At The Point
The Journal of ASL

#8 & #9

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CALABASH, NC 28470

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#13
CHARLES FARGO
4841 HAWKSHEAD PARK
SARASOTA FL 34241

BULK RATE
U.S POSTAGE
PAID
SHALLOTTE, NC
PERMIT NO. 126
CONTENTS

LABOR STATUS 3

QUIBBLES AND BITS 3

FORUM 4

POINT REPLAY #3 The Eastern Gate 5

POINT CROSSFIRE – Crux of Calais
Mark Nixon, Robert Banozic 15

PANZER GEGEN PANZER #2 Bruce Bakken 20

PUTTING NAILS IN THE IRON COFFINS
Ronald Berger 25

“MONSIEUR CX” Kurt Martin 27

TACTICS OF ITALIAN BROTHERS Eric Baker 28

THE PURSUIT Scenario 29

THE FIRST WALTZ Scenario 30

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SUBSCRIPTIONS are $15 for U.S., $20 for Canadian and Mexican, and $25 for overseas subscribers; back issues are $6. Checks or money orders, do not send cash. Please make checks payable to Marc Hanna. Notices of ASL tournaments or other info is printed free of charge in the Bullet-n Board. Please send address changes with as much advance notice as possible.

AT THE POINT is published 10 issues per year by Marc Hanna, PO Box 4401, Calabash, NC 28467.

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LABOR STATUS
(WAS -2 WHEN WE FINALLY FIGURED IT OUT)

It has been a nebulous couple of months here at ATP while we tried to figure out what had started the playtest process over--tentative scenario designs. Dan, say as he might, was having some trouble getting a response out of the playtesters (though hats off to Mike Stachowski, our MVP! Thanks, Mike). Not surprising, really, when you consider just how fun playtesting--I mean really playtesting--isn't. Many of those who signed up may not have realized the effort entailed. Others did and just could not fit it into their busy hobby and personal schedules.

Those scenarios that did make it successfully through the playtest grist (there were three or four), were then reviewed through the very exacting eyes of Messrs. Baker and Martin, and were found, for various reasons, to be lacking in some way or another. Both are making substantial efforts to redesign them, which, although perhaps necessary, resulted in a short-circuiting of the entire playtest process. Now, after several months of announcing the scenario system for ATP, I was faced with an unenviable decision: publish the revised ones without playtesting (one is in this issue), or put them through the faltering gristmill again. Ug.

The first reaction: why not bad scenarios for ATP? After all, don't the Annual, the General, The Rout Report, and Contact churn out plenty? Is it worth the headache when these other folks are doing a damn good job in the first place? Well, certainly under the current circumstances it was not worth the headache. Too much valuable time had recently been spent trying to sort out the problem; productivity was too important to me for that.

Then it hit me. Eric Baker had once pointed out that you don't really need to playtest the heck out of a scenario to make it a good one. A few playings should be enough to tell you if it is a bear or a bull. At the time, thoroughly consumed with the "playtest syndrome," I shrugged his remark off. Mistake, as anyone who has seen, not only the quality, but the regular volume of scenarios produced by the Dagrassens in the Rout Report, Eric was right. This by no means reflects the Hill's practice of playtesting the heck out of scenarios (they have the resources and notoriety to mobilize a hobby wide effort). They, after all, have a lot more at stake in the success of their published scenarios than the likes of us amateurs.

Rew Martin's comments in the recent Annual "Signals" column also provided renewed impetus. Basically, he implies that good scenario design is, supremely, an acquired art, playtesting is only secondary. The outside critique is fundamental, but need not be overdone. Good words, those, and a discussion with Robert Banozic, designer of the first scenario (now modified by Kurt, but the original will eventually get printed!) ever submitted to ATP, confirmed this view. Realizing that both he and Dan Dolan have access to large clubs that like to informally play and review local designs, here was what was needed! Such groups could provide the final touches to an already good design. The screening of designs, as well as some actual design work, will be done by yours truly. After all, if I don't have the "acute appreciation of what the ASL system can simulate" and have "a feel for what the system can be made to simulate," then, soon enough, the readership will lose interest in ATP. (Anyway, the world needs more scenarios that have articles and tips associated with them. This ATP will maintain as policy.)

Luckily, that loss appears not to be the case--so far. Circulation is reaching the 300 mark and growing weekly. Continuous arrival of meaty, well written articles by the likes of Nixon, Banozic, Bakken and Gifford help assure the interest of the readership. Kurt's acceptance of the offer to support ATP as a regular Columnist, providing readers with his saucy view of the ASL world, is a definite added plus. Keith Larson, recently recovering from an operation (get well quick, Keith!), will continue to appease the FPH/PBEmers of the game. A bientot!

FAUST

OUTRIBLES AND BITS

This issue contains the last of three courtesy scenarios generously provided by Phillippe Leomand and the ASL News. This one is just a sample of the twenty-one scenarios that you can get if you purchase the new SPECIAL OLDIES 4-3 series especially printed for English reading subscribers. I have seen advanced copies of these beauties and they are fantastic--not only for the scenarios, but the articles, special play aides, analyses, humorous bits, and more! For availability, contact Phillippe, 28, Avenue Seghers, B-1089 Brussels, Belgium. Excellent.

Welcome Robert Banozic aboard ATP as one of the new Scenario Advisors who will provide me with much needed critiquing of the various designs on the drawing board around here. The others will be Dan Dolan, recently moved from his position as Playtest Coordinator, and Eric Baker (if he accepts, being darn busy with the real world lately--not to mention special Dagrass projects), once the final scenarios that were generated by the old system are published. By the way, three's a charm, so if you have access to a group of good players who don't mind batting new scenario ideas around a couple of times, give me a hoot. We could use your help, too! Kurt Martin will move on to be a regular feature in ATP as "Monseigneur CX." Anyone familiar with the Rout Report will recognize his pithy, humorous style. His first effort appears in this issue! Wowzer! Do I know how to twist arms and beg without dignity, or what????

