

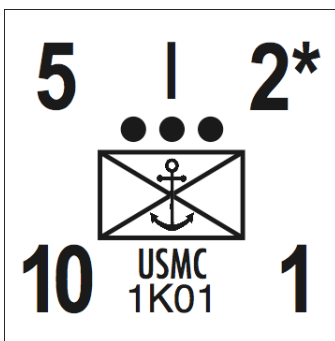


## **A Few Good Counters:** **PL American 7 & 8**

By Byron Henderson

The Pacific War does not translate easily into PanzerBlitz game terms. The majority of the fighting was infantry engagements – the assault of reinforced island fortifications being the most prevalent example. However, the armies in the war may still be considered in PanzerBlitz terms since battles often involved armored units, although not on the scale of the European War. When designing scenarios for the Pacific Theatre, players will need to consider new rules options to mirror the specific requirements for that theater. Options such as variable entry, infantry quick-time through rough terrain, and invasion rules may need to be considered depending on the scenario requirements.

The counters on the counter sheets PL American 7 & 8 include both counters for the U.S. Marines as well as numerous additional units that provided support for U.S. forces in both Europe and the Pacific. I hope that these counters, coupled with the upcoming Japanese counter set, will not only allow players to create scenarios for



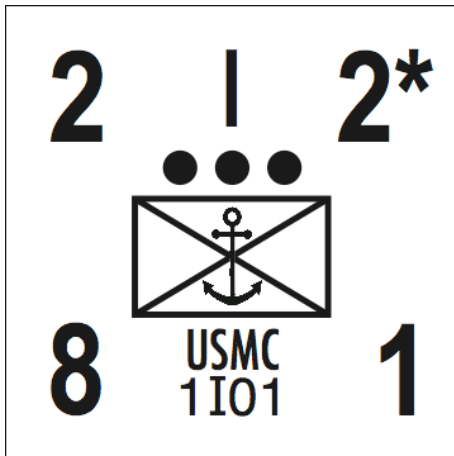
the Pacific Theatre but also increase the variety in scenario designs for the European Theatre.

As usual, the work on these units was far from a lone endeavor. In particular, recognition should be given

to CSW stalwarts Derek Quintanar, Carl Schwamberger, Greg Moore, Michael W. Myers, Chris Fawcett, Alan Arvold, and Ward McBurney. I apologize if I have neglected to mention anyone else who contributed.

### **U.S. Marines**

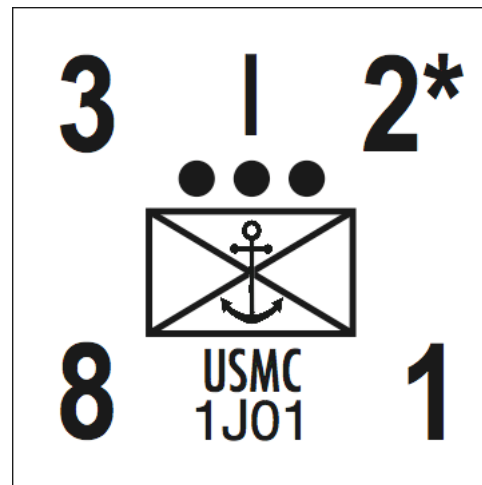
Throughout WWII the Marines constantly increased the firepower of their platoons in an ongoing effort to achieve overwhelming fire superiority in any situation. Unlike other infantry combat organizations in the United States and other countries, frontline troops in the Marines received additional machine gun support, flamethrowers and explosives in unprecedented numbers. By the end of the war, no other infantry organization in any army was as heavily armed as those in the Marine Corps.



