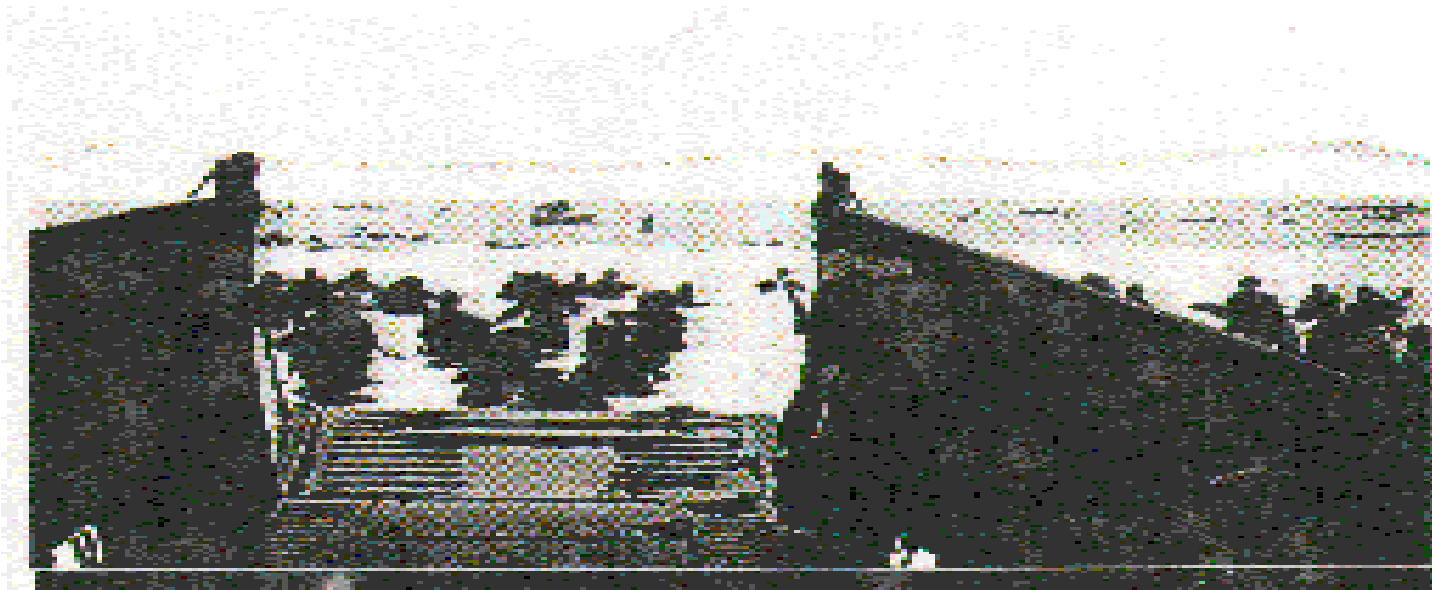


Hit the Beach!

The Newsletter for Southern California ASL Players

Volume 4, Number 2
April 1999



President's Corner:

by Rodney Kinney



I would like to recap a number of club news items, some are hot off the press, some are old news.

PTO CHALLENGE, the first *one-day tournament* of 1999 for the SoCal ASL Club. Rob Stai will preside over a set of tournament scenarios set in the Pacific, with or without the Japanese (so don't forget to bring other nationalities). Come one, come all. Sit down to three rounds of ASL in a tranquil, nurturing environment. Prizes for first and second, and the official recognition ceremony for the WestCoast Melee runners up!

From the mouth of the tourney director:

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone this Saturday at Biola for our one day tournament. The theme is "PTO Challenge". As a warning, this does NOT mean "with/against Japanese", so please bring any/all SL(tm) stuff you have.