ERRATA:
The Shortest Way
(AS APPEARING IN ATP6)

ADD TO SSR #4: Partisans have MRL capability.

This should help even things up. Errata courtesy of ASL News.

Fourth Annual WINDS OF WAR!
PLACE: RAMADA INN, GREENSBORO
DATES: APRIL 4-5, 1992
THEME: STALINGRAD, 1942
CONTACT: RAY WLOZYSZEWSKI, 7152 MANTLEWOOD LANE KERNERSVILLE, NC 27284 919-996-5677
Dear Marc,

I'm impressed, definitely impressed. In my opinion, ATP has already established itself as a quality resource in the world of ASL. I eagerly await each issue. The well-written articles by you (who I hope to someday meet), Kurt, (who I finally had the pleasure of meeting at HighDesign last week), Eric (who I got back at for my worst ever hosing), Mark (ask him about the sleazy hoards of conscripted Italians), Guy (who beats me every damn time) and the rest of the crognards associated with ATP, make it an invaluable asset to the ASL community.

In regards to your request for feedback, I enjoy about anything/everything that could be done. From series replays to indepth analysis, the articles on "Tricks of the Trade" to letters from fellow ASLers (there are still a few areas which can be somewhat cloudy, i.e. Bocage, various Night Rules, etc. which someone may have gotten a clarification from the ASL Staff at Avalon Hill), even a scenario every now and then (especially with the caliber of contributors that ATP has).

One last point I wish to bring up is that of support. You know better than I, the huge task (check) it is to put out ATP. (I must congratulate you not only on ATP's contents, but also the consistent on time arrival of the issues). ASLers should show their appreciation in any form possible, whether contributing articles, producing artwork, writing letters to the editor, or just merely subscribing, support is the key. It is the cornerstone for successful longevity. We subscribers have the duty to 'bend' our non subscribors fellow ASLers to show their appreciation with a subscription. Just because a couple of local players receive ATP and can share it with the rest, it defeats the purpose—support of ASL. $15.00 a year is a mere pittance compared to the good ATP does for ASL. I truly believe that works such as these keep the continuing saga of ASL alive. Avalon Hill couldn't/wouldn't keep publishing new modules if it wasn't profitable to do so. The interest generated by a forum such as ATP leads to more sales of the game itself, I would think. And as long as we keep buyin' 'em, they'll keep makin' 'em! (Knock on wood!) I mean, what other game can boast eleven modules to date (9 ASL, 2 DASL & Red Barricades)? Add on the Rulebook and the British AFV Data Cards and we're talking approximately $350 invested so far (up to COB). If ya wanna play, ya gotta pay, and just as ATP's subscription cost by no means reflects its value, ASL too, is a bargain. Compared to the hours upon hours of exhilarating fun I've had playing, ASL's price tag doesn't even enter my mind (and I'm far from a Beaner and a summer home). To give an off-beat example— if an ASLer played the SI module scenarios published to date (66 ASL, 18 DASL, and 7 RB) one time each, and using 5 hours per game as a standard mean, it breaks down to $1.30 per hour! Where else can one have so much fun at so low a price. And then there's the million or so other scenarios, the historical and informative value, the aesthetic beauty of the mapboards, not to mention something you can't put a price on-- friendship. The camaraderie I have with my fellow ASLers is really the crux of the matter that makes ASL gaming so enjoyable. A scenario need not be played to experience ASL. Whether discussing tactics, sharing ideas, figuring out rules, or just rambling on about that 'game that got away', all this is part of the fun of ASL.

Speaking of rambling on, this was meant to be a letter, not a novel, so, in closing, I'd like to thank you for ATP. Vive L'ASL!

FS—Hopefully I'll be submitting some work for your approval in the not so distant future.

Ray Verbanic

That testimonial is a little Christmas gift to myself in these pages. Forgive the indulgence. We look forward to your articles, Ray. Vive L'ASL!

Dear Marc,

Enclosed is a check for $15.00 for a year's subscription to At The Point. I have heard great things about the magazine from several sources and I look forward to receiving it. As a collector I may be interested in getting all the back issues that I have missed but I find the rate for them a bit steep. Of course I understand that the mail costs are higher given the first class mailing, but would there be a discount for getting them all?

Anyway, I look forward to my subscription.

Anders Hanch

Thank you, Anders, for your subscription. As you are new to ATP you may not well understand the reason for the high price of back issues. For the benefit of you and other new subbers, let me explain.

The price is not really associated with the cost of postage or reprinting, as much as it is with the overall pain in dealing with back issues at all.

Basically, to satisfy the back issue market, I have three options:

1. Estimate the number of people who will purchase a given issue as a back issue and print that quantity in advance. This option has high up-front inventory costs that have, unfortunately, an unmeasurable probability of being a total loss.

2. Make copies of back issues on a made to order basis. This option is labor intensive as I have no access to a copier, but must journey over ten miles each time I need back issues.

3. (I give "thanks" to Darryl Burke and the Grofs for proposing this option) Forget about back issues and stop trying to discourage their purchase with inflated pricing! Instead, allow the readership to make copies for friends as they please.

That, unfortunately, does not cover the situation for remote players who wish them, nor does it encourage people to subscribe and keep this operation viable.

In short, Anders, sorry, but no. However, stay tuned, as I may soon succumb to the inevitable and drop the back issue prices to a level more consistent with their value. That means, however, that at some point certain issues will be discontinued permanently.
I would like some feedback from the readership on how they find the new format and how they like the idea of a single commentary.