Originally organized much the same as the army, the Marines regularly reorganized their infantry battalion structure based upon experience and necessity. The 1941–42 battalion organization was much the same as the regular army, although it included an additional machine gun platoon. By 1943, experience had led to an increase in manpower in the squad (up to twelve men) and aggressive tactics were developed to deal with bunkers and fortifications (the Japanese had learned the hard way to allow the Marines to land and then draw them into combat in caves, jungle and dugouts). In addition, platoons had access to additional heavy machine guns, flame throwers, demolition kits, and bazookas as needed for their mission. In 1944, the early war Weapons Company was integrated into the machine gun platoon, allowing a two squad heavy machine gun section to be directly attached to each rifle platoon (now 45 men strong and divided into 3 “fire teams” of 13 men each). Beginning with the assault on Peleiu in September 1944, the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division fielded “battalion weapons platoons” (later called

Assault Platoons). By Okinawa the Assault Platoon was formalized as 55 men organized into 3 15-man assault sections, one attached to each Rifle Company. In addition, each Assault Platoon included 12 flamethrowers and 9 bazookas.

In Panzer Leader terms, the basic Marine infantry rifle unit undergoes a change for approximately every year of the war. In 1942, it rates slightly better than its army equivalent, 2 I 2\*/8–1. By 1943, it increases to 3 I 2\*/8–1. By 1944 the Marines rate an impressive 5 I 2\*/10–1. The dramatic increases in both manpower and firepower produce the best infantry in the game, bar none.



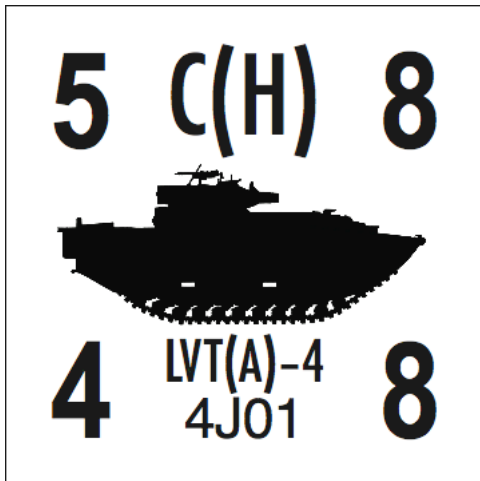
The Marines employ a large variety of support units to help them on their island-hopping way. Most important to any invasion scenarios will be the variety of armored and unarmored LVT (Landing Tracked Vehicles) and the significant expansion of airpower included in this counterset. Numerous support vehicles that were primarily used in the Pacific theatre are also included.

**LVT-1 (2 C(I) 2\*/1-4):** Although initially unarmored and slow, its use as an assault vehicle was quickly realized and capitalized upon. Approximately 1,225 produced.

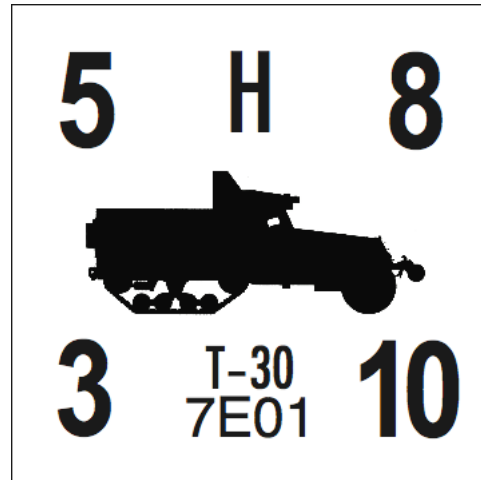
**LVT-(A)1 (5 A 5/2-8):** The first fire support version, now armored and mounting the turret from a Stuart light tank. Approximately 510 produced.

**LVT-(A)2 (2 C(I) 2\*/2-8):** Approximately 450 produced.

**LVT-4 (2 C(I) 2\*/1-8):** Unarmored and by far the most numerous version of LVT. Approximately 8,351 produced. (The stats are also valid for the LVT-2, of which approximately 2,962 were produced).



**LVT-(A)4 (5 H 8/4-8):** Another fire support version available in 1944. It was more heavily armored and mounted the M8 self propelled howitzer turret with the short 75mm gun. The gun lacked gyro-stabilization, reducing its accuracy on both land and water.



**T-30 halftrack (5 H 8/3-10):** Used as regimental cannon company weapon 1942-43. Also a company in the early tank regiments for light artillery support. Replaced in the tank units with the 105mm cannon equipped Sherman.