I plan on running this event like a duplicate bridge tournament. Basically this means that you're not playing against the player sitting across from you as much as the other players playing the same side as you. The idea is to do the best you can with the forces available. For example, if you are playing the Russians on a particular round, I'll be comparing your score for that game with all the other Russian players to determine the winner for that round. You then score one "tournament VP" for each opponent you beat that round. The top two scores after 2 rounds will play a final game, winner take all.

Don't forget: Saturday, May 22nd at Biola University!

Directions to Biola: Taking either the 5 North or South or the 91 East or West, exit the freeway at Valley View Blvd. (The sign might say Valley View/Orangethorpe) and go North on Valley View. At Rosecrans turn right. Go East on Rosecrans until Biola Ave. (the light following Valley View Blvd.). Turn left and go North on Biola Ave. You will see the main entrance to Biola on your right (There will be a flagpole in the middle of small grass circle with a brick wall behind it).

Dues: If you haven't paid your dues for 1999, you will continue to receive the newsletter until August, but please pay as soon as you can. Dues are \$15 and should be sent to:

Rodney Kinney
10787 Massachusetts Ave
Los Angeles CA 90024

Open Gaming: San Diego trounced Los Angeles 8-1 at the most recent Open Gaming at Brookhurst Hobbies, to tie up the ASL Freeway Series at 1-1. All the LA ringers were notably absent: Kinney, Cruetz, Angell, Zeman. Even Fretlohr defected and played for San Diego, which helped solidify the route. Only Bruce Kirkaldy managed to repeat his win in the first LA-SD matchup. The next match has not been scheduled, but be sure that when it comes it will be a doosie! Everybody should be there for that one!

Here is the schedule for upcoming Open Gamings:

May 22:	Tournament: Biola University
June 12:	The Game Zone
July 10:	Brookhurst
August 14:	The Game Zone

SoCAL Challenge Cup

SoCal ASL Challenge Cup rules:

The Challenge Cup awards are given out once a year, based on the win-loss records of all club members. The awards will be given out at West Coast Melee, for the period ending the day before the tournament, and games played at West Coast Melee will be the first to count for the next year. Eligible to be counted towards the Challenge Cup are:

- 1) All club tournament games
- 2) All club open-gaming games, unless agreed against beforehand
- 3) All other play between members, if agreed upon beforehand, with no more than 2 games against the same opponent per month.

Results of eligible games should be reported to Robert Hammond, by email at robertndawn@juno.com or by surface mail (1025 N. Tustin St., #304, Orange, California). Only the win-loss record of each player present needs to be recorded. The names of scenarios and opponents are not necessary. At a tournament, the director is responsible for reporting results. At open gaming, a volunteer should collect the results. For private games, the winner reports the result.

There will be two awards given for the Challenge Cup: the "Gonzo" award and the "Finesse" award. They are determined from the same win-loss records using different scoring methods.

Gonzo: The Gonzo score encourages frequent play: 5 points for a win, 1 point for a loss.

Finesse: The Finesse score measures the probability that a player's score would result from flipping coins: the lower the probability, the higher the score.

Challenge Cup News:

A form has been supplied in this newsletter to keep track of your Challenge Cup games. You can either use this for personal reference and/or send it to Robert for him to compile up-to-date Challenge Cup standings (see above address).

Anybody on the Challenge Cup list that has not paid their dues yet should do so soon, or will be taken off! See the front page for where to pay dues.

Current standings, sorted by Gonzo points:

NAME	Wins	Losses	Gonzo	Finesse
WORKS, Paul	6	0	30	20.9
CREUTZ, Douglas	5	1	26	3.2
ZEMAN, Eddie	5	1	26	3.2
HAMMOND, Charles	4	6	26	< 1
KINNEY, Rodney	4	3	23	1.1
STAI, Robert	4	3	23	1.1
CASTELLANA, Chris	4	3	23	1.1
FRETTLOHR, Herman	4	2	22	1.3
MOSHER, Ron	4	2	22	1.3
BENDIS, Robert	4	2	22	1.3
RYLAND II, Sheldon	4	2	22	1.3
PLACHTA, Daniel	4	2	22	1.3
LIESEMEYER, Brandon	4	2	22	1.3
MORTON, Eric	4	1	21	2.1
STEWART, Stephen	4	1	21	2.1
SMITH, Bob	3	3	18	1.0
HANCOCK, Don	3	3	18	1.0
ROMEY, Matt	3	3	18	1.0
AIKENS, James	3	3	18	1.0
FEINSTEIN, Robert	3	3	18	1.0
HAMMOND, Robert	3	3	18	1.0
ABELA, Brian	3	3	18	1.0
HARDIMAN, Francis	3	2	17	1.1
VISNOWSKI, Eric	3	2	17	1.1
CROWDER, Jeff	3	2	17	1.1
KIRKALDY, Bruce	3	2	17	1.1
YOUSE, Brian	3	1	16	1.5
SIMONSEN, Paul	2	6	16	< 1
CONCEPCION, Joe	2	4	14	< 1
ROSNER, David	2	4	14	< 1
CAMPBELL, Thomas	2	4	14	< 1
LOPEZ, Rick	2	4	14	< 1
ARGENT, Chas	2	3	13	< 1
NIXON, Stance	2	3	13	< 1
PETROS, Don	2	3	13	< 1
WITHAAR, Hank	2	3	13	< 1
COCKE, Perry	2	2	12	1.0
ROSSI, Randy	2	2	12	1.0
DETHLEFSEN, Steve	2	1	11	1.1
THOMPSON, Scott	2	1	11	1.1
OLDEN, Chan	1	5	10	< 1
JOHNSON, Karl	1	5	10	< 1
PETERSON, Mark	1	4	9	< 1
REINKING, David	1	3	8	< 1
BURTON, Don	1	2	7	< 1
McGUKIN, Derek	1	1	6	1.0
LAUFLE, David	1	0	5	1.6
TREATMAN, Steve	1	0	5	1.6
PETRONZIO, Roger	0	4	4	< 1
IRELAND, Jon	0	3	3	< 1
ST. CLAIR, Rob	0	2	2	< 1
BROOM, Brian	0	1	1	< 1
COLEMAN, Dave	0	1	1	< 1



AAR J1 - Urban Guerillas



By Robert Smith

This scenario has catapulted onto the top of my favorite scenario list. Some people may find the SSR allowing Partisans to crop up on Russian sniper rolls of 3 or 4 too randomizing. Deal with it. The joy of this scenario is that at any time unforeseen events can spice up an otherwise ordinary situation. I think the partisan SSR provides for increased replay value. The complexion of the game can change drastically depending on what that SAN 6 sniper chooses to do, or not to do.

And even ignoring the sniper, there's always plenty of randomness running around. Let me show you what I mean...

THE ONGOING SAGA

Here is a rundown of my latest game against Curtis "Kick Bob's butt every time and make him like it" Brooks. Curtis lives in Minnesota and we play weekly on VASL. Rodney, you stud.

Curtis and I had each played this once before, myself as the Germans and Curtis as the Russians. Curtis set up the Germans this time in the exact way I wish I had when I played them (in hindsight). He set up quite strong in the factory, deploying HSs out to the German right to stop flanking AFVs. He also had a strong force in the stone building (CC9) flanking the forward bridge.

Control of the BB bridge is crucial. Curtis parked the Panther right in front of it (bb6). This is a terrific deterrent against that Russian HMG trying to command the road over the bridge.

PANTHER BY THE TAIL

There is one danger with this Panther placement. The German must make sure that he has a unit off on his left (EE7) to protect the big cat. I'd even recommend a PSK in there. Don't count on searching for a PF you may not find. On turn one I drove a Russkie tank up the Russian right into FF6 and parked aimed at the Panther's flank. The Germans in the CC8 stone building never had a good shot at me. The 88 popped up its head in W2 to try and cancel out the Russian threat. No go. I forget exactly how things went. Maybe the Panther pivoted its turret to fire. It missed. I figured I had a good AFPh shot at his side.

