

Banzai!!

The Newsletter of the Austin ASL Club

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This newsletter is FREE. Don't let anyone charge you for it.

From the Editor's Desk

Matt Shostak

The purpose of this newsletter is to serve as a vehicle for the promotion of ASL in the Central Texas area. There is no regular publishing schedule; rather, it comes out whenever there is enough material (and energy on the part of the editor), to warrant it. Article submissions are welcome and encouraged - we need good articles to keep this newsletter going. Such things as after action reports, scenario analyses, and tactical tips are always appreciated.

For information about our club, and the next club meeting, please call Matt (280-8414) or Mike (288-3778).

Austin ASL Tournament Coming Soon!!!

The fourth annual Austin ASL Tournament is scheduled for June 28-30. Work it into your schedule now, as you will not want to miss this event. Once again, David Halley is taking charge. He has secured the same location in Georgetown as last year, which was a very good facility with plenty of room. This tournament adds a unique twist to ASL. Not only are players recognized by their individual performances, but also how their team fares in a variety of theaters. Teams can be formed beforehand or at the beginning of the tournament. This format adds a nice touch of camaraderie, as players take a heightened interest in other games going on across the room. For more information, contact David Halley at (512) 869-1267.

If you have never attended an ASL tournament before, you are in for a real treat. There is no experience quite like a total immersion in ASL for an entire weekend. Chances are you will get to play more ASL games in one weekend than you could otherwise play in a few months of face-to-face meetings with your favorite opponent. Moreover, you'll get a chance to play different people, with different playing styles than you are used to. It will help improve your ASL play quite a bit. If you are a newbie, fear not - there will be plenty of more experienced players around to help with difficult rules questions, and there will be other newbies there, too. Really, I mean it - you **DO NOT** want to miss this event. Let's show some club spirit and make this tournament the best yet.

Club Notes and Ladder Standings

Competition on the ladder has really taken off. We now have 12 active members of our ladder, 9 of whom have played more than one game. Since the last newsletter, 12 new games have been played. One interesting point to note is that so far the Axis has won 22 out of 26 games. It's probably just a statistical anomaly. The March meeting was held at Mike's place, with Jack, Matt, and Eric joining him. Jack and Matt squared off and got the first PTO scenario on the ladder. Matt's Japanese managed to scratch together a defense at the last minute, helped by the timely arrival of a Zero, to hold off Jack's Australians in Children of the Kunai. Mike and Eric got going in a rollicking game of The Mad Minute, which was not completed by press time. Join the fun.

Player	Points	Record
Shostak	1207	8-1
Smith	1081	6-3
Esparza	1037	1-0
Hailey	1037	1-0
Tom Woller	1037	1-0
Purnell	1036	2-1
Swantek	1004	1-1
Seningen	955	1-3
Gerstenberg	954	1-3
O'Quin	945	0-2
Hively	918	2-6
Kirk Woller	893	2-6
Austin	1000	
Lavan	1000	
Milam	1000	
Nicholson	1000	
Sosa	1000	
Valdez	1000	

Total Results

Shostak (Russ) def Kirk Woller (Finn) in Fighting Withdrawal
 Gerstenberg (Germ) def Shostak (Amer) in Silence That Gun
 Kirk Wailer (Germ) def Purnell (Amer) in The T-Patchers
 Purnell (Germ) def Kirk Woller (Amer) in Lost Opportunities
 Shostak (Germ) def Seningen (Brit) in Franzen's Roadblock
 Esparza (Russ) def Kirk Woller (Germ) in To the Last Man
 Shostak (Germ) def Kirk Woller (Russ) in Panzers Marsch!
 Shostak (Germ) def Seningen (Brit) in Franzen's Roadblock
 Shostak (Germ) def Gerstenberg (Brit) in Phyrlic Victory
 Shostak (Germ) def Gerstenberg (Russ) In Wintergewitter
 Kirk Woller (Germ) def Swantek (Russ) In The Guards Counterattack
 Seningen (Germ) def O'Quin (Russ) in Acts of Defiance
 Hailey (Russ) def Smith (Germ) in The Agony of Doom
 Swantek (Germ) del Gerstenberg (Russ) in Berserk!
 Smith (Germ) del Hively (Brit) in The Steel Eyed Boys
 Smith (Germ) def Hively (Brit) in Denouement
 Smith (Germ) del Hively (Amer) in Patton's Prayers
 T Wailer (Germ) def K Woller (Russ) In The Guards Counterattack
 Hively (Russ) def Smith (Germ) in Wintergewitter
 Smith (Germ) del Hively (Brit) in The Crux of Calais
 Smith (Germ) del Hively (Russ) in Acts of Defiance
 Shostak (Germ) def Seningen (Russ) in Wintergewitter
 Purnell (Germ) del K Wailer (Part) in The Liberation of Tulle (G bal)
 Smith (Germ) def Hively (Russ) in Valhalla Bound
 Hively (Germ) def Smith (Brit) in Cold Crocodiles
 Shostak (Jap) def O'Quin (Aus) in Children of the Kunai

BASE POINTS:

These are the points that are gained/lost depending on who wins/loses a scenario. If the lower rated person wins a game, then the lower rated person gains the points in the "Lower Wins" column while the higher rated person loses those points. "Bonus Points" are added/subtracted from the base points to get the total points gained/lost.