PRR GAME COMMENTS:

Dave and I selected this scenario for a variety of reasons. It is one of the most uniquely enjoyable FTO scenarios available to date. The first three turns move very quickly, though jockeying for position with the cumbersome column is one of its crucial aspects—as close to a chess game as ASL gets.

The early maneuvering quickly evolves into a very intense jungle melee, repletes with smoke, banzai charges and a frustrating loss of cohesion. The latter often leads to small local advantages in key areas which can mean the difference between (guess what) victory and defeat.

IMPORTANT NOTE: one reason this replay was on ice for so long is sheer embarrassment. Yes, we played the whole scenario through, meticulously recording events, and never noticed that we had placed the large overlap on Bd. 36 BACKWARDS! It was quite a devastating discovery a couple of weeks later when I typed this into the computer. After a discussion with Dave, we decided that the net effect is slightly pro-Japanese since the hill objectives are a touch further away. Control of the central path over the stream becomes much more important in this "variant," but overall, the scenario retains much of its flavor. If you are following the game blow by blow, make the following change on the

PLACEMENT OF
OVERLAY 2 ON Bd36:

ERGM: 38D2-01

TO: 38BH-99.

Column selection, order of entry and (for the Japanese) entry hexes are critical pre-game decisions mandated by SB33. Experience with the scenario indicates that the best bet for the Japanese is to enter everybody through the Kunai field on Board 35 and forgo the path on Board 34. The latter method leads to two possibilities: either you exit into the central field at the four-square board junction (a couple of turns later than a Bd. 35 entry would get you there anyway), or you wind up on the slopes of hill 615 in such a position that you cannot support, nor be supported, by the other columns on the map. Since the Japanese suffer from a lack of cohesion in the first place, best to enter all the columns around 38E1 so that they can support each other to a certain extent.

Given that, the next aspect of importance to both players is column composition. Again, keep in mind that the Gurkha columns are mutually supportive (at least at the beginning), so composition is not as crucial. SB33 somewhat dictates the structure of the columns anyway. The Japanese, however, have a wide variety of squad types, and can choose three constructs:

1. Weak 2nd line troops on front, followed by MMCs, 8 morale squads as reinforcements.

2. A non-homogenous mixture of all types.

3. High morale troops, good leaders and MMCs up front, 2nd line troops as reinforcements to fill in the gaps.

My preference is the latter method. The Gurkhas are tough, and can pack quite a wallop in Fire and CC. Worse, at 8 morale, they can take fire pretty well, too. 2nd line Japanese squads are really no match for them. Also, as an alternative strategy (one I would not recommend), the Gurkha can try to form a defensive hedgehog on the corner of Bd. 37 and simply try to evade the Casualty VF condition of victory. This is difficult to do, 12 CVP is not a lot; however, if the Japanese troops are meandering through the Bd. 34 path after entering on turn 4, the possibility becomes less remote. Finally, the initial Japanese troops must fight hard to prevent Gurkha access to the hilltop. The best troops are the best choice for this job. Lower quality troops can be fed into the gristmill with more effect against K-reduced British squads.

As you can see, Dave has chosen to deploy the maximum number of 458 squads with an eye to getting the most MMCs onto that hill. His
"Killer" column will enter at 37P4 and act as the force which will pave the way for his smaller F7 column to get up the hill from the backside (along the Kunai path 37CS-37KB). This is a reasonable strategy for the Gurkha, though HS are slightly more vulnerable to fire and elimination. Perhaps he might have waited until he was nearer the hill and then deploy MMC via TC. Time will tell if this extra vulnerability will make one iota of difference as the scenario develops.

TURN 1 COMMENTS:

The first few turns involve a subtle maneuver game which is nastily critical in determining who gets the initiative for the mid-game. Kudos to the devious person who designed SSR 4! After three turns, the answers to these questions—what forces who to disband first, what LOS will each side have and where will the initial contact occur—will indicate the player with the edge. Though he may not realize it at the time, the other will be playing catch up for some time to come.

The Japanese have three approaches for their on board forces—through the gaps at 37L10, F1 and C1. Call them aggressive, moderate and conservative stratagems, if you will. I rejected 110 because initial set up will reveal that as the target to the British player, who can set up for that possibility. This also leaves column one well out of position to support reinforcements. Remember that the Japanese player must keep in mind that his columns with rules cannot advance due to the mechanics of column/horse maneuver.

TURN 2 COMMENTS:

The Japanese player takes a conservative angle, allowing him to get nearer the strategic clump of woods (hereafter referred to as "the Grove") that straddles Ds. 36 and 37, where key fighting is bound to occur. In turn, the British player decides to concentrate his force in front of the palm glade. This move makes it easier for the foe to block him. Reversing a column is a time consuming process; in effect, the British player forgoes a deep penetration along the western Kunai path. However, the advantage is that the British force is now poised and cohesive—an arrow prepared to slice through the first enemy column. As the Japanese player, this is a very imposing sight, and am glad that I chose to bring on the elite troops first.

TURN 3 COMMENTS:

The Japanese player notes that the British move allows him to "win" the opening. The VC demand that, at the end of Turn 3, at least a Gurkha squad is on/north of hexrow 37C. The British player cannot reverse his columns and withdraw: in effect, he must place reasonably strong forces along this row or past it.

Noting this, I move the first column aggressively and unexpectedly to F2. The Gurkha is forced to move to 37D5, prompting disbandment, allowing his other column to disband and advance forward. Remember that a column which disbands during its Mph is "frozen" until the APh, so no large penetration or attack by the Gurkha can be achieved on his turn 3. The battle initiative swings to the Japanese player. Note that pinned units are not prohibited from assembling/dismantling, something which seems to be a common misconception.