I moved another tank into the row BB street in front of the Panther. Figuring I already had the side shot, I pulled off to the side to aim into the CC building. Error #1.

Lesson #1: The Panther used its MGs to pivot itself to face my tank in FF6 during the DFPh. I needed to leave my second tank in the BB row to trap the German in a crossfire in order to get my flanking shot. Remember, tanks with MGs are dangerously mobile.

After firing futilely at the Panther's front armor, my tank in FF6 waited until the German Prep Fire phase to become a smoking wreck. So close, and yet so far. This blunder depressed and distracted me.

THE RED TIDE

I had set up heavily on the Russian right. I had one AFV, 3 squads and a leader to occupy the German right. A leader and HMG positioned to

The complexion of the game can change drastically depending on what that SAN 6 sniper chooses to do, or not to do.

take 22F6 and control the 23BB road over the bridge (he never did). All the rest of my troops set up to pour into the overlay building from 22D6-B6, which they did. On turn 2 they continued their swarm by leaping into the street to assault the German stronghold in CC9, the Gateway To The Bridge (GTTB).

The streets flowed red. SS units had advanced out of the factory on turn one and taken position behind the wall. By the end of Turn 2, I had already captured the GTTB, but I had seen about 2.5 squads vaporized in misty red clouds of KIA residue and another 3-4 squads broke.

This was terrific progress for the Russians in terms of real estate gain, but for some reason I was in a funk. I felt my casualties were too high and that I was doomed. I was, however, happy. This assault saw my first successful use of a FT. Flame on, Jakov Human Torch!!

THE FATEFUL SNIPER



Ah, the sniper. I had originally positioned him across the canal in one of the VC buildings. His first action came on turn #1. He leapt off to my left and broke the 88 crew in W2 after they had spent themselves missing my FF6 tank. The crew would Self Rally

in the following Prep Phase, so all they lost was acquisition on my burning wreck. Three more sniper shots generated nothing.

Next, the Sniper swooped down and to the left, breaking a HS on my side of the canal and far left of the factory. Two moves and the sniper had bounded way out of good position. He did manage to generate a hero on Turn 4 or so, in 22K7! This hero did finally crawl up on my very last turn, wounded, to help in an attack. My sniper scored a few more 1s, picking on the HSs and dummies wandering through the scattered buildings. He completely eliminated one HS sporting a PSK.

Lesson #2: Remember the option of moving the sniper! It would have been very handy to hurl this guy back into the main battle where his tomfoolery would have been immensely helpful!

WICKED DAME FORTUNE

Turn 3 sees the reinforcements come rumb-rumb-rumbling along. I enter on my right, as that is the area I've cleared out. I plan for one of the 122's to head straight over to the factory to join the two surviving original tanks at the wall. The other 122 drives up to the canal to stare at Mr. Panther, who has retreated across the canal and sits (in DD3) in front of the small VC building guarding the bridge. My tank can't be hurt through its front armor. I can roll up and park and take that Panther OUT!

As I stop across the canal, the 88 fires. No prob, he can't hurt me either. Wait, ATT? What? Ack!

Lesson #3: ATT does not care too much how good your armor is! All tanks are relatively equal in its eyes. It's a good way to take pot shots at "invulnerable" enemy AFVs.

It missed. The Panther decides to fire. Again, no sweat. He declares a DI attempt, DRM = +5 DI, +1 BU, +2 moving target = +8. You guessed it, snake eyes. My tank grinds to a halt and the crew goes leaping out like a jack in the box. Curtis happily breaks the crew and I am so demoralized I can't stand it!

THE FICKLE MISTRESS

Dame Fortune will smile in different directions without warning. An IF shot from the Panther turns up boxcars and his days onboard are numbered as his Disabled Main Armament sends him packing under Recall. Ya just never know.

