes important to protect your company. Making a last ditch run across open ground to reach a victory point objective (VPO) is not as attractive as it would be in a regular *ASL* scenario where you don't have to use the troops you have left at the end of one scenario for the next one. This conservation of force and the variable length of the mission contribute to making *SASL* different from *ASL*. It is also what got me into a mess the first time I played an *SASL* mission.

I decided to jump straight into a campaign in Russia using a German company. I selected Bunker Busting (Mission 4) as the first mission. Not only was I having to deal with fortification rules with which I was not very familiar, but also I had to know the vehicle rules for the assault guns I received as support. Half of the way through the mission, I realized I had yet to check for sniper activation. I also forgot to check for panic more often than not. I hate to think of what other rules I was using incorrectly. I quit playing the mission in disgust with my poor grasp of the rules.

STARTER TIPS

I thoroughly enjoy *SASL* now and I would like to offer some suggestions to help make the transition easier for others who are new to *SASL*. I provide an analysis of each of the missions and the rules that some may find problematic in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 covers the missions where enemy units have a hold (defensive) attitude (missions 1-7). Table 2 covers the missions where the enemy is in an advance (offensive) attitude (8-14). If a mission has a yes in the row for partisans, then that mission may be played against a partisan enemy. The engineering row refers to missions where engineers, demolition charges and flame throwers may be used. Artillery strikes are the equivalent of OBA for the enemy side, but they are somewhat easier to use than the traditional OBA.

As can be seen from Tables 1 and 2, the missions with the least amount of rules are missions 1, 2, 5 and 8. Of these, missions 1, 2 and 5 have your company attacking, while mission 8 has your company on the defensive. I recommend starting with mission 1 or 2. These require the least amount of space, and the enemy is using a hold attitude. It is easier to play a solitaire mission against an enemy with a hold attitude because they are much more likely to fire than move which minimizes the amount of rules you have to master. Also, I suggest experimenting with design-your-own companies. Try SS, paratroopers and mixed companies to get a feel for the system before using one of the historical companies. Don't jump directly into a campaign until you are familiar with the rules.

After you become more familiar with the *SASL* rules, try Mission 8, Patrol. This is the simplest mission (in terms of rules) where the enemy is in an advance attitude. After that, you can move in whatever direction you choose. Most of the non-random event guns and vehicles show up in missions 8-14, when the enemy is in an advance attitude. Most of the extensive and/or confusing rules sections, such as OBA, are primarily used in these missions also. On the positive side, however, the units requiring those rules are often optional. The Human Wave rules are only required for Mission 14, Human Wave. They may enter due to a random event in other missions where the Russians are the enemy but they can be ignored if you do not feel comfortable with Human Waves. The rules for using Human Waves in *SASL* are even printed in a shaded box, because they are used infrequently. Don't bother reading them until you want or are required to use a Human Wave.

One of the more difficult sections to remember are the rules concerning automatic actions. It is a good idea to have that section handy when you are playing. Checking leaders and squads for command control is another aspect of *SASL* which can easily be forgotten during the course of play. This section, however, is vital to play balance. It is quite easy for your company to win if nobody panics. Therefore, if you find that you are forgetting to check for panic, I suggest you check after the rally phase of each player turn. This may affect balance somewhat, since you know ahead of time who will panic and who will not, but it is better than no check whatsoever.

Finally, there are a few tips that might make your first few missions more successful. You

will most likely get light mortars among your support weapon allotment. These weapons can be very useful. Use them against Suspect counters that are out of range of your squads, especially in woods. Mortars, as indirect fire weapons, qualify for the -1 Airburst TEM which can help determine if those pesky Suspect counters are actual units or just shadows. Remember that mortars can retain Rate of Fire (ROF) even though they are using the Area Target type. The American 60mm mortar can retain ROF firing WP when it becomes available. Try to keep your squads within two hexes and in line of sight of your leaders when possible. This should reduce the amount of panic that strikes your troops. Avoid fighting partisans in Mission 2, Pockets, since they don't surrender via the rout phase method and they get VPs for each squad (good order or not) still left on board at the end of the game. Even though these missions have variable end turns, you have to be aggressive on offense. Don't let the Suspect counters slow you down. Deploy a few squads and run them out where they can cause activation checks. Mark some of your MGs with opportunity fire and shoot anything that pops up.

The basic point to remember in *SASL* is that you can proceed at your own pace. If you don't want to deal with a certain rules section, re-roll or ignore any random event that calls for you to use units requiring those rules. If you do happen to use a rules section with which you are not familiar or have questions, read that section carefully when the time comes. The down side is that with no one around to challenge you, you must look up a rule if you are unsure. It would be a rude awakening to "learn" a rule incorrectly in *SASL* only to have it cost you a scenario in a face-to-face game when your error is uncovered by your opponent.

Thus, *SASL* can be an important learning tool in your *ASL* library. It also can be a lot of fun. Maybe in future pages of *The GENERAL*, you will read about the hardships and battles of a German infantry company as they march across the steppes of Russia.

★

TABLE 1. Missions with ENEMY Units in a Hold Attitude

Rules Involved	Mission 1 Cautious Advance	Mission 2 Pockets	Mission 3 Recon	Mission 4 Bunker Busting	Mission 5 Take the Highway	Mission 6 The Fortress	Mission 7 Block Party
Fortifications	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Guns[1]	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Vehicles	No	No	*	*	No	No	*
Artillery Strikes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
OBA	No	No	No	No	No	No	*
Bombardment	No	No	No	No	No	*	*
Partisans	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Engineers	No	No	No	*	No	Yes	*

[1] This does not include the 1/2" Light Mortars used as support weapons

* Units using these rules sections are either optional or possible attached units that may or may not be used.

TABLE 2. Missions with ENEMY Units in an Advance Attitude

Rules Involved	Mission 8 Patrol	Mission 9 Enemy Offensive	Mission 10 Hold the Line	Mission 11 Tank Attack!	Mission 12 Besieged	Mission 13 The Bridge	Mission 14 Human Wave
Fortifications	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guns[1]	No	*	*	*	*	No	*
Vehicles	No	*	*	Yes	*	No	*
Artillery Strikes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	*
OBA	No	No	*	No	*	No	Yes
Bombardment	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Partisans	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Engineers	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No

[1] This does not include the 1/2" Light Mortars used as support weapons

* Units using these rules sections are either optional or possible attached units that may or may not be used.

IT'S DEBATABLE

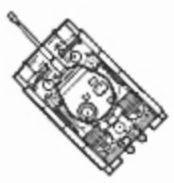
Why So Much *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER?*

By Brian C. Blad

While I cannot accede to Brian's plea for more coverage of ASL *within these pages, I think this is a useful testimonial from one part of the hobby community to another. The Series Replay in this issue represents the maximum amount of space we can devote to "The Game" and probably won't be replicated within a year or two. Although popular,* ASL *suffers from being quite complex, procedurally. The age of computer gaming provides some hope that the most complicated and realistic wargames can be made more accessible to a wider public. To date, however,* ASL *continues to defy computer programmers. Charlie Moylan, the programmer who did* OVER THE REICH *for us, is the latest to step forward with a hopeful proposal. Until he succeeds, we are left with the (many aspects of the) boardgame to show you.—SKT*

You may have seen the tons of *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* (*ASL*) articles and scenarios published here over the years. Many of you have wished, no doubt, for less coverage of *ASL* and more of YOUR favorite games. Others, such as myself, wish for even more coverage of *ASL* in this magazine. In this short article, I explain what *ASL* is and why as part of our devotion to "The Game" (as we refer to it) that we need/want even more *ASL* coverage.

ASL is a squad level, tactical simulation of World War II. The *ASL* system covers every theater of operations from the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 through some of the individual battles of the Korean War's end in 1953.



"Now wait a minute! You just said World War II and yet here you are throwing in the Spanish Civil War and Korea!? Okay, what gives?" This is one of the big draws of *ASL* and the modular system it employs. *ASL* allows the recreation/simulation of almost every land action ever fought in those time periods. The mapboards are geomorphic, which means they can be put into different configurations and they'll still fit together, and many overlays have been created to allow for the simulation of literally thousands of different terrain types.

The rules allow for beach assaults, desert warfare, jungle fighting, city slugfests, caves, tunnels, fortifications, night attacks, snow, rain, mud and more. All are covered in the mechanics of the *ASL* rules, in a module by module addition to the system. Chapters A-D of the modular rule system are all that is required to learn the main game system.



"Why modular?" Well, *ASL* is the most advanced game that I've ever seen, but modules allow me (or you) to learn the system a little at a time. It is also easier on your wallet, because you don't have to buy the entire game system all at once when learning how to play. You can get into *ASL* with the *ASL Rulebook*, *Paratrooper* and mapboards I through IV (for about $80).

"Yikes! 80 bucks! That's a lot of money to spend on a game!" Is it? Look at the expandability of the game system. New scenarios, historical modules and more are being released all the time. *ASL* is infinitely replayable. You can play the same scenario a hundred times (but you need not, given the volume of published scenarios available) and get a different outcome every time. Now that there is a solitaire play system available for *ASL*, you no longer have the excuse of not having a face-to-face opponent.

"There are amateur products being released to support ASL *and the* ASL Annual *is published every year? Why?"* Once you are hooked on *ASL* you can never get enough. The demand for *ASL* material grows every day as more and more people are introduced to *ASL* at gaming clubs, hobby stores and conventions like AvalonCon.

ASL is unique in that you can recreate all kinds of small unit actions if you wish. There is a design-your-own system where you can pick a date, a number of points and, *voilá*, with little effort, you have a purely fictional battle to play. All the major power nationalities are represented in *ASL* as are the Axis and Allied minor nations. Partisans are included, too. The best part of *ASL* is that it is not a stagnant game system. A rough estimate puts the official and unofficial published scenarios in the range of over 300. Many more scenarios and historical battles are being researched and converted to *ASL* every day. The *ASL* game system provides something for every student of WWII.



"Okay, you've sold me, so I go ahead and I buy the basics. I learn the system and I even like it. Where do I find opponents?" The obvious answer is in your hands. Read and advertise in the opponents wanted column of *The GENERAL*. Usually, you can leave your name and number on a bulletin board at your local hobby or game store. If you own a computer, jump onto the internet and do a search for *ASL*. You will find all kinds of World Wide Web pages set up to sing with praise of *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*. The *ASL* mailing list on the internet discusses new scenarios and products like modules and *ASL Annual* on a daily basis. Over 500 *ASL* players from around the world actively participating in the discussions. America Online and Compuserve also have significant discussion groups for the game and the Avalon Hill bulletin boards on those services can facilitate finding an opponent. Stop by a local game convention (the convention calendar in this magazine lists many of them). Wander among the convention-going boardgamers. You will soon find an *ASL* player or two. There are even tournaments held around the world dedicated solely to the play of *ASL*.



"If I don't like ASL, then what do I do?" In case you don't, the obvious course of action is placement of a game "for sale ad" in this magazine (see Opponents Wanted page). You can also get on the internet and use the same *ASL* sources to find a buyer looking to add to their sets. *ASL* players tend to wear out boards, counters and rule books after a time.

So, is *ASL* for you? Maybe, if you're looking for a flexible, expandable, challenging way to recreate small unit actions in World War II. If not, bear with us. There is no solid estimate of *ASL* players worldwide. Some have estimated 7,000-10,000 players worldwide. We do know that we are recruiting new players every day. There are players almost everywhere you may go. Still not sure if *ASL* is for you? Find a local player or hobby shop and check it out, you won't be disappointed that you did!



★



SERIES REPLAY
SOLITAIRE ASL

AMERICAN: Neil Clark

GERMAN: The Game System

NEUTRAL COMMENTATOR: Richard Eichenlaub



"Did I just hear Matthew Ellison say Bunker Busting busted up his understanding of the rules?" Well, here we get to see another player tackle Mission 4, Bunker Busting in the SOLITAIRE *module of* ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER. *I hope that this replay serves to illustrate this unique extension to the* ASL *game system for ASL players and the uninitiated alike.*

—SKT

Focusing upon the fortunes of US Army Company "Strange" from the D-Day landings through to the end of the war, this replay shows Strange Company's baptism by fire. Following the D-Day landings, "Strange" Company took part in an action to expand the beachhead into dense, fortified land to the east.

Situation: June 1944
SASL Mission 4 (Bunker Busting)
Friendly ELR = 3; Enemy ELR = 3
Friendly SAN = 2; Enemy SAN = 4
Friendly REs = 2/3; Enemy REs = 5/6
AC No: 3
Booby Trap Level = B
Board Configuration. Configuration B with board 37 on north with i.d. number to southwest and board 13 on south with i.d. number to northeast. Friendly board edge (west) abuts off-board setup area (hexrow FF of any board, ignoring non-road terrain).
Environmental Conditions. Moist (-1), Overcast, no wind, streams and connected marshes are flooded. All bridges on board 13 are intact.
SSR Reinforcements: 2 x M4(105)MTs (no armor leader). This gives three victory points (VPs) at start to the enemy.
Suspect & Sniper Placement and Company Setup. As shown in setup figure.

NEUTRAL COMMENT ON SETUP

Only upon reading Neil's final notes on the Rest and Refit after this mission did I realize the error, but Neil is starting this mission with too many squads. An American company consists of *nine* squads and the other listed personnel, not twelve. This company commander should feel fortunate to enter this mission with a "reinforced" company.

PRE-GAME COMMENTS

This is not an easy start to the campaign. The Bunker Busting mission is a tough one, with plenty of fortified positions to be revealed. Although the SSRs have given me two superb AFVs to support the attack, there will probably be a lot of guns out there capable of stopping them. I must activate a lot of the suspects (S?) to stand a chance of winning. The VP schedule gives 1/2 VP to the enemy for each S? still on the board at the end of the game. As so many of them are in closed terrain, activating them will have to be done up close which means casualties and more forfeited VPs.

The forest on board 37 will probably be very well defended—no less than 38 S?s are in those trees. On board 13, most of the S?s are in buildings, which are very likely to be fortified building locations.

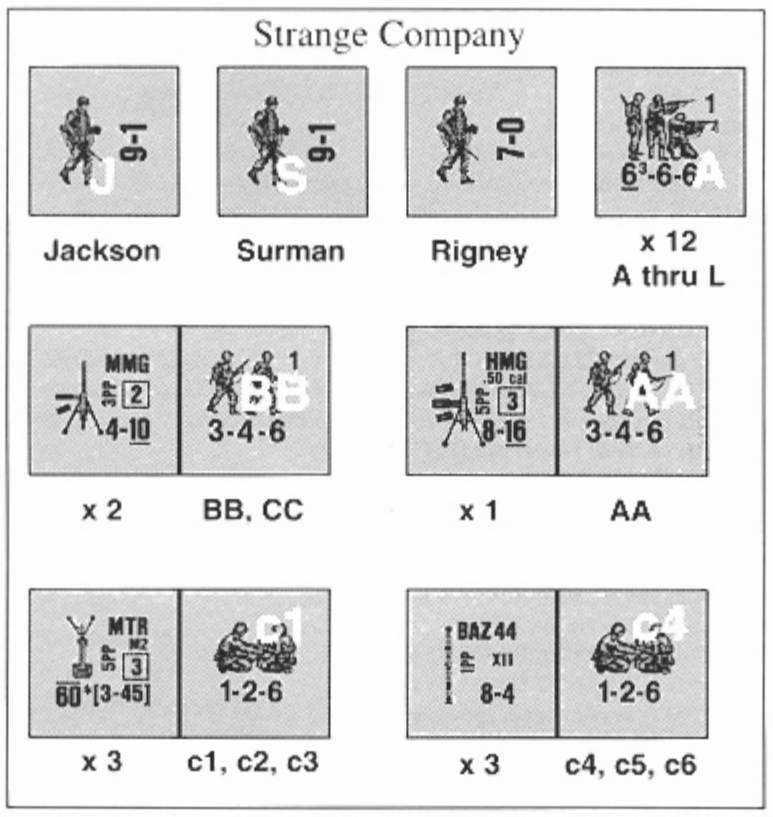
The random event numbers (RE#s) dictate that the enemy is very sensitive in this area and will very likely generate reinforcements, while I am largely on my own. The density of S?s, coupled with the reasonably high AC#, means that once S?s generate fortifications, the neighboring S?s will only fail to activate on a 6 because fortified positions are victory point objectives (VPOs) in this scenario.

The sniper activation numbers (SANs) are reasonably low. Sniper fire shouldn't be too dangerous. Booby traps have never caused me much trouble in the past.

That flooded stream effectively cuts board 13 in half and all the adjoining marshes are impassable too. I had best concentrate my efforts to the north of the stream. The elevated road hexes should help conceal my moves from some of those S?s as the game advances.

Because the bulk of the S?s are in the woods, I shall attack on board 37, screening my advance from board 13 with the numerous line-of-sight (LOS) hindrances and obstacles. I don't have to stay out of sight, but I must keep the final Infantry Fire Table dice roll modifiers low so that the board 13 S?s don't activate. Because the terrain is much more open on board 13, an attack on any location there is sure to draw fire from S?s on both boards. If time permits, I'll take out some of them later.

The plan is to advance onto board 37 and overwhelm the less densely situated S?s near the friendly board edge (on west). Then, before moving on the woods, I'll use the mortars to activate S?s from long range. Whatever is activated will be concealed again due to favorable terrain effects but at least I'll know what I'm up against. All that concealment terrain will also help to protect my force as it advances. The American squads are notoriously brittle under fire.



As always, it's a good tactic to limit the number of S?s activated at any one time, but it's especially true in this mission, as every activated fortification which is not captured at the end of the game will yield VPs to the enemy.

I use the usual tactic of deploying and sending the half squads forward to provoke activation. The tanks will come on the board only after I know that there are no guns waiting to take them out. The first time I played this scenario as the Germans, I brought a StuG IIIB aboard early and finished it's move. A squad moving later in the same MPh activated an S? six hexes from the StuG which revealed an AT gun in a pillbox. The StuG was blown away in the first enemy Prep Fire without firing a shot. The armor is just too important to be lost like that.

The M4(105)s are pretty impressive in this mission, although I could have used a couple of engineer squads with a FT and a couple of DCs to help with that forest. The M4s can generate lots of smoke and white phosphorus, and pack formidable firepower in their 105mm gun, coaxial MG and bow MG. The anti-air MG won't get used much, as they'll enter buttoned up and probably stay that way throughout. One excellent thing about the *SASL* system is that you can get to see some pretty sexy hardware in action.

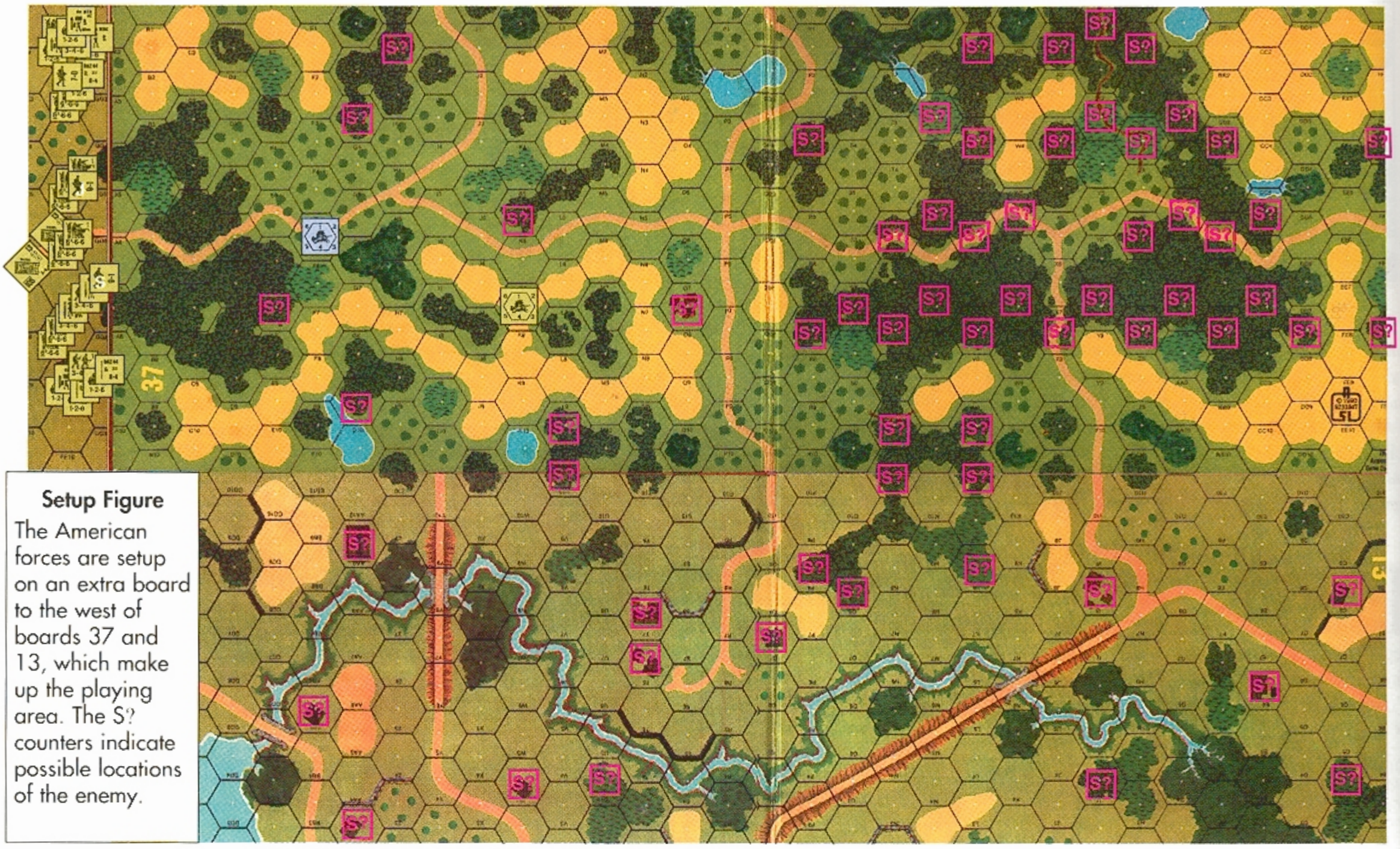
In the *SASL* system, a lot of dice rolls are used to determine what exactly gets activated, and what actions those units perform, especially when the enemy is on the offensive. The enemy units will be revealed and move/fire as dictated by the Activity tables. You really have no idea what you are up against when you start. The high dice roll modifier (DRM) to activation table A1 means that probably there will be many guns out, but few AFVs, but the REs could bring anything onto the board.

The *SASL* system provides rules about command control which add uncertainty to the effectiveness of your side. I find that they add a new dimension to *ASL*, which makes vitally important your leaders and the quality of their leadership. Failure to be in command means that the unit is temporarily immobilized. Both sides are subject to panic, but it hurts the friendly side the most.

At start, all American squads are 6-6-6s, and are listed by squad identity letter (A, B, etc.). Half squads are termed HsAA, etc. while crews are c5, etc. As units battle harden or ELR, they will be replaced with the appropriate unit with the same identity letter.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Neil has diced himself into an extremely tough first engagement for his untried company. He is well aware how difficult Bunker Busting missions are. In my experience, these can be



Setup Figure
The American forces are setup on an extra board to the west of boards 37 and 13, which make up the playing area. The S? counters indicate possible locations of the enemy.

very hard to win when the terrain is dense and have a nasty tendency to ruin a good company. However, if handled delicately, a couple big VPOs can offset the free VPs awarded to the enemy for leftover suspect counters.

In a complicated twist, Neil has provided the enemy with a nearly secure flank. The flooded stream, as he notes, cuts board 13 in half. He has to be very careful not to allow those S? on the far side of the stream to activate. They could be VPOs which would be deadly if he tries to capture them. Neil is being very optimistic to even consider having enough time to tackle the far side during this scenario. Once he gets sucked into that woods, he'll be lucky to disengage, much less refocus his attack elsewhere.

His plan to tackle board 37 is, I think, his only viable approach. He's absolutely correct that he needs to manage how many S? activations he allows. One secret to this mission is to bypass non-VPO activations. Once an S? activates and does not create a fortification of some sort, it is worth nothing to the enemy. When the other side is defending, there is only a one-in-six chance it will move. Of course, the risk is that the unit will successfully dig foxholes, thereby creating another VPO. However, on the whole, foxholes are not worth much and I feel it is better not to tangle with the enemy except for some substantial potential gain.

Experienced *ASL* players will recognize the tactic of using 1-2-6 crew counters as support weapons teams (for the bazookas and mortars). This is a nice tweak of the system, because these units can self-rally. They also tend to be replaced relatively easily between missions.

A key concept, and one that makes *SASL* campaign games so interesting, is knowing when to call it quits. It takes experience with the system to know that losing this mission is better than winning it with your company in such bad shape that the next three missions are almost certain losers. This is the toughest of all decisions in *SASL*.

AMERICAN TURN 1

System-driven actions are shown in italics below.

Setup
Squad H deploys into half squads HsKK and HsQQ

Movement Phase
Jackson in command, puts Rigney in command
Jackson & A move A5 B5 C5 D4
B moves A5 B5 C5 D5
C moves (CX) A5 B5 C6 D5 E5...
G3 fails activation check (AC)
... C moves F4
K5 fails AC
Surman in command
HsKK moves (CX) A8 B8 C9...
G9 fails AC
... HsKK moves D9
13AA9 fails AC
c6 moves (CX) A8 B8 C8 D7
E7 fails AC
c3 moves (CX) A8 B8 C8bp D8bp E9
HsQQ moves (CX) A1 B1 C1 D1
H1 activates 4-4-7 and 2-4-7 squads. H1 fires at D1: (cowers)
1RFP placed in D1. HsQQ ELR failure DM becomes 2-3-6 HsQQ
Rigney, c4, G & I move A2 B1 C2 D1
Attacked by 1 RFP: no effect (NE)
J move (CX) A1 B1 C2 D2
c1, c2, HsBB move A1 B1 C2
Surman, L & K move (CX) A8 B8 C8bp D8 E8bp F8
HsAA & HsCC move (CX) A8 B8 C8bp D8
c5 moves (CX) A8 B8 C9 D9
E & F move (CX) A6 B5 C6 D5 E5 F5 G5
D moves (CX) A6 B5 C6 D5 E5 F5 G5
M4(105) A in command, moves start A6 B5 C6 D5 E5 F5 G5 H4 I4 J3 stop
M4(105) B in command, moves start FF5 A6 B5 C6 D5 E5 F5 G4 H4 stop

Advancing Fire Phase
Rigney directs D1 fire at H1: NE

Rout Phase
Rigney routs with HsQQ C2 C3

Advance Phase
c4 to E2
c1 & c2 to D1
J to E3
HsBB to D2
D, E & F to H4
C to G5
Jackson & A to E5
B to E5
Surman, K & L to G9
c3 to F9
c6 to E8
HsAA & HsCC to E8
HsKK & c5 to E9
Concealment on E2 E3 D2 E8

TURN 1 COMMENTS

Well, that went more smoothly than I would have expected. Five of the six suspect activation checks failed to activate anything, allowing me to force-march my troops into forward positions. Although the wheatfields around 13CC6 do not conceal my movement, they do prevent an AC because of the LOS DRMs.

I didn't have to move the M4s buttoned up, because there was no threat to them, but they got to where I wanted them anyway. They are in position to area fire at R3 and O7 in the upcoming defensive fire phase (DFPh).

Surman and his boys will have a 6FP (firepower of six) shot on V10 at +2 which has less than a 50% chance of revealing something. Team c3 in E9 can assemble the mortar and fire, rate of fire permitting, in the next prep phase until it gets a result on L9.

On the left wing, I'll paste H1 with defensive fire (12FP at +2). If that fails to do the trick, I'll assemble the mortars to hit it in the next Prep Phase. Those units will have to go down before I can move safely past the J hex row on the left.