Notice how Dave advances a screen of H5 to form a perimeter defense against sniper attacks. It seems that many good players use this strategy intuitively. But then, already readers can see how the dense, protective jungle forces players to disperse forces to cover possible approaches. As these scenarios develop, co-ordination becomes more and more difficult.

TURN 4 COMMENTS:

Both sides draw first blood with close range rifle/LMG fire. Note, however, that by forcing the Japanese player to fire, Dave has maintained a relatively safe path to the Grove along the far edge of the palm tree patch, and he planned ahead for this. Check out the position of those mortars: smoke shells are ready to be placed to cover the approach. The wind change early in the game is used to his favor; note how smoke will drift right along the path. Such in the mark of an excellent ASL player: one who does not forget a clear opportunity to recapture the initiative.

TURN 5 COMMENTS:

Take a look at the move of the 8-0 and four 246s. Dave is not a player who is afraid to take his chances with maneuver fire. This is not foolhardly on his part; should they have survived (rather than suffering 50% casualties as they did), he may have chose to voluntarily routed the whole stack towards the hill objective. The 8-0 would have been handy rallying the stack in B6, wouldn't it? The fact that he perished is very, very fortunate for the Japanese player.

Routing forward is a valid tactic and not recommended for the faint of heart. I will use this same trick against him to devastating effect later in the scenario (and why not, he taught me, after all!). The Japanese are particularly suited for these methods since desperation morale is never a problem. In fact, a unit with 5' morale, being rallied in bonus terrain by a 1 leader, only fails if boxcars are rolled! Scary, isn't it?

At a relatively high cost in casualties due to accurate Japanese fire, the Gurkhas have neatly flanked the enemy position and control (at some points, marginally) approaches to the Grove. This is a dire situation for the Nippon and I need to take immediate steps to correct it, if possible.

Interestingly, look how spread out the British player found himself to be after two turns of contact with the enemy. Not significant of itself, the other factor in that several fragments that cannot directly support each other are evident. This is typical and possibly unavoidable in the jungle. The Japanese player is likely to find himself in the same boat soon enough.

TURN 5 COMMENTS:

Fortunately, the Japanese player can use the British smoke screen to cover his own maneuvers in an effort to seize control of the eastern approaches to the Grove. Nonetheless, a desperate assault over OC by a decent force is unavoidable if A4 is to be taken by something other than my all-too-valuable MG crews. Luckily, it works very well— and only works because it is a Japanese assault. Something to keep in mind: no squad
In tougher but more brittle than the Japanese. The position will fall, but I lost, irrevocably, a BS equivalent in taking it. Other nationalities would have failed, but those troops would have rallied and fought again.

The fire attack by 664A prompts an assault by Fujita's platoon which still gets chewed up by the tenacious Gurkha squad. Afterwards, voluntarily breaking 664A was the correct tactic in this situation. No need to lose it on a 1:4-1 MMC attack which has a 27% chance of succeeding; this unit is simply too valuable to risk at this time. Its rout to K3 is totally legal, by the way, though thorough understanding of the rout rules is needed to appreciate the elegance.

The CC phase was crucial for the Japanese player. Gurkhas in hexrow G just won't be had, but the important victory in A4 (in spite of an ambush!) secures the eastern access and covers the central glade. An anxious moment for the Japanese commander, let me assure you!

Cohesion is starting to slip, so I created a couple of large, high potency stacks that anchor the right flank and should block the enemy long enough to allow the body of my regimental elements to pass to/into the north of the Grove un molested. These stacks are vulnerable, but necessary, and I expect that the D3 troops are forfeit, but they must buy the time.

Dave boldly maneuvers in an effort to retake the initiative by moving his best stack to A5 in an effort to secure the path entrance at 3685. Desperate to prevent it, FFP pins the 9-2 at the unfair expense of fanatic and hero creation in compensation! Nasty indeed are fanatic 643s...

He also does a fine job in positioning his troops for point blanket assaults on my anchoring positions. Worse, he starts to regain some cohesion, especially in the critical Grove area. Once again, his famous characteristic of applying pressure might yet allow him to regain the edge in this hard fought scenario.

Until two seemingly unimportant events occur. First, a very lucky shot from my D3 troops break both squads manning the BMCs; units which linked his flanks together! From this moment on, the Gurkhas will be forced to fight a battle in two localities if so dictated by the enemy; with the edge in numbers, this benefits the Japanese. Second, the calculated risk taken by breaking both of my MMCs accomplishes two things at the expense of increased vulnerability: it allows me a shot at his units (at least the 9-2) in the open, and then, if I desire, lets me do the same trick during the NEXT Rth and occupy hex 3665, a position that effectively cuts off further penetration along the quickest rout to the hill. The unavoidable fact is that the Japanese will get to 3665 first, and the readers will see the significance of this later on.

Sound like a cheezy trick, all this routing and rallying? Well, it is not foolproof: the disaster of a '12 rally attempt always lurks in the back of my mind. Blame yourself, Dave, for teaching me about these low-down tricks...This time, the initiative does not switch back from the Japanese, and Dave will find himself hard-pressed to ever seize it again during the game.

**TURN 6 COMMENTS:**

Fujita moves his platoon up to take a potshot at the large broken stack in K3 so it will be DM another turn, but he pays the ultimate earthly price for this little excursion.

Bang! Finally, a sniper, and it is devastating. Cardboard Max dies (quickly, we hope) and the Gurkhas are left with a useless platoon and none to rally them. The saving grace is that I have too few units to take real advantage of their helplessness.

The Gurkhas continue to dominate the realms of CC with those damnably famous knives of theirs. I still need 2CVF to prevent a potential fall-back strategy and won't rest easy until I got them!