DESPERATE MEASURES

I really feel the pressure now, despite the Panther's misfortune. I've got three squads lined up (with a leader and HMG) to assault the factory with its five SS. The remaining tanks are all parked at the wall staring in at the Germans. I know my loss of

the early squads and the 122 are gonna hurt. I feel the clock ticking. I've got a pile of brookies in the GTTB, but I feel it's now or never. Time to spend some tanks and make a charge!

Curtis has already taken five squads across the canal and has the MMG in position (in BB3) protecting the bridge. The SS have pulled back into the factory, so one tank peels off and starts rumbling over the bridge. On the far side it attempts to belch some smoke and fails, but the Germans oblige and turn it into a permanent smokepot. Tank #2 starts up and heads for the bridge. On the near side it belches out a lovely dispersed smoke. Both ends of the bridge are now smoke filled. This tank then takes a hard left and heads over to freeze the units covering the bridge from the factory. I had hoped this guy would live, but the Germans turn him into a flaming wreck as well. Ok, no freeze, but smoke in Z6.

I look at my stack of three squads that failed to rally in the GTTB. I look at my other troops not quite close enough to effectively exploit the bridge. Did I charge too soon? Units storm across the bridge and the Panther fires with its still functioning MGs while under recall. Ack again! He'd be gone next turn. This really may have been premature.

Lesson #4: AFVs under recall aren't dead to the world! They bite! Ouch!

Argh! Russians fall back broken, but more charge into the fray! This is our chance! The Russians pour CX style across the bridge. Many break, but at the end there are two guards over the bridge in the smoke, a squad in Melee with the German MMG, and a brookie also across the canal. There is a guard/DC perched on the bridge, and Jakov Human Torch waits in the smoke on the near end of the bridge for his turn to cross. We are coming!

ALLAH SMILES ON THE IGNORANT

My last tank to roll is the 122. An evil SS HS has crept up behind him ready to Fausticate him on his first start point. Not knowing better I oblige and crank up the engine. Happily, the German's pockets are empty and my 122 drives over the wall and over to the W hexrow to harass units in the factory and the Panzer sitting up in X5.

Lesson #5: I later realized that I could have used the MGs to whip my tank about in the Prep Fire phase, reducing the threat of the PF shot by placing my front armor in its direction. I'm not certain this would have been wise in this situation however. This tank had places to go and things to do. Still, it is important to keep such options in mind and consider them as alternatives.

As a result of my tank moving up, the German Panzer stepped over and parked two hexes from my FT. My FT was in rapidly thinning smoke

and would soon be sitting out in the open. Oh dear.

Bedtime beckons, and we take a break. Deliberate Immobilization, snake eyes, grrr grrr grr grr.....

THE WILD WINDS OF WAR

After a week off, I reflect on how this game is going. I apologize to Curtis for any over-whining and frustration venting I may have done during the wildness of the first half of the game. I realize if I had kept the Panther in a crossfire (the action which had started my frustration) that I could easily have ended up with two dead Russian tanks instead of just one. The crossfire was in no way a sure kill. I've calmed down, centered my chi, and prepare for a calm and rational game.

*Perhaps it is living in the moment
and the thrill of it all, but I'd have
to say that was about the most fun
I've had playing ASL.*

Let's start. Russian Turn #5. WC: snake eyes. Uh oh. The wind kicks up into a mild breeze. Random direction, 2! The smoke from the wreck in Z6 will drift over the bridge! However, the drift does not come until the AFPh. My dispersed smoke is removed, and my FT unit is standing two hexes in front of the German Panzer. Uh oh. Time for a rescue. My 122 starts up and drives back around the factory to avoid the 88 and parks in front of the Panzer. In a rare (very rare) brain-fart, Curtis does not go for motion and the Panzer goes up in flames. Oh boy, more smoke. This will drift right next to the bridge!