GERMAN TURN 1

Rally Phase
Rigney fails to rally HsQQ, desperation morale (DM).

Prep Fire Phase
H1 fires at D1: NE

Defensive Fire Phase
Rigney in command
G & I fire at H1: NE
c1 assemble MTR A
c2 assemble MTR B
M4(105) A Panics
M4(105) B in command, area fires at O7: miss -1 TA. Fires BMG/CMG at O7: NE
Surman in command, directs K & L fire at 13V10: NE
c3 assembles MTR C

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Indeed, things went better than expected. With an activation check of 3, half the potential activations would be successful. Neil is bucking the odds up to this point. This is beneficial, because he needs to press the attack and there is nothing worse than getting stuck right out of the blocks.

I think he is dangerously close to activating 13BB5. He has a 50% chance of creating something, then a slightly better than even chance of it being a fortified building. That would grant the enemy nine victory points which would be difficult to take away.

On the opposite side, he is going to clear the squad and a half in 37H1. I think these guys are only a minor threat, because they are on the back side of a woods. As Neil has decided to make his main line of advance the northern board edge, I understand why this enemy is bothering him.

I was a little surprised he didn't bring his forces onto the board concealed. Fire against concealed units is less effective, as Neil knows well, having placed concealment counters on three of his stacks at the conclusion of his turn. Even though suspects will strip his concealment, opportunities still exist to maintain concealment and use it to advantage.

AMERICAN TURN 2

PRE-TURN COMMENTS

This turn, I plan to blow away those units in H1 and move to the other side of that tree line. The M4(105) A can area fire at R3 while I use armored assault to advance the units in H4 along the road towards O7. I must activate those units in L9 & V10 this turn so that I can advance up the road although that will be easier done by advancing a unit rather than prep firing. Until something is activated, the bazooka team in E8 will have to advance boldly to draw some fire. If nothing comes up, they can continue towards O7. If anyone does show their face, then I might have some use for Opportunity Fire after all.

Rally Phase
Surman fails to deploy squad L
Rigney rallies HsQQ

Prep Fire Phase
Rigney in command



American Turn 1: The company sweeps through the "shadows"—suspect counters—finding minor resistance in H1, where a firefight ensues.

c1 fire MTR at H1: K/1 (2-4-7), 4-4-7 breaks DM
c2 dismantles MTR
M4(105) A in command, area fires at R3: miss -1 TA
M4(105) B fires WP at O7: miss, -2 TA
Surman in command
c3 designated as opportunity firer, remove CX (-CX)

Movement Phase
c4 moves CX F2 G3
J moves F3 G4 H3 (-?) I3 -CX
HsBB moves CX E3bp F3 (-?) G4 H3 I3 J2
G & I move CX E2 F1 G2
Rigney & HsQQ move D3 E4 F3 G4 H3 I3
c6 moves F7 G8bp (-?) H7 -CX
HsAA & HsCC move F7 G8 -CX
L moves H9 ...
L9 fails AC
... L moves I9
13V10 fails AC
..L -CX
Surman and K move H8bp I8 J7bp K8 -CX
HsKK & c5 move F8 G8bp H7 -CX
D in command, moves I5 J5 K6...
O7 activates 2-4-7, 37L AT gun (CA N6/N7) and 2-2-8 crew in Fortified building location. 2-4-7 fires at D: NE. 37L fires at D: miss, -1 TA
.. D moves L5 M5 -1TA left in L5 -CX
E Panics -CX
F in command, moves I5 J5 K6 L5 M5 -CX
Jackson in command
C moves H4 I5 J5 K6 L5 -CX
Jackson, A & B move F5 G5 H4 I5 J5 K6 L5

Advancing Fire Phase
G, I, c4, HsQQ & A fire at H1: 4-4-7 (broken) passes 2MC
A, B, C, D & F fire at O7: (cower) NE

Rout Phase
H1 to H0

Advance Phase
c2 to E2
G & I to H1
c4 to I2
HsBB to K3
D & F to M4
Jackson, A, B & C to L4 -1 TA left in L5
M4(105) A & B both CE
L to J8
Surman to J8
K to L7
HsKK, c5 & c6 to I7
HsAA & HsCC to H7

Concealment on D1 E2 H1 I2 I3 L7

TURN 2 COMMENTS

I decided to expose the crews of the two AFVs, because I don't want to take the -1 BU penalty to my shots, especially when that AT gun has activated in O7. The 37L is not a danger to me at this range, it would need a 2 to hit, but if I close the range, it's special HEAT ammo becomes more dangerous.

The decision to pull Surman back to L7 in the Advance Phase looks odd at first, but it enables him to perform the command control dice roll for all the units in his command range. Otherwise, they would have to perform those actions themselves. Also, sniper fire makes it not a good idea to leave a leader alone in a hex.

Unfortunately, my mortar teams are lagging behind the advance. I must bring them up as soon as possible, even though they are all out of the command range of any leader. I'll try to use the Defensive Fire Phase to get the assembled mortars dismantled. Next turn, I want to place white phosphorus in O7 and blitz it in close combat. The fortified wooden building is worth nine VPs and the AT gun two VPs.

Thus far, I've been lucky with the activation checks, so I've made good progress, but O7 is the start of a new phase.

GERMAN TURN 2

Rally Phase
4-4-7 fails self rally, retains DM

Prep Fire Phase
37L fires AP at M4(105) B: hull hit, -1 TA, TK: NE. 37L fires AP at M4(105)B: miss, -2 TA.
2-4-7 fires at I4: NE

Defensive Fire Phase
Jackson in command
A, B, C, D & F fire at O7: 2-4-7 1MC. hero creation. 2-2-8 breaks DM. TA lost
M4(105) A in command, area fires HE at R3: miss, -2 TA
M4(105) B in command, area fires at O7: hits, hero elim. 2-4-7 passes NMC. 2-2-8 (broken) NMC elim
Rigney in command
HsBB assembles MMG
c3 in command, dismantles MTR
c1 in command, dismantles MTR

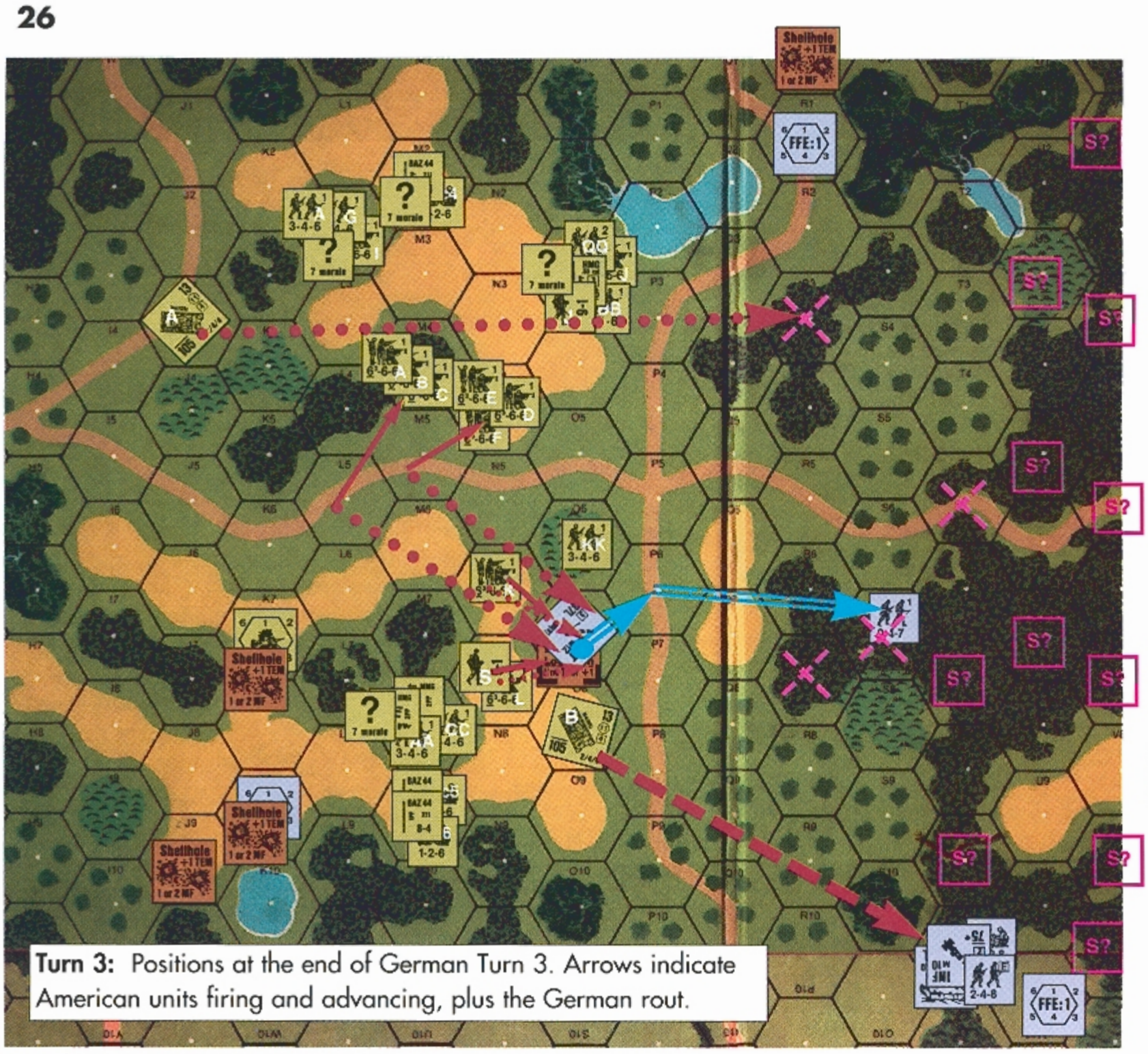
Rout Phase
H0 surrenders to G

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Neil finally hits paydirt with the 37O7 activation of an AT gun and a half squad. As he notes, this is worth 11 VPs and is a relatively easy target. He can press home the attack quickly, but that risks activating the S? behind it. This prize might be worth capturing slowly.

Although he hasn't been terribly plagued by panic yet, it is obviously a concern for him. One squad froze this turn. It's not a key unit, but it causes a tilt for the player. Generally, every unit has a planned action and when a squad doesn't fulfill its obligation, things can get really messed up. Neil is cognizant of this and is doing a decent job keeping his forces organized and his leaders well-positioned.

The American company captures its first German prisoners. This happens pretty often in *SASL* and is an excellent way to rack up VPs, because captured units count double. The drawback, of course, is that Neil has to allocate some of his precious forces to guard duty.



Turn 3: Positions at the end of German Turn 3. Arrows indicate American units firing and advancing, plus the German rout.

In typical *ASL* fashion, the half squad in the building generates a hero which is immediately wounded and dies. The crew of the AT gun is wiped out. Looks like 11 easy points for Neil.

AMERICAN TURN 3

PRE-TURN COMMENTS

I am supposed to play the enemy side to its best advantage. Firing the 37L with AP ammo to get a -2 target acquisition counter seemed like a good idea. Unfortunately, it lost ROF before it could get off a HEAT round, although it would still only have hit on a 4. Had it hit, that would have been it for the M4.

The Hero in O7 didn't last long and, at last, one of my AFVs got a result. I shouldn't have too much trouble this turn storming O7. I expect that will draw some fire from the units in the woods. I hope to activate enough S?s with VPs along the tree line to win the game without having to activate too many interior woods hexes at point blank range.

On the left flank, I will push the MMG half squad to N1 where he can fire on R3 without a lot of LOS hindrance DRMs. The prisoners are a bit of a nuisance, and I don't get any VPs for them. Yet, even though it's a game, I don't like the idea of not accepting surrender.

The overall objective this turn is to get as many units up front as possible. I haven't yet managed to get the support weapons to keep up with the advance and I want those mortars and machineguns to do some work.

Rally Phase
Squad G deploys into Hs's G & A. A takes prisoners

Prep Fire Phase
Jackson in command
A, B, C, D & F fire at O7: (cowers) 2-4-7 NMC Breaks DM
M4(105) A in command, area fires at R3: Hits, 4MC
R3 fails AC

Movement Phase
HsBB moves L2bp M2 N2 -CX
Surman in command
HsKK moves CX J6 K6 L5 M5 N5
R7 fails AC
T5 fails AC
K moves M7 N6 (-?)
c3 Panics
HsAA & HsCC CX to I7bp J7b K8 (-?) L8
Surman & L move K8 L7bp M7bp N6
c5 & c6 move J7bp K8 L8
Rigney in command
E moves I5 J5 K6 L5 M5
c4 moves J2 K3bp L2 -CX
I & HsG move I2bp J2 K3 -CX
Jackson moves L3 M3 N2
c1 in command, moves E2 E3bp F3
c2 Panics
J & HsQQ move CX J2 K3bp L2bp M2 N2
M4(105) B in command, moves start I5 J5 K6 L5 (CA M6/L6) M6 M7bp N7 O8 stop
Rigney moves H3 G3bp F3 E3bp E2
HsA moves I1 J1 K2

Advancing Fire Phase
Surman directs K & L fire at O7: 2-4-7 (6) passes 3MC

Rout Phase
2-4-7 low crawls to P6

Advance Phase
Jackson, HsBB, HsQQ (?) & J (?) to O3
S7 fail AC
c4 to M2
I & HsG to L2
c1 to G3
HsA to L2
D & F to N4
E to N4
HsKK to O6
A, B & C to M4
Surman, K & L to O7
HsAA & HsCC to M8
c5 & c6 to M9
Concealment on M8

TURN 3 COMMENTS

Where is everybody? It can be a bit frustrating moving painstakingly forward, only to find that there's nobody there. Still, I shouldn't complain about clearing the first half of board 37 and capturing one VP location and a gun. The second half won't be so easy.

The M4(105) in O8 is there to cover the advance on the right wing next turn, in case T9 and T10 open up with something nasty. You just never know what the random event numbers might turn up.

I've sent Rigney back to pick up those straggling mortar teams. Admittedly, his chances of gaining command are only slightly better than the crew's, but at least they'll get two attempts. I'll have to let F9 make it on their own. I've clustered everyone else, except L2, into the command range of the two 9-1s. Barring an unlucky command dice roll (DR), they all should be moving into the woods on turn 4.

GERMAN TURN 3

Rally Phase
Random event. 2 x Artillery Strikes. FFE1 A on O7 (150mm) scatters to K9. FFE1 B on O3: (150mm) scatters to R1
2-4-7 (6) fails self rally

Prep Fire Phase
Although the off-board artillery (OBA) blast areas are free of units, a DR is made for each hex for shellholes and burnable terrain for possible flame creation.

Defensive Fire Phase
M4(105) B in command, area fires at T10: Miss, -1TA placed.
Fires CMG/BMG at T10: NMC
T10 Activates 2-4-8, 75 INF gun (CA S10/T9) and 2-2-8 crew in Trench.* NMC nullified by TEM
Surman panics
K in command
L panics
HsKK in command
K & HsKK fire PBF at P6: (cowers) NE

Rout Phase
2-4-7 (6) routs Q6 R6 S7

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Neil's advance continues with ease. His command problems are causing his support to straggle a bit. He should not be frustrated, but rather thankful, that he's had such good fortune. He has to remember that it's a long war and his company has many battles to fight, some tougher than others. He shouldn't wish for a fight. His war god might grant it and give him more than he can handle.

One minor error was that the 37O7 half squad should have surrendered to the squads pounding on the door from 37N6. Since it had no recourse but to low crawl or be interdicted and was next to known enemy units, it should surrender.

A quick accounting shows Neil with 9 VPs for the fortified building and 4 VPs for the captured squad. If he grabs the gun captures the half squad, he'll be at a grand total of 19 VPs. I count 53 S? remaining, which gives the enemy 26.5 VPs plus the 3 VPs Neil coughed up for tank support. If he's conservative, Neil might be able to steal the eleven or so points he needs and settle down and wait for the mission to end.

Will the enemy let him do that?

A random event is triggered. Neil is lucky the artillery missed because it rolled well (four kills). The trench/infantry gun combination is the winning ticket. He's right that nearby activations could start a snowball of enemy VPOs that could throw quick victory out the window.

AMERICAN TURN 4

PRE-TURN COMMENTS

Random event-driven artillery strikes don't kill much in my experience, because they scatter all over the place and are not continued. As it stands, there is only a very small chance that they will find a target in the Defensive Fire Phase this turn. If they do, I'm in very serious trouble, because they'll probably be continued and two modules of 150mm OBA is potentially lethal to my concentrated troops.

In my movement phase, I'll have to disperse them just in case the FFE2 ends up among my troops. The tanks are going to button up this turn to protect them from OBA and that infantry gun in T10. Hex T10 is now worth six VPs for the trench for both sides and the infantry gun is two VPs to me. Unfortunately, to assault it, I will have to risk activating board 13 S?s and that could get tricky.

This phase, I plan to get into the woods in R3/R4 and get the HMG/MMG set up in O7 to fire on that T10 position. Infantry fire might be more reliable than the M4s MA.

Rally Phase
2-4-7 (6) remove DM
L recovers 37L gun

Prep Fire Phase
M4(105) B in command, fires CMG/BMG at T10: NE. Fires MA at T10: Hits, -2TA, 2-4-8 pinned, 2-2-8 takes PTC (gunshield)

Movement Phase
Surman in command
HsKK moves P5 Q5...
U5 fails AC
... R4 -CX
Jackson in command
HsQQ moves P3 (-?) Q4bp R3
U3 fails AC
Rigney in command
Rigney & c2 move E3bp F3 G4 H4 I5 J5
c1 moves G4 H4 I5 J5
c3 in command, moves F8 G8bp H7
K moves CX P6 Q7 R7
2-4-7 (6) place DM. T7 activates 2-4-8, 50L AT gun (CA S7/S8) and 2-2-8 crew in Trench. 50L AT gun fires at R7: Hits, K NMC breaks DM. Fires at R7: Hits, Hits, -2 TA, K (DM) takes 1MC, NE.
Jackson, J & HsBB move P3 (-?) Q3 R3bp S3bp T2
V3 activates 5-4-8. 5-4-8 fires at T2: 1RF placed, Jackson passes 1MC, J passes 1MC, battle hardens 6-6-7, HsBB Breaks DM. 5-4-8 SFF at T2: Jackson passes NMC, J passes NMC, HsBB passes NMC
E & F CX move O5 P4 Q4bp R3bp S3
D moves CX O5 P4 Q5 R5 S5 T4
c4 moves CX N2 O3 P3 (-?) P4 Q5
A & B move M5 N5 O6
C moves CX N4 O5 P5 Q6 R5
I panics
HsAA AM to N7-CX
HsCC AM to N7-CX
L abandons 37L, moves P6 Q6 R5
c5 in command, AM to N9
c6 in command, AM to N9
M4(105) A panics

Defensive Fire Phase
R1 FFE scatters off of board (N2)
K9 FFE scatters to 13R9, no flames
50L gun fires at R7: hit, K passes NMC
2-4-8 fires at R7: NE
T10 panics

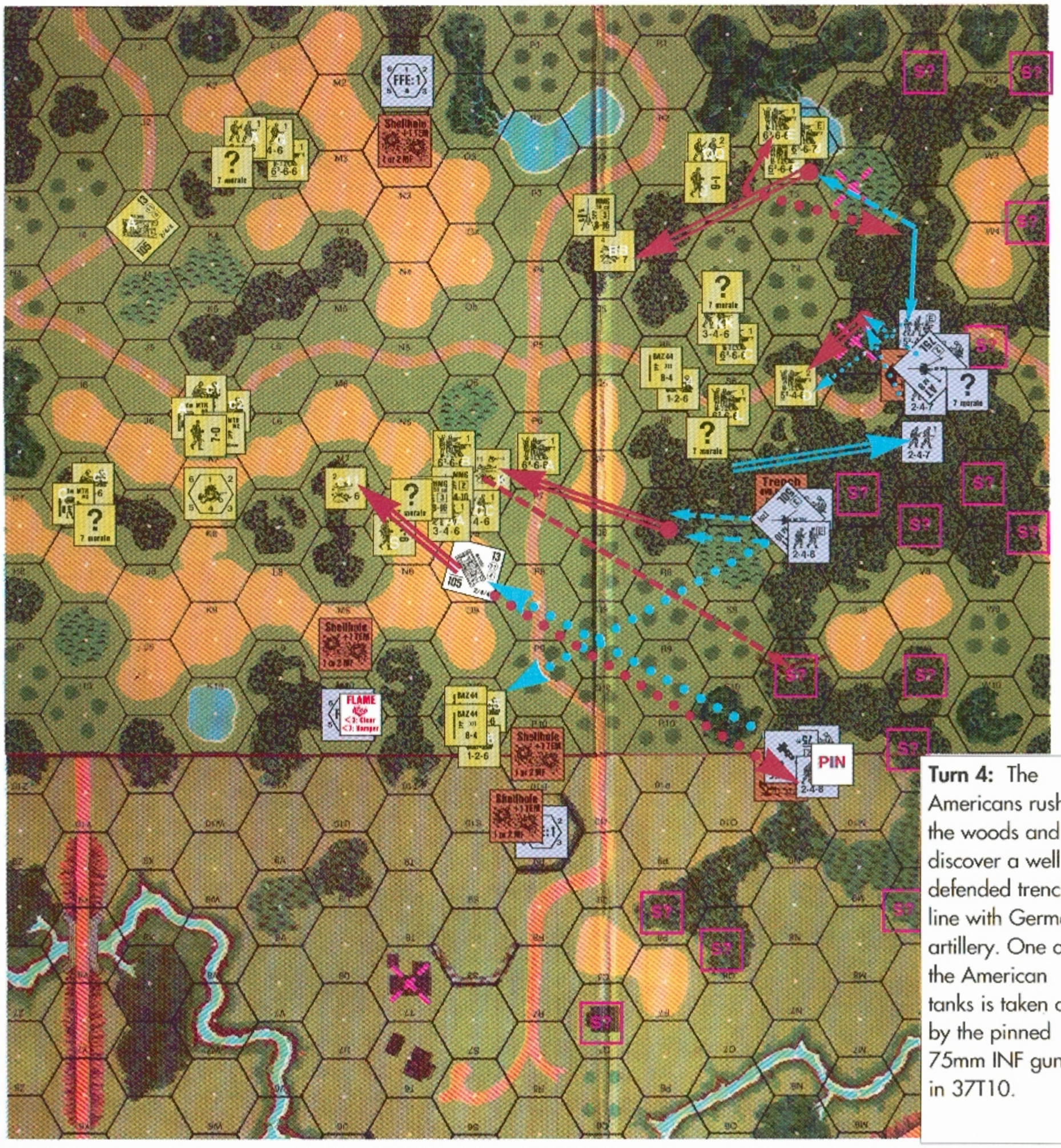
Advancing Fire Phase
Jackson directs J fire at V3: NE
E & F fire at V3. NE

Rout Phase
HsBB routs to S3 R3 Q4
K routs Q7 P6 O7
2-4-7 routs T7 U7 V6

Advance Phase
Rigney, c1 & c2 to K6
c3 to I7
Jackson to S3
E & F to T2
HsQQ to S3
L to S6
C to S5
HsKK to S5
D to U5
V5 activates Hs gun F, 1-3-5 pillbox with 2-4-7 (CA U5/U6), 75L AT gun (CA U5/U6) with 2-2-8 crew
c4 to R5
A to P6
B to O7
HsAA & HsCC to O7
c5 & c6 to O9
13T7 fails AC
Concealment on S5, S6, I7, L2

TURN 4 COMMENTS

I made a serious mistake not firing white phosphorus at T10 during prep fire, because the 75* INF gun possibly has HEAT ammo which could hit the M4s. Fortunately, the crew panicked and no shots were fired, but I'll have to endure his prep fire before I get another chance. It was also a mistake to advance those bazooka teams into O9, but fortunately T7 failed to activate. That could have been very unpleasant. A fortified building in open terrain would tie down a lot of my force and would activate many other such locations when I attacked it.



Turn 4: The Americans rush the woods and discover a well-defended trench line with German artillery. One of the American tanks is taken out by the pinned 75mm INF gun in 37T10.

I'm not sure that building a fire base in O7 is going to be of much use, because of the high hindrance DRMs and TEMs, but I'll chip away from the fortified building while I try to outflank the position through the woods.

As expected, the OBA modules couldn't find any targets and will probably fail to be continued in his Prep Fire Phase. Had they found two or three units, they would have pounded away mercilessly until the end of the game or, given the high caliber, until the units were eliminated.

The Advance Phase is a good time to activate suspects because they can't fire back, although the V5 units will get point-blank fire versus squad D. At least I know what's ahead now. The interior woods hexes were always going to be tough, but I'm grateful that its not a couple of squads and a leader. Of course, that AT gun is lethal. In closed terrain, pillboxes are easily overwhelmed from the flanks, but moving to V4 and V6 might activate fire.

GERMAN TURN 4

Rally Phase
2-4-7 fails self rally, remove DM
Surman rallies K
Remove DM from HsBB

Prep Fire Phase
13R9 FFE: C: 37M10, no flame
Off-board FFE: C: no flame
2-4-7 fires PBF at U5: (cowers) NE
75L gun fires HE at U5: hits, D ELR failure, breaks to 5-4-6, DM
50L fires at O9: miss, -1TA
75 INF fires HEAT at M4: turret hit, -1TA, HEAT TK: M4(105) B eliminated, crew survival: c11 1-2-8 placed on O8. 75* fires HE at O8: hits, -2TA, c11 2MC breaks, DM*

Movement Phase
5-4-8 moves V4 V5

Defensive Fire Phase
Surman in command
HsAA & HsCC assemble MGs
Surman directs B & K fire at T9: NE

Advancing Fire Phase
5-4-8 fires at D: NE

Rout Phase
D routs to T5
c11 routs to N7, M7
Concealment on V5

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Call it gamesmanship, but I think Neil has made this mission extremely tough for himself by charging ahead along the north and middle of board 37. Once he activated the two mid-board trenches, I would have redirected my attack at those two key points. The more S?s that he activates, the more likely additional VPOs are going to appear for the enemy. Then, all activations adjacent to them are modified by -1, making them even more likely to activate. This can be the beginning of a chain reaction of activations that quickly puts the mission out of reach.

At this point, he has more than enough to manage. Three guns face him, two from trenches (worth six points apiece plus the guns) and one from a seven-point pillbox. I'd consider this, plus the additional activations nearby that are going to take place, as the mission's only focus. Neil should concentrate on systematically reducing these positions. Then he should hunker down on his hard-won battlefield. Let another company move through his and continue the fight while Strange eats dinner. He is likely to generate more problems for himself by executing a fighting recon deeper into the woods on the north.

The enemy in 37V5 does a fire action automatically. A friendly unit *adjacent* to the enemy as well as the enemy in an improved position with a target both require a fire action (overriding any other action determination).

The tide is beginning to swing against the American forces. He *was* about even in the fight, but now fate has conspired against him and mission victory is becoming more difficult. The loss of the tank is a tough blow.

AMERICAN TURN 5

PRE-TURN COMMENTS

This was *not* a good turn at all: one M4(105) destroyed and both the OBAs returned to the board with another chance to find targets in the upcoming DFPh. The frustrating thing is that the To Hit DR of the M4s fire of HE last turn would have resulted in the successful placement of white phosphorus on T10 without loss of that ammo and an automatic NMC for the crew. Mistakes are severely punished in war.

Squad D was hammered last turn to a 5-4-6, but the route into the woods interior has been freed by the 5-4-8's move to defend V5. Although now it might be more sensible to concentrate on capturing what's already on the board rather than attempting to activate more S?s. The 5-4-8 can defend the NCA of the pillbox, reducing it's vulnerability to close combat.