Otherwise, I am a little angry with myself because of poor usage of mortar ordinance in the game, and this turn I advanced two of these pieces into nice areas that have one small problem: dense jungle -- I can't fire the bloody things.

Dave continues to pound away at the D3 units, but cannot seem to obliterate them. Take note of his clever use of Opportunity Fire to remove the CX penalty and take APH shots at any of my units which expose themselves to fire defensively. He can, and does, move up leaders to provide their bonus capability in the APH.

His final shot with the MMCs is questionable, in my view. These valuable units need to be moved up to and past the Grove where they can do some meaningful damage.

His maneuvers are, however, brilliant. See how he fears breaking very little, if he must, he expects to rout from 3785 and A7 "forward" onto B6, 36 around 3682-3D. This time, I expect him to take great pains to avoid letting me invoke DM status by moving adjacent. Too bad, I've got another little Japanese surprise in store for him that should be quite demoralizing!

By this, I don't mean my voluntarily breaking and routing to D5, as I had been planning on for some time. This is demoralizing enough for him, as he clearly expected to "cut me off at the path." It's bloody, but dag-gone it! I want that last CVF. I think, at this point, I can keep him off the hill (thanks to the stream that would not normally be there since we mucked up the overlay), so let's try a few Banzai charges and watch him sweat (and my troops van-...)

**TURN 7 COMMENTS:**

The first Banzai charge has two objectives: to divert fire from 36C5 away from D5, and to obtain DM on the enemy stack in B3. Anything achieved beyond that is an incredible plus. Note that I take advantage of the fact that units which Banzai (or conduct a Roman Wave) need not stay in the hex they end their MP in (even if it contains an enemy unit!). They may advance beyond and infiltrate the enemy lines.

Dave, anxious to prevent this, throws it all at Ayabe, but still fails to affect these troops with 16,12 and 12TP attacks, all modified by a -1 DBM. Pearson's last gasp finally breaks the NS, but Ayabe victoriously runs through the lines and disrupts the rallying point...
Worse, the Sniper continues to harangue the Gurkha right, breaking the last key defender there. Too bad the Nippon is not in position with a couple of units to do some mopping up. Nevertheless, 137E goes on a snapper which yields wild results; in the end, Dave prevents DM on the 548 over there, preserving good chances for self rally, but at significant expense.

Taking advantage of this unlikely diversion, the gun crew charges the enemy rear in an effort to block rout paths prior to the second Banzai planned from C1. Pinned at the last moment, but still in a good position to support the objectives of the upcoming charge.

The second charge has two objectives as well. First, eliminate a single CVP to obtain the needed 12th point to minimally satisfy the VC. Second, to block all British troops south of hexrow E from ever reaching that hilltop. In the end, 645C was an obstinate fellow, refusing to yield the second objective to the charge. The gun crew remains in position to do the blocking; that is all, but perhaps that is enough. For that we can thank 137E. The primary objective is finally achieved when the Nippon manages to win only his second CC of the match. Curiously, it seems they cannot lose on or about 374A.

The Brits find that they start the turn with too little force to gain a position of advantage along the stream and must consolidate. One objective is elimination of Ayabe, who blocks the main route to the chosen crossing area around 38E8.

The attempted infantry overrun caused a discussion about the accessibility of Bamboo to units that are pushed back by this procedure, Dave would have preferred C3 to B4. Later, after the game, we decided that Bamboo in a legal location.

Witness that his encircling fire vs Ayabe accomplished nothing other than making it more difficult for his troops to exit the hex after any successful CC attack. Needless to say, by this time Dave had a certain bloodlust to absolutely nail Ayabe ASAP. Primly, let me say that he was somewhat disappointed with the CC results!

In 36B2, Dave has finally found a secure rallying point for his boys.

Note his trick to get Sylvester into this hex where he is most needed. Overall, his coordinative problems have been largely due to his propensity of "routing forward" into hexes that are a little too exposed to assure rallying, at least against an alert, aggressive player. Turn after turn, a Gurkha platoon, vitally needed for the push, has remained broken because of DM status.

The Gurkha commander has three turns to get it together, force the stream and get onto that hill. Definitely an uphill battle. With the overlay reversed, readers can see the importance of getting across that stream before the enemy.

Yet, in spite of the popularized routing trick used once more, the Japanese appear weak on the north bank. Pearson is moved to what most people would consider an excellent position to block further reinforcements from the south side. Believe it or not, moving Pearson to 36D5 was the most significant error Dave made in the entire match. He is about to receive a painful demonstration in the flexibility of Banzai charge attacks. The lesson: if you want to avoid a Banzai, don't move minimal forces into a position where a nice chain of MMC has an LOS to you! Pearson is absolutely useless there, a better move would have been occupation of 36D4 with Pearson and the fanatic 648 to interdict the crossing. Watch.

TURNS 8 AND 9 COMMENTS:

The frightening thing about Banzai charges is their general flexibility. There are few requirements, and new players I meet keep trying to read more into the rules than is there! You need to have an enemy unit in LOS (yes, a dummy stack will do). You need to have a leader and optionally, an MMC. You need to move the chain of units in the same general direction towards that enemy unit. No, you don't need to enter that enemy's hex, you don't need to converge towards that hex with the chain, and you don't need to stay in the hex for CC if you want to advance out! Banzai charges can be very suicidal (as were my last), or subtle instruments of infiltration and reinforcement. Be careful when opposing a clump of Japanese--they may rush you. Don't give them the chance if you aren't prepared for it! Even if you are, it's quite unnerving in a manner which is hauntingly historical. For gosh sakes, as a Japanese player, don't be afraid to use a Banzai charge to get a job done. The psychological impact is tremendous, even if it fails! The reason for this: the opponent senses what it might have done, and what another could do. Using a Banzai is like throwing the long ball in a football game, loosening up the defense for your running game. They are nothing as fragile as a Russian Ruman Wave, please don't get caught up in that association.