DRAWS RESULT IN NO POINTS GAINED/LOST

Point Differential	Lower Wins	Higher Wins
0-50	25	25
51-100	30	20
101-250	35	15
251-500	40	10
501-	45	5

BONUS POINTS:

These are variable points added to the winning players base and subtracted from the losing players base. To find the bonus point total:

$(1000 - (P_{win} - P_{lose})) * 0.01$ Where P_{win} = point ranking of winner P_{lose} = point ranking of loser Bonus points are FRU.

Incentive for Playing: Each player is awarded 2 points per game completed, regardless of who won, as an incentive for participation in Ladder games.

Scenario Challenge

Tom Repetti

Answers from last Issue's challenge

> #1. Start with the hedgehog

Le Herisson, which is French for "the hedgehog".

> #2. Make it an Annual scenario

Le Herisson is scenario 77; put an A in front of the number to make it an Annual scenario. Scenario A77 is Hide & Seek.

> #3. Switch to the only other AH scenario with that special character in the title

Searching for ampersands, we find A53, Smith & Weston.

> #4. Add up the number designations of all of the overlays. Go to the scenario that has that many turns. S&W only has one overlay, #4. The only scenario with 4 turns is T8, Aachen's Pall.

> #5. Go to the scenario in the same location.

There are actually two others in Aachen: Kurhaus Clash and Among the Ruins. Among the Ruins (#21) is the one you want.

> #6. This scenario has the same boards as #5, but they're rearranged.

AtR uses boards 20 and 21; so does #7 Dash For The Bridge.

> #7. Backtrack 2 years.

DftB takes place on 12 Sep 1944, #64 Hazardous Occupation takes place on 12 Sep 1942.

> #8. See how many turns this scenario has? Go to the scenario that has exactly this many fortifications. Whoops.

Bob Oppen informed me that there are something like 9 scenarios that fit the bill here. Sorry about that. Only one of them, of course, leads to the right answer for clue #9, heh heh. I'll be more careful next time. Hazardous Occupation has 10 turns; A82 Orange at Walawbum has 10 Panji hexsides.

> #9. This scenario and the adjacent 3 form four-fifths of a special group. What's the fifth scenario?

Looking at the Record, we see that A80 through A83 are reprints of SCA scenarios 1,2,3, and 5. The missing one is SCA scenario #4, Chance d'Une Affaire, which was not published in the 95 Annual (but should have been).

This month's Scenario Challenge takes us into the world of anagrams. It's amazing what you can do with an anagram generator and a list of scenarios...

For instance, did you know that "Orange at Walawbum" can become "Water Bowl Managua"? Incredible.

This month, your task is to match the anagram to the scenario. Capitalization need not be followed, apostrophes can be freely inserted.

Ready? Begin!

- #1. Sliced color cod
- #2. Hancock mend some
- #3. Susie smooch hamster
- #4. Heinz bedrock earwig death
- #5. Youse pelvic life make irk
- #6. Fago thieving sloth
- #7. Repetti bend so toot
- #8. Appel how sturm
- #9. TAHGC nut senile

Disclaimer - No similarity to persons living or dead expressed or implied. It's not my fault how the anagram generator worked :-)

Spass mit Panzerfaust! (Fun with Panzerfausts!)

Tim Hundsdoerfer

In 1942, Germany realized that it needed a light anti-tank weapon which would be available to infantry on the smallest scale-the squad. Indeed, with the development of the PF the Germans had created an extremely effective light anti-tank weapon which made each Landser a potentially dangerous menace to even the most formidable Allied armor.

In ASL terms, the PF is a complex mathematical equation which allows you to kill enemy AFV with your infantry. There are basically three stages: availability, "To Hit" and "To Kill". There is also a reasonably high chance that something bad will happen when you are trying to find one or when you are firing one. I won't go into the math, but as you gain experience, you will gain an innate knowledge of the cost/benefit relationship involved in the PF. You will have to determine whether it's worth it or not, because the styles of different players will mean different thresholds of risk taking. Essentially, without taking into account Desperation Use (C13.81), you have a one in five chance of having something bad happen when you look for and fire a PF.