ONE STEP FORWARD, ONE ROUT BACK

Decision time. Do we wait for the drifting smoke to cover our path? We only have three MPBs in which to get into those buildings! No time to waste, we move onto and over the bridge. The end of the MPB sees 9 Russian squads in the bridge location and its two ends. The Russian horde is coming!

But the German 88 is already there. The DFPh sees the 88 break the entire stack in the smoke on the far side of the bridge. PAINFUL! On the next turn the Russians pour over the bridge again. Again the 88 breaks three squads and a leader on the far side of the bridge. Oh, the agony!

Meanwhile, the Russians have destroyed the MMG squad in CC and have a foothold in the BB3 building. They prepare to pounce on the

Germans in the Aph, but the Germans upstairs voluntarily break and head back to hide with a leader in Z1, while the Germans on the lower level (this is in AA3) ambush the Russian onslaught and dance away unscathed! Argh argh! I throw the 122 across the bridge to try to bring some FP against the VC building, but it is not very helpful vs. Infantry after moving. I've only got 3 unbroken squads and 2 DM squads over the canal as the final turn comes.

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE FACTORY

The SS studs. One squad with an LMG: he vaporized my berserk HMG HS, withstood several MCs from the remanned HMG, stomped a Russian in the Z6 smoke location in CC. He was indeed mighty. But as all things go, fortune turned on him. The HMG rof'd him with a 20+4, and two 12+4's to break him as he hid in the smoke of Z6. He was surrounded and dispatched. The factory fell on turn 6.

A BLOCKING ACTION AND A SECOND LIFE

When I played the Germans in this scenario I saw absolutely no use for the halftrack. Of course, a sniper hit recalled it on turn one, but that's another story. Curtis used the beast well as a blockade. As my units assaulted on turn five, Curtis moved the HT over into DD3 to prevent me from moving through the drifting smoke toward the second VC building. On Turn six he planned to place the thing on the bridge to prevent my newly rallied boys from crossing. However, on turn four the crew from the immobilized Russian tank (argh! That DI snake-eye roll STILL hurts!) had managed to rally. On turn five they crept toward their vehicle, climbing back in on turn 6. Just in time. Curtis started up the HT to go block the bridge and suddenly there was even more smoke on the board. A 122 gun two hexes away is a dangerous neighbor.

Lesson #6: AFVs can be extremely useful for blocking or slowing infantry

advances, especially through bottlenecks such as bridges.

GET BACK ON THE ROAD, YOU NUT!

Some exciting rally action on the final turn sees one of my DM 628s self rally across the canal and about 4 squads rally on the bridge and in the GTTB, my main rally point. Curtis rallies two squads in Z1 to greatly enhance my throbbing headache.

Curtis noticed my push into the BB3 building and moved units from the CC2 VC building to reinforce my target building in Z1. He advanced

forward making the Z1 building I was after look indomitable. The German units also covered the approach to the second VC building. Oh dear. Time for a mighty vehicular hero.

My 122 starts up and drives past adjacent Germans bristling with PFs toward the looming 88 Gun. He turns the corner to head up toward Z1, aiming his turret toward the 88 in a desperate attempt to keep frontal armor between himself and perforation. He pulls up to Z1, where Curtis expects ye old bypasse freeze. Nope. The tank revs up and rumbles right into the building, CrrrrRASH! No bog, no cellar. Sadly, no chance of rubble. The 12+3 TPBF mg BFF attack takes Curtis a bit by surprise, but does nothing further. However, those Gerries won't be shooting out of that hex today!

Lesson #8: I asked a lot of questions while pulling this stunt. Hopefully, some of these procedures will stick with me. You can't rubble stone by driving into it. If you fall into a cellar, the

units in the location are unaffected. Must be exciting for them, though!! You can only spend delay points while stopped, but you can declare extra MPs while entering a location. You can always ask questions while playing. So much tank-age, so little brain.

Since my MG surprise attack did not empty out Z1, my focus changes to the other VC building.

MATE IN TWO

Here's what was in the second VC building.