Hex T6 is the angle of attack on T7, because the AT gun will have to pay a severe CA change penalty and a one-shot ROF reduction to fire on me. However, U7 could activate and slow that attack down. I'll have to try that first before I try a frontal assault with smoke. The fire group in O7 can only really fire on T9 as the LOS hindrance and TEMs on T10 are prohibitive (+6).

After some thought, I've decided to continue moving east through the woods with a small force while the remainder turns south to take out the guns. At the moment, I've captured 13 VPs, but there are still 46 unactivated S?s on the board. Locations in enemy hands are worth another 17 (26 if the guns are captured). My casualty VP loss is 7 VPs. I gave away 3 VPs in the setup. I'm way behind, but if I can take everything on the board at the moment without suffering heavy casualties, then I will win.

Rally Phase
D fails self rally, remove DM
c11 fails self rally, remove DM

Prep Fire Phase
Surman in command
HsAA & HsCC declared opportunity firers, -?

Movement Phase
L in command, AM to T6:
T7 panics, 2-4-8 FPF's at L: (cower) no attack, 2-4-8 breaks DM. 50L FPF's at L: miss, gun breakdown, 2-2-8 breaks DM. U7 activates 5-4-8, 2-3-7, fire at L: (cower) NE, 2RF placed
A moves Q7 R7
Jackson in command
HsQQ moves CX to T3 U3 V3
W5 activates 8-0, 5-4-8 with LMG. W5 fires at HsQQ: 4RF placed, HsQQ 2MCELR failure, becomes 2-2-6, DM
HsKK moves S4 T3 U3
J moves T3 U4
Jackson moves S4 T4 T5
C moves T5, smoke placed in U6
c4 in command, moves S6 T5 U6
V5 doesn't panic, 2-4-7 (6) in V6 DM. 5-4-8 & 2-4-7 fire at c4: NE. 75L fires at c4: Hit, c4 fails 2MC, DM
E moves T3 T4 fails smoke placement in U5 -CX
I panics
F moves T3 U4 -CX
c6 moves P8
2-4-8 fires at c6: NE
75 fires at c6: Hits, -1 TA, 6RF placed, c6 2MC breaks DM*
c5 moves O8 P7 Q8
T9 activates 4-6-7 in trench. 4-6-7 fires at Q8: c5 passes PTC
Rigney in command
Rigney, c1 & c2 move L5 M5 (-?) N5 O5 P5 Q5 R5
c3 moves J6 K6 (-?) L5
M4(105) in command, moves start K3bp L3 M3 N3 O4 (VCA P4/O5) P4 P5 P6 P7 P8 (TCA Q8/Q9) stop
CE attacked by 6RFP's in P8: NE
M4(105) attempts to fire sM at T10: NE
HsG panics
Surman & K move CX P6 Q6 S7 T6
Attacked by 2RF: NE. 2-3-7 FPF: Surman NMC Breaks DM, K passes NMC, K passes LLTC, 2-3-7 Breaks
B moves CX P6 Q6 R6bp S7

Defensive Fire Phase
M10 FFE:2: c3 elim, MTR destroyed
N1 FFE:2: HsBB elim, MMG destroyed

Advancing Fire Phase
K & L fire at U7: 5-4-8 passes 1MC, 2-3-7 (6) pases 1MC
B fires at T7: NE
A fires at T7: NE
HsAA & HsCC fire HMG/MMG at T9: NE
M4(105) fires MA at T10: miss, -1 TA

Rout Phase
HsQQ routs U4 T4 T5
c4 routs T5
c6 routs O8 N7 M7
Surman routs S6 R6
U7 2-3-7 routs V6 W6 W5. 2-4-7 routs W6 W5. 2-4-8 routs U8 V7 W8. 2-2-8 routs U8 V7 W8

Advance Phase
HsKK to V2
V1 activates 4-3-6
X3 activates 2-4-8, 81mm MTR (CA W3/W4) with 2-2-8 crew in trench*
C to U5
E to T5
K & L to U7
V7 activates 4-6-7. 4-4-7 with 8-0 in 2S Foxhole
B to T7 (enters trench)
A to S7
c5 to R7
Rigney, c1 & c2 to R6

Close Combat Phase
K & L are ambushed, 5-4-8 vs. both 6-6-6s: NE
K & L attack 5-4-8: elim
Concealment on J & F, E, B, Rigney, c1 & C2

TURN 5 COMMENTS

I've captured another 8 VPs, but activated another 16 VPs for the enemy side (T9, V7 and X3). Now, it seems that S?s can't fail activation. Both OBAs found targets and wiped out two stragglers for 2 casualty VPs, and, if continued, can find good targets next turn. 150mm OBA is lethal, especially if it finds targets in open ground or woods where it gets a -1 DRM. Hopefully, neither will be continued in the next Prep Fire Phase.

I may have won the close combat in U7, but now I'm adjacent to two squads and a leader. Barring panic, I'll have to face a 16FP (+1) prep fire. I wanted to advance a squad to V3 but that 81mm mortar would hammer them.

I've learned a lot about concealment in this game. I used to think it was lost the moment you used non-assault movement or moved adjacent to an enemy unit, but that's not so. Instead, I can gain concealment, assault move adjacent to a position, take the defensive fire as area fire and advance into close combat with a better chance of ambushing. Those crews are very useful scouts, because they are not subject to disruption or ELR failure and they can self-rally!

The flanking move through the woods to T6 panicked the units in T7 and the position

fell without a struggle. I hope to repeat this tactic on V5 next turn.

Moving the remaining M4(105) to P8 to assist the attack on T10 is risky. I had hoped to stick a smoke counter on T10, but that attempt failed. I've got a -1 target acquired counter on T10 for the upcoming defensive fire, if I survive the prep fire. There's already a -1 target acquired marker in P8 so it's a very risky move. By my reckoning, I was unlucky to lose the other M4, because there is only a small chance of a kill. I must capture a lot of VP locations to win now. The way through the woods looks very tricky, justifying the risk to the tank.

GERMAN TURN 5

Rally Phase
W8 2-4-8 fails self rally, remove DM, 2-2-8 rallies
W5 8-0 rallies 2-4-7, 8-0 fails rally of 2-3-7, remove DM
Surman self rallies
Jackson rallies D
Jackson fails to rally c6, remove DM
Jackson fails to rally HsQQ, remove DM
c11 fails self rally
c6 fails self rally, remove DM

Prep Fire Phase
M5 FFE:1 scatters to I3, flame placed in H2
R3 FFE:1 scatters to N5
T9 4-6-7 fires at M4(105): NE
T10 75 INF gun fires HEAT: Hull Hit, -2 TA, HEAT TK, crew passes shock TC, CE HEAT coltrl attack: NE*
2-4-8 fires at R7: NE
V1 4-3-6 fires at V2: NE
V5 5-4-8 & 2-4-7 fire at U5: ? lost, C 1MC casualty ELR failure, becomes HsC 2-3-6, DM
75L AT gun fires at U5: hits, -1TA, NE
V7 8-0 directs 4-6-7 & 4-4-7 fire at U7: L 2MC Breaks, DM, K 2MC ELR failure, becomes 5-4-6, DM
W5 5-4-8 entrench, place 1S foxhole, TI
2-4-7 entrench, fails, TI, -1 labor
W8 2-2-8 entrench, fails, TI, -1 labor
X3 2-4-8 fires at V2: NE
81mm MTR fires at V2: miss, -1TA

Defensive Fire Phase
M4(105) in command, fires MA at T10: miss, -2TA, fires CMG/BMG at T10: NE
HsAA panics
HsCC panics

Advancing Fire Phase
M10 no blaze

Rout Phase
HsC routs U4
K routs T6 S7 R6
L routs T6 S7 R6

Advance Phase
V7 8-0 to W8
Place concealment on V5, V7, W5, W8

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

I see a couple problems in the play as noted. First, if the broken 5-4-6 in 37T5 indeed rolled a 3 for rally, I would consider that successful. The squad has a 7 morale when broken, desperate adds 4 to the dice roll, self-rallying adds another one, but the woods are rally bonus terrain, bringing the modified roll back down to a seven. Also, my take on panic is that the half squad must use final protective fire, which caused it to break. But the gun is simply marked as fired and does nothing more (it is neither Infantry nor an armed vehicular unit). Therefore, I would say the AT gun and crew are both okay, although unable to fire for the remainder of Neil's turn (making them pretty much sitting ducks for close combat).

The worm begins to turn for Neil. All those early missed enemy activations are being balanced now by activations of real, shooting Germans. I think this is a key turn for Neil. Enemy VPs are beginning to mount and he is taking casualties. He has Germans in front and artillery pounding his rear areas.

As I mentioned before, the *SASL* campaign game forces the player to make the tough decision to cut losses and get out with something left to fight another day (or another month, as it goes in *SASL*). Neil needs to seriously consider his situation. Perhaps it is time to get his forces back in good order and retire. It is not an easy decision. Neil really shouldn't go back after his first mission with so many losses as to be eligible for rest and refit.

After the German player turn, Neil's forces are, essentially, disengaged from the enemy. Now is a perfect opportunity to fall back on his left and focus on clearing the two positions in the center. If he uses his tank's smoke to shield his troops from the potential enemy on board 13, he might be able to sweep down the woods line and take these positions. Then, given that he's going for the win, he can either try to take what he has exposed or hope he can reveal a real treasure in the 37V/13L hexrow just behind the trenches.

AMERICAN TURN 6

PRE-TURN COMMENTS

I don't believe those OBA modules both rolled to continue with no targets. Fortunately, they didn't scatter anywhere unpleasant, but they can roll again in the Defensive Fire Phase.

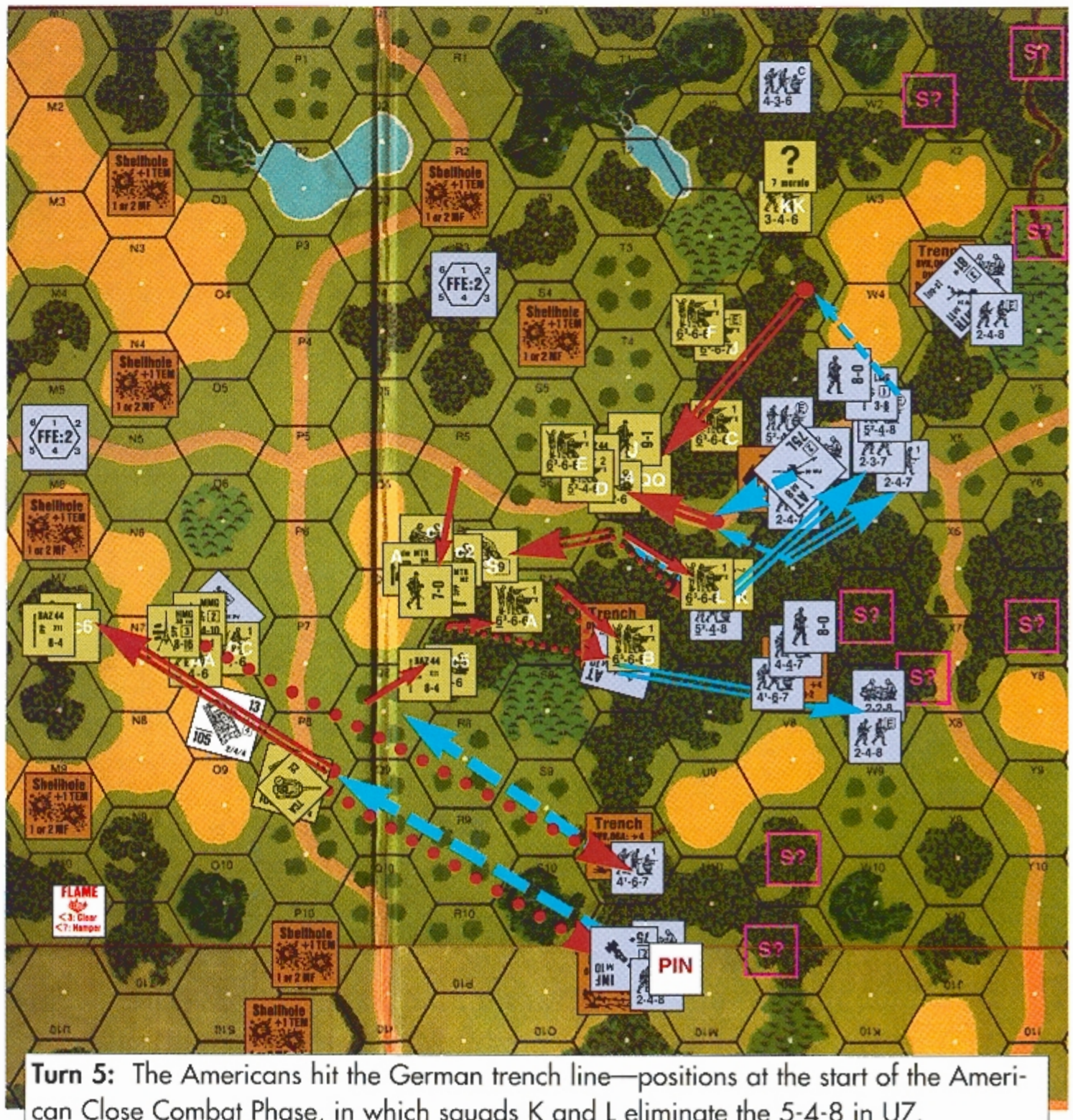
That was a close thing with the HEAT round last turn if it had been a turret hit, the M4 would have been gone. As we now both have -2TA on each other, I must make it count this turn.

With just over half the game gone, I feel I'm struggling a bit. I've now captured 19 VPs and lost 10 casualty VPs (CVPs), and there are 29 VPs in enemy hands. Finally, the 40 unactivated S?s on the board are another 20 VPs. I still need to capture VP locations.

This turn I will attack hexrow T by firing white phosphorus on T10 and by assault moving the concealed squad in T7 to T8 to attack T9. This will activate V9, but I can't attack frontally until fire is drawn from T9 and T10. At some point in this turn, I'll probably activate 13P8. If it opens up with an AT gun, the M4 is looking very exposed. Although a hull hit will be a frontal hit, a turret hit will use the reduced side armor factor. Things are getting sticky.

Fortunately, Surman rallied himself last turn. He can help rally two of my broken squads and direct their fire this turn. The fire base in O7 is proving to be useless. With no leader to exert command, it's likely that they'll panic as they did in the last DFPh.

Finally, on the left, I'll assault move HsKK to V3 to lose the -1TA and stop those boys in W5 from completing their entrenchments, although he'll probably get clobbered by their defensive fire. Then, I'll push a couple of concealed squads towards V5 and see what happens. It would be nice to use smoke but that means whoever attempts to place it will lose concealment.



Turn 5: The Americans hit the German trench line—positions at the start of the American Close Combat Phase, in which squads K and L eliminate the 5-4-8 in U7.

Rally Phase
HsC fails self rally, remove DM
Jackson rallies HsQQ
Jackson fails to rally c4
Surman fails to rally L, remove DM
Surman fails to rally K, remove DM
c6 fails self rally
c11 fails self rally
W5 8-0 rallies 2-3-7
W8 8-0 rallies 2-4-8

Prep Fire Phase
M4(105) in command, fires WP at T10: hit, full-strength WP placed in T10. 2-4-8 NMC Breaks, DM. 2-2-8 passes NMC. M4(105) fires CMG/BMG at T9: 4-6-7 passes PTC
HsAA in command
HsCC in command
HsAA & HsCC fire HMG/MMG at T9: NE

Movement Phase
Surman in command
c5 AM to S8
T9 panic check, 4-6-7 fires at c5: 1RF placed, c5 passes PTC
B in command -CX, AM to T8
T9, 4-6-7 SFF at B: 1RF placed, V9 activates 4-6-7
V9 4-6-7 fires at B: NE
4-6-7 SFF at B: NE
A moves T7 T8
Attacked by 1RF: NE
c1 moves S7 T7
c2 moves S7 T7
Surman moves S7 T7 T8
Attacked by 1RF: Surman passes PTC
HsKK in command, AM to V3
W5 panics, 8-0 directs 2-3-7, 2-4-7, 5-4-8/LMG at HsKK: ? lost. 6RF placed, HsKK 1MC Breaks, DM
Jackson in command
F places smoke in U5, moves U5 (-?)
T5 panics. 5-4-8 & 2-4-7 PBF at F: 6RF placed, F 3MC Breaks. DM
J AM to U5
Attacked by RF NE. 75L fires at J. miss, -1TA.
E AM to U5
Attacked by RF: ? lost, E 1MC Breaks, DM
Jackson & D AM to U6
5-4-8 FPFs at U6: NE. 2RF Placed. 5-4-8 FPFs at U6: 5-4-8 Breaks, DM. 75L Intensive Fires at U7. miss, -1TA
HsQQ AM to U6
Attacked by RF: NE. 2-4-7 FPFs at HsQQ: HsQQ passes NMC
I in command, moves CX M3 N3 O4 P4
HsG panics

Defensive Fire Phase
N5 FFE:2 scatters to I3
I3 FFE:2 scatters to I1
*T10 75*INF gun fires HEAT at M4: turret hit, HEAT TK NE. HEAT vs. CE: NE. 75*INF gun fires HEAT at M4: turret hit, HEAT TK. NE. HEAT vs. CE: NE. 75*INF gun fires HEAT at M4: hull hit, HEAT TK: NE. HEAT vs. CE: crew (M7) passes 1MC*
X3 2-4-8 fires at HsKK: NE. 81mm MTR fires at HsKK: hit, -1TA, HsKK 1MC NE. 81mm MTR fires at HsKK: hit, -2TA. HsK elim

Advancing Fire Phase
Surman directs A & B at T9: 4-6-7 2MC pins
Jackson directs D & HsQQ at V5: 5-4-8 (8) passes 1MC. Pillbox, 2-4-7 passes PTC
J fires at V5: 5-4-8 NMC casualty breaks to 2-3-8.

Rout Phase
E routs to T5
F routs to T5
V5 2-3-8 (7) routs to W5
T10 2-3-7 (7) routs to 13N9

Advance Phase
J to V5
Jackson, D & HsQQ to V5
Surman, A & B to T9 enter trench
c1 to T8
c2 to T8
c5 to T7 enters trench
I to Q5

Close Combat Phase
T9 German ambushed: Surman, A & B vs. pinned 4-6-7: elim 4-6-7
V5 German ambushed: Jackson, HsQQ, D & J vs 2-4-7 & 2-2-8: elim 2-4-7 & 2-2-8

TURN 6 COMMENTS

At last, it's turning my way. One VP location was captured (T9). Another was neutralized (V5). The down side is that the units in both of these locations are adjacent to enemy positions and will get clobbered in the next prep fire phase, this being especially true in V5 (where a 24FP attack at +1 is something to worry about). American squads don't hold up under fire (easily failing morale checks) and when there are numbers before them, they ELR fail as well. At least they will only get hit once (apart from the LMG). If he doesn't roll low, there shouldn't be any casualty breaks.

Three consecutive hits with HEAT on the M4, two of them turret hits, was a bit too close for comfort. I was lucky not to lose the M4 this turn. The INF gun still has HEAT and is still standing. The crew took the hits without blinking, too. They deserve a medal.

The advance on V5 was a little out of sync. I should have advanced the concealed units before advancing a known unit. Instead, the concealed units had to face a 6RF attack before the defensive fire began. Luckily, it all worked out well in the end. There was a lot of fire this turn. I like the *SASL* rules. In some ways, they are very elegant in spite of the OBA rules. I hope those OBA modules won't be continued this turn, but my advance has moved past their reach at this point.

GERMAN TURN 6

Rally Phase
Random event: enemy convoy enters 13A5 to exit 37 I1 in order: PSW234/2 w 9-1 AL, PSW222(L), PSW233, 4xSdKfz 7s each with one S? Passenger.
13N9 2-4-8 fails self rally, remove DM
37W5 8-0 fails to rally 2-3-8, DM retained
Rigney fails to rally K
Rigney rallies L
c4 fails self rally
Remove DM from E & F
c6 self rallies
c11 self rallies

Prep Fire Phase
I1 FFE:C cancelled
I3 RRE:C
FFE:1 scatters to K4, no flames
T10 75 INF gun fires at T9: miss, -1 TA. 75* INF gun fires at T9: critical hit, -2 TA, [SAN Target F5, Enemy Sniper, Enemy SAN now 3], 1KIA, Squad A elim, Surman & B break, DM. 75* INF gun fires HEAT at M4: miss, HEAT ammo lost, hull Hit with HE, -1 TA, HE TK: NE. HE vs CE: NE.*
V1 4-3-6 Entrench, fails, TI, -1 Labour
V7 4-4-7 & 4-6-7 fire at T9. NE
V9 4-6-7 fires at T8: (cowers), NE
W5 panic

Movement Phase
W8 8-0, 2-4-8 move V8 U9
c1 panics, c2 panics, c1 & c2 FPF at U9: 1RF, [SAN F8, nearest target is F5 sniper, American sniper removed]. 8-0 and 2-4-8 both elim
2-2-8 moves V8 U9
Attacked by 1RF : NE c1 & c2 FPF at 2-2-8: c1 & c2 pinned
Convoy enters 13A5 in order stated above, VCAs B4/B5 move B5 C6 D6 E7 F7 G8 H7 remains in motion.

Defensive Fire Phase
Jackson panics
J panics
D in command
HsQQ in command
D & HsQQ fire PBF at W5:
Entrenched 8-0 3MC Breaks, DM 2-3-8 (7) 3MC Breaks and elim. 2-3-7 3MC pinned. 2-4-7 3MC Breaks and elim. 5-4-8 2MC pinned
M4(105) in command, fires MA at T10: miss

Advancing Fire Phase
U9 2-2-8 fires at T8: (cowers), NE
M10 no blaze
I2 no blaze

Rout Phase
W5 8-0 routs X4 X3 into trench
T9 Surman & B rout S9 S8 R7

Advance Phase
U9 2-2-8 to T8

Close Combat Phase
T9 Americans ambushed: 2-2-8 attacks both c1 & c2: c1 elim
Ambush & Panic
c2 attacks 2-2-8: both in melee

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Neil has managed to get things back in order and capture two VPOs. He is bold, attempting to take the pillbox directly in front of German forces, but boldness wins missions.

His observations about the *SASL* system are absolutely correct. Players will need to accept the total randomness of the system (every unit in the German order of battle is represented aside from the SS and engineers). In my experience, however, the various events come together to make for a tough opponent, even if a bit robotic. *SASL* carries forward that tradition that one can never assume anything in *ASL*. Neil never counted on the German artillery to keep roaming about his rear areas, but it has. I doubt Neil would have expected his left flank to be crushed as it has been. All of this has taken place through a series of dice rolls and friendly activity. The system may seem haphazard, but when you sit back and examine events in a big picture context, it has amazing flow and continuity.

The dice continue to create interesting events for Neil. He managed to survive in front of the pillbox because the enemy panicked, which is a much less frequent occurrence for the enemy than the friendly side. At the same time, a convoy of reinforcements has arrived and is destined to cruise in and blunt the American point of attack. This situation could play to Neil's benefit, because he may be able to set up a little ambush and snatch some easy VPs.

AMERICAN TURN 7

PRE-TURN COMMENTS

Well, I got knocked back from one VP location, but it wasn't V5 as I expected but instead T9. What a disaster that was. I forgot about the point blank fire modifier and I hoped that the white phosphorus hindrance modifier would effectively render the INF gun useless. Instead, it retained ROF and got a critical hit. I was actually lucky not to lose the whole team in T9. A small local counterattack means that I have been pushed back again, and one mortar team is killed, the other locked in melee. I won't be able to use their mortars in the upcoming turn.

I was audibly relieved when W5 panicked, allowing me to get my fire in first. Unfortunately, Jackson and one squad also panicked, making the fire less powerful than it should have been. Otherwise, it would have been all over for those boys. I should finish them off this turn and advance into the pillbox in the advance phase (APh).

I'm in bad shape for pressing on against new objectives this turn with four and a half squads and one 9-1 leader already broken. I expect some of them to rally. They will get thrown into melee at T8.

I've never lost a sniper before. While it's loss may not seem so great, it is good to know that, if he rolls double ones, I have a 1-in-3 chance of inflicting some harm on the enemy side.

The convoy won't get far this turn. I might not have to worry about it breaking up. However, fortune has dictated that its path runs right through my position. This is a good example of how wild an *SASL* game can be;

(Continued on pg. 35)

SERIES REPLAY...

(Continued from pg. 30)

you can face an enemy which vastly outclasses you, or one that is so feeble that it's hardly worth the bother. It's the not knowing that really draws you in.

The INF gun has used all its HEAT ammo. The M4 is safe for the time being, until that PSW234/2 with 9-1 armor leader gets into LOS. The 50L needs a lot of luck to kill the Sherman from the front, but it may have APDS ammo. The bazooka teams should help keep the armored cars away from the M4. If I'm crafty, I can ambush the lead elements so that they never trouble me. That might be difficult while the T7/T10 line is so contested.

Rally Phase
E fails self rally
c4 self rallies
Rigney rallies K
Surman fails self rally, remove DM from Surman and B
X3 8-0 fails self rally, remove DM

Prep Fire Phase
Flip WP counter to dispersed WP
Jackson in command, directs D, J and HsQQ's PBF vs. W5: 2-3-7 passes 1MC.
Entrenched 5-4-8 passes NMC

Movement Phase
M4(105) in command, moves start, VCA Q8/Q9, TCA Q8/Q9, Q9, R9
*T10 panics, 75*INF gun fires HE at M4. turret hit, -2 TA. HE TK: NE. HE vs. CE: Crew 1MC breaks, stunned, M4(105) stops. 75*INF gun fires HE at M4: hull hit, HE TK. NE*
Rigney panics
K panics
L in command, moves R7 S8
I in command, moves R5 S6 T6 -CX
HsCC panics
HsAA panics
c6 in command, moves N6 O6
c11 in command, moves N6 O7
HsG panics
c4 in command, moves T6 T7

Defensive Fire Phase
FFE:2 scatters to I5 no flames
W5 panics, 5-4-8/LMG and 2-3-7 fire at V5: Jackson 2MC breaks. DM. HsQQ 2MC breaks, disrupted. D 2MC ELR failure, becomes 5-3-6, DM. J 2MCbreak, DM

Advancing Fire Phase
M10 no blaze
I2 Blaze

Rout Phase
HsQQ surrenders to W5 2-3-7
Jackson & J rout U5 T5
D routs U6 T6 S7

Advance Phase
I to T7 not in trench
L to T8
c4 to T8
c6 to P5

Close Combat Phase
T8: L, C4 & c2 vs. 2-2-8: 2-2-8 elim
Concealment on T7

TURN 7 COMMENTS

What on earth was I doing advancing the CEM4 towards the INF gun? I guess I got what I deserved. I should have buttoned up in the MPh and gone CE in the APh, but I was overconfident and didn't want a "–1" penalty to my AFPh. Now I have a permanent -1 DRM.

My prep fire in V5 was a disaster which allowed the units in W5 to rip me apart. One half squad has surrendered, which doubles the CVPs he gives to the enemy side. I failed to capture the pillbox. Control of a pillbox is defined as the last player to occupy the pillbox Location and I never made it inside. Things are going badly.

I hope the FFE:C will fail to be continued this turn. At least, there are plenty of shellholes to cover my retreat, if my position fails. With a minimum of three game turns left, I still have plenty of time.