With a "To Kill" number of 31 (22 for the prototype PFk), the PF is one of the most deadly anti-tank weapons in ASL. A hit virtually assures a kill, barring a dud; and consider the extreme likelihood that the PF will be making a side or rear shot, and it is easy to see why wise squad leaders steer clear of these little menaces.

Of course, the PF has many drawbacks-a short range, potential hazards when firing, and uncertain availability, but without question, the PF provides the German infantry unit with the most potent, effective anti-tank weapon provided in Advanced Squad Leader. The PF check may pin or break you (C13.31), the shot may blow up in your face (C13.36), or, if firing at a same-hex target, you may cause a blaze and make your position untenable.

When you consider whether to place a Panzerschreck (C13.5) or a PF, keep in mind the strengths and weaknesses of each one. Unlike the PSK (which in German means "tank terror", pretty cool, eh?), a PF is an inherent support weapon which may or may not be available, depending on a die roll. When designing a defense, it is crucial that the most vital areas are covered with a PSK, not PF. Because if you fail the availability die roll, especially with a "pin" result, your antitank ability is virtually exhausted. So availability must be taken into consideration when you are setting up. You can count, of course, on making your availability die roll half the time. Therefore, this is an essential part of the equation which you must consider during set up.

Of course, because it is represented by a counter, the PSK is as conspicuous as a sore thumb. That extra counter attracts attention every time. (This can be used to your advantage, too. Sometimes a deployed squad or a squad with a LMG masks as a PSK.) The PSK eliminates a great deal of the risk in the equation; you will no longer pin when checking for availability. It does not blow up as you fire it. It's available 82% of the time (taking into account malfunction and elimination.) It has a decreased kill number, but not appreciably so. Even if it does malfunction, the

squad may still check for a PF, assuming that it has not used its inherent firepower. So the PSK is a much more dependable (and safer) weapon. Remember this during your setup.

There is also the Optional Usage rule (C13.311). It allows the German player to record which units have PF (up to the limits laid down by year) up to it's US#. This involves a bit of record keeping, and some will question the realism of such complete control. After all, the German player has absolutely no incentive to preserve any of his PF in such a case. Once the enemy armor dies, the German is free to unload the rest of his PF at enemy infantry, and this is no puny attack (more later). All in all, I've never played using the Optional rule, and I'm sure I wouldn't like it if I were playing the Allies. It MUST have some effect on play balance. I'd be very interested to hear what others think about this.

There are many things to remember when firing a PF. Moving vehicles are harder to hit. Because of the bell curve, it's increasingly unlikely at two or three hexes. However, larger vehicles are easier to hit, and because of the dynamics of the bell curve (created by rolling two dice), usually much more so. Looking for a PF counts as using a SW and they cannot be "saved" for later use. If you find one, you must immediately fire it or forfeit it (and your ability to look for another one.) You can look for two, but only if you have not used your inherent firepower. Of course, you forfeit your inherent firepower if you check for a second PF. Remember, also, that with the powerful PF, you are likely to flame an AFV, rather than just wreck it. Remember that after you fire that PF, you are likely to create a +2 hindrance in that hex. If LOS through that hex is important to you, you may wish to weigh the importance of that LOS against the importance (and threat) of the vehicle you are going to destroy. Even the most formidable AFVs are likely to brew up when hit with a PF.

The PF may also be used against infantry, and it is a potent weapon. A hit yields a 16FP unmodified attack. Because infantry must be either in a bunker or building, or behind a wall, and you will have to modify the "To Hit" DR with the positive TEM, infantry is much more difficult to hit. Also, only one unit, chosen by random selection, can be affected. However, it is also very important to remember that if one or more of the target units is known and has a support weapon or mans a gun, the firing player may choose that unit as a target - usually a good idea.

Also important to remember is the fact that a firer has to pay the Case C3 (+2) when in a building, sewer, rubble, bunker, or vehicle, or accept the backblast. "Eating the Blast" as grognards call it, makes you take an attack on the 1 firepower column using only the colored die. This is very dangerous, as a 1 on the colored die and a 6 on the white die might mean you are reduced or eliminated, while your target is unaffected. The unit may be able to get around both the Case C3 and backblast penalties by declaring opportunity fire in the Prep Fire Phase. If the unit is in a zero level building location or rubble, it does not have to apply the case C3 or take a backblast attack. Opportunity Fired units do not have to apply C3 or "eat the blast". The drawback, of course, is that you will have to survive defensive fire. Keep in mind that the backblast "attack" is derived from the colored die roll of the "To Hit" roll, not from a new and separate attack. Also note that units in Factories and in Rooftop locations never need to apply the C3 modifier.

For this reason, you may wish to re-think your set up. Walls provide as effective cover as buildings, so you may wish to be set up behind walls, rather than in buildings. HIP units may wish to be set up in grain or orchards, rather than wooden buildings.