?+1 in CC2.1

SS sqd in DD2

I began by moving into the open and drawing fire from the squad in DD2. I broke, but he fired. I poured units across the bridge; Curtis held his fire expecting me to come for the Z1 building. Instead I peeled off to my right and pounced about the smaller building. At the end I had three

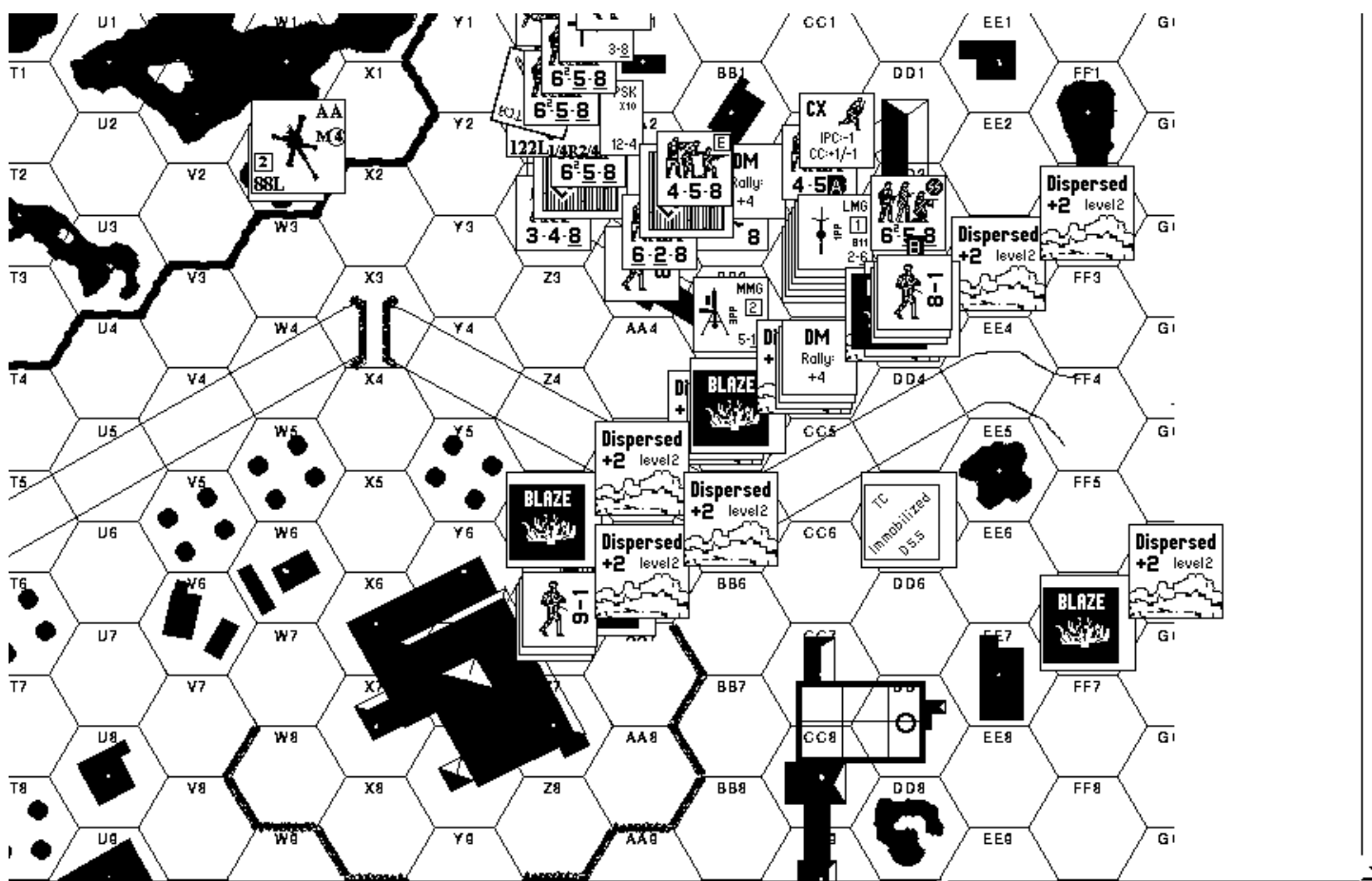
squads in the "courtyard" (CC3) with the now wounded partisan hero, a CX squad in DD2 who had popped the concealment off of the SS HS in CC2.1, and a leader and HS/DC in the smoke of DD3.