GERMAN TURN 7

Rally Phase
c11 recovers 37L
13N9 2-4-8 fails self rally
X3 8-0 fails self rally
Surman fails self rally
Jackson fails self rally
Remove all DM counters

Prep Fire Phase
I5 FFE:2 scatters to J5, no flames
*T10 75*INF gun fires HE at M4: turret hit, HE TK: NE. 75*INF gun fires HE at M4. hull hit, HE TK. NE*
V1 4-3-6 fails entrench attempt, T1, -2 labor
V9 4-6-7 fires at T8: c4 NMC breaks, DM. c2 NMC creates Hero (Matherne), Fanatic. L NMC ELR Failure, becomes 5-4-6 DM

Movement Phase
W5 2-3-7 with prisoners moves X5 Y5 Z4 AA5 BB5
W5 5-4-7/LMG moves V5, enters pillbox
X3 2-4-8 moves CX W4 V4 U5 HsC DM. T5 DM
Convoy moves to Y9, PSW 234/2 LOS to T8 releases convoy, VCA X8/X9 BU. X8 W9 V8 stop
PSW 222(L) moves to Y9 stop
PSW 233 moves Y10 Y9 X8 X7 X6 X5. VCA W5/W6, W5 V5 U6 stops
All SdKfz's stop

Defensive Fire Phase
c2 panics
Matherne fires at V9: NE
c11 in command
c11 changes 37L CA P6/P7

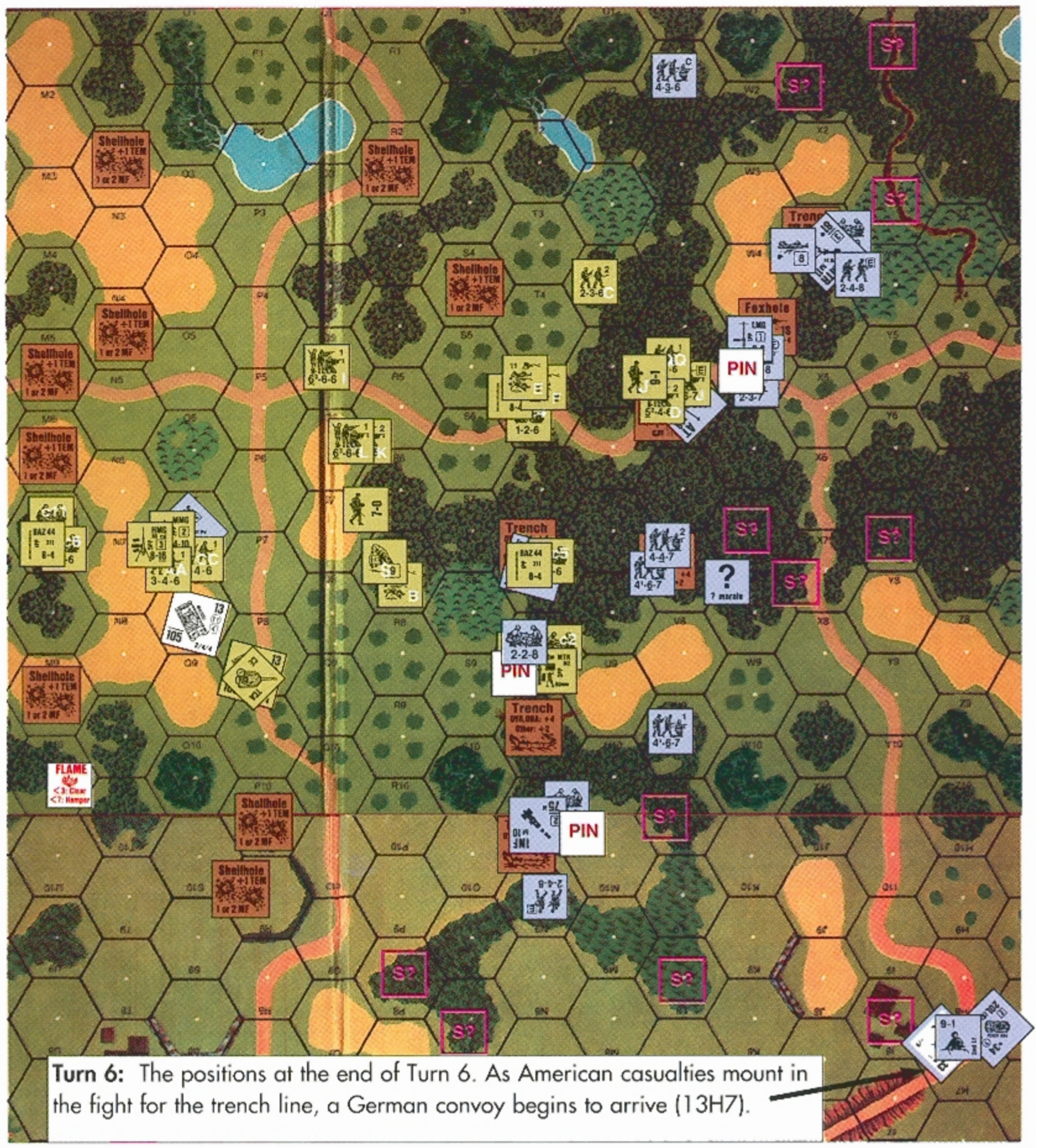
Advancing Fire Phase
U5 2-4-8 PBF at T5: NE
PSW233 fires MA at T5: miss, -1 TA
PSW234/2 fires MA at T8: miss, -1 TA
PSW234/2 fires CMG at T8: Matherne passes NMC. c2 NMC breaks, DM. c4 passes NMC. L passes NMC

Rout Phase
T5 Jackson, E, F & J rout S5 R4 Q3
U4 HsC routs T3 S3 R3
T8 c4, c2 & L rout S8 R7

Advance Phase
U5 to T5
BB5 to CC6
Remove T1 marker, flip stun marker to +1
Concealment on CC6, V1, V7

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Neil is showing typical American optimism. *[I'm glad to see that the British Mr. Clark has thrown himself into his role.—SKT]* His last remaining tank is rendered impotent for this turn, his left flank continues to disappear and he's losing VPOs faster than he's gaining them. He's hit a concrete wall and bounced off. In another two turns, the German convoy will pile



Turn 6: The positions at the end of Turn 6. As American casualties mount in the fight for the trench line, a German convoy begins to arrive (13H7).

into the action putting him at even more of a disadvantage. Despite all of this, he's hoping for an extended mission length!

A couple of minor goofs. First, the support weapon teams (1-2-6 counters) are considered crews, and are immune to heat of battle. Second, if my understanding of Neil's notations is correct, the enemy units in 37X3 and 37W5 rolled 8 and 9, respectively. For enemy units in hold attitude, as dictated by the mission parameters, this would normally be a fire action. However, the subscript notes that an infantry unit will entrench if not already entrenched, otherwise it does nothing. In both cases, the units are already entrenched, so should not have moved. Normally, in *SASL* missions where the enemy is in hold, movement of enemy units is rare.

Were I under Neil's command, I would be begging him to get us out of here. Company Strange has lost all but two of the VPOs previously gained. Their furthest line of advance is nearly recaptured by the enemy and losses are beginning to mount. Getting all forces pulled back in good order is going to require good luck. Even then, I suspect Neil is destined to lose a few more guys in the rearguard action.

TURN 8

PRE-TURN COMMENTS

My God, if I haven't lost it already, I'm in a lot of trouble. I diverged from the normal movement commands for the enemy side last turn when I advanced the 2-4-8 to U5, but I am supposed to play the enemy side to its best advantage. Putting flight to three and a half squads and a 9-1 leader was too sensible a move to overlook.

Barring an incredible Rally Phase, I have only four squad equivalents and one leader (a 7-0) unbroken on the board, plus my AFV is operating with a +1 handicap. I feel I can still do some damage. I have two bazooka teams in good order—one in T7 and concealed, which means they can either advance adjacent to U7 or to T8 for a shot at an armored car.

At this stage, I take stock of my situation. I have captured 19 VPs and I have lost 15 CVPs. The enemy has 43 unactivated S?s for 22 VPs and holds 29 VPs of fortifications, so the tally is: US 19 VPs, German 68 VPs. Not good! I have to capture 25 VPs with no more losses to win. Those armored cars are worth 3VPs each, 5 VPs if the Crews die too. The T8/T10 line is worth another 14 VPs. I shall concentrate my efforts there and try to hold the left against a counterattack. I have to minimize the number of hold attitude S?s activated now in case they generate more fortifications. The advance attitude S?s brought in by the convoy can't generate fortifications and should activate when they advance next turn.

The German right flank is too strong for me to attack. That 81mm mortar in the trench in X3 with 3ROF makes any flanking move through the woods too dangerous. That pillbox in V5 is well defended again.

TURN 8 COMMENTS

I got a break and destroyed the PSW234/2 and killed its armor leader for 5 VPs. I'm poised once again to assault the T8/T10 line. Instead of advancing everyone into T9 and taking the -1TA with me, I'm going to try to blow away the defenders on the V7/V9 line, while the M4 uses it's smoke mortar to place smoke in T10.

I had some bad rolls with the M4 and not only lost the white phosphorus ammo, but malfunctioned the gun. The MGs and the smoke mortar are all it has left to contribute to the last few turns, barring a lucky repair roll.

I think I've learned by now that it's not a good idea to advance adjacent to a gun/AFV within it's covered arc. The -2 point blank modifier makes that a lethal move. I've been lucky that so few of these shots have been critical hits. Instead, my squads have ELR failed.

There is an element of desperation creeping into my play now. This turn was filled with piecemeal moves (and most of them were blown away). I don't have the troops to make a big effort anywhere. Maybe the next Rally Phase will change that so that I can make some proper moves in the last two or more turns.

I am tempted to withdraw to the O line and wait for the game end, resigning myself to a defeat. Yet, the game could possibly last another four or five turns and a lot can happen, even in one turn. Besides, I want the CVPs to try to improve my company. Without a win, I'll be in bad shape for the next game. With a win, I may be able to bring all those second-line squads back up to strength as well as get a leader promotion. It's a pity that the hero perished as they help with battle hardening between games.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Despite Neil's terrible luck with morale checks, he hasn't had any additional losses. Breaking the tank's main gun is a typical, couldn't-happen-at-a-worse-time *ASL* event. Possibly, though, Neil will get lucky and repair it immediately.

The *SASL* system will be what helps Neil avoid total destruction. The original units will not pursue him and the convoy is pretty well funneled right now. But, Neil's situation is serious with so many units broken and his position badly bunched up in the middle. A concerted push by the enemy on his flanks risks complete envelopment. If that were to happen, leader promotions and between-mission battle hardening will seem a distant dream.

As I feared, German forces are slipping around Neil's flanks. He runs a very real risk of getting trapped in the 37R6-T8 woods area where his forces are concentrated. He really needs to kill the armored car in 37T5 to clog up the woods-road and slow any other vehicles from exiting the forest. It is clear that Neil's confidence is beginning to show strain. He has stopped talking about capturing additional enemy positions and is considering protection of his company.

TURN 9

PRE-TURN COMMENTS

It's strange how this game plays. The 4-6-7 in 37V9 has made some incredible DRs to get effective results from a low FP attack with positive DRMs. Last turn, once again it broke my units in T8, including the bazooka team, which makes any attack on T10 very difficult this turn. There is only a small chance that the M4 will be able to get its main armament up and gunning before the end of the game.

T10 will be reinforced this turn when the advance attitude S? moves there and will very likely activate something. Advance attitude S?s can activate very effectively. A leader and two squads with support weapons are not unlikely, for instance.

That half squad crosses the orchard from T5 to R4, surviving the defensive fire of my squads, to effectively neutralize the last bazooka team and place my broken leader and squads under desperation morale in the rally phase. I hope the captured AT gun in O7 will hold off the armor and maybe even kill another AFV before it breaks down. I was lucky to get three shots out of it last turn without a breakdown. Now, in my turn, barring panic, I will have a +2 shot at that PSW because the -2TA counter neutralizes the LOS hindrance DRMs.

Unless I get a favorable random event in this turn, or a wonderful Rally Phase, I'm pulling back. Otherwise, I can't see how I can hope to win this one. I will establish a defensive line along the O hexrow. As the enemy is in hold attitude, he'll more than likely leave me alone, provided that I can take care of the armor.

TURN 9 COMMENTS

To top it all off, it's raining! At least it will add to his To Hit DRs when I'm seven or more hexes from him. It also means that SMOKE is now useless, though. That INF gun has been lethal in this game. I suppose they always are, but I've never been shown how bad they were.

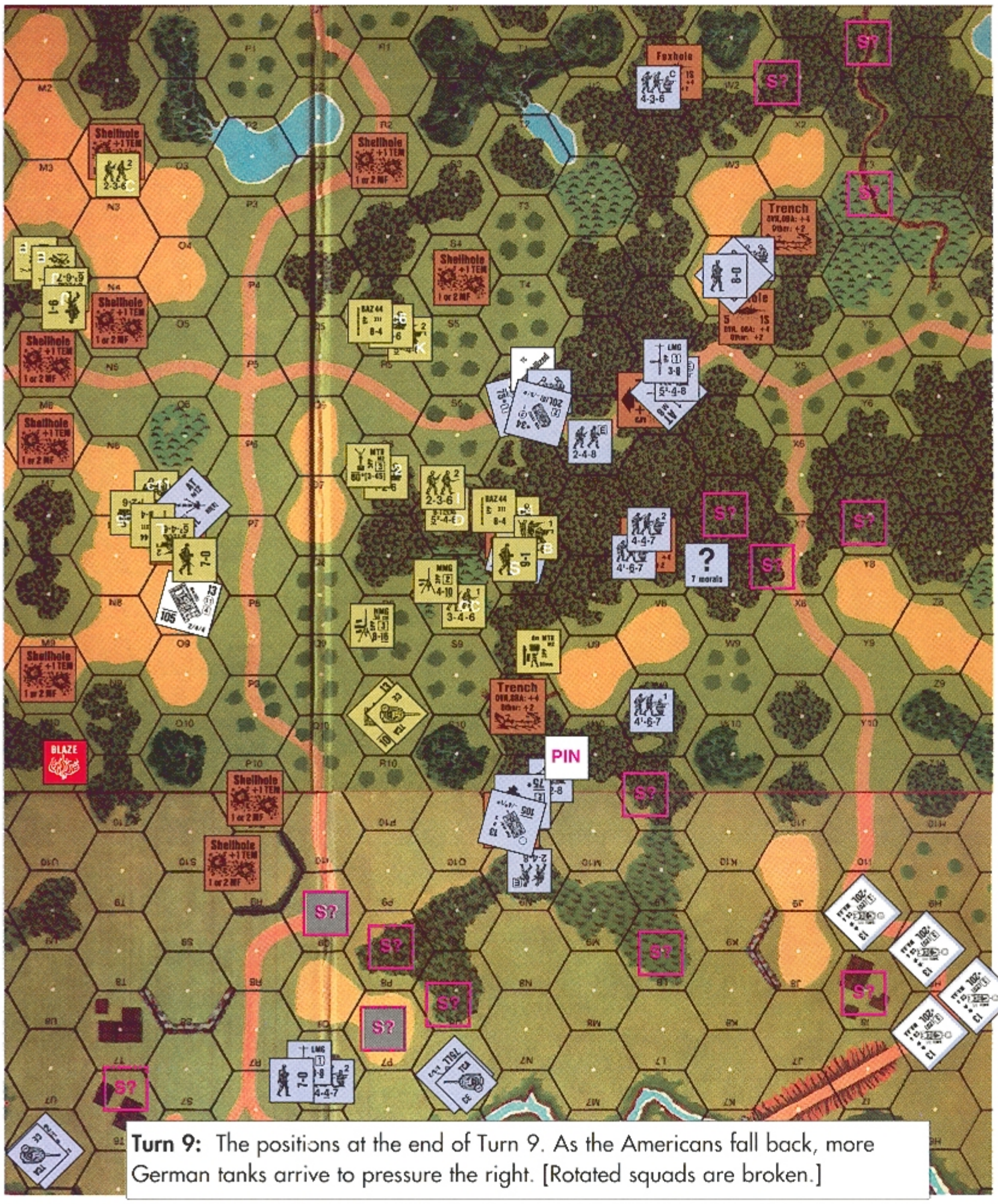
I had hoped to get a result from firing the MMG at V9, after having gone to all the bother of carrying it there, but nothing came of it. The 37L AT gun immobilized the PSW233 and forced the crew to abandon it, but died in the process. With the close combat in R4 resolved without loss to me, I hope that I can conduct an orderly and uneventful withdrawal and that the game end dr is merciful.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

I can imagine the colorful language emanating from the US positions now that, on top of everything else, it started raining.

Neil has kept things together. He was able to rout a large portion of his force out of harm's way, squashed the threat on his left by killing the half squad that jumped his support weapon team and effectively knocked out the armored car.

The Germans continue to pressure the US forces. A Panther and a Tiger both arrive and an assault gun activates (admittedly, from a S? that was previously a passenger in a halftrack. Hmmm, that must have been some halftrack.) The American tank was very nearly shocked by the turret hit. Such a result is lethal a little less than 50% of the time, assuming there isn't an enemy in position to finish it off. Neil knew from the start that the enemy side would get more random events, but I admit that he has suffered at the hands of fate.



Turn 9: The positions at the end of Turn 9. As the Americans fall back, more German tanks arrive to pressure the right. [Rotated squads are broken.]

TURN 10

PRE-TURN COMMENTS

Let the game end dr be merciful. I'm in full flight. I am lucky to still have the M4(105). I'll have to reverse him back as far as possible before the Panther gets a shot at him. I could play hero and advance the bazooka team at T7 to T6 or U7 for a shot at the Tiger, but I just want to save as much of my company as I can.

The random events have been kind to the German player and I've received nothing. If the weather wasn't so bad, I could hope for an airstrike to kill off the enemy armor. *[I sense a bit of battle fatigue and bitterness here.—SKT]*

TURN 10 COMMENTS

I lose Jackson to a casualty rally DR, just after I thought that I'd really hit the bottom. The M4(105) is a goner, no doubt about it. I just hope somebody survives this fiasco!

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

At this point, Neil is not as bad off as he seems to think. He's already paid VPs for the attached tanks; their loss doesn't affect his company. He needs to focus on getting his men out. The loss of Jackson was a big blow. Although there are still German guns bearing on his forces, he may be able to avoid further damage to his company if he gets behind some cover.

TURN 11

PRE-TURN COMMENTS

What is there to say? Rigney rallies three squads and the M4 blows up with the loss of all hands, I really should have abandoned the vehicle after it was immobilized. Squad D soldiers are sitting on their butts and will probably surrender. Squad K ELR breaks down to a green squad. I can only hope the game ends this turn.

TURN 11 COMMENTS

I voluntarily broke Surman and squad B because I don't want them sitting in the open where they can be overrun. Surman is my best leader. I may not pull much out of this game, but I want to keep the 9-1 leader.

The increased LOS hindrance from the heavy rain means that all my forces are out of sight of the bogged StuH and that cursed 75*INF gun. I hope neither will bother me again. The Panther wasn't able to see anyone either. Unfortunately, the Tiger can, but I'm hoping that my last bazooka team can nail it, if it moves closer. That 81mm mortar will start shooting in the next prep fire phase.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

In *SASL*, support weapons (SW) are sort of automatic troops, because any unmanned SW team-run weapon has a two-thirds chance of regenerating a crew between missions. If the weapon is lost, there is a two-thirds chance it will be replaced with a new crew (assuming one isn't available already). These guys can become the kamikazes of the *SASL* world. Yet, one quickly finds important infantry support dwindling away, if these chances are taken too often.

Neil is beginning to feel the effects of having only one active leader on the field as his units panic. His command control was good on the advance, but broke down during the retreat after Jackson disappeared and Surman got trapped in the open (having panicked). It is atypical in *ASL* to have to conduct a wholesale retrograde movement in the face of an active enemy. In *SASL*, it can happen frequently. It becomes a unique skill to keep the company in good fighting order with proper combat deployment, while directing an orderly retreat.

TURN 12

PRE-TURN COMMENTS

I think I'm going to be all right, as long as I offer targets with high DRMs to hold attitude enemies, because they are only interested in keeping me away from their positions. I'm going to let all those units fire at O7 where they will have high DRMs.

TURN 12 COMMENTS

The demise of the Tiger should ensure my survival, even though I still have the Panther to handle.

I can't help notice that the German left is in tatters and it's tempting to rush the position to try to pick up VPs.

Even if I kill both the PSWs, capture V1, V5, W5 and X2 without activating another fortified position or taking a single casualty *and* hold T7, I'll have only 60 VPs to the enemy's 70. It's not worth the risk. Besides, there is a 50%chance the game will end this turn.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

So, the gamble eventually paid off. Neil was able to kill the Tiger, giving his company a morale boost and a little better survival probability.

Neil still considers reversing direction and attacking again! I have to hand it to him: He's got moxie. If it were me, I'd be pulling all units back even further than he has. I'd leave a SW team in the 37O7 building as bait to keep German attention, while the remainder of the company would settle in on the back side of the 37K and 37L wood lines.

In a final portent of what could have been, more enemy units arrive on Neil's immediate left to apply pressure on his already-compacted company. In my many missions of *SASL*, the arrival of enemy forces from all directions can be the most terrifying of situations. They may be a bit robotic in motion, but they just keep coming and coming.

VICTORY POINT DETERMINATION

The final VP tally yields a German victory.

	Enemy:	Friendly:
At start VPs	3	0
CVPs	15 (Inf)	4 (Guns)
CVPs (AFVs)	17	13
VPOs	33	15
Unactivated S?s	19	0
Total VPs	**87**	**32**

FINAL COMMENTARY

So where did I go wrong? Would I have been better to attack on board 13 to start with? The closed terrain seemed more favorable to the attacking American squads who crack easily under fire. I'd hoped that the copious LOS hindrance DRMs would help protect my fragile force. My own feeling is that, once again, I failed to use my support weapons effectively. My mortars and that magnificent .50cal heavy machinegun hardly saw any action. I was advancing quickly. These units would have been better left dismantled until serious opposition was encountered.

As it was, I assembled mortars to assault the tree line at H1 early in the game, while the main force ran on towards O7. To be fair, though, when the SWs were in action they didn't get good rate-of-fire and were also hampered by the high LOS hindrance DRMs. I should have taken more time to prepare my assaults.

I wasted the M4(105)s. I was too cautious with them at the start, keeping them BU. Later, attacking an enemy position while CE was just plain stupid. I have lost AFVs to snipers early in a game. The last time I played Bunker Busting, one of my supporting StuG IIIBs ended up sitting five hexes away from a Russian 45L in a pillbox at the end of my first turn. It was promptly blown away in the first enemy prep fire without doing anything! At least both M4s saw some action. However, I am never going to advance an AFV at an enemy position CE again.

Another "never again" is assaulting an emplaced high-caliber gun through its CA. The DRMs for point blank fire make Critical Hits much more likely. The INF Gun was superbly placed in T10 to cover board 37. The swamp in S10 protected it from a frontal assault. It held its own brilliantly with some superb covering fire from the 4-6-7 in V9. I don't complain about DRs in a game, unless it's really bad, because they have a tendency to break even. As in life, a perfectly executed "perfect plan" can fail just because some brave souls won't break, but instead lays down murderous defensive fire against impossible odds. Some utterly stupid tactics can still win with luck. It's all fair in war.

I wish I had received one random event with some support for me, but with the RE#s being what they were, that was not to be expected. As I'd remarked earlier, the booby traps killed nobody and the snipers did nothing except shoot at each other.

Finally, because this is a campaign game, my company is going to be handicapped during the rebuild/refit stage because of the loss. There are no promotions for Surman or Rigney, although Rigney deserves a medal. I get Jackson and the two half squads reformed into squad C, but all the rest are lost.

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

Neil had three strikes against him going into this mission with his new company. First, he got a Bunker Busting mission. This is undoubtedly one of the toughest to win in *SASL* and requires very careful manipulation of the system to activate S? slowly and carefully select the VPOs to capture.

Second, Neil ended up with a dense terrain board. S? activations can snowball as VPOs are revealed and nearby activations become easier. The board configuration left Neil with little choice on his approach. With the flooded stream he ran a very real risk of activating deadly firing positions in valuable fortified locations which would have required an assault across bridges. He was much better off probing the woods and picking the fruits gingerly.

Third, he faced numerous enemy random events. One has to assume that any random event is going to cause an adjustment of plans. Even off-board artillery forces a player to spread out or risk a lucky hit killing off a large portion of the company. In Neil's case, most of his troubles arrived from off the board. Although this offers some VP opportunities, advancing enemy forces usually cause headaches and make it difficult to manage the flow of the battle.

As I've mentioned, where Neil went wrong is not recognizing the *SASL* system and what it can do to a player. In *ASL*, you usually know what the objectives of the scenario are and set about maneuvering to meet those objectives. The enemy force make up, both on the board and reinforcing, is known as well. The whole approach to the game changes in *SASL*, especially in a Bunker Busting mission.

The basic victory goal is known: get rid of S? and take fortified positions. However, the number and location of fortified positions is not predictable. The player has to carefully utilize the concepts of probe and support. Establish good fire bases. Probe the next set of S? counters to find the good stuff. Unless there is a need to move through a non-fortified position, it's best to bypass it and look for gold elsewhere. As long as this process is managed carefully, time is usually the player's friend. However, if dozens of VPOs are generated, there suddenly isn't enough time to capture them all.

Once a few VPOs are located, the player needs to assess the opportunity and deal with them in detail. All the time, the player must exercise care not to activate S? that aren't near the action.

Neil rushed forward and cleared S? like a scythe. Flush with success and frustrated by a lack of enemy, his company became dispersed and outran its support. When he finally hit some serious resistance, he forged ahead in other sectors of his front and suddenly found himself outclassed. The *SASL* system really kicked in and started pouring more enemy forces onto the board. Since Neil was just trying to take and hold the main enemy line of resistance, he was ill-prepared to deal with this sudden influx of aggressive infantry and vehicles. Although he managed to handle the various threats, his momentum was gone and his company was in bad shape. It took two turns just to get all his squads back in good order, facing the right direction.

In certain respects, the *SASL* system can be the most difficult opponent to play. It is unpredictable and somewhat relentless. The system can be a real puzzle to solve, with each mission having unique characteristics and unexpected events. On top of it all, the player has the job of shepherding his company through these missions in an effort to not only survive, but to improve the company. The player has two objectives in a *SASL* campaign game. Winning a mission is tough enough, but the real trick is having a viable company survive afterward.

REST & REFIT POSTSCRIPT

All double-break units were retained. Squads C and I were made back up to full strength and Jackson returned. Abandoned support weapons were lost. Because the mission was lost, no leaders were promoted. Prior to replacements, Strange Company stood like this:

9-1 Lt. Surman
9-1 Lt. Jackson
7-0 Cpl. Rigney
1 x 6-6-7 (Squad J)
5 x 6-6-6 (B, C, E, F, H)
2 x 5-4-6 (I, L)
2 x 5-3-6 (D, K)
1 x Hs w/ MMG (CC)
1 x 1-2-6 Mortar Team (c1)
3 x 1-2-6 Bazooka Teams (c4, c5, c6)

The company gains no battle hardening and receives the following replacements:

1 x 6-6-6 (A)
1 x 5-4-6 (G)
2 x Hs (AA, BB)
1 x .50cal HMG
1 x 1-2-6 Mortar Team (c2)

Thus, the company enters the next action almost at full strength (missing only a MMG and a mortar team).

(Continued on pg. 45)

SERIES REPLAY...
(Continued from pg. 39)

easy Bunker Busting win in August before going down dramatically (all but wiped out) in September during Mission 8, Patrol).

NEUTRAL COMMENTARY

After Neil collects his company together, he sees he has three leaders, ten and a half squads, a MMG, a mortar team and three bazooka teams. None are fanatic and there are no heroes, so the company gets no modifications to the improvement process.

The first check is for leader promotion. That can't happen because Neil lost the mission, but nobody gets demoted either, because he stayed on the field.

Next, he rolls to see if any squads are improved, but none are hardened.

Then, he should not have rolled on the replacement table and should have considered himself lucky that he had a reinforced company when he took on this first mission. Upper command has realized their error and Neil's company will *not* be receiving any more guys this month (he's overstrength by a squad and a half now, so they should be taking away men).