**T-28E1 halftrack (6 H 12/1-10):** Common AA gun during 1942-43. Unarmored and armed with a 37mm AA gun and twin 12.7mm machineguns.

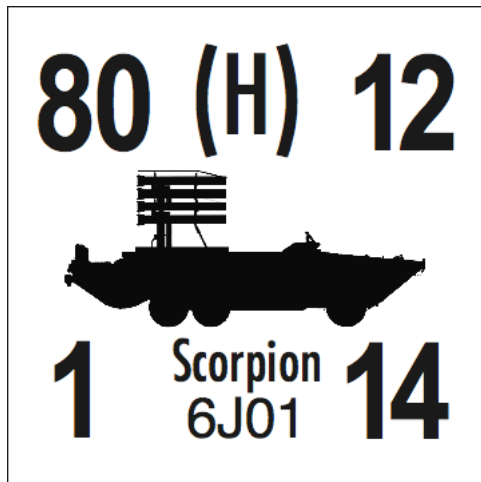
**T-27 truck (40(H)12/1-12):** Rocket armed trucks used by the Marines in 1944-45. Twelve trucks mounting three 4.5 inch launcher racks were regularly attached to a Marine Division.

**M-15 Special (8 H 12/3-10):** M15 MGMC with weapons removed and/or replaced by a single 40mm Bofors gun. It can be used for direct fire only as the gun recoil prevented AA use.

**M-2A4 (5 A 5/3-12):** Predecessor to the Honey and Stuart light tanks. It saw limited action in the early part of the Pacific War.

**M-4A2 Sherman (11 A 8/9-9):** The only Sherman tank model used by the Marines during WWII. M4A3 Shermans, armed with 75mm or 105mm guns, were available in 1944.

**DUKW (0 C 0/1-14):** It's a truck! That floats! The letters were its General Motors model designation (D-year model, 1942; U-amphibian; K-all wheel drive; W-dual rear axles).

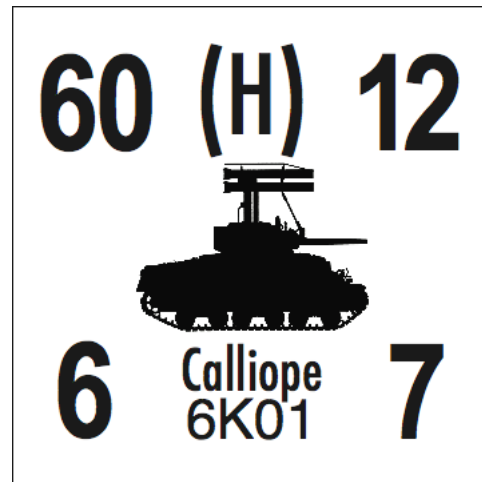


**Scorpion DUKW (80(H)12/1-14):** DUKW armed with a 120 tube rocket launcher. A one shot unit. Replace it with a DUKW once it has fired.

**37mm antitank gun (5 A 5/3-0):** The best pea-shooter in the game!

**D-8 bulldozer (0 - 0/1-3):** The standard bulldozer normally used to bury Japanese inside of bunkers. Players will need to develop their own special engineering/CAT rule for this unit.

A few European theater units that did not make it to the earlier countersheets are included as well:



**The Calliope (60(H)12/6-7):** A one shot rocket armed tank unit. The counter represents two Sherman tanks and, once fired, it should be removed from play as the tanks are considered to be "absorbed" into the remaining counter mix.

**The M-3 GMC (9 A 8/3-10):** An interim tank destroyer for the U.S. army in 1941 and 1942. By the Italian campaign in 1943 most of them were replaced by M 10 tank destroyers. Saw action in both the Pacific and European theaters.

**T-19 halftrack (20(H)32/3-9):** Neither common nor popular, the T 19 was used for light artillery support in 1942 before being replaced by the Priest. The gun was too heavy for the halftrack chassis and it carried only limited ammunition.

**M8 HMC (10(H)25/5-11):** The indirect fire version of the M8 HMC counter.