Whether you are firing at armor or infantry, you may direct the PF with a leader to increase your "To Hit" probabilities (C13.35). At least allow for the possibility to do so.

So, what advice do I give to squad leaders, playing (or opposing) German squads with available PF?

Use them! It's been said many times, by far better players than I, that if you have them, you simply must remember to use them if you want to stay in a game. Get in the habit of making PF checks. Even after you've wiped out the pathetic little Shermans, use them on the hapless GIs. Use all of them, because it will get you in the habit. Later, you can start making thoughtful decisions about whether to use them or not. But get in the habit to check if you've got them. If not, you're giving up a balance which was never intended in the design of the scenario.

Prevent overruns! Most opponents will not try to overrun a unit which may find a PF, but keep the possibility in mind. Once you've used up your ability for the turn, the enemy actually has an incentive to overrun you. Remember that if you fire before the overrun is declared, you don't have to take the attack, even if he's in your hex. Also remember that if he declares an overrun, and you destroy him, you only take an area attack, rather than a full FP attack.

Plan for them! Remember when you are setting up, that squads should be in a position to maximize success. It's often better to be behind a wall than in a building. An ambush on a woods-road is pretty deadly if you are packing a

PF. But upper level building locations are of little utility, and you will no doubt be firing few PF. However, if you have a fanatic elite unit, you may be willing to take your chances with the blast.

Know the odds! You have to recognize whether the shot you are going to take is a good one or not. Nothing is more frustrating than finding a PF when your opponent is three hexes away, calculating the odds and deciding to wait, only to have the dopey squad lose the PF when the OT-34 rolls up to them. So find the PF when you know it will do you some good. When does the chance of something bad happening outweigh the potential hit? You'll have to decide for yourself. Aggressive players may take a shot when they need a 5 to hit. I wouldn't take the shot unless it's a 6 or more. When you consider the chance of becoming pinned (or broken) or having the PF explode, low percentage shots just aren't worth it.

Keep the THREAT alive! Often, against less aggressive opponents, the threat of a PF is more effective than actually using one. You may wish to forego a long range inherent firepower attack, and just use your MG, in order to keep those tanks out of PF range. Before you use a PF, think about other threats which may develop because you have used your PF capability.

Now, if you have to go up against a PF-toting force of Totenkopf, the opposite applies. You still want to remember the threat, and keep those vehicles out of PF range. Not only range, but potential range. You've got to allow for the possibility of a unit moving up to take a shot. Now, if he'll have to make a run in the open, that's no big deal since you can gun him down. But if he can move closer under cover, particularly in woods or behind a wall, you will be in trouble.

Keep in mind that if your opponent has HIP ability, every potential concealment terrain hex holds a possibility of a little killing machine. Keep away from these areas, or stay in motion. Motion is a decent defense against PF. Because of the bell curve, and the fact that motion turns an 8 to hit into a 6 to hit, moving targets are indeed hard to hit for them. This decreases the likelihood of a hit by quite a bit. So if you've got some decent IFE or big MG's, consider staying in motion and pasting the little nuisance (your ordnance is unlikely to hit if you are in motion). Remember, put him in a position where the potential damage caused by the PF is as dangerous to him as it is to you!

Play mind games with him. Running a halftrack past his squad in a building makes him make some difficult choices. It's not an attractive shot, and your loss would not be great (tell it to the halftrack driver). But if you can cut off his rout paths, he's got to consider it. Make him THINK about every shot he's taking. And think hard. When he takes that shot where he needs a "6" to hit, a well timed "whoa!" or "gutsy!" may make him think too hard about the potential consequences and take the PF out of his mind some time when he really needs it and when it may do him some good.

Overruns are generally ill-advised, but if he's pinned, and you've got an expendable unit, you may consider it. Wait until he's final fired, or has no more PF. Then make sure and give him the business, just because you can. Overrunning MMC after they've used their PF ability becomes important if you can muster a decent chance of breaking the unit, especially if they are not in good TEM. Also remember, however, that the Reaction Fire attack will likely include an Anti-Tank Magnetic Mine, so don't take low FP overrun attacks for granted.

The Germans have more than one way to skin your cat, but an unsuspected PF can ruin your day. Plan for them, just as the German plans for them. If you fail to take them into account you are making as dangerous a mistake as the German, if he fails to make plans for them. They can alter the battlefield significantly.

In conclusion, the PF is a double edged sword--a very sharp one--but a double edged sword nonetheless. Remembering to use them is a very important first step. However, knowing when to use them is the mark of a good squad leader. More so than any other SW in ASL, you MUST keep in mind the odds, the potential payoff and costs. Know the odds at all times, whether you are toting the PFs, or ducking them.