Now I have troops where I need them: a paltry squad has been reinforced by a souped up platoon. Dave reacts quickly and daringly to this unexpected development by, once again, routing forward to 36E3 with a potent stack, hoping to rally immediately and bring much needed firepower to bear across the stream. As an aside, I don't think I've ever played a scenario where both players make use of routing/rallying in such an aggressive manner.

Two Japanese leaders have, between them, killed a squad equivalent! Salutations to the samurai heroes of Nippon! By now I've probably lost six squads to accomplish the same thing at more even odds. Strange is ASL...

Dave's risky ploy to rout to the front fails to pay off and these squads are in deadly danger. A desperate effort to dash across the stream is gunned down in midstream under the watchful eye of Sgt. Hana. To many, the Gurkha position seems lost.

Those who feel that way are instructed to read on. The next few events should demonstrate to you that it can pay off to keep playing when it appears very much hopeless! The players that do are usually those that you find in the final rounds of the major tournaments; and are also those that repeatedly demonstrate an outstanding caliber of play. Anything can happen in ASL. Anything. Never give up until it is absolutely certain that you have lost, and even then, consider carefully! Witness the following chronology of events around the stream:

1. A Japanese LMG breaks.
2. An M60G with the 347 is eliminated due to unqualified use penalties.

3. The 447 with Hana goes Berserk and is later gunned down in the stream with a vengeance.

4. A 347 suffers a casualty.

As a result of freakish happenings, in one brief player turn I have lost over half of my defensive capacity on the north bank. Any gloating about Sgt. Hana's battleworthiness is now rendered premature, wouldn't you say? Later:

5. The fanatic 648 rallies under fire again, generating a hero--

6. Another 648 self-rallies.

Suddenly, a complete turn after many would have quit, the British have increased their assault capability from 5FP to 24FP and have a 2 leader and 2 heroes to help aid me. I guarantee anybody that if the Gurkha player had just one more player turn, he would have a better than even shot to win the match after all. An early resignation would have been inexcusable! The sad thing is, most earlybird resigners don't even get the chance to realize it for themselves. If one is fortunate enough to be playing a kind but seasoned player, he might just be grabbed by the collar and lectured that it is way too early to resign, so keep playing, buster!

AFTERMATH: Unfortunately, The Gurkhas don't have an extra player turn to get the job done and must attempt a futile bayonet charge across the stream. This is my first victory over Dave, a true milestone of accomplishment for me; thereafter, it wasn't my last, either. In all fairness, this time I had a stacked deck; three previous playings of the scenario as each side, hundreds of hours of COB playtest experience (Dave, normally involved in most playtests, was touring Europe at the time of the COB effort, this was only his second time out with a PTO scenario), and a reversed overlay which definitely favors the Japanese player. The fact that it was so close is a testimony, not only to his fine gaming abilities, but to his tenacity in the face of adversity. Many of my ASL skills were earned to his ever greater glory, and I gratefully owe him profound thanks for the lessons—and pleasures, of our many (but now too few) battles together. Salud!

PRE-GAME

JAPANESE COLUMNS:

COLUMN 1: 16-1 I GAWAN, 1-1 HANA, 24LMG, 24MTR (E,F), TYPE 92 INF, MULE, 3x228 (4.5,7), 2x2448 (2P,2), 4x447 (1,1,2,P,0), 23BD, 547K

COLUMN 2: (ENTRY 35E1) 9-0 FUJITA, 9-0 AYADE, 2xLMG, 24MTR (A,B), TYPE 92 INF, MULE, 3x347 (C,J,L), 4x447 (1,1,2,G,K), 228 (10), 23BD

COLUMN 3: (ENTRY 35E1) 0-0 INOUE, 9-0 OSAWA, 24LMG, 24MTR (C,D), 4x347 (1,1,1,2,P,0,0,0)

GURKHA COLUMNS:

COLUMN 1: (ENTRY 37P2) 9-1 BARKER, 9-0 COX, 24LMG, 24MTR (E,F), 3x248 (2P,2,2), 24K (0,0,0,0), 2x248 (1,1,2,2,1,2,2,2)

COLUMN 2: (ENTRY 37P2) 9-1 SYLVESTER, 9-1 MCNAVANA, 2xLMG, 24LMG, 2xMTR (D,E), 2x246 (0,0,0,0), 7x459 (12,2,4,1,2,3,3), 2x246 (7,17)

NOTE: DISCUSSED PATH RESIDES TO ER 37P5/378AS. ALSO, SNIPER

DIRECTION 1 IS ALWAYS NORTHEAST.

JAPANESE TURN 1

RALLY PHASE

001 SET-UP:

COLUMN 1

35DF-10 LMG, 144M1, LMG, 144R0, 447L GAWAN

35DF-77 447R, LMG #2, 22BD, HMG4, 22BD4, 144R, HANA

35DF-11 INF, MULE, 22BD7, MTR E, 347K, 447F

35DF-9 INF, MTR #1, 23BD8

N002 BRITISH SNIPER-3966

N003 WIND CHANGE 5.5 NE

PREP FIRE PHASE--NONE

MOVEMENT PHASE/ADVANCE PHASE

004 COLUMN CX FROM 35D4 TO 30D1,0D05

GURKHA TURN 1

RALLY PHASE

005 OFFBOARD SET-UP

COLUMN 1 (IN ORDER OF ENTRY)