Since he thought he was understrength and deserved more men, Neil must have rolled well. The only modifier is the number of squad equivalents over one that the company is short. It is extremely tough to be successful on this roll unless the company is really shot up.

He lost some equipment, but gets an automatic crew to man the mortar he retained. The HMG can be doled out within the company as he sees fit.

It is interesting, but not surprising, that Neil's company lasted only four months. Perhaps I am more conservative, but I found it possible to take German and Russian companies from the start of hostilities to nearly the end of the war. In each case, I had positive net campaign game points at the time I stopped. However, I was much more willing to bug out and choose my winnable missions than Neil has been here. I tried to ensure the safety of the company and to minimize losses. This is a much different game than standard *ASL* in that respect. Except for a few scenarios, the regular game does not force a player to protect his units from destruction (*Historical ASL* campaign games being a major exception and even these guarantee replacements to cover most losses).

SASL campaigns can be agonizing to play, but also very rewarding. I became very proud when my Russian company attained Guard status. I also felt despair when my German unit was pulled out of the line for two months to rest and refit until it could be brought up to minimum strength.



★

Hung Up, Skewered, and Blasted

The Use of Wire, Panjis and A-P Mines in *ASL*

By Chuck Goetz

It's not often in *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER (ASL)* that a commander has the opportunity to utilize "obstacle" fortifications such as wire, panjis and anti-personnel (A-P) mines. When you do have such an opportunity, you want to make the most of it. In general, these fortifications are intended to slow down or obstruct enemy movement. Panjis and mines have the added benefit of possibly inflicting harm on the enemy through failed morale checks and outright casualties.

SETUP AND CLEARANCE

Wire, panjis and A-P mines must all be set up before play commences and cannot be moved thereafter (they may only be eliminated or cleared). With a few important exceptions, these fortifications are limited to the same types of terrain. None may be set up in rubble, marsh, swamp or water obstacles (although wire may set up in a frozen water obstacle). Wire and panjis may not be set up in a building hex, while mines can—provided it's not an interior building hex. Mines and panjis can set up in bamboo, but not crags or paved roads/runways; vice versa for wire. Mines are the only fortification that can set up in a culvert (but only if non-HIP). Wire and panjis can set up in any beach hex (mined beach hexes must be adjacent to at least one hinterland hex). Finally, panjis cannot be set up in the same hex as wire or mines (or a roadblock), although wire and mines can occupy the same hex.

Like other fortifications, wire, panjis and mines are set up using HIP and stay hidden until either within LOS of a good order enemy unit (i.e., wire and panji unless in bamboo, kunai or jungle) or a real enemy unit enters the fortification's location. The strength of a minefield is not revealed, while the number and placement of all panji-covered hexsides are. Each of these fortifications can be revealed also by Searching, although mines and panjis may cause casualties as per A12.154.

All three of these fortifications can be partially or totally eliminated by infantry using the B24.7 clearance rules, although it generally requires some combination of luck, multiple MMC, good leadership, heroes and time. FFE (if a KIA result; a K/# reduces a minefield) or bombardment (if MC failure) can also eliminate these obstacles, but not with any reliability. Finally, a fully-tracked vehicle can create a trail break through a minefield [B28.61], possibly remove a wire counter (with a one on the colored die of its bog check DR [B26.53], and clear one panji covered hexside (by expending 1/4 of its MP (FRU) [G9.73]).

THE NASTY THINGS THEY DO

Wire can't actually hurt the enemy. It slows him down. Upon entering a wire Location, an infantry unit is hung up until it can make a dr less than or equal to its MF capability. Because a unit can't use double time during a turn in which it attempts to move beneath wire (nor can it advance off wire, though it may advance onto wire), it will be unable to move off the wire at least one third of the time (unless stacked with a leader). On the other hand, 17 per cent of the time it only costs your opponent one MF to move off the wire, and before you know it your defenses are breached. While hung up on wire, infantry units suffer a +1 penalty to any attack they make (To Hit, IFT, CC, etc.), are more vulnerable to CC attacks against them, and cannot place, throw or set a DC. Vehicles may enter a wire location (2 MP + COT for fully-tracked, 4 MP + COT for all others) after undergoing a bog check.

Mines can hurt the enemy, but other than attacking (and possibly breaking, pinning, immobilizing or eliminating) units entering or exiting their hex, minefields do not impose any movement penalties. Of course, a minefield attack is never halved against concealed units and doesn't apply any TEM or FFMO/FFNAM modifiers. Unarmored vehicles are attacked on the star vehicle line while armored vehicles are unaffected unless the minefield attack results in a KIA, in which case they are immobilized. Vulnerable PRC of a vehicle immobilized by mines are attacked Collaterally. Any vehicle whose lowest hull AF is zero is treated as unarmored. There are no combat penalties for being in a minefield.

Available only in the PTO, panjis both hinder movement and potentially inflict harm on traversing units. In addition to prohibiting bypass (along or across a panji-covered hexside) and use of a bank counter, infantry and fully-tracked units entering a hex across a panji hexside must expend an additional MF or MP to move underneath the panjis. Non-fully-tracked vehicles (including wagons) are immobilized when entering, horses/bicycles are eliminated when ridden into, and guns eliminated when manhandled into, a panji hex across a covered hexside. Unless using assault movement, using low crawl, or making a normal advance, an infantry unit (random selection for stacked units) moving across a panji hexside (or disembarking from transport above a panji counter) must take a NMC (leader modifier and HOB or NA) and also suffers casualty reduction if it rolls doubles. In addition to suffering from the same attack penalties incurred when hung up on wire (exception: DC used by Japanese as per G1.424), infantry above a panji counter are always engaged in concealment-loss activity, may only use inherent FP/SW, LMG, LATW (but not 20mm ATR) and FT, and may not interdict.

WHAT TO DO WITH THEM

First, remember that none of these three fortifications is a rigid barrier—all can be penetrated by a determined opponent. Don't rely on wire, panjis or mines to actually block enemy movement. Instead, use them

➔➔➔➔➔ *(Continued on p.54)*

PEGASUS BRIDGE

ERRATA

Q6.1 Hex C9 should have a square, white staircase symbol indicating it is a Tower.

Q8.2 ILLUSTRATION Under squad E, add "A," between "except" and "B."

Q9.4 CGSSR4a Add "Treat the three German setup areas separately for purposes of E1.2 and A2.9."

Q9.61741 CPP ENTRY COST TABLE
Delete the entry for hex A15 and change hex A8 to A7.

MAP Change the grid coordinate for the hex between KK10 and KK12 from ""KK10" to "KK11;" change the second "10" to an "11" in hexrows II and MM also.

PLAYER AID Add "Permission is granted to photocopy for personal use only."

CLARIFICATIONS

Q9.1 Does the German control all Strategic Locations at game start.
A. Yes.

PBSSR14 Do the Ox and Bucks suffer an automatic Sniper attack (E1.76) when using a captured MG at night?
A. No.

MAP At what level is hex Z8?
A. Level –1.

➔➔➔➔➔➔ *(from p.50)*

to supplement a defense by slowing down the enemy enough to allow your own units to respond to the threatened penetration. Second, obstacle fortifications aren't very effective unless used in depth and/or breadth. One or two hex obstacle zones are easily bypassed. Thus, these obstacles should be clumped together, in conjunction with other natural terrain obstacles such as ponds, bamboo, cliffs, marsh/swamp and frigid streams, to guard one flank or victory objective (or more if you have an ample quantity of fortifications). Guard your fortification barriers with sufficient troops to make the enemy pay for any penetration attempt.

As you sit down to construct a defense with obstacle fortifications, remember that each type has strengths and weaknesses making it better or worse for different types of terrain. For example, panjis aren't a serious threat to infantry aware of their existence and willing to safely assault move through them. Therefore, panjis need to be hidden in concealment terrain to give them a chance to inflict a NMC on enemy units attempting to move quickly through them. Several "layers" of panjis will increase both the MF cost to units moving through the panji zone and the likelihood that hasty enemy units will impale themselves. Jungle, kunai and bamboo are all good terrain types for panjis. Wire, on the other hand, doesn't depend on surprise for effectiveness. Accordingly, it's the perfect obstacle to block open ground or road hexes, especially when enhanced by covering fire from nearby buildings or woods (in fact, wire is the only one of these fortifications that can be placed in hard-surfaced locations such as paved roads). Meanwhile, mines are perfect to stymie infantry movement through single-hex buildings where the other two types of fortifications can't be placed.

Another important aspect to consider is the protection which wire and panjis give you from enemy units advancing into CC against friendly units underneath the fortification. The enemy will think twice before advancing into CC with your units, especially those in jungle, kunai or bamboo, if he knows or suspects that your units are guarded by panjis or wire. Also, don't forget about the effect that these fortifications can have on broken units. Though a broken unit need not rout across a panji hexside or through a minefield if it has an alternative rout path, it may be forced by circumstances to risk the consequences. Wire can be especially dangerous for a broken unit adjacent to a known enemy unit—roll too high and it will be eliminated for failure to rout. Savvy defenders should be alert to traps and mini-counterattack opportunities exploiting such possibilities against broken enemy units. Finally, don't forget that a stream is not a water obstacle unless frigid, so all three of these fortifications can be set up in a stream.

★



SCENARIO BRIEFING

A Breath of Fresh Air from the Windy City

by Louie Tokarz

The Windy City Wargamers (WCW), our local Chicago area gamers club, decided to develop some scenarios for our local tournament held every April (now the ASL Open). The first two scenarios were well received at our 1995 tournament, after which we went to work on scenarios for the 1996 ASL Open. I received many submissions from newly-inspired club members, making it difficult to pick only eight.

I had joined up with Jeff Cebula in 1988 when he was the TAHGC playtest group coordinator for the Chicago area. Jeff and his group took playtesting seriously and studied every new detail, rule and SSR. To this day I continue to follow the examples they set for a thorough playtest of a scenario. It was hard sometimes to keep everyone focused on the job of playtesting these eight new scenarios. (Special thanks go to Robert Banozic, Scott Holst, Scott Drane and Bob Bendis.) After more than a year of playtesting them, I didn't want to see them ever again (some I played more than 15 times). In the end, though, we had what we thought were ten good, balanced scenarios.

At MMP's request, I picked some of the best to see print in *The GENERAL,* along with some scenario analyses. The first of these is below. I'm not a big fan of the scenario analysis article. I'd rather come up with my own strategies than use a plan someone else has designed. It's more important to "see" the battlefield (playing area) than memorize setups and attack approaches. I'm not saying that nothing is gained from reading an analysis article (I've read every one that has been printed), but it is the little things you pick up from reading such articles—not the proposed setup—that ultimately improves your play.

In my analyses there are no detailed setups to copy, but rather some suggestions based on the situation at hand. Some are quite obvious, while others may be less so, especially to the *ASL* newbie. I hope you can gather some *ASL* knowledge from these analyses to use in your approach to a given scenario.

WILL TO FIGHT...ERADICATED

This scenario depicts a last, desperate onslaught by retreating Polish forces to retake a small town named Papiance while the Germans were taking a breather. I came upon the description of this small battle in Poland while reading *Tiger Ace, The Life Story of Panzer Commander Michael Wittman.* (One might be surprised that a book about a Panzer commander could produce a strictly infantry engagement, but it just goes to show that a real *ASL* fanatic looks for scenario possibilities in everything he reads. As an aside, Michael Wittman and his PSW 222 were in the vicinity, but anti-tank mines in the area kept him and his unit on the outskirts of the town.) The Poles attacked and quickly regained a portion of the village, whereupon SS cooks and other non-combat personnel were ordered to stem the tide until the line soldiers could arrive to drive back the attackers. As I read the account, I pictured a bitter see-saw battle between two determined foes. I have always liked scenarios where both sides had to do something more than sit around and react. I thought that this situation would make a fun *ASL* scenario.

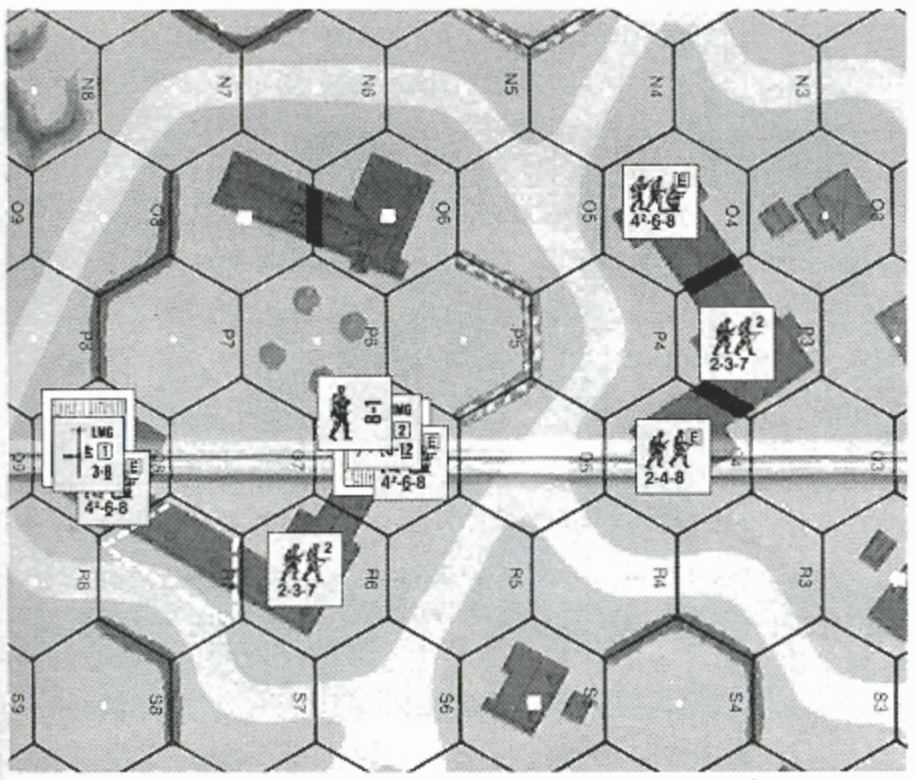
The original playtest version of this scenario awarded victory points (VPs) for each stone building Location controlled. This was a pain in the butt to keep track of when playing, so we came up with the idea of giving points for all of a building's Locations to the side that controls the building at the end of the game. The size of the building still mattered, but the bookkeeping aspect of the game was reduced. It has been my experience that, if the attacker is doing well during the first couple of playings of a scenario, it usually means the scenario favors the attacker. From the very beginning, this scenario played fairly even with some blowouts due to poor play or luck. After the change in VP determination, we didn't experience much of a difference between the final version and the first revision, and therefore adjusted the VP requirements by only a point or two.



GERMAN ADVANTAGES: Leadership, Machineguns and Strong Reinforcements

The German player has the better quality troops and three "-1" leaders. If the German player can team a medium machinegun (MMG) or two with a "-1" leader and place them in dominant positions, the Poles staring down the barrel of those machineguns will whither in fear. I used the 4-6-8 squad for the SS because it's the opening campaign of WWII and the normal 6-5-8 doesn't work well then. Also, the Poles need to be on an equal footing during close combat (CC) since so many of the games come down to the last CC phase.

The German player must be aggressive with the turn 3 reinforcements—and thanks to high morale, he can. With eight morale, the SS squads should be able to stand up to most fire attacks. In this scenario, I like to have my best leaders leading the attack instead of rallying troops. The Germans need that extra leadership modifier during fire attacks and morale checks.



Units in O4, P3 and Q4 are set up to cover street hexes N3, N4, O2 and P1. The machinegun units on the first levels of Q6 and Q8 can see over the hedges and wall to interdict the Polish advance. Two Polish half squads are hidden in the cellars in Q6 and U5 to block German rout paths.



GERMAN DISADVANTAGES: Initially Outnumbered

A great deal of this scenario boils down to how well the Germans stem the initial Polish onslaught. Should they surrender ground to save troops or should every German unit in the starting order of battle (OB) go down fighting in order to save time in the end? I've occasionally seen the initial German troops survive until the end of the game if set up in one of the multi-hex buildings, though this does take some luck or conservative play by the Polish player. If the initial troops fall quickly and without causing many Polish casualties, the reinforcements will have a long road ahead of them, eight morale or not. More on this dilemma below.

GERMAN STRATEGY



First, look at what the Germans must control in order to get the 29 VPs needed to win. There are 17 VPs on or west of hexrow S. The marketplace (R6) is worth ten and building P3 is worth nine. Thus, if the Germans can grab buildings R6 or P3 along with the buildings on or west of hexrow S, they will be very close to winning. Capture of either building R6 or P3 is imperative for the Germans to pull this one off.

In the initial setup, the Germans must decide what to do about the hidden initial placement (HIP) Poles in the cellars. Knowing where these HIP Poles are will save the Germans time and units later in the scenario—so find them! I like to deploy the second-line squad and mop up buildings R6 and P3 on the first German player turn. If both half squads (HS) aren't found by this maneuver, I'll send the elite HS into building U5 to see what's there. Alternatively, run some HS around the buildings and into the cellars. Not a bad strategy, because, if a HIP HS wants to fire at a German recon HS, the German unit will get the cover of a stone building. Because of the option of hand-to-hand CC (SSR 4), I wouldn't advance into CC with the Poles—you are not trying to eliminate the Polish HS at this time; just find them. Wait until the big lumber arrives on turn 3 to inflict the damage.

The issue is where to put the initial MMG. I like Level 1 of Q6 (directed by the 8-1 leader) where it is fairly safe and can blast anyone who moves into P6 or P5 with point blank fire. Furthermore, Poles in O6 or O7 cannot see it. A squad with a light machinegun (LMG) looks good on Level 1 of Q8, where it can move to Level 1 of R7 and, together with the troops in Q6, protect building R6 very well. The rest of the units should set up to cover Polish movement on turn 1—O3, O4, and O6 are all possible locations.

Now, what about that key issue posed earlier: should the initial Germans pull back or die to the last man? The longer the Germans can hold building R6, the better their chances will be. Pulling back is difficult at best due to the lack of cover. No matter what the Germans do, a few Polish troops are likely to make it to interdiction positions. Thus, the best choice is to duke it out and make the Poles take the buildings from you.

The turn 2 reinforcements will be instructed to move to the most crucial spot on the board. If the Poles are running for building U5, get there first. If one or more Polish HS are still HIP, don't go running the reinforcements as one big stack toward V5. This could spell disaster. Set up one squad deployed and send a HS or two probing toward building U5.

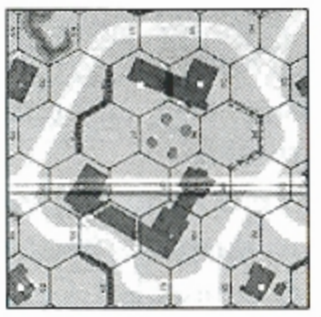
If things have gone well for the Poles, they'll control buildings R6, P3, S5, S9 and T3. The turn 3 German reinforcements have now arrived. Don't panic—there is still plenty of time left. Any Poles on or west of hexrow S are dead meat. The German can position himself to eliminate those units when they break. Make sure this happens. Spread out and form large multi-hex fire groups. An overwatch position in U5 consisting of a squad, MMG and 9-1 on Level 1 and a squad, LMG and 8-1 on the ground floor will bust up any Poles in Q4 or on the ground level and in the cellars of building R6. This should open things up for the ground assault into R6 or P3. Remember, the Germans only need one of these two buildings. Assaulting P3 is easier, due to the cover offered by the one-hex buildings south of it (and which is also required for a victory).

From here, the Germans may even be able to grab buildings O1, M2 and M3. The major drawback to this approach is its proximity to the turn 7 Polish reinforcements. The attack on building R6 will be a little more difficult, due to the open ground the foot sloggers must cross to reach it, but once the Germans are in there they won't be ousted as easily by the Poles.



POLISH ADVANTAGES: HIP, Early Momentum

The two HIP HS will do more for the Poles then anything else they have. Just where to put them is a matter of your gaming philosophy. Do you use them to cut rout paths? Keep them hidden in order to maintain control of a particular building? Or wait for a juicy target to present itself? If used to cut rout paths, a HIP HS can also help build an early momentum swing, sending Polish squads on a rampage. Imagine your opponent's face as two or three of his initial units die on one turn. If the Poles do well, they can make it almost impossible for the Germans to get going later in the game. Most good players won't allow that to happen, barring some lucky breaks for the Poles. Be aggressive with the Polish troops early in the game (so long as any units that break will have a decent chance to make it back into the game). When misfortune strikes the Germans, you will have plenty of time to take advantage of it.



POLISH DISADVANTAGES: ELR, Terrain

These Poles won't rally back as quickly as their counterparts, especially if they are green or first-line units. The Poles have no negative rating leadership and one +1 leader. At some point in the game the 6+1 leader will have to rally a few of his shaky followers—not something to rely upon in order to win a scenario. Don't stack this leader with any friendly Good Order units within German lines of sight (LOS); his +1 modifier will make any morale check (MC) harder to pass, with those troops more likely to ELR.

The terrain on board 12 favors the attacker. The main buildings are surrounded by a road, and the buildings are spaced out more than usual, with LOS that don't normally exist in a town environment. Because the Germans will be able to

see almost any rally points, the Poles may stay desperation morale (DM) for a long time, adding to their rally difficulties.

POLISH STRATEGY



The first thing the Poles need to decide is how to use the two HIP units. Consider a few options. Place them both in building V4 with the idea of slowing down the German reinforcements. Place one in building V4 and the other in either building P3 or R6. Place one in building P3 and the other in R6 in order to help clear out any Germans or to stay HIP as long as possible. The longer their locations are unknown to the Germans, the better. One strategy (which will help eliminate any broken German units on Level 1 of hex Q6) is to put one HIP HS in Q6 and the other in U5. When the German units break, revealing both HS will just about kill the German units. They won't be able to go downstairs to stay there. They won't be able to go to R6, because this would bring them closer to U5.

On turns 1 and 2, the Polish player needs to be very aggressive (I can't say this enough). The Poles outnumber the Germans at start by nine and a half squads. The capture of buildings O6, P3 and R6 is an absolute must. If the Germans still control any of these buildings on German turn 3, the Poles will need a small miracle to win.

Don't risk the leaders, expect to lose some units on the first two turns. The Poles will need them to rally broken troops later in the game. The more leaders the Poles have, the more places they can use as rally points. Remember, not many locations are hidden from the German fire.

The Poles should use hand-to-hand CC whenever possible, except when they have a 2:1 or better advantage. Use the numbers advantage to the utmost. Don't shy away from any fire attacks. Rather, take any reasonable risks to break Germans.

If the Germans set up in forward positions, use a couple of HS to dash across the street into hexes with the concealed Germans. Meanwhile, designate one stack of units for Opportunity Fire and use that stack to hammer any revealed Germans. Use the Elite squads to maneuver around the German flanks. Be aggressive!

After the Poles have secured buildings R6 and P3 they must decide what to do next—-move forward or hold ground and gain concealment. Digging a couple of foxholes in hexes P7 and Q7 will make holding building R6 a little easier, because rallied or reinforcing units will be able to get into building R6 with some cover.

After turn 3, the scenario is a defensive game for the Poles. Hide from the German fire whenever possible during the Polish player turns (although this will be difficult on board 12). If the Poles can't retreat to a blind spot, then Prep Fire. Don't rush too many Polish units west of hexrow S. They will just end up in the counter tray earlier than they should. There is no good place to defend there, and any unit that breaks will more then likely be eliminated by the swarming German reinforcements.

Believe it or not, the turn 7 reinforcements do have some significant uses. I can recall some folks asking me if there was a misprint on the scenario card. What could the Poles do with the units that enter on the last turn of the game? Consider these possibilities. They can draw fire from frontline German units that don't want to be caught in a CC position on their last turn. Many single-hex buildings needed by the Germans can be reached by the reinforcements in one movement phase. However, the most important thing the Poles can do with their reinforcements is move them into buildings R6 or P3 where one HS could be the difference between holding the building and losing it. At the very least, the Polish reinforcements may draw some German fire that would otherwise have been used to shoot up other, better-placed Polish units that could survive in an important location. The last option is using the reinforcements to secure buildings O6, M8, M6, M5 and M2. During playtesting, the turn 7 reinforcements made the difference in most of the games played and also helped make the last turns some of the most memorable scenario finishes of my *ASL* experience.

FINAL COMMENTS

After releasing "Will to Fight" at the 1995 Chicago ASL tournament, it received good reviews—though more recently some people have claimed that the Germans have a slight advantage. I think this all depends on the type of Polish player. If cautious, he will most likely be in for a difficult time. I think a clear understanding of the building control rules (A26.12) is critical in scenarios like this, where a single broken leader at the end of a scenario could keep one side from gaining control of a building. Sometimes it is better to voluntarily rout upstairs than to fight it out in CC at game end.

Some folks tell me that the Germans need another squad in their starting forces. I guess that styles of play matter more. I can remember someone telling me that if the defender has the edge when a scenario first comes out, it will probably be a balanced scenario once players figure out the best approach to take when attacking. At first I didn't accept this rule of thumb, because when I started playing *ASL* the most difficult aspect of the game to grasp was how to play an effective defense. One could assume that the attacker has the edge in any scenario where two people are playing it for the first time. I now believe the reverse is true in most cases.

Overall I believe that this scenario is as balanced as one can make it. After listening to many different game stories, I've neither seen nor heard anything over the past two years that would make me change my mind.

★

TOP A.R.E.A. RATINGS
ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER
Active Players
Date of Standings: April 7, 1997

Rank	Name	Rating	Games	Opp	Pbm
1	Michael McGrath	2371	86	64	0
2	Bod Bendis	2248	47	16	0
3	Steven Pleva	2208	72	55	20
4	Jim McLeod	2053	60	46	0
5	Richard Summers	2022	106	64	0
6	Eric Givler	2018	64	61	0
7	James Crawley	1984	27	13	0
8	Pete Mudge	1960	12	10	0
9	Hugh Harvey	1943	18	17	7
10	Bruce Rinehart	1942	85	30	0
11	Chad Cummins	1939	24	24	0
12	Douglas Creutz	1928	26	25	2
13	Russell Bunten	1920	20	16	0
14	Rodney Kinney	1915	10	10	0
15	Danny Stanhagen	1914	25	25	0
16	Cloyde Angell	1906	39	37	0
17	Thomas Morin	1903	48	33	0
18	Mark Nixon	1897	29	25	0
19	Scott Drane	1891	126	93	19
20	Robert Banozic	1889	55	41	0

ACROSS FIVE APRILS
Players on List: 62 Active players: 57
Date of Standings: June 17, 1997

Rank	Name	Rating	Qualifiers
1	Mark S. Miklos	1715	DF—D6
2	Mark Giddings	1710	CF—B6
3	James Falling	1618	BE—B6
4	Michael Sincavage	1598	BD—B6
5	Jerry Cecchin	1590	AB—A6
6	Donald Stone	1580	BD—A6
7	Chris B. Rice	1570	BD—B6
8	William Place	1570	BD—B6
9	James Matt	1568	AB—A6
10	Brian Conlon	1567	AC—A5

GETTYSBURG ('88)
Players on List: 60 Active Players: 26
Date of Standings: June 4, 1997

Rank	Name	Rating	Qualifiers
1	Allen Kaplan	1781	CF—C6
2	Vince Meconi	1759	DFCD7
3	Michael D. Uhrich	1750	DGBC5
4	David M. Zimmerman	1718	FIBD6
5	John D. Poniske, Sr.	1708	CDBC6
6	Charles R. Hamm	1601	BDBB7
7	Robert Mull	1596	AC—A6
8	Jeff Cierniak	1585	BE—B5
9	John Scivolette	1579	CE—C5
10	John E. Welage	1565	AC—A5

WE THE PEOPLE
Players on List: 22 Active players: 19
Date of Standings: June 4, 1997

Rank	Name	Rating	Qualifiers
1	Roger E. Taylor	1605	AB—A5
2	James M. Scott, II	1575	JA – – 6
3	James C. Doughan	1536	AB – – 6
4	Marty Ward	1535	AA—A6
5	James Rush	1535	AA – – 6

Qualifiers refer to quantities of games played, opponents played, PBM games, tournament participation and year of last activity (with later letters indicating greater quantities and the number being the last digit of a year). For more information on the A.R.E.A. rating system, send $1 to:

Glenn E. L. Petroski
6829 23rd Avenue
Kenosha, WI 53143-1233
email: GELP@ juno.com



A Preface to Peiper

by Stuart K. Tucker



Although many a wargame has been published on the popular WWII topic of the Battle of the Bulge, the two *KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER* historical modules for *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* provide gamers with the most detailed view of those events. These modules allow recreation of some of the most pitched house-to-house and woods fighting ever experienced by the American Army.

