

Banzai!!

The Newsletter of the Austin ASL Club

Issue #6

May 1996

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).

Top Ten Reasons to Attend the Austin ASL Tournament

10. Convenient place to turn in your latest article submission for the newsletter
9. Play more scenarios in one weekend than you normally can in several months
8. Make fun of Mike Seningen's counter storage system
7. Support your local club
6. Take a look at some of the best trophies in ASL
5. Learn how to sign
4. Some of the finest wine in Central Texas
3. Good tune up for Wild West Fest
2. Ask Matt if he's been playing frisbee with his dog
1. Listening to tumbling dice that much makes you an honorary Rolling Stones groupie

Who: the Austin ASL Club and you

What: the Fourth Annual Austin ASL Tournament

When: June 28-30

Where: Georgetown Recreation Center, Georgetown, TX

Why: need you ask?

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 Hailey 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 Hailey 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

While rewriting the ladder program in Java as an exercise, I uncovered a bug in my C++ program. It resulted in some scores being slightly off. Both Chas and I lost a few points, while a few others gained some points. Not to worry; the bug has been fixed and the results below are correct. Join the fun.

Player	Points	Record
Shostak	1201	10-2
Hailey	1074	2-0
Smith	1061	6-3
Esparza	1037	1-0
Tom Woller	1037	1-0
Purnell	1036	2-1
Seningen	1010	2-3
Swantek	999	1-1
Lavan	967	0-1
Gerstenberg	954	1-3
O'Quin	940	0-2
Hively	938	2-6
Kirk Woller	866	2-8
Austin	1000	
Milam	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 Woller (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 Phyrrie 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) def Gerstenberg (Russ) in Berserk!
 Smith (Germ) def Hively (Brit) in The Steel Eyed Boys
 Smith (Germ) def Hively (Brit) in Denouement
 Smith (Germ) def Hively (Amer) in Patton's Prayers
 T Woller (Germ) def K Woller (Russ) in The Guards Counterattack
 Hively (Russ) def Smith (Germ) in Wintergewitter
 Smith (Germ) def Hively (Brit) in The Crux of Calais
 Smith (Germ) def Hively (Russ) in Acts of Defiance
 Shostak (Germ) def Seningen (Russ) in Wintergewitter
 Purnell (Germ) def K Woller (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
 Seningen (Jap) def Shostak (Amer) in Smith and Weston
 Hailey (Brit) def Lavan (Germ) in Franzen's Roadblock
 Shostak (Russ) def K Woller (Germ) in Blood and Guts
 Shostak (Germ) def K Woller (Russ) in One Down, Two to Go

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 time

- #1. Sliced color cod = Cold Crocodiles
- #2. Hancock mend some = Commando Schenke
- #3. Susie smooch hamster = The Commissar's House
- #4. Heinz bedrock earwig death = The Czerniakow Bridgehead
- #5. Youse pelvic life make irk = Escape from Velikiye Luki
- #6. Fago thieving sloth = In Sight of the Volga
- #7. Repetti bend so toot = No Better Spot to Die
- #8. Appel how sturm = The Puma Prowls
- #9. TAHGC nut senile = Silence That Gun

New challenge

1. Name That Scenario, given the brief clue:

- a) pulkka
- b) Polish cavalry
- c) Muslim partisans
- d) RCL
- e) Italian human wave

2. Which scenario does not belong with the others?

- a) White Tigers
- b) Children of the Kunai
- c) Brandenburger Bridge
- d) Hill 253.5
- e) For Honor Alone

3. Which scenario does not belong with the others?

- a) The Rock
- b) Bofors Bashing
- c) First Banzai
- d) Retribution
- e) End of the Ninth

ASL Exercise

Practice makes perfect. You have to exercise to be fit. This is true in ASL as well. It struck me while thinking about articles for this newsletter that the very act of writing up a scenario analysis can be excellent ASL exercise, especially for beginners who have a few games under their belts. This is because it forces you to think in a very logical, analytical way about a scenario, including options for both sides. It should put you in the right frame of mind for developing your plan, even in other scenarios which you have not put to such rigorous scrutiny. Consider doing it once in a while.

How to do it should be easy. Just take a look at a few of Mark Nixon's articles in the General or in the annuals and try to imitate what he does when he analyzes a scenario. When you are done, not only will you have learned something, but you have something that you could contribute to this newsletter.

After Action Report: A53 Smith and Weston

Matt Shostak

Mike Seningen and I got a chance to play this one recently, and it turned out to be an exciting match. This scenario is sort of the PTO version of Fighting Withdrawal. A Japanese force of 18 squads, very well led by two 10-1s, plus assorted other support weapons and leaders, must enter in two groups, one each on boards 34 and 5. They must traverse the length of the boards and exit more VP than the Americans, who have only a thin screening force in front of them. The Americans are also very well led by two 9-2s, but they only have about eight 667 squads and a couple of crews to hold off the Japanese. Moreover, the usual American abundance of support weapons is not there -- they get only one MMG and one 60mm mortar.