My plan was to break the HS with fire from the courtyard and pounce on the SS squad in CC with 3 squads, a hero, and a leader. Sounded promising! I was feeling good!

The shot on the HS in CC2.1 resulted in a 3 or 4 mc. Boxcars! Bye bye HS. Curtis' howl of suffering seemed excessive for the occasion and made me look again at the situation. If the HS had merely broken, it could have routed back to DD1.1 and been out of my reach! I would not have gotten a chance to surround/capture it! Oh my goodness! To pull this assault off I had to get a unit into DD1. I was sure lucky the HS vaporized!

So the question, without reading further take a look at the situation after the AFPh as shown in

Situation during the RtPh of the last player turn. Do you see what Robert missed?



the figure. What must the Russian do to ensure his chances of the favorable CC?

It's at this stage that I see the real heartbreaker. The SS squad could voluntarily break and escape upstairs. Oh no.. no no no NO! I'm so CLOSE! NOOOOOOOO!

I am crushed. Someday I'll think about tactics like that. I declare no more AF and sadly rout my one unit from BB2 to BB1 and tell Curtis to do his thing. He asks if I am sure; I say, "yeah, go ahead". He breaks the SS and moves upstairs to DD2.1 for the victory with one broken squad in the building.

Did you see the key move which I missed? Curtis breaks my astounded coma by saying, "Now that its over, may I show you a secret?" Uh oh. I had a cx squad in CC2.0. I could have voluntarily broken it and routed up to CC2.1 and then to DD1.1. This would have given the SS squad nowhere to rout, blocking both DD2.1 and DD1.0. I would have gotten my CC at 3:1 - 2! Aaaargh!

Oh well, Curtis tends to ambush me anyway. He'd have just withdrawn out of CC and kept

the building. That's the rationalization I use to avoid the need to punch myself silly.

Lesson #9: Always consider voluntary breaking! Remember that your opponent has the option. Curtis has escaped from CC often enough that you'd think I would catch on. I think this finally drove the lesson home.

Lesson #10: Although there are some important task checks in any ASL game none is more important than the player's Personal Task Check. When a surprise situation is sprung upon you, take a deep breath, analyze the situation objectively, and look for a solution. Don't let emotion blind you to your alternatives. This is a very hard lesson to learn.

PLAY THIS SCENARIO

Perhaps it is living in the moment and the thrill of it all, but I'd have to say that was about the most fun I've had playing ASL. [I wrote this AAR late at night right after playing. In retrospect, it was not the heat of the moment. This scenario was a

hoot even in hindsight.] Curtis and I do seem to get into some ugly, gnarly, action filled battles. However, we both agree that Urban Guerillas is a tremendous scenario for both sides and that we'd both be willing to play it a third time. It's topping my faves list and I think will be a classic. Forget those control freaks who are afraid to deal with the active Sniper; this scenario is a total blast. I became a complete headcase both times I played it.

It was interesting playing both sides and comparing how things went. Curtis' skill became apparent. Whereas my SS tended to break near the factory and rout away from it, most of Curtis' Germans routed into the factory. Once the factory was in danger, almost all of his squads managed to rout over the canal, whereas when I played the Germans my units died in place or routed into the outbuildings. Things I used to attribute to stinky luck I am finally beginning to realize are not luck at all. Good players make their own luck.

In summary, Urban Guerillas is a must play. Instant classic, IMHO.



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