7G, LMG, 144M1, 459K, 24BD0, 24BD1, 2xL40, 24BD1, 2xLMG, 1x448, MTR E, 448F, BARKER

10 24BD0, 24XL, 2x459K, 2x4BD0, MTR C, 24BD0, COX

006 BUILD MTR IN 37D0

007 BUILD MTR E IN 37E1

COLUMN 2 IN ORDER OF ENTRY

7W, 24BD0, 24BD1

7X, MTR D #4, 459K, 144R0, 1447L

7Y, HMG #5, 144R0, 144R0, 144R1, 144R5

7Z, HMG #5, 144M1, MTR F #5, 459K, MCMAPAN

006 WIND CHANGE 1.1 CHANGES

2 WIND CHANGES FROM SE

MOVEMENT PHASE/ADVANCE PHASE

007 COLUMN 2 CX TO 37L1,4M2,0D3

008 COLUMN 1 CX TO 37L6,4M6,0N5

JAPANESE TURN 2

RALLY PHASE

009 OFFBOARD SET-UP

COLUMN 2 (IN ORDER OF ENTRY AT 35D1)

9W, INF, MULE, 2x22BD, 447K, MTR A, 23BD8, AYADE

9X, MTR E #5, 247K, LMG, 447C, LMG, 447T

010 WIND CHANGE 6.5 GUSTS

MOVEMENT PHASE/ADVANCE PHASE

011 COLUMN 1 TO 37C1, 35C0, 09, 08

012 COLUMN 2 CX TO 35E4, 35E0, 35

GURKHA TURN 2

RALLY PHASE

013 WIND CHANGE 6.5 NE

MOVEMENT PHASE/ADVANCE PHASE

014 COLUMN 2 TO 37H4, 33, 32

015 COLUMN 1 TO 37H4, 35, 35

JAPANESE TURN 3

RALLY PHASE

016 WIND CHANGE 6.4 NE

MOVEMENT PHASE/ADVANCE PHASE

017 COLUMN 1 CX TO 37F2, 31, 31, D6

018 COLUMN 2 TO 35E7, E6, E6

GURKHA TURN 3

RALLY PHASE

019 WIND CHANGE 1.5 NE

PREP FIRE PHASE--NONE

MOVEMENT PHASE

020 COLUMN 2 TO 37FA, 34, 33, 35

021 BRITISH COLUMN 2 DISBANDS

022 JAPANESE COLUMN 1 DISBANDS

023 COLUMN 1 TO 37H1, J1, J2

024 COLUMN 1 DISBANDS

DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE

025 BUILD MTR E IN 37D0

026 BUILD MTR E IN 37E1
CLOSE COMBAT PHASE

223. HEX 37G AMBUSH 2/6 NO
   AMBUSH
   JAPANESE 111/115.5 NE
   GURKHA 111.5 4470 ELIM
   AMBUSH
   JAPANESE 111.5 2/6 NO
   GURKHA 111/115.5 NE
   JAPANESE 111.5 4470 DILL, 24h ELIM

GURKHA TURN 5

RAILY PHASE

238. WIND CHANGE 1.5 NE
239. MTR E 1/11 REPAIR 4 NE
240. YY 2483 2/6 RECOVER MTR 115 5 OK
241. 4358 37G SELF 14/4 3.5 NE
242. 2483 STES 2/6 1.5 NE, KEEP DM
243. 2483 1/4 RALLY

PREP FIRE PHASE

244. FLIP SMOKE IN 37G, REMOVE DGRP
   SMOKE IN C6

MOVEMENT PHASE

241. 2483 37G TO C5
242. 2483 STES TO C4
243. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] 3.5 NE
244. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] 2.5 NE
245. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] 1.5 NE
246. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] 0.5 NE
247. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -1.5 NE
248. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -2.5 NE
249. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -3.5 NE
250. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -4.5 NE
251. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -5.5 NE
252. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -6.5 NE
253. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -7.5 NE
254. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -8.5 NE
255. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -9.5 NE
256. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -10.5 NE
257. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -11.5 NE
258. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -12.5 NE
259. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -13.5 NE
260. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -14.5 NE
261. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -15.5 NE
262. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -16.5 NE
263. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -17.5 NE
264. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -18.5 NE
265. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -19.5 NE
266. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -20.5 NE
267. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -21.5 NE
268. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -22.5 NE
269. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -23.5 NE
270. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -24.5 NE
271. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -25.5 NE
272. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -26.5 NE
273. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -27.5 NE
274. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -28.5 NE
275. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -29.5 NE
276. 2483 37G VS STACK 44P[1.1] -30.5 NE

ADVANCING FIRE PHASE

281. STACK 3706 VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
282. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
283. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
284. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
285. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
286. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
287. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
288. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
289. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
290. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
291. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
292. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
293. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
294. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
295. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
296. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
297. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
298. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
299. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
300. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
301. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
302. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
303. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
304. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
305. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
306. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
307. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
308. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
309. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC
310. 2483 37G VS BS 1800F[1] 5.5 2MC

ADVANCE PHASE

311. TC MTR F4, 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
312. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
313. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
314. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
315. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
316. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
317. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
318. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
319. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
320. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
321. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
322. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
323. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
324. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
325. 2483 37G TO BS PLACE
DEVELOPMENT PHASE

623 STACK 37GUS, 4568, 2481 ELIM.
625 PEARSON 3669 TO 03.
626 3393 366D TO 03.
627 LMG 2492 STM TO 04.
628 STACK 37GUS VS 3669 4981 [1] 4, 2 PTC
629 3668 PTC 3, 2 OK.
631 NMC
632 688 BNC 4, 3 OK.
633 LMG, 3418 3684 TO 05.
634 LMG 3685 VS 3684 4981 [1] 1, 5, ROF, PTC.
635 3688 PTC 2, 5 OK.
636 LMG ROF VS 3684 4981 [1] 4, NE.
637 2480 STM TO 12.
638 SYLVESTER 3663 AM 03.