Since this one was even according to the record I let Mike pick sides, and he chose the Japanese. As the American player, I was most worried about getting into contact with the Japanese and thereby getting held in place and annihilated. I decided that my gameplan would be to stay just far enough ahead of the Japanese so that they would be hesitant about jumping into CC with me. Since board 34 was much more constricted terrain (dense jungle is in effect in this scenario), I decided to HIP three half squads along the path at various points so that they could block Japanese movement. I also had the 8-1 and a 667 squad over there in the middle by the junction of paths as a backup. The right side, board 5, being more open, I thought needed more strength. Thus the fourth HIP half squad went there on the path in P5. Both 9-2s were over there, stacked with squads on the far right on or by the path. The 8-0 and two squads covered the center area. As far back as I could place them, I put the two crews and the support weapons on the path on board 5. Their mission was to dismantle their weapons and run for the rear as fast as possible to try to anchor the last ditch defense. I knew this meant I was giving up any bore sighting opportunities directed by a 9-2, but I thought it was well worth it. Often if I've bore sighted a hex, I am tempted to stick around too long hoping for that miracle shot against a huge stack. In this game I didn't want any temptation to stay to the front.

Mike came on with the bulk of his force on board 5 and a smaller force on board 34. He immediately moved some of his guys along the board 34 path, but others quickly went for the far edge of the board. I didn't prepare for the possibility of this move. It was clear that they were going for that small path along the flank. On this flank his squads kept running into the HIP half squads on the path, which delayed them quite a bit. On board five my guys kept pulling back just ahead of his. The first several turns went quickly without much shooting at all. The "sideshow" on board 34 was turning into a draw. Ultimately, he was able to exit an 8-0, 447, and 228 from this flank for 5 points, but I was able to exit an 8-1, and two half squads for 4 points. The action on board 5 got really interesting as the fight reached the more open area on the second half of the board. My squads had good firing positions and cut down many Japanese as they came across. On the last turn he had a slim chance to exit some units, and they declared a banzai against the mortar crew in the last hexrow. The 10-1 got wounded and a half squad got wiped out, but a reduced squad managed to get into the hex. An advancing fire 6+0 rolled a K/ which eliminated the crew and allowed him to advance off. Another 6+0 rolled a K/ on the MMG crew. Now the Americans were forced to try to exit some guys on the last turn for the win. Unfortunately, I had not chosen their last positions with enough care. Most of them were in crest status in the gully near the center, and although Mike couldn't exit all of his squads, they were in good position to fire on these guys as they tried to get out. No one made it, and the Japanese won. In retrospect, I could have chosen a better position for these last units, and if they had exited (even just the 9-2) I would have won. Oh well, live and learn. Mike played a good game and deserved the win. I think I also played well but subtle mistakes like that one cost me in the end.

Intermediate Driver's Education

Part 2: The Run and Shoot (*part 1 in this series, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" appeared in issue number 4*)

Matt Shostak

One of the things that shocked me most when learning about vehicles in ASL was how effective they could be when firing on the move. Perhaps I just let that whopping case B and C modifier intimidate me. It's understandable - combined with the other typical DRMs such as BU and hindrances, it is often not wise to plan on hitting your target a high percentage of the time before he hits you. Then again, it's supposedly the mobility of AFVs that makes them so effective, right? How is that strength reflected on the cardboard battlefield? Are we constrained to simply moving our AFVs to a good position and then waiting for two turns of acquisition fire before we can expect any positive results? Sometimes, yes, but there are times when firing during the movement phase can pay off. It is these situations that really give me the feel of the true power of armor in a mobile battle. So it should be worthwhile to understand the capabilities your AFVs have, in case such a situation arises in one of your games. With that in mind, I'd like to go over two things here: Bounding First Fire (D3.3) and motion attempts (D2.401). I will not cover overruns, since that has already been done so well in J.R. VanMechelen's excellent "Dance with the Tiger", from **Backblast #2**.

Bounding First Fire allows you to fire (and also move) during the movement phase. The modifiers are not hard to calculate for vehicular ordnance. It would be foolish to go over them all in detail since you can read the chart yourselves, but I would like to note the restrictions, which may slip by an unwary player at first. If any weapon is fired from a vehicle, the others must be fired in the same phase or forfeit their opportunity for that turn (D3.5), with the exception of MG use in CC and multiple overruns. In addition, once a weapon fires, the other weapons of that vehicle can only be fired that turn from that same hex and if they fire during that phase (again with exceptions for overrun, and maintaining ROF D3.51). Which brings us to a small bonus for using Bounding First Fire, namely that multiple ROF can be maintained and it can be used (D3.3) either during the movement phase or the advancing fire phase (but only for one additional shot during the AFPh D3.32). Note that multiple ROF is normally NA in the AFPh, unless using opportunity fire (C5.2), but that vehicles may not use opportunity fire (A7.25).