On December 16, 1944, Adolf Hitler launched his last western offensive of the war. The hole torn in American lines by the combined might of the German Sixth and Fifth Panzer Armies gave the battle the name "Bulge." The game modules take their name from the German SS unit which led the 1st SS Panzer Division's spearhead across the Amblève river on December 18, 1944 (part of the northern shoulder of the offensive). The Kampfgruppe Peiper, having been delayed by American Engineers near Habiémont, established a defensive bridgehead at Cheneux while its remaining elements caught up with the vanguard. The most immediate reserve available to Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower was the 82nd Airborne, which was rushed to the front in trucks to plug the gap between the 30th Infantry and 7th Armored divisions. This set the stage for the clash of two of the most elite units of the war in a series of battles around the Amblève river.

The scouts of US 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment approached the village of Cheneux from the west on the morning of December 20th. Thus began the battle for the Bridge at Cheneux depicted in one of the two campaign games provided in the *KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER II* module (and the subject of the *ASL* scenario and *ASL* Crossfire article below).

The daytime advance on Cheneux of Companies B and C were checked by the 2nd Battalion of the 2nd SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment, which had recently reached the area on foot. After nightfall, the attack was resumed, but met by intense fire. The Americans gained a tochold on the western outskirts of the village, where on the 21st the house-to-house firefight continued. Colonel Reuben Tucker, commander of the 504th, ordered the 3rd Battalion to assist with the capture of Cheneux and the bridge over the Amblève. Company G entered the western end of the battle-torn village to relieve Companies B and C, while Companies H and I flanked the village to the south and then pushed north from Monceau towards the bridge. This is the situation at the start of ASL Scenario KGP 7, "The Bridge at Cheneux."



Situation at end of Turn 1A. The 6-5-8 in KK13 was eliminated by the mortars using opportunity fire. In the Close Combat Phase, US units advancing into ZZ10 ambushed and eliminated a 3-4-8, then withdrew to AAll. A 7-4-7 eliminated the 3-4-8 in AA10. The 8-0 in BB10 eliminated a CX 3-3-7, while the concealed 3-4-8 in AA8 ambushed the advancing GIs and withdrew to BB7, declining close combat.

Unlike the basic modules of the *ASL* system, the *KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER* modules include detailed, historically accurate mapsheets (hence the nomenclature, Historical ASL module). The two modules provide five large mapsheets, covering three different portions of the battlefield (Stoumont, Cheneux and La Gleize, Belgium). The hilly terrain of the valley is depicted with elevation spanning from Level -2 to Level 9. Counter sheets provide SS multi-man counters, support weapons and vehicles, their American counterparts, status counters (helpful for a battle where the German commander must concern himself with the critical issue of running out of gas and ammunition). Chapter P provides all the module-specific rules (including new terrain types) and campaign scenario material. A total of eleven shorter scenarios are also provided. The campaign rules allow for refitting, but introduce the critical tactical dimension of conservation of force.



ASL Crossfire

KGP 7

The Bridge at Cheneux

by Robert Banozic and Rich Summers







GERMAN
(Rich Summers)
Rating: 60% Pro-German

December 21st finds Peiper's drive to the Meuse temporarily stalled as the storm troopers wait for ammo and gas to be brought up from the rear. Fortunately, at Cheneux, a detachment has pushed across the Amblève and captured a vital bridge. In support, elements of a *flak* battalion have just arrived. Understandably, the Americans don't seem too happy about the developing situation, and across the misty fields and roads it is obvious that they are forming up for a major attack. It's bad enough that they don't really have a stomach for hard fighting, but won't they be surprised when they find out just how strong this bridgehead really is!



AMERICAN
(Robert Banozic)
Rating: 60% Pro-US

KGP7, "The Bridge at Cheneux," begins as almost two-scenarios-in-one, as the divided US forces must meet the dual victory condition of capturing the bridge and clearing out the town proper. By mid-game the issue should be somewhat clarified as the Heavy Mist probably thins and the Germans find themselves backed into one corner or the other. The end-game drive to secure the final objective may be a close-run thing, but I have every confidence in the ability of my men to get the job done. Today, Cheneux; tomorrow, Berlin!

GERMAN DEFENSE

Advantages: Rate of Fire, SS, Hidden Initial Placement, Range

The German order of battle (OB) includes 104 firepower factors that have the chance for rate of fire (ROF), including two quad-20 *flakwagens* that are the big hits of this scenario. Contrast that with 28 factors

for the American OB. This gives the German a sustained hitting power that can't be matched by the US forces. The SS troopers aren't too shabby either. Their six factors of inherent firepower (FP) are optimal for gunning down men in the open, but its their morale that makes them shine. They don't go down easy, and, with a broken side morale of nine, they won't be down for long. Additional firepower is added by the 105mm and FlaK 38 artillery (the 105 can also fire smoke). More important, however, hidden initial placement (HIP) for the guns means that the defender has the option to hide and infiltrate back into Cheneux or Monceau after the paratroopers have passed. This threat should keep a number of GIs off the front lines for a while. Finally, the high proportion of artillery and support weapon (SW) firepower in the SS OB means that the Germans have a considerable advantage in range. This advantage is partly negated by the effect of mist on long-range fire, but much of the time, especially in the northern half of the playing area, the SS will be able to engage the paratroopers first with little risk to themselves.

Low Ammo B# -1

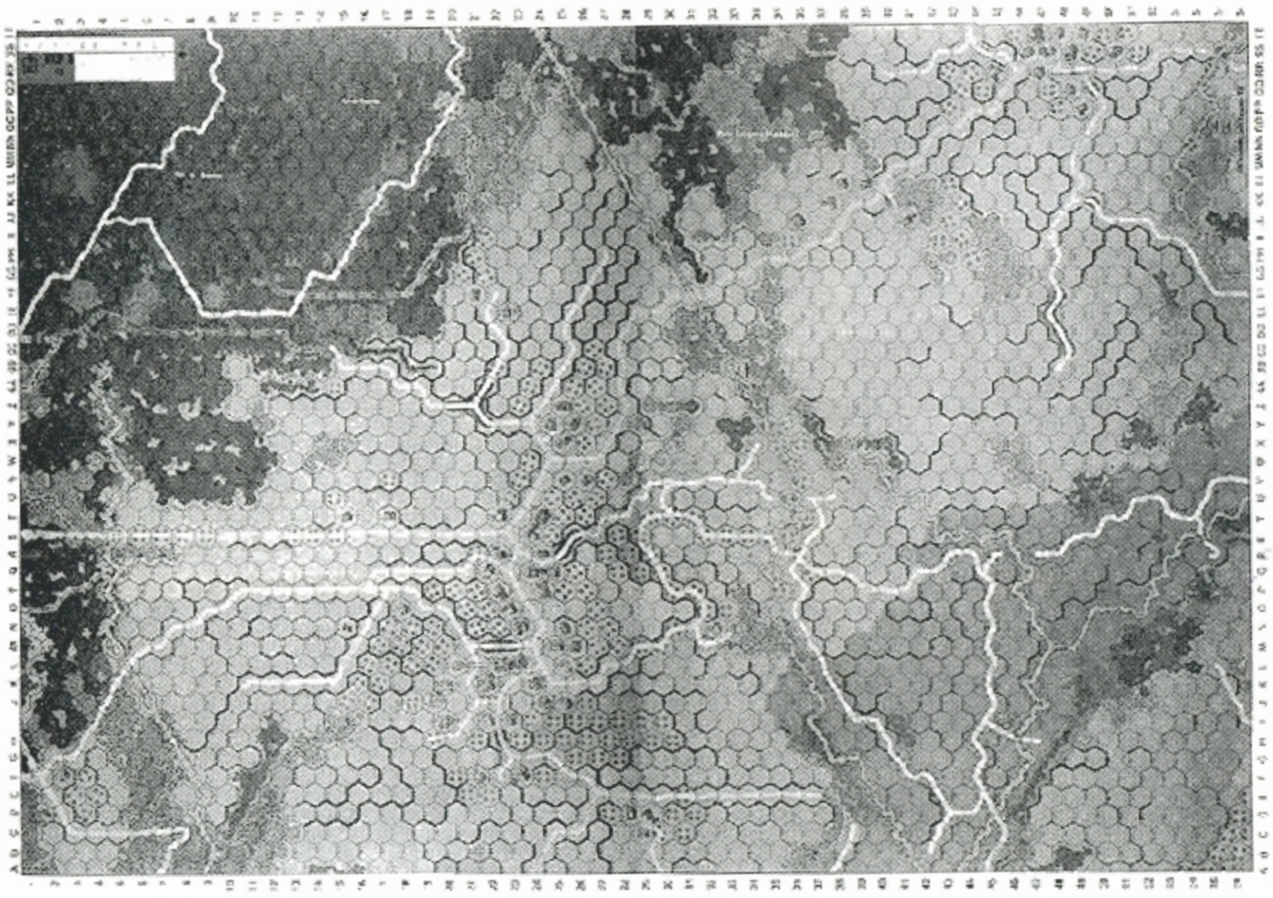
Disadvantages: Ammo Shortage, Vehicular Vulnerability

Although there are few disadvantages, the first one is a doozy. Ammo Shortage (A19.131) prohibits fire lanes (since affected machineguns are not in good order; A.7). It also lowers SW breakdown numbers by one, gives guns and vehicles a circled breakdown number one lower than their inherent B#, lowers ammo depletion numbers by one (in this case negated by the SS increase), and causes experience level rating (ELR) replacement when a 12 is rolled on an infantry fire table (IFT) attack. Without this handicap, I don't think the SS would come up short too often in this scenario. As it is, 50 per cent of the machineguns (MGs) will have malfunctioned after just eight shots (that's only two game-turns on average for the heavy machinegun (HMG). The guns and vehicles will last a little longer, eight shots before half of them have low ammo counters, and then four shots later about half of those will be malfuntioned. But even here, that's only four turns of continuous action for the quad-20s.



The familiar *ASL* scenario cards grace each module.

Next, if ammo shortage doesn't take the *flakwagens* out, then enemy fire probably will. These large targets are particularly vulnerable to long-range mortar fire, because the effects dice roll of a hit isn't influenced by the mist. Of course, up close and personal, not even mist will save the *flakwagens* from the heavy firepower of the American squad. The armored half-tracks fair a little better, but all of the American SW have a reasonable chance to score a kill. Plus, the paratroopers are toting those captured panzerfausts (KGP Special Scenario Rule 15). No doubt about it, the key to German success in Cheneux is to build a defense that doesn't tax the vehicles or ammo too much.



This playing aid shows the other two mapsheets of the second *KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER* module, depicting the area around La Glieze.

German setup:
Z10: 3-4-8, ?
AA8: 3-4-8, ?
AA9: 3-4-8, ?
AA10: 3-4-8, ?
BB10: 8-0, ?
DD3: 3-4-8
EE13: 6-5-8
HH13: 6-5-8, MMG
II13: 6-5-8
JJ5/1: FlaK 38, 2-2-8 (HIP)
KK8/5: SPW 251/1
KK13: 6-5-8, ?
LL7/5: SdKfz 7/1
LL9: 9-1, HMG, 6-5-8
LL12: 6-5-8, LMG, ?
MM6/5: leFH 18, 2-2-8 (HIP)
MM7/5: SPW 251/21
MM8/5: SdKfz 7/1
MM14: Sniper
NN12: 6-5-8, LMG, ?
PP12: 9-2, MMG, 6-5-8

Played out on a colorful mapboard faithful to the actual terrain, the Bridge at Cheneux from *KAMPFGRUPPE PEIPER II* is one of the finer scenarios in the *ASL* system. I'll also give it two thumbs up in the replay department, given the defensive options open to the German player. To win, the American player must control all building/rubble Locations on the board as well as the critical bridge over the Amblève River. Consequently, the SS are pretty much free to choose the field of battle. Moreover, because the strong American force is split initially, with a weaker contingent in the town of Cheneux, Peiper's finest can entertain thoughts of retaking the town (which I've seen done successfully). In the final analysis, I think the stormtroopers are better served if they let the Americans come to them. The best way to do this is to defend in strength around the bridge.

The game starts with a pre-game rubble placement phase, but even as the defender, who usually benefits from this kind of destruction, I don't think this phase is particularly important. By special scenario rule, rubble counters can't be placed adjacent to one another. Nonetheless, rubbling BB9, FF12, GG9 and DD10 will congest the central portion of the board and should give the northern wing of Rob's attack something over which to trip. The rubble in BB9 has the benefit of blocking the narrow street through Cheneux (P5.126), preventing bypass movement along both sides of hexsides BB9/AA10 and BB9/BB10. This should drive impatient Americans out of town. More important, the rubble counters in DD10 and FF12 extend the natural barrier provided by the stream, helping to channel the Americans to the north and south. Finally, the rubble in GG9 is perhaps the least important, but it prevents bypass of the hex, forcing the paratroopers from the northwest to cross a hedge or make a detour on their way to the bridge.

The strongest American force is also the closest to the bridge. More than twelve US squads start out in the southern playing area with some of their jumping-off positions only eleven hexes from the bridge. Facing this, I've arrayed seven of my ten and a half

squads (and all of my SW) in the large woods south of the bridge. Three squads and two light machineguns (LMGs) are set up concealed at woods edge. Mist, concealment and range will keep Rob's best initial attack to an 8(+1) and that would burn up nearly three squads, all his medium machineguns (MMGs) and the 9-2 leader. True, with ROF, his MMGs might do a little more damage, but the odds favor less than a squad of mine breaking during the Prep Fire Phase (PFPh). His two mortars will probably be salivating at the air burst possibilities, but again, even accounting for ROF, each only has about a 20 per cent chance of scoring a pin task check (PTC) or better versus concealed, mist-enshrouded units. I like the match up in this sector. His hundred-plus men fire off a couple of inconsequential shots at my 8-morale stormtroopers. In return, any paratrooper that tries to set foot in the fields between Monceau and the woods eats potentially lethal 6(-1) or 8(-1) defensive fire.

However, that's just the picket line. Along the bank of the Amblève on the southeast flank, *oberleutnant* 9-2 heads up one MMG team in PP12 with a line of sight (LOS) to nearly half the plain between Monceau and the woods (thanks to the up-slope hexsides; P2.3). These guys will fill any gaps in residual fire. They'll also turn back threats that develop along the river. I toyed with the idea of starting the HMG here, but four portage points (PP) are tough to carry, if you are busted, making it risky to go toe-to-toe with the paratroopers. Later, the 9-2 will team up with the HMG closer to the bridge. Note that I started the leader out possessing the MMG with the squad stacked on top. As long as I remember to transfer SW during the first Rally Phase, this is a good way to keep Rob guessing about the real makeup of this stack.

The remainder of the positions on the south flank are rounded out by a squad in II13 (which gains concealment after setup), an MMG team in HH13 and a squad in the EE13 farmhouse. These three squads cover the paratrooper's safest, but longest route to the bridge. Paratroopers starting around GG17 can move up to the woods free of fire, but they'll be hit by 20+ FP when they start pushing inwards.

After turn 1, once the advantage of concealment is lost, American firepower will begin driving the stormtroopers back into the woods. Across its shortest axis to the bridge, however, the woods are five hexes deep. This will provide the SS with plenty of cover to establish a line of concealed units free from US mortar or long-range fire support. Here, Peiper's finest will face down the paratroopers at point-blank range, relying on their superior morale and the defenders prerogative to take the first shots. In the misty woods, most of these shots will be of the 12, 16, and 20 (+2) variety. Unconcealed Americans can't weather too much fire like that. Yet, if Rob wants his men to gain concealment, it will cost them a turn off the line. As the game progresses, substantial remnants of the six starting squads will coalesce around LL9, where *leutnant* 9-1 and the HMG team have been waiting from the outset. This team will deploy on turn 1, and the leader will direct two attempts to dig foxholes each turn (B27.11). By the time the paratroopers get in range, preparations should be complete. Then, the 9-2 and a couple of squads with an MMG will move in and take over the HMG. This dug-in position (48 FP at point-blank with good chances for ROF) chokes off access to the bridge from the southern woods. More importantly, if not threatened directly, this MG nest is sited to hammer the northern approaches to the bridge, as well. While the MG nest won't form until German turns 3 or 4, it will be one of the cornerstones of the final German defense—and one that the American will have a difficult time subduing.



National Archives, 111-SC-199149

House-to-house fighting was a common combat sight along the roads of Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge.

Cheneux itself is only covered by a light screen. Concealed half squads (HS) occupy all the buildings across from American set-up locations, and another HS covers the far north flank. As in the south, concealment and mist will absorb much of the initial American firepower, leaving most of the screen intact to interdict US movement out of all proportion to their actual strength. The four HS in Cheneux pack a total of 24 FP at point-blank range that can be divided up against any paratroopers that try to cross the Z6-Z9 street. This might not be the Seigfried line, but these guys will impede the opening US moves at little cost to defensive resources. The half squads that fail to beat back American moves stand to be annihilated in close combat (CC), so they'll opt to break voluntarily rather than fight if it seems that the rout options allow a continuous secondary line (even of broken units) to form astride the US line of advance. There's also an 8-0 leader in town, but if things get real hot he may not be able to do much. I don't expect many survivors to make it out of Cheneux, but every turn that they delay the American force means an extra turn of ammo around the bridge.

The early fighting should be tooth-and-nail, but the paratroopers, due to their lower morale and need to cross open ground, will be taking the worst of it. They'll probably find that they need every bit of their advantage in manpower and leadership. This, however, is just the prelude. As the SS withdraw to the bridge, they'll be falling back on their heavy equipment.

At start, the two quad-20 *flakwagens* are positioned right in front of the bridge, one on the road in LL7, the other in the woods in MM8. The LL7 location is something of a compromise setup; on turn 1 this battlewagon intends to move back across the river to PP5. It didn't start there, however, because this might have enticed US mortar teams to set up in SS17 and SS19, where they would have been perfectly sited to rain shells down on the soft-skinned target leading to a fairly swift demise. Once in PP5, the *flakwagen* can place 20 FP on the approaches to the bridge (albeit with a +1 dice roll modifier for firing through the bridge). It also can pummel the MM9 and NN9 woodland cliffs, helping to choke off the exits from the southern woods. Admittedly, some games will witness a little trouble getting into position crossing the



By the end of January 1945, the US 82nd Airborne Division had plenty of armor support to plug the gaps, but not during the early days of the German offensive.

006/PP5 hedge as Gas Shortage (three per cent chance) or Bog (28 per cent) will conspire to stop the half-track short of its goal. Don't worry about this, because, wherever this gun platform ends up, it will earn its keep.

The second *flakwagen* owns the bridge, sited as it is to lay 40 point-blank FP onto the entry hex. For the paratroopers, it's imperative that they take this position out—not an easy task. GIs from the south can only threaten the *flakwagen* from the cliffs in NN9 or at point-blank range from MM9 and LL8. To the north the vantage points are more numerous but beyond the 7-4-7s inherent range.

Supporting the *flakwagens*, the HIP 105mm gun in MM6 can lay fire onto most of the high ground east of Cheneux and it has special orders to smoke the rubble in DD10 and GG9, if the paratroopers should decide to position some long-range weapons there. On average, the 105 will get off twelve shots before low ammo takes its toll, which means that in most playings it should still be functioning at game's end. Being set-up adjacent to the bridge, this is a key position that the paratroopers must take out.

The 20L *flak* goes in the woods in JJ5, pointing northeast. This should delay any paratroopers that try to work toward the bridge from the far north. If a threat doesn't develop from that direction, the gun can turn its attention to the bed of the stream, toward which it can spray all the approaches to the bridge with 6 FP. Other good set-up locations include HH13, where the gun can play an active role in the defense or where the crew might chose to hide, waiting to move into Monceau on turns 6 and 7. Alternatively, there are all those orchards outside Cheneux. The 20L hidden anywhere there could give the GIs nightmares, especially if the crew chooses to infiltrate back into town late in the game. Some may view this use of the 20L as gamesmanship instead of generalship, which may be true, but it also reflects the real difficulties inherent in securing an area. While I haven't chosen this tactic here, my setup will keep the 20L HIP until late in the game, forcing Rob to expend a few HS on the tedious chore of securing the mapboard. Notably, this burden will fall on the smaller northern US force.

Finally, there are the two armored half-tracks that start out huddled with the other vehicles in front of the bridge. Their role will develop as the game progresses. If the American northern group gets badly mauled on its approach to the bridge, then one or both half-tracks might go on the offensive, chasing down broken paratroopers and moving back into Cheneux. Otherwise, these vehicles will be content to stay back and hold the bridge. In this case, the 251/21, with its 12-FP IFE (infantry firepower equivalent), will most likely move into LL7, once the quad-20 leaves, adding to the already considerable firepower in this area. The second half-track doesn't pack too much of a wallop with its paltry 3-FP MG, but the American can't afford to ignore it because of its threat to motor back into town. Like almost every other unit in the defense, the American will probably have to eliminate this half-track to win. That is the main problem for the paratroopers—to get onto the bridge, they're going to have to kill or capture almost every element of this very potent German OB.

AMERICAN SETUP AND ATTACK

Advantages: Numbers, Assault Fire, Close Combat, White Phosphorous, Time

Obviously, the greatest advantage wielded by my paratroopers is their sheer numerical superiority in infantry. A two-to-one edge in squad equivalents, leaders and leadership dice roll modifiers (DRMs) is substantial in any scenario. The assault fire bonus (A7.36) enjoyed by the 7-4-7 squads will also come in handy, as it will often push my Advancing Fire Phase (AFPh) attacks onto a higher column. (Yes, the SS have the same ability, but the Germans will have few, if any, AFPh opportunities while I'm on the offensive). The one-factor edge of my squads over the 6-5-8s translates into a significant close combat advantage that I will be trying my best to exploit. I also won't forget the white phosphorous (WP) ammo for the mortars (MTRs) (see KGP16) and Bazookas (BAZs). The WP grenade capabilities of the squads should get a liberal workout. I also think that, with eight turns, I have plenty of time to do the job. Some of my units start only eleven hexes from the bridge, while others are already in town. I should have little need for reckless running in this game.



Disadvantages: Morale, Mist Change

These GIs have decent morale, but that of the SS is even better. The SS troopers rally so fast that I am going to have to work extra hard for kills (not just breaks). So, the importance of my CC advantage is magnified (it being not modified by morale levels and frequently fought to the death). The tendency of the heavy mist to decrease in intensity is also troublesome. I must get up-close-and-personal with those Nazi guns and *flakwagens*. Denser mist is better for me.

American Setup:

Y6: 3-3-7
Y7: 8-0, 7-4-7
Y8: 9-1, 2 x (7-4-7 w/MMG)
Y9: 7-4-7
Y10: 8-1, 2 x (7-4-7 w/BAZ)
Y11: 7-4-7, 3-3-7
GG17: 8-1, 2 x (7-4-7 w/BAZ)
HH17: 7-4-7
II17: 7-4-7
JJ17: 7-4-7, 3-3-7
KK17: 7-0, 7-4-7, 3-3-7
LL17: 8-1, 2x(3-3-7 w/MTR), 7-4-7, 3-3-7
MM17: 9-2, 3 x (7-4-7 w/MMG)
LL6: Sniper

I think that the rubble is more of a hindrance than a help to the Americans, no matter where it is placed. I have to place it somewhere, so I chose to rubble GG19, II19, V10 and V8, which are about as far out of the way as I can manage. I did not rubble the Delvenne Farm (S10) because I might be trying to make a stand there if Rich tries to win by storming and holding that corner of Cheneux. The rally bonus of the building could prove helpful (of course, it could help the Germans, but I am optimistic that they won't get that far).

After Rich sets up, it is clear that he intends to make his stand at the bridge. In a face-to-face game I ordinarily wouldn't count counters, but I can tell here that Rich has deployed a squad. It also appears, from what I initially can observe, that Rich has setup leaders possessing machineguns in a

futile effort to confuse me. Certainly, he will transfer some support weapons in the first Rally Phase (RPh). I expect to find the 9-2 and HMG at LL9 ready for some quick entrenching work, while PP12 probably harbors a 9-1 and MMG. Hexes LL12 and NN12 probably contain LMG-toting squads. I won't be surprised if Cheneux itself is garrisoned by nothing more potent than a collection of half squads. There are no dummy stacks. The guns using HIP are likely to be positioned so as to bring under fire the approach to the bridge.

The first PFPh kicks off with a couple of BAZ WP shots from Y10, first at AA10, and, if successful, then at Z10. If I have the ammo, I'll have a hit (note that terrain effects modifiers don't affect BAZ WP To Hit attempts; see the official Q&A to C13.42). I can then fire the leader-directed inherent firepower of the squads at the best target of opportunity, depending on how the BAZ WP performed. If either BAZ unit had no WP, it will decline to fire in order to move. I will use opportunity fire on the stacks at Y8 and MM17, as well as the 8-1 and MTRs at LL17.

In Cheneux, the Movement Phase (MPh) starts with assault move WP grenade attempts from Y10 on Z10, if not already hit by smoke by a BAZ. The squad at Y7 assault moves into Z7 and also tries for a WP grenade on AA8 if Rich declines to shoot, while the 7-4-7 at Y9 assault moves into Z9 with a WP placement attempt, if circumstances dictate. These WP grenades are great, but not just for their ability to strip concealment (worthwhile in itself). The real payoff is the 16.7 per cent chance of a WP critical hit (CH) (A24.31). Since the lowest morale check (MC) the enemy could have rolled when so afflicted is a dice roll of 7, the reversed terrain effect modifier (TEM) effect really hurts. In those stone buildings, Rich's units are likely to be broken. If the target unit should fire when I move adjacent, I would not try for WP, because the enemy has sacrificed his concealment already and the chance of a CH is not worth having to digest the residual FP attack which would be triggered by the grenade attempt.

The 3-3-7 at Y11 double times (CXs) Z11-AA11-BB10 to reveal a concealed German, which I suspect to be the 8-0 leader. If the 7-4-7 at Y11 hasn't already tried for WP placement on Z10, it will follow to AA11. The 3-3-7 at Y6 moves Z5-Z4 with a planned advance to AA4. My own 8-0 runs out to BB7 to draw fire and/or cut rout paths.

What happens next in Cheneux will depend on how the attack has proceeded and on what I have discovered. Given the blizzard of WP attempts and flurry of movement, I won't be surprised if no German unit in the town has retained its concealment as we approach the Advance Phase. I intend to jump into CC at every opportunity, and, if I have penetrated to AA11 and BB7, Rich will find voluntary routs difficult to execute to his advantage. The future looks mighty bleak indeed for the garrison Rich has stranded in Cheneux, while my paratroopers should soon be streaming eastward to the bridge.



The grim-faced soldiers of the surrounded US 101st Airborne Division move out to dislodge their besiegers on December 29, 1944.

Meanwhile, the GIs attacking the woods line from the south will move forward the sacrificial half squads. I would like to see the 3-3-7 at JJ17 move to JJ14, and the free HS at LL17 double time to LL16-MM16-MM14. I expect the FP of some 6-5-8s may still be available, with the result that the squads at JJ17, KK17 and LL17 will probably have to settle for an assault move forward. The HS at KK17 will probably move LL16-MM15 to draw additional fire. My units at GG17 move individually to GG15, while the squad at HH17 assault moves to HH16 and the II17 squad moves up to II15.

Obviously, I have taken some chances. There may well be some broken GIs on the approach to the woods line. I can afford some early casualties, as I believe I have plenty of time to get these units back into the battle. The opportunity to get into the woods quickly is worth the risk, and my opportunity fire by MTR and MMG may well open some holes in the \German defenses. These ROF weapons have the potential to inflict permanent casualties. Any broken German units appear to have a bit of a hike to their rally points.

Because the German line in the woods is so thin, I don't think that the SS will want to stand toe-to-toe with my paratroopers and exchange fire, even when the Germans get the first shot. I expect Rich to slowly pull back through the woods and so retain/gain concealment. I intend to use my numerical superiority to push some units into the face of the German FP, forcing concealment loss, while others, which have gained concealment themselves, take advantage of this with assault moves. Although these assaults will not always succeed, occasionally Rich will muff his shots or my troops will demonstrate commendable fortitude under fire, setting up the AFPh and CC opportunities which I am seeking.

I plan to swing those MTRs west around the woods mass to get into hex EE11. This can be accomplished in three turns, so they might be in position to lob WP and high explosive (HE) on the German LL9 strongpoint by turn 4, depending on how quickly I can force Rich's troops off the southern woods line. The MTRs can be effective also against the *flakwagens* from FF10 or GG10, but the return fire would be a problem. I am hoping to be able to swamp each of Rich's most powerful positions with multiple threats when the time comes. The use of "concealment growth" wherever possible should help in this. Placement of my Sniper in a hex like LL6 should improve my chances of softening-up the vehicles or the leader-directed HMG team before they tangle with the bulk of my forces.

During my assault, I will have to sweep every possible hex in the German set-up area containing concealment terrain in a hunt for HIP guns, although some fortuitous application(s) of KGP18 (civilian interrogation) might ease this burden. A crafty *ASL* player might try to keep a gun HIP in such a location until the last turn or two, when the crew can jump out to grab a Victory Condition location and thus snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. I hope Rich tries this, as it will cost him a gun, because I will have a couple of HSs run around the place looking for holdouts. Many players might be surprised to learn that even the stream-woods/brush/orchard hexes have to be checked. Although a non-vehicular gun may not fire from a stream (B20.6), there is no rule which states that a gun may not be emplaced in a shallow stream (but not deep stream; C10.1, 10.3 and A2.9). I think that the ability to emplace a gun to use HIP in an eligible stream hex is clearly a glitch in the rules arising from the new terrain types introduced, but it is legal.

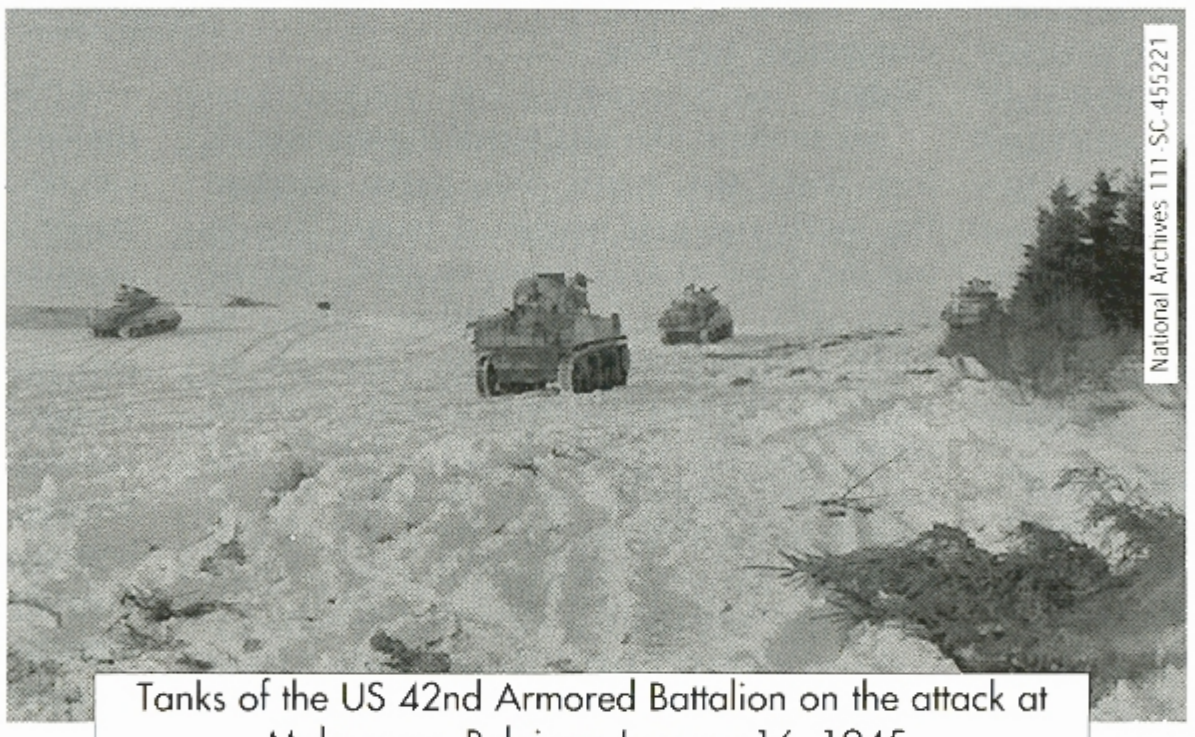
Another rules question which is likely to arise in this scenario is whether the low visibility (LV) hindrance (here, it's mist) is sufficient to allow a concealed unit to assault move or advance into an otherwise open ground hex without losing concealment. It is true that LV hindrances do not negate first fire movement in the open (FFMO) or interdiction (E3.1). But A10.531 seems unclear if a hex would be considered open ground for concealment loss purposes when *both* the "-1" FFMO and a "+" DRM apply—from an LV hindrance, for example.

GERMAN RESPONSE

Rob has countered my concealed set up with opportunity fire and WP. This will certainly minimize early American casualties, but the German benefits as well. First, in about half the games, Rob's Cheneux force will have expended all BAZ WP in this effort. Those bazookas seldom carry more than one round of WP, if even that much which come back to haunt the paratroopers as they close on the heart of Peiper's defense around the bridge. Next, opportunity fire is not a technique I use too often, though a case can certainly be made for it here. The downside is that units using opportunity fire sacrifice their movement options without increasing the immediate movement options of the other units in the vicinity. After the Movement Phase, opportunity firers will probably be able to do more damage against the now unconcealed targets than if they had prep fired, but, with the assault fire bonus that the paratroopers enjoy, nearly similar results could be achieved after moving. It's not a big deal, but I think that opportunity fire works to the defenders advantage, because the attacker sacrifices some of his initiative.

Of course, Rob may not need too much initiative in Cheneux. He has focused on annihilating my HS screen with a careful series of moves which take full advantage of terrain, WP and assault movement to prevent my troopers from obtaining any potentially lethal "-1" DRM for my fire attacks. Without that benefit, I'll think twice about losing concealment, waiting instead to ambush the advancing paratroopers in CC (42 per cent chance of success). This will allow some of my men to withdraw from their positions to form a secondary line. Failing ambush, the HSs will retain concealment in CC and the survivors (73 per cent of the time) will assault move out of the hex during the German movement phase. In any case, I'm not counting on the survival of too many HSs. They've done their job, buying at least a turn for the bridge defenders and possibly depleting some of the bazookas of their ammo. The HS in AA9 has the best chance of getting out of Cheneux. It will work its way cautiously through the orchards east of town, breaking up the American advance. The remaining HSs will stand and fight if their concealment is stripped by WP. Grenade WP dissipates before final fire, so I'll get off a few 6(+1) shots versus adjacent paratroopers. These have about a one-third chance of breaking or pinning the GIs, which may save a few German skins.

That done, the Cheneux garrison will fix bayonets and prepare for CC. It doesn't look like my original plan to voluntarily break and rout out of town will bear much fruit, because Rob's moves may succeed in cutting the rout paths for two of the four HSs. Broken, the remaining two HSs would not form much of an obstacle to later US movement. Choosing to fight, there's still a 16 per cent chance that I might get some ambushes and withdraw (barring a favorable "-1" American leadership modifier which would halve the chances). Alternatively, I might inflict some casualties, but that's not very likely given the 1:4 odds column upon which I'll be attacking US squads.



Tanks of the US 42nd Armored Battalion on the attack at Mabompre, Belgium, January 16, 1945.

In the future, I think I'll alter the Cheneux defense a bit. The 8-0 leader that started out in this sector is virtually useless, and would have a much bigger impact with the main line of defense in the southern woods. There, he can help men move without double-time penalties through the woodland hills and will be available to rally broken troopers, freeing the 9-1 and 9-2 leaders for their more important frontline missions. To fill the gap left by the departure of the 8-0, I'd pull the concealed HS in Z10 back to BB10 instead.

In the far north, my lone 3-4-8 HS faces down a 3-3-7 HS, which isn't too worrisome. More paratroopers will be forced north to guarantee that my boys don't work their way back into town. Indeed, this seems like a good time to spring the 251/1 halftrack on a supporting mission. So, during the German movement phase, the halftrack will motor along the paved road to HH3, remaining in motion. Depending on the American response, the halftrack can then continue to the northern board edge around GG2 on turn 2, or, if paratroopers with bazookas start dispersing northward, it can head back down to its starting position. This should keep the paratroopers off balance, deflecting them from the bridge. If the halftrack does head north, the HS in that area will make plans to fall back slowly toward it. Later, they will try to make a move back into Cheneux.

Rob's attack in the southern sector is fairly cautious, in part due to the commitment of almost a third of his force to opportunity fire. Except for the suicide HS, the remainder of the force is understandably leery of rushing across the fields against the full weight of SS fire. Consequently, little progress is made, except along the western flank where the paratroopers move forward relatively free of fire. Versus this type of attack, it is best to withhold fire from at least one of the initial SS positions, so that concealment can be retained. This will enable the German to form another concealed line on turn 2, using the concealed squad in II13, plus any squads that opt not to fire.

In this playing, the 6-5-8 in KK13 will fire on the first HS to move, hitting it with a 6(-1) shot in JJ15, leaving two residual fire (RF) factors. If this doesn't stop the HS, a 2(-1) subsequent First Fire shot into JJ14 will leave one more factor of RF. The second HS will be greeted by an 8 (even) shot in MM15 from the MMG team directed by the 9-2, leaving either two or four RF depending upon whether the MMG maintains ROF. This position can then follow up with MMG ROF or squad subsequent first fire if the HS isn't stopped. The two LMG teams will hold their fire, given the poor shots offered to them.

While it can occasionally be difficult to exercise this level of fire control in a face-to-face contest, it will pay big dividends, enabling a strong, concealed line to reassemble at woods edge for the American turn 2. As many as three concealed SS squads may be peering out over the misty fields as the Americans prepare to move again. To form this line, the concealed squad from II13 will double time to KK12 and then advance to KK13. The concealed LMG team in LL12 will assault move back one hex, avoiding defensive fire, and then

advance back into its original position. The concealed LMG team from NN12 will pull back double time to MM11, and then advance into MM12. Unless the American MMG platoon advances into LOS, the MMG team directed by the 9-2 will remain in place, taking a 6(+1) shot against their best target. I'll skip using the MMG here—the incremental gain in effectiveness doesn't justify the risk to the MG for this target. It is better to save the MG for shots that receive a favorable DRM. On the western edge of the woods, the line will begin to contract as the MMG team in HH13 pulls out to JJ12 (covering the flank), and especially the vulnerable exhausted 6-5-8 in KK13. In all likelihood, the original occupant of KK13 will have been broken by American advancing fire and opportunity fire, and the remnant will rout back into the woods.

There's about a 50 per cent chance that at least one foxhole will be dug in LL9 this turn. I'll keep digging here until there's enough underground space to accommodate two squads. The two HS will then be free to move up into the woods or drop down into the streambed near the bridge. In the streambed, they can be in crest status in KK9 (nicely shielded by the adjacent hedge) or LL8 to harass paratroopers moving in from the north and west.

The squad in the EE13 farmhouse is going to start taking some licks from the bazooka-toting paratroopers in GG13. An assault move into the rubble in FF12 will increase the defense modifiers to "+4," making the squad a pretty tough target for the bazookas. My men will probably face a 12(+3) shot. Still, they have a decent chance of coming out unscathed. Over the long haul, however, they have no real escape, so they'll try to tie up some paratroopers for as long as possible.

Finally, the vehicles break out of their huddle and make their moves. The *flakwagen* motors back across the river to PP5, risking bogging down as it crosses the hedge behind which it wants to hide. Next, the 251/21 slides forward into LL7. Now, the defense begins to assume its final form. From now on, the SS are going to play cat-and-mouse with the paratroopers, ducking out of fire whenever possible and working to keep at least a few men concealed. No more than a delaying action is required until the stormtroopers are forced to pull back to LL9. There the withdrawal will stop—only broken men will leave the LL9-MM9 line, routing back to LL8 or MM8 where they will rally for another round. The *flakwagens* will hold their fire until large or threatening targets begin to present themselves, and then they will start shooting for as long as the dice gods allow (no point in being shy about firing then). If a weapon is going to go down early, nothing can be done about that. It is during this phase of the game that the German really needs to blunt the American effort.

If Rob does get his mortars north, which shouldn't happen until turn 5 at the earliest, the 105mm gun will lay smoke into their hex. I don't like those mortars for two reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, they're a threat to the *flakwagens*. Second, they can really take the sting out of the LL9 MG nest, if they succeed in dropping WP into the hex.



The oft-recurring scene of Americans moving through a Belgian town to attack Germans dug into positions beyond the town. Here, the 87th Infantry Division moves through Bihein.

Rob's assault, though well reasoned, doesn't sway my assessment of this scenario. Of my seven squads arrayed in the southern woods, at least half should make it back to the LL9-MM9 line with whatever functioning MG they have. Concentrated here, with 9-1 and 9-2 leaders directing point-blank fire, these stalwarts should turn away most American threats, possibly with heavy casualties. Shots at 16, 24 and 36 (even) are hard for anyone to stomach.

To the north, the paratroopers will make decent progress once Cheneux's HS are eliminated. Americans may even start showing up around the EE8/EE9 cliffs on turns 2 or 3, getting their first view of the German preparations around the bridge. I hope a few stray Germans in the area will have prevented the paratroopers from gaining concealment. At this point, the *flakwagen* in MM8 will gear up for some 20(+4) shots into the high ground. Initially, the threat from the north shouldn't be too great, because the paratroopers will have been deflected in several directions (searching for HIP guns and chasing down nuisance HSs). Once the Americans are ready to focus on the bridge in strength, the stormtroopers will be ready, and a huge firefight will erupt. In the end, the stormtroopers morale, firepower and good defensive positions should stymie the GIs.

AMERICAN RESPONSE

Those Ultra intercepts have proven their worth once again—I have correctly identified all of the concealed German units (except for transposition of the 9-2 and 9-1). My attack will proceed without any major surprises. However, I am surprised at the enemy's failure to expect or better respect those stacks using opportunity fire. The classic case for the use of this tactic is when concealed (or HIP) enemy units are likely to become known due to defensive (first) fire. This is precisely the situation offered to the Americans as this scenario begins. The use of opportunity fire for the MTRs and kill stacks is definitely the way to go. That is how the American inflicts the permanent casualties which are so key to the assault, and which are simply not likely to be generated against concealed targets in the first PFPh.

I can only imagine that *Obersturmbannfuhrer* Summers' hopes for maintaining concealment in Cheneux are the product of too many of *der Fuhrer's* deranged lectures about inevitable victory. Aside from any WP rounds from the BAZs—at least one, 66 per cent of the time—my other squads will toss WP grenades with abandon when those HSs hold their fire (are they *sturmtruppen* or UN peacekeepers?). Concealed German 3-4-8s allow more of the American 7-4-7 to jump the HSs in CC (which usually won't pull off an ambush), and kill them even if they decline to attack (to preserve their concealed status). Rich's estimate that his men will survive CC 73 per cent of the time assumes that those HSs won't be up against anything more lethal than individual 7-4-7s. When two 7-4-7s attack a concealed 3-4-8 the odds are 2-1. I think the Germans would be much better served if they took shots at 6 (even) which they can get as my paratroopers assault moving into the Z6-Z9 street, thereby placing residual FP. Of course, that may not work either, but at least it affords some chance of hurting the GIs.

The real problem for the Germans in Cheneux stems from the disposition of the

troops ordered by their HQ. Like the Amblève itself, Rich's defense is deep, but not very wide. By this I mean that while the woods are well-defended, the German commander has left holes in his line which are big enough, ahem, to "drive a flak truck through." Slowing the attack from Cheneux is a key part of any German defense plan built around saving the bridge, but the four HSs which Rich has allotted to this task are woefully inadequate for the job. I predict that this puny force will be destroyed or driven off by the end of game turn 2, and probably without any permanent casualties being inflicted on the GIs. Having now gained concealment in the orchards, my guys will be pushing to the crest lines overlooking the bridge and approaching the northeastern woods on turn 3. This is far too rapid for the German, particularly when the stronger US body will be pressing simultaneously from the south (with more WP-shooting BAZs).

Imagine, instead, that a couple of the German HSs in Cheneux were upgraded to full squads, and that perhaps one LMG were added to the garrison. With this increase in strength of just one net squad and one SW, a force would be created which might repel the initial US assault across the Z6-Z9 street for a game turn, with the prospect of continued resistance. To be sure, the German commander has to prioritize with a view toward his overall strategic goals. I'm suggesting, however, a somewhat more balanced defense would work better than that proposed by Summers.

Rich's attempt to establish a second concealed line in the southern woods for turn 2 has some merit, but this effort simply serves to illustrate the relatively poor options afforded the German commander in this scenario. Turn 2 will see a repeat of the opportunity fire tactics by my MTRs and kill stacks (which advanced forward one hex in turn 1A). One German unit will be the recipient of a 30 FP attack in KK13 or LL12, while another enjoys more air bursts. This is in addition to the AFPh attacks generated by the units that moved. Although Rich seems to be hoping for mega-FP end-game attacks by his survivors in the woods, he assumes that my troops will be known. Yet, concealment is easy to gain in those woods. With my numerical advantage, I expect to generally have some concealed troops on the frontline during the German turn. This means holding troops back temporarily on occasion, but it is better than getting blasted by the massive FP which Rich promises.

My evaluation that this scenario is 60 per cent pro-American does not stem from any particular defect in a given strategy. Rather, it is based on my assessment of the overall potential in the OB within the constraints of the scenario itself. Like his real-life counterpart, Rich simply doesn't have enough troops or ammo to get the job done adequately. Time (er, the turn record chart) is on the side of the GIs.

GERMAN CONCLUSION

The decision to hold fire and retain concealment in Cheneux is a tough one. It stems, however, from my desire to rescue at least one HS from the town for a turn 2 stand. If the garrison loses concealment, it is unlikely that any units will survive the combination of advancing fire/opportunity fire, close combat and turn 1B defensive fire. True, WP will reveal some of my men, but it is unlikely that he has enough grenades to smoke everyone out. Hopefully, the resistance put up by the revealed forces will enable a few men to straggle out. This might buy an extra turn for the bridge defenders.

Rob's suggestion to increase the Cheneux garrison is well taken. Yet, barring a large commitment, Cheneux is generally destined to fall early, usually with the loss of all hands. Part of the problem is that it is difficult to hide from American defensive fire during the German turn. Moreover, as demonstrated here, the city just isn't the best defensive position. The terrain on the south edge of town favors the attacker. The single road that must be crossed in the north can be tackled using assault moves or by dash (if possible). There's more open ground in front of the bridge and this is where German firepower can really be put to best effect. Plus, the stream offers some excellent defensive sites. In addition to KK9 and LL8, crest status in LL6 commands the approaches to the bridge. Units placed in these hexes can duck into the stream to avoid defensive fire and then advance into position to interdict American movement. Comparing the defensive options in Cheneux with those around the bridge, I don't think there's much question that the bridge provides the best benefits and deserves the most personnel. The Cheneux garrison is minimal to buy a couple of turns of delay. I think they will succeed in many games.

To the south, Rob's 30-factor MG nest is a real threat to cause some permanent SS casualties. Again, concealment minimizes the damage. The mere threat of firing will probably limit US moves to single-hex assaults. A bolder defensive approach would see similar restraint during the American movement phase, but the line of stormtroopers that is assembled in KK13-LL12-MM12 would then squeeze off a 24(+3) defensive final fire shot into the opportunity firing American MG nest. More than 70 per cent of the time this will score a lMC or better which stands a good chance of breaking up this position before it gets its shot off. Of course, having retained concealment, it may be wiser to keep it. In the end, the goal in the south is to fight this battle from LL9 and its environs. The American advantage in numbers and dispersal will be negated as the GIs are funneled toward the bridge. Faced with fewer target hexes from which to choose, the true defensive strength of the German OB (its concentrated firepower) will become apparent.

AMERICAN CONCLUSION

If the German defense of Cheneux really hinges on saving a single HS to stem the American tide on turn 2, my point has been made. I predict that this kind of performance will reward the enemy commander with a chilly reception at the next OKW staff conference.

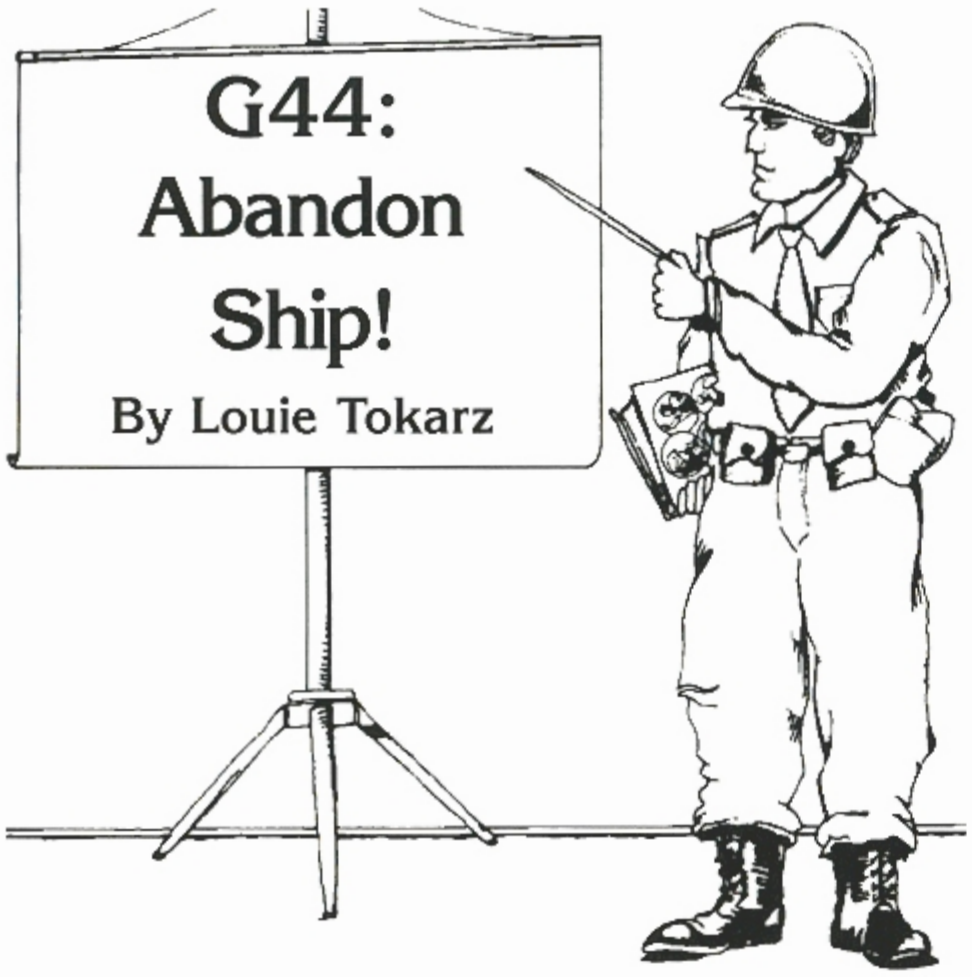
Certainly, the relatively open terrain around the bridge poses serious problems for the American attack. As Rich notes, the concentration of the front into a smaller perimeter as the GIs close on the bridge offers some advantages to the defenders. However, the ability of the numerically superior US forces to cycle units from the firing line back a hex to gain concealment (particularly in the southern woods area) should take the edge off of that concentrated German FP. Furthermore, those German units will themselves be squeezed into fewer, and juicier, target hexes as the battle moves into its final stages.

I don't want to leave the impression that the Germans can't win this scenario. A 40 per cent chance is considerably better than no chance at all. It will be a good fight, but I still want the Americans.

★

AFTERMATH

House-to-house fighting and close combat with German *flakwagens* continued throughout the 21st. The outnumbered *SS-Panzergrenadiers* fought fanatically, but were slowly forced to give ground. By 1700 hours, the few surviving Germans abandoned their heavy equipment and withdrew northward, eventually crossing the railway viaduct toward La Gleize. Peiper's bridgehead was eliminated at the cost of 225 Americans and about 200 Germans. Companies B and C of the US 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, emerging from the battle with only 56 men and 3 officers, were later awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for their valorous efforts to capture the village and bridge.



SCENARIO BRIEFING

This scenario is by Jeff Cebula, one of the original Chicago ASLers who goes way back to the purple colored *SQUAD LEADER* box and the *GI ANVIL OF DOOM* playtest. Jeff was also the first person I ever played *ASL* against and to this day many of the ideas and ways to go about playtesting I learned directly from Jeff.

I liked "Abandon Ship!" from the start; I prefer scenarios where both sides have to do something. To me there is nothing more boring than playing a static defense scenario, especially if I am the defender and my opponent is sleep-walking through the game (this is something becoming more and more prevalent on the *ASL* tournament scene thanks in part to the internet, where players have virtually an infinite amount of time to study every move—and often bring the same mind set to the face-to-face arena). After two playings of "Abandon Ship!," I knew the Victory Conditions had to be altered. In the original version, the American needed to exit 16 CVP off the west edge. Even though a SSR prevented the Americans from moving west of the roadblock before turn 4, the outcome wasn't even close if the Americans started running 16 points toward the edge on turn 1. In fact, the game boiled down to a fight between the German tanks trying to catch up to the fleeing U.S. squads, with American bazookas trying to stop them. Not much fun. After talking to Jeff and reading about the situation, I changed the VC and gave it another try. The next version looked almost identical to the current VC, except that the Germans only needed to move units west of hexrow J instead of west of the gully. After a few more playings, we changed the VC one more time to the present version. We also changed the order of battle, exchanging a Pz IVJ for a Panther and deleting one concealment counter and one HS from the U.S. side. We played it a few more times and the outcomes were very close.

Since the release of this scenario at a tournament, I have heard that some folks believe that if the Americans just stand their ground they can't be beat. I must disagree. During the playtest, a few people tried to do just that, but ended up losing badly. Such an approach for the American player is a do or die proposition—all it takes is one tank behind U.S. lines to win the game for the Germans. More on strategy later.