There may be times when you do not have the luxury of playing cat and mouse games with your tanks, but are pressed for time and must close with the enemy. I'm sure clever players will find all sorts of circumstances when using bounding first fire is to their benefit. Let's just look at the numbers needed to hit. Suppose you managed to drive your tank up to a stationary enemy AFV during the movement phase, stop, and you want to take a shot. You might need a final DR of 7 to hit (10 base, +1 BU, +4 case B and C, -2 point blank). That's not really that bad. Even if you weren't point blank, rolling a 5 or less is not ridiculous odds. Consider what this may gain you. If you hit and kill the enemy, it's a win for you. If he shoots at your tank, whether he kills it or not, you may very well exhaust his ROF and

give your followup units more freedom than they otherwise might have had. That's one of the beauties of the BFF attack: you put pressure on your opponent, both real and psychological, to make a quick decision.

Of course you shouldn't forget the machineguns on your tanks. They can use BFF as well. Their firepower will be halved for BFF (D3.31). Furthermore, it will be halved again if the vehicle is in motion (D2.42). Be careful about what it means to have motion status, though (D2.4). It is tricky. Just because your vehicle is moving does not mean that it is in motion. At any rate, BFF can be a good way to shoot some infantry and still scoot your AFV out of danger from them. (EX. A stopped, BU Panther starts the MPh adjacent to a Russian 628 with a DC in woods. The 628 is in both the VGA and TCA of the Panther, which uses BFF with its machineguns to fire on the 628. The attack will be an 8+1 (8+1, double for point blank fire, halved for BFF). It then tries its MA at the 628, needing a 4 to hit (8 base, -2 point blank, +1 BU, +1 woods +4 case B and C). It then starts up and moves to a safer location.)

The implications of BFF for flamethrowing vehicles are very important. Such vehicles often receive a great deal of attention; keeping them in motion is a good way to keep them alive. Therefore it is often wise to use BFF to make attacks with flamethrowing vehicles. Usually their firepower is high enough that the halving penalties are not overwhelming. EX. A Crocodile starts, moves to within 2 hexes of a 658 in a stone building, stops, and fires its FT. The attack would be a 36+0, provided there are no hindrances. If the Crocodile had not spent a point to start, the attack would still be a 36+0, because the Crocodile is not yet in motion and the halving for D2.42 would not apply. If the Crocodile stayed in motion and fired during the AFPh, the attack would be a 16+0, because the halving of D2.42 would now apply, but the halving for firing in the AFPh would not (A22.1).

Suppose you are about to become the victim of a BFF attack. Even worse, suppose you have no chance of killing the enemy tank, such as a Panther bearing down on your poor Sherman for a point blank shot. What can you do? I think that motion attempts are one of the most overlooked capabilities of vehicles. If you read the relevant rule, D2.401, you will note that it gives your vehicle a greater chance of survival when threatened by something during the movement phase. Note that a motion attempt cannot be made unless the enemy unit causing it started the MPh out of the vehicle's LOS. Then the more time he spends in LOS, the greater the chance of succeeding with the motion attempt. So suppose a Panther is going to move up and shoot at your poor Sherman. Your Sherman is not yet marked with any kind of fire counter (this is important - read the rule). The Panther might need an 8 to hit (10 base, -2 point blank, -1 size, +4 cases B and C, +1 BU) if you just let him have his way without doing anything. It's likely you'll get to find out why the Sherman was often called a Ronson. Now suppose the Panther had been out of the Sherman's LOS at the beginning of the MPh. Suppose also that in moving adjacent, he spent more than 6 MPs in its LOS. Then the motion attempt automatically succeeds! Moreover, you get a free try at a smoke dispenser if your tank has one (D13.2), and a free VCA change. Suppose the smoke dispenser worked, then the Panther would need a 2 (+4 case B and C, +1 BU, +2 smoke, +2 motion, -1 size) to hit! Big difference. And you can use the VGA change to position your Sherman to have a quick escape out of the Panther's LOS. Maybe you could even circle around and threaten him from the side or rear next turn. The point is, making a motion attempt kept your Sherman alive. Since a successful motion attempt requires that you make a $dr \leq$ the number of continuous MPs spent in your LOS, it can often be nerve wracking to decide just when to make the die roll. Once made, you cannot attempt it again that phase, so you must choose wisely. Thus when your opponent does not need to spend a large number of MPs in your LOS to get a shot at you, it becomes less obvious when to go for the motion attempt. Only experience and the current tactical situation can help you make that decision. If you use your imagination you should be able to see how a well executed armored attack can force your opponent to make a lot of agonizing decisions such as this one.

Employing the full capabilities of your AFVs with regard to fighting on the move can add a lot of weight to your attack. The cardboard battlefield becomes transformed; you can really see the frightening power of WWII armored monsters at work. It also gives you yet another outlet for your creativity in carrying out a plan of action.