AMERICAN ADVANTAGES: 10-2, '45 BAZ, Squad Firepower

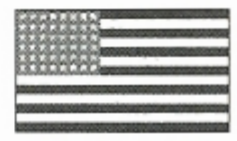
The 10-2 leader is the single most important unit in the U.S. OB for this engagement. There will be many ways to use him in this scenario: directing fire from a MMG, directing bazooka fire, routing voluntarily with units that voluntarily break to run away from the German hordes, or placed in a building with a squad for possible street fighting. I am sure you will think of some others of your own, too. Just how you use the 10-2 depends on the tactical situation at hand. His mere presence can be enough to make the Germans reconsider their approach, leaving a cautious German player uneasy and unsure of his troops. The '45 bazookas are the best thing the American has to stop German armor. Keep them in spots where the Germans are likely to traverse when breaking for the U.S. rear area. Although the Germans will eventually outnumber the American squads, the Americans have the big edge in firepower at a range of four or less. Don't get caught in a long-range dual with the Germans during the first two turns.



AMERICAN DISADVANTAGES: Squad Range, Fall-Back Defense

Don't shoot it out with the Germans at longer than four hexes, where they will have a better than 2-1 advantage in firepower. One of the most difficult maneuvers in *ASL* is falling back. It takes nerves of steel and good decision-making to pull it off successfully (one of the hardest things for me to learn was when the defender should run instead of fight). Sometimes a beginner will try to fight it out with the attacker when he should instead fall back and make the attacker move into the defending fire. One of the most important things I ever learned from Jeff relates to this subject. In my beginning *ASL* days, it seemed like my troops were always getting cut off and annihilated. Jeff told me that if you are debating about moving back or firing, then you should probably move back. This advice has proven very useful in numerous games.

AMERICAN STRATEGY



There are two ways to approach this scenario as the defender. The GIs can stay and fight it out with the Germans (this takes guts) or they can make a skilled retreat back toward the roadblock, while exiting some troops off the west edge. I like the latter, because I don't trust my luck and I have never seen a successful stand by the Americans.

First off, where does the 10-2 go? I like to start him in the upper level of V3 with a MMG team. This will help keep German infantry from moving down the German right. Extracting these troops from this spot might be a bit tricky if the German decides he would rather kill them than do anything else on turn 1 or 2. Therefore, a BAZ goes in U2. This covers the road, while helping the 10-2 retreat (by firing WP into hex W3, if the bazooka dudes aren't under any Ger-

man guns themselves). There are numerous possibilities for the other MMG, but I like to use it to lay a fire lane on turn 1, either down the road from Y9 (but moving out of this spot could be difficult if the German positions any troops to cut him off) or Z9 (but this offers even worse fall-back possibilities than Y9). Therefore W5 looks like the safest spot if you plan to move back on turn 1. The other three bazookas should be used to cover the obvious tank paths on turns 1 and 2. If you feel adventurous, you could try and place a couple up front to take shots at curious German armor. Remember, though, the Panther is not going to die from a normal bazooka hit on its frontal armor. If the Panther ventures close enough (say about three hexes), try a Deliberate Immobilization shot. I would even sacrifice a half squad (HS) with a bazooka during the prep fire phase, if the German player was kind enough to give me the chance to immobilize the Panther during the first two turns (I wouldn't want him to think I was ungrateful). An immobilized Panther likely would be good for nothing later, after U.S. troops have fallen back to safer pastures.

I like to take two squads and a HS with an 8-0 leader and head for the roadblock on turn 1. Here the squads can start digging foxholes for the end-game defense of the roadblock. After the foxholes are dug, I like to exit the 8-0 and one squad. These units will need to run like the dickens to get off before the German player can get troops to a high enough level to interdict their path off the board, so the extra movement factors the leader provides are crucial to the success of this mission. By exiting these units and maintaining possession of the roadblock, the American obtains a seven-point lead (three EVP plus four for the roadblock). Even if the Germans manage to move one tank past the gully, the Americans still win—provided they maintain control of the roadblock. I believe that maintaining control of the roadblock is essential for the Americans. Don't wait too long to exit the troops. Note that Germans units in U4 at Level 1 or anywhere on the hexrow U ridge line can see the exit hexes, making a nightmare of the exit.

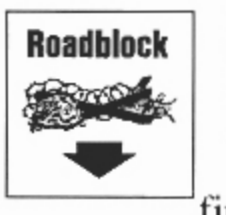
The 60mm MTR can be a very pesky weapon for the Germans to face. I like to move it into hex P7. From there it can greet the Germans as they advance into the woods on the hexrow U ridge line. The MTR can also be placed to cover hexes CC9 and DD8 on turn 1.

The rest of the game amounts to a slow retreat back toward the roadblock. Move back before the Germans move adjacent to your units. Don't be tempted by point-blank prep fire attacks, whether at 12 or 24 (+1). If they fail, so do the Americans. Keep the enemy off your flanks. If the German player can maneuver units into the U4 building early, he puts extreme pressure on the American left flank and makes crossing the T3-T5-R6 street a treacherous affair, not to mention the headache of exiting.



GERMAN ADVANTAGES: Tanks, First-Line Squad Range

The Panther should be used to engage any U.S. strongpoints which may have bazooka support. If possible, stay at least four hexes away from any suspected U.S. bazookas. Barring a lucky hit, this should keep the Panther from falling victim to a Deliberate Immobilization attempt. The ability of the tanks to move quickly around and in back of the American positions should be utilized early and often. This will help keep the American player from solidifying a central position which could prove impossible to break. Use the German range advantage early in the game. If the American wants to stay and fight, he will be at a disadvantage.



GERMAN DISADVANTAGES: Short-Range Squad Firepower, Roadblock, Time

Limit the close range U.S. firepower advantage by spreading out. There is not much you can do about the roadblock. If you can remove it or clear it, the game is pretty much going your way. If the American stays and slugs it out instead of falling back, take your time and look for an advantage on the flanks. If the American pulls back, be aggressive and try to maintain contact. Not every shot the U.S. player takes is going to hit the mark. The German infantry in this scenario is pretty much expendable. Trade squads to gain ground.

GERMAN STRATEGY

The German player should take a cautious approach on turn 1 in order to position his troops for a turn 2 assault. Don't go running across the board on the first turn in a panic. I have seen some people be *too* aggressive on turn 1 and lose the game before it even gets interesting. The German strategy depends largely on the approach taken by the American player. If the American stays and fights, then the German player can slow down his attack, waiting for the right moment to pounce. However, if the American decides to fall back, the Germans will have to push quickly and try to close with the Americans. After the first U.S. movement phase, enemy strategy should become apparent, and the Germans will be able to put their game plan into action.

On the first turn, movement into the trees in CC9-DD8 will be safe through the path GG10-DD9. Advance into CC9 and DD8. Try not to give the American too many shots on the first turn. Run a few HS to try to reveal U.S. positions and possibly the locations of bazookas. A few dead HS won't weaken the Germans much, and the information gained should be worth the price. Any surviving HS will keep all American units which have first fired from attacking any other German units that are not as close or closer (this is one reason some players hold off firing at scouting HS). I like to position the tanks looking down the road with one pointing at the first level of V3, prepared to smoke any defenders on turn 2. Use the Panther to face off any strong U.S. position, but remember to keep it out of effective Deliberate Immobilization range.

Now, the ball is in the American player's hands. Will he fight or run? Look over the options if he stays and fights. If he has units in Z9, Z10, or Y9, you should do everything to cut off and annihilate them. German units in CC9 and DD8 should help this cause. Next, move to the wall along hex AA10 as soon as possible, preferably with a tank. If the other tanks are sighted on the road, only a very brave American will stick around and fight on the German left. After that, move some units behind the hedge near BB5. From there, the Germans will enjoy a firepower advantage against any units in the wood line centered on W5. If the American has a unit in U2, it is a good possibility that it is a HS with a bazooka. If possible, move a tank to AA2 to meet that challenge. With the Germans in these positions after turn 2, they then will be ready for turns 3 and 4. On turn 4, the Germans want to be in a position to run a tank or two behind the Americans. Because of its small target size, the best tank to use is the JgPz IV. Try to ensure that the American player has multiple decisions to make during his turn 4 defensive fire phase, perhaps allowing the JgPz IV to skate through. Using a Pz IV here to draw American fire or enter a U.S. position to freeze their fire would be a smart sacrifice if the Germans could gain a foothold in building U4. When U4 is in German hands, the American "up front" defense will crumble like a house of cards. That is why it is important to cut off any units around Z9. If the Americans fall back to T6, make sure they won't be able to leave (except to go back into the counter tray). If things have gone well, the German has but to grab the roadblock or move a tank past the gully. I believe that the Americans will need luck to stay and fight successfully.

If the Americans run for it, most of what I wrote above still applies. However, a

good player will force the Germans to move into American fire each movement phase instead of letting the Germans have any decent prep fire opportunities. In this situation, the German must get very aggressive—an intact force at the end of the scenario may show that you are a very decent and moral individual, but you probably have lost. Don't be shy about using your troops. As soon as time permits, move units with the MMG and the 8-1 into Level 1 of building U4, or any other position which has a LOS to the exit hexes. This should put a crimp in the U.S. exit plan.

With the Americans falling back, the Germans will have a better opportunity to attack the roadblock—but against more Americans. If the Germans can move boldly enough, they should keep the Americans from getting too many units back to defend the roadblock. Break them before they get there. Position units to cover the open-ground road hexes, making retreat difficult. If the Germans can hem the Americans inside the village, the chances of taking the roadblock will be increased. Once the battle breaks down to a short-range fire fight, deploy and run HS at the enemy.

FINAL COMMENTS

None of this is easy, but it should be fun. Almost every time I played this scenario during playtesting, the outcome was close. The win-loss records that I have seen for this scenario have been encouraging, and the few times I have played it since its tournament release, the games were close. I have won with the Germans twice against people who thought the Americans couldn't lose by staying and fighting. Of the ten scenarios we did for the '96 ASL Open, this one was the most difficult one to fine tune. I think we were successful, which makes all the work worthwhile. Due to the replayability of the fall-back defense, "Abandon Ship!" should be a tournament favorite for years to come. Personally, I would like to see more scenarios like this—where the defender has to do more than set up correctly, and where both the defender and attacker must move to the point of contact.

★

Chestnuts of Iron

The Defense of Luga

by Jim Stahler

Turning from the small, tournament-sized scenarios I've been updating for the *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER* system, I have now tackled two of the largest scenarios from the original *SQUAD LEADER* system. ("The Capture of Balta" will appear in an upcoming issue.) These were also two of the most popular scenarios in the early days of the system. We spent many hours playing these two back in the good old days.

Both are from *CROSS OF IRON*, the first module published after *SQUAD LEADER*, and both take place early in the 1941 German summer offensive as Hitler's hordes invaded Russia. In "The Defense of Luga," a huge Russian force must battle across fields, forests and hills to secure a large foothold in the city. The Russians outnumber the Germans by three to one, with lots of armor in support. However, the Russians have far to go, and their enemy is hidden and supported well by anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns.

THE UPDATE

Several rule changes between *SQUAD LEADER* and *ASL* can have a significant effect on this scenario. One is that tanks cannot carry riders at this early stage of the war. In the original scenario, a significant fraction of the Russian squads could be carried rapidly forward by the tanks. Also, radio-less tanks must now either use platoon movement or risk a task check to be able to move. This inherent restriction replaces the original Special Scenario Rule, which required a die roll to determine how many tanks could move in a turn. Most Russian tanks of this period have red MP numbers, which makes immobilization possible every time they start up. New with *ASL*, the Russians have the option of a commissar at this stage of the war, and the *ASL* rules give them the capability to launch a human wave attack.

The German forces in the update are virtually the same as in the original scenario. The crews, originally 2-4-7s, are now 2-2-8s. The German machine guns in *ASL* are stronger than in *COI*. I dropped the setup restriction that allows no more than twelve German counters on any board, since that seems to me to be an artificial restriction. The game is more interesting to allow the Germans a wider variety of setup options. I kept the Russian support weapons unchanged from the original scenario and added two elite squads during the playtest.

The board configuration is unchanged. With four board sections, it is one of the larger *ASL* playing areas. The game length is extended to 13 turns. With so far to go, twelve turns weren't enough. The victory conditions are recast in terms of *ASL* building control. The Russians still need to control 16 stone buildings to win. There are no stone buildings on board 5, one stone building on board 4, and five on board 3, requiring the Russians to take at least ten stone buildings on board 1. For awhile, during playtesting it seemed like the Russians needed to have the number of buildings reduced, but in the end, the Russians appear able to take 16 stone buildings if they can defeat the German troops. I considered ignoring the buildings on boards 3 and 4 and just requiring the Russians to take ten stone buildings on board 1, but I kept the original victory conditions to encourage the Russians to pay attention to the town on board 3. This gives the Germans a reason to recapture buildings the Russian fails to protect.

I used the standard ELR during this period—4 for the Germans and 2 for the Russians. Since the Germans are on the defensive, I gave them a SAN of 4. The Russians have the minimal SAN of 2.

The balance of adding a 10-0 commissar to the Russians should be a big help, because the Russians are hungry for leaders, with only four for 41 squads. On the ofter side, the loss of two first line Russian squads will be missed.

RUSSIAN ANALYSIS

Let us begin by examining the board layout. Most of the stone buildings are on board 1, which is quite a hike from the Russian entrance on the north edge of the board. To win, the Russians normally take all five stone buildings on board 3, the single stone building on board 4, and ten of the stone buildings on board 1, which is nearly half the board. They must therefore advance 48 hexes from their entrance board edge in the course of the game, a huge distance for only 13 turns. It works out to nearly four hexes per turn—little time for the luxury of prep fire for the Russian infantry.

The hills and woods channel the Russian advance into four main avenues initially. The westernmost route is along the western edge of board 3, over the western hillside of Hill 534, perhaps using building 3I10 for cover. The next route lies along the road between the two hills on board 3, with lots of cover from the shellholes, woods, and hills. The third route runs between Hill 547 on board 3 and the woods around 4H6. The eastern route is along the eastern half of board 4, following the road between the 4H6 woods and the 4H2 woods.

The Russians have enough troops to send a sizable force along every route, and saturate the German defenses. Also, if one force becomes bogged down, it is easy to switch troops between routes or to abandon one axis of advance in favor of a more promising one.

The first stage of the game involves the Russians either capturing the board 3 town or bypassing it on board 4. Once the Russians have passed the town, they can directly attack board 1 from board 3. They can also enter board 1 from board 4, passing between hill 498 on board 3 and the woods around 5X1. A small force can be sent through the gap in the woods on board 5, near building 5R1. The long road through the woods on board 5 can also be used, but it is too long for infantry. However, it might be interesting to send a couple of spare tanks that way to dash behind the German lines and wreak havoc with enemy withdrawal, routing, and concealment.

The Russians must depend on using mass and maneuver to force the Germans out of their positions. The infantry doesn't have the time to stop and trade fire. They must do their damage with Advancing Fire, Defensive Fire and tanks. The Russians will take lots of casualties, especially from fire lanes and multiple ROF, but they must press on regardless. Time will run out on a timid Russian player.

Because the hidden Germans can be almost anywhere, in any building or woods or grain hex, the Russians should move only one squad at a time, to minimize the damage done by successful German fire. More than one squad should move with a leader only along a secure route from the rear.

When the Russians find some Germans, they should maneuver so that the Germans must brave fire to withdraw to a new position in the rear. The idea is to not let the Germans get away, and to minimize the amount of time lost due to the German outposts.

The tanks have little to fear from the German infantry if they don't get ahead of their own protective infantry. However, the Germans have a variety of anti-tank weapons that can deal with the Russian tanks, including machineguns which can knock out some of the lightly-armored tanks. The Germans have four types of ord-

nance ranging from the MG (base TK# of 4) to the 50L Guns (base To Kill number of 13—which can penetrate the armor of any Russian vehicle in this scenario).

Each of the six types of Russian tanks has its own characteristics, its own advantages and disadvantages. The T-40 armor is very weak. It is vulnerable to all the German AT weapons, even machineguns. However, its 8-factor CMG is very effective in this scenario, because the Germans present only infantry targets. A good use of this tank is to maneuver behind the Germans and use the CMG to cut off the German retreat. Unless it is using road movement safely in the rear, it should be buttoned up the whole game, because with its one-man turret it is easily Recalled and cannot fire its gun while Crew Exposed.

The T-26 M37 is an average tank for this period of the war. It is on the slow side, with red MP, so the Russian player should be reluctant for it to stop. It can often survive against the 37L guns, but it is dead meat if it meets up with a 50L gun. It, too, spends most of its life buttoned up. Even though it doesn't frighten the German player, it can be a handy tool.

The BT-7 M37 is one of the fastest tanks in *ASL*. It has the same puny armament as the T-26 M37, but it has very light armor and no radio. This tank must watch out for German machineguns. Its great speed often takes it far ahead of the remainder of the Russian forces. It can be used to get behind the Germans to cut them off and encircle them. It frequently detects German guns the hard way, by becoming their first target and their first victim. This tank often remains in motion.

The eight tanks in these three light tank-types are often risked and lost. They are expendable. The three other types of Russian tanks are the heavys for this period of the war. They are much more valuable, much more threatening, and much less expendable.

Like the light tanks, the T-28E has no radio and red MP numbers. It is important to keep these tanks in a platoon. If one gets destroyed or immobilized, any other tank can join with the survivor to form a platoon and keep it moving up. The T-28E need not concern itself with German machine guns or the 20L AA gun. The 37L AT guns are a significant threat only from the flank or rear. The 50L AT guns are the big danger, and must be avoided. Because these tanks are so slow, they will usually be accompanied by infantry. They are good candidates to move up with the infantry in an armored assault, because they lose so little movement.

The T-28E has many machineguns, and very respectable main armament (76mm). Note that its turret is not restricted, so the crew can stick its head out and improve its chance of getting a hit, provided that the Germans are not too close. This tank also has a smoke number of s8—the Russians' only source of smoke. The smoke can be used to blind the most dangerous German firing positions. The T-28E tanks' main use is to drive to within six hexes of a German position, acquire the Germans in the advancing fire phase, and then become crew exposed in the advance phase. Even if the Germans are protected by a stone building, a DR of 6 results in a hit, which attacks on the 12 FP column. It behooves the Germans to fall back, which ideally is prevented by the lighter tanks which have maneuvered to cut off any retreat route. In the midgame, when the Russian infantry approaches the stone buildings on board 1, smoke from the T-28Es is crucial to protect the infantry assault.

The T-34 M40 is an excellent tank for this period. Except for the possibility of deliberate immobilization and critical hits, the T-34 has nothing to fear but the 50L AT guns, and its frontal armor can withstand a lot of hits from them too. It also has red MP and a RST turret. Because of its speed and its radio (by SSR) it can move solo to zip ahead of the infantry to get behind the Germans and prevent their retreat or encircle them. Because of its strong gun, it can also move up close to the German positions and encourage the Germans to leave. This is the most valuable and flexible tank in this scenario, one that the Russians can least afford to lose but must be sure to boldly use.

The KV-2 is awesome, with strong armor and a powerful gun. However, because it is a very large tank, it is more vulnerable to deliberate immobilization, so it should be careful to stay more than six hexes from the German guns. Its job is to move up to a German unit, halt, fire an acquisition shot in the advancing fire phase, and then watch the Germans scamper away. Its most important use is taking on the German machinegun nests in the stone buildings when the Russians approach board 1. It can also fire with its crew exposed. It may make sense to stand off about 12 hexes from the Germans, open the hatch, and open fire.

The Russians typically start with the infantry and tanks spread the width of the board. The first line of squads enter the board using armored assault with the tanks. Leaders usually help haul the heavy MMGs. To prevent undue casualties, move one squad at a time and avoid residual fire. The T-34, KV-2 and T-28Es quickly move to gain the board 3 hills, to find firing positions to engage the German outposts defending the board 3 town.

After about five or six turns, the infantry should reach the southern edge of the town. By this time, a force moving along the eastern side of the board should have gained the long hedge on board 4.

The main Russian force must use smoke, tank fire and maneuver to advance from woods to woods to reach the first stone buildings on board 1. Often the original 41 Russian squads will have been whittled down to maybe a dozen squads surviving in the spearhead.

The Germans should be down to just a few squads as well, with a gun or two left in support. The endgame consists of defeating these German remnants with the Russian remnants, and rushing a few squads past the Germans to seize some undefended buildings in the rear to win the game.

GERMAN ANALYSIS

This scenario is an opportunity for the German to be very tricky. He must use deception and surprise to the utmost to lure the Russians into his deadly traps.

The German has the advantage of quality on his side. The Russian infantry is inferior in range to all the German squads. Nearly a third of the Russian force is conscript, with low morale, short range, slow speed and lax attitude. The German advantage is likely to be augmented during the course of the scenario as Russian first line squads suffer quality reduction as they fail morale checks. Expect a lot of conscripts to become disrupted, making them hard to rout and rally, and easy to capture.

The Germans also have a big edge in leaders, outnumbering the Russians, and with a total leadership modifier of "-7" as compared with the Russian total of only "-2." With their few leaders, the Russians are especially vulnerable to sniper attacks. The more the Germans can force the Russians to roll morale checks and pin checks, the more likely that the German sniper will make its appearance and perhaps eliminate one of the rare Russian leaders.

The Germans are rich in automatic weapons. Their two HMGs can dominate the battlefield. The Germans must count on the long range firepower of their machineguns to neutralize the Russian numbers. The machineguns can be effective against some of the light Russian tanks—which can also be threatened by the six guns. The 20L AA gun is only slightly more effective than the machineguns. It is more of a threat to the light tanks, but it has little chance to harm the heavys. Its main use is against the Russian infantry; it can apply its 6 IFE factors at a range of up to 16 hexes. The 37L AA gun, with its 8 IFE factors, is even more dangerous against infantry. With their turreted mounts, they can swivel to face their target much easier than the AT guns,

and their high rate of fire can wreak havoc with the Russians' infantry.

The 37L guns are effective against all three varieties of light tanks, and can threaten the T-28E from the flank and rear. Its main use against the front of the T-28E, or against the T-34 or KV-2, is deliberate immobilization. This is especially a threat against the KV-2 because of its large size. The two 50L guns, with their To Kill number of 13, are the only German weapons that can knock out any of the Russian tanks. They don't have a great chance against the front of the T-34 or KV-2, but if they can keep punching, they will eventually penetrate the front hull of the KV-2, or the front turret of the T-34. The AT guns can all fire HE at the Russian infantry.

Let us discuss three important approaches to the German defense. One is to put all the strength on boards 3 and 4, to engage the Russians strongly and as soon as possible. The disadvantage is that the Germans can be cut off from any retreat by the Russian tanks, and if the line is broken, you have nothing stopping the Russians. It only takes a couple of squads getting past the Germans to capture enough buildings to win the game. However, an up-front setup can surprise and discourage the Russian player if he takes too many casualties merely getting on board.

The opposite approach is to put all the Germans on boards 1 and 5. I think that this is a better defense, but it allows the Russians to move too quickly without opposition, and to arrive at the main line of defense with too much organization. If you have a history of setting up forward, though, the enemy may be delayed just by the threat of the German presence.

The defense that I favor has most of the Germans on board 1. A squad or two on board 5 prevents a flanking Russian move, while a third of the German force, four or five squads, sets up on board 3. Their job is to delay the Russians, breaking or eliminating as many Russian squads as possible, and disorganizing the enemy as they battle for the board 3 village. They should fire at the Russians at long range, and then bug out when the Russians get close. This outpost should be supported by one or two 37L guns, to destroy the light tanks that zip ahead to cut off the German retreat.

Do not count on many survivors of this outpost force to make it back home to board 1. For this reason, the German player should not commit his best up front. The HMGs, 9-2 and 50L guns should be set up on the main line of resistance on board 1.

Level 2 of 3M2 is a good place for a squad and an LMG. From here they can fire at any Russians that make it to the level 2 hill hexes, as well as most of the infantry that enters board 4. A MMG with a squad can start in level 1 of 3R5 or R6. From here it can fire at 3H9 and I9, to contest a Russian move along the west side of hill 534. It can also fire at the level 1 hexes from 3G1 to I2.

A MMG in level 1 of 3R3 can fire at the west side of hill 547, and also fire over the walls around building 3M2 to engage Russians moving along the road in hexes 3I4, J3 and K3. To round out the forward outpost line, an LMG in level 1 of 3L4 can place a fire lane right down the east side of hill 534, from 3K5 to F7.

These four positions can make it expensive for the Russians to advance over the hills or along the road in the valley between the hills to approach the village. However, the Russians cannot be halted by such light forces. Those German squads must get out quickly when the Russian infantry gets close. The units in 3M2 and L4 should fall back no later than turn 2. The other two squads can hang on another turn or two, and then they must withdraw as well. A couple of leaders with these forces will help them scoot and perhaps survive.

Good positions for the 37L AT Guns are 3O5, 3T1, 3V3 and 3X3. With luck, a gun will destroy a tank or two, but a forward gun is just as effective if it intimidates the Russian player, making him cautious with his light tanks, and enabling some German squads to escape after doing their damage.

The Russians will have relatively easy going until they reach hill 522 and run into the two HMG. Ideal positions for these dreaded weapons are level 2 of hexes 1BB4 and 1AA7. From both locations the HMG can attack at normal range the level 2 hill hexes of hill 522, as well as the woods in 3W4 and 3W8. Of course, each HMG should be manned by a full squad and directed by a leader. One of these should be the 9-2 leader. The full squad will bump the HMG firepower up to the 8 column within 12 hexes. These two HMGs will dominate hill 522 as well as the killing ground on board 3 to the south of hill 522. Their positions should be supported with the bulk of the remaining German forces.

Many good positions exist in the woods and small buildings for fire lanes. Some examples are 1GG7 with a fire lane to 3AA7, 1FF3 with a fire lane to 3BB1, and 1EE2 with a fire lane to 3BB5. When the Russians are getting close, the German squads and machineguns must put down a solid wall of fire. The Russian troops should be forced to move through residual fire and fire lanes to gain ground.

Two good positions for the 50L AT guns are 1EE6 and 1DD7. They both get the benefit of stone buildings for defense, and they yield good lines of fire. From 1EE6, the gun can fire at the level 2 hexes of hill 522, as well as engage any target that rumbles down the road. The gun in 1DD7 can block the gap between the gully and hill 498. It can fire as far as 4D3. The road in 4Z8 might be a good location to bore sight.

The two AA guns and perhaps one or both of the 37L AT guns should guard the flanks of this position. Hex 1GG7 is a good spot for the 37L AA gun, because it can discourage tanks from creeping along the west edge of board 1, as well as blast infantry moving up the middle. The 20L AA gun could defend board 5. In 1X0, it can fire along the 4Z2-FF5 road, and even boresight hex 4Z2. Another good place for this gun is 5Y6, where it can oppose a Russian drive down board 5. In either place, it can be supported by a squad with a LMG in the building 5FF6, with a potential fire lane down the road to 4Z8.

A successful German setup will have mutually supporting positions that create a puzzle that the Russian cannot solve, not even with all his infantry and tanks. The Russians will be allowed to penetrate to the southern fringes of boards 3 and 4, but they will be stopped cold on the doorstep of board 1, well short of victory.

★

ATLANTIC STORM

➤➤➤➤➤ *(from p. 24)*

only hope to win the convoy, but you "feed" yourself some VPs in the battle. This approach works even better if you play a Victim card in the first round, then destroy it with its Fate card in the second round.

The key to either approach is flexibility. Be prepared to make a strong final play on either side of the battle. Furthermore, don't always play "opposite" to your opponent's lead. For example, if he comes out German, you don't have to come out Allied. You could play German, too, and maybe win the convoy with the highest play on the same side.

CONCLUSION

To recap, there are many ways you can improve your play of *ATLANTIC STORM* without having to pray to the gods of dice and cards. These ways can be outlined in five quick steps.

1) Learn the two card decks from fore to aft.
2) Hold good card plays in your hand for opportune moments in the future. In particular, be ready for Victim cards and for juicy 1940 and 1943 convoys.
3) Understand the initial advantages and weaknesses of each side by suit. Of course, these initial advantages will erode or improve as soon as aircraft, ships and subs start getting lost in combat.

(Continued on p. 61)➤➤➤➤➤