DEVELOPMENT FIRE PHASE

640 COMER.
641 NMC
642 LMG 3659 VS CS 2FPT [1] 1, 5, BKN, DM.
643 LMG 3657 VS 3658 2FPT [1] 1, 5, BKN, DM.
644 STACK 37GUS VS 3657 2FPT [1] 1, 5, ROF.
645 RMC.
646 LMG 1376 3673 VS CS 2FPT [1] 1, 5, NE.
647 OPTIONAL, 4, 1 MGC WITH 3479 ELIM.
648 2280 STM 37GUS VS 3673 2FPT [1] 1, 5, NE.

ADVANCE PHASE

649 STACK 3623 VS GS 2FPT [1] 1, 4, MC.
650 HANNA 1MC 2, 5 OK.
651 4976 1MC 1, 4. HOB [1] 1, 5, 255 BESERK.
652 3457 1MC 6, 5 TO 1377**.

CLOSE COMBAT PHASE

653 1280 STM 37GUS TO EB.
654 2281 STM 3633 TO F1.
655 2282 STM 3650 TO D7.

ADVANCE PHASE

656 STACK 3651 TO 03.
657 3661 STM TO 12.
658 LMG 2493 STM TO 04.
659 STACK 3651 VS 3661 4981 [1] 4, 2 PTC
660 3662 PTC 3, 2 OK.
662 NMC
663 688 BNC 4, 3 OK.
664 LMG, 3418 3684 TO 05.
665 LMG 3685 VS 3684 4981 [1] 1, 5, ROF, PTC.
666 3688 PTC 2, 5 OK.
667 LMG ROF VS 3684 4981 [1] 4, NE.
668 2480 STM TO 12.
669 SYLVESTER 3663 AM 03.

DEVELOPMENT FIRE PHASE

671 COMER.
672 NMC
673 LMG 3659 VS CS 2FPT [1] 1, 5, BKN, DM.
674 LMG 3657 VS 3658 2FPT [1] 1, 5, BKN, DM.
675 STACK 37GUS VS 3657 2FPT [1] 1, 5, ROF.
676 RMC.
677 LMG 1376 3673 VS CS 2FPT [1] 1, 5, NE.
678 OPTIONAL, 4, 1 MGC WITH 3479 ELIM.
679 2280 STM 37GUS VS 3673 2FPT [1] 1, 5, NE.

ADVANCE PHASE

680 STACK 3623 VS GS 2FPT [1] 1, 4, MC.
681 HANNA 1MC 2, 5 OK.
682 4976 1MC 1, 4. HOB [1] 1, 5, 255 BESERK.
683 3457 1MC 6, 5 TO 1377**.

CLOSE COMBAT PHASE

684 1280 STM 37GUS TO EB.
685 2281 STM 3633 TO F1.
686 2282 STM 3650 TO D7.

ADVANCE PHASE

687 STACK 3651 TO 03.
688 3661 STM TO 12.
689 LMG 2493 STM TO 04.
690 STACK 3651 VS 3661 4981 [1] 4, 2 PTC
691 3662 PTC 3, 2 OK.
693 NMC
694 688 BNC 4, 3 OK.
695 LMG, 3418 3684 TO 05.
696 LMG 3685 VS 3684 4981 [1] 1, 5, ROF, PTC.
697 3688 PTC 2, 5 OK.
698 LMG ROF VS 3684 4981 [1] 4, NE.
699 2480 STM TO 12.
700 SYLVESTER 3663 AM 03.

DEVELOPMENT FIRE PHASE

702 COMER.
703 NMC
704 LMG 3659 VS CS 2FPT [1] 1, 5, BKN, DM.
705 LMG 3657 VS 3658 2FPT [1] 1, 5, BKN, DM.
706 STACK 37GUS VS 3657 2FPT [1] 1, 5, ROF.
707 RMC.
708 LMG 1376 3673 VS CS 2FPT [1] 1, 5, NE.
709 OPTIONAL, 4, 1 MGC WITH 3479 ELIM.
710 2280 STM 37GUS VS 3673 2FPT [1] 1, 5, NE.
POIN T CROS SIRE
Cr for Cala is
Robert Banozic: British
Mark Nixon: German

BRITISH PLAYER:

One of my favorite features in the '89 ASL ANNUAL is "A Question of Balance", in which Howard Sylvester and Eugene Murrell claim "To The Square" (ASL Scenario #9) is unbalanced. The peculiar part of it, though, is that they completely disagree on which side is favored. I think it would be interesting to see other such divergent opinions in the hobby press about particular scenarios.

So, when I recently discovered (through Philippe Leonard's ASL NEWS) that "Stand Fast The Guards" is widely considered by many, and not just by me, to be extremely pro-German, and since I had reason to believe from playtest proceedings that Mark Nixon bore some responsibility for this, I challenged him to explain his reasoning in AT. Well, it turns out I was misinformed. Mark, like most everyone else, agrees the scenario is pro-German. However, he suggested we compare notes on other scenarios, and I readily accepted. We settled upon "The Crux of Calais", and the result of this collaboration is now before you.

Mark and I would like to produce more of these joint scenario analyses for AT, although it seems more often than not we agree on play balance of published scenerios. Still, we believe a comparison featuring different approaches and playing styles might be of interest, and, I hope, you agree. And, of course, input from AT readers will be encouraged, be it contrary opinions, suggestions of additional scenarios for discussion (tell us your "worst nightmare" scenario; maybe we can shed some light upon it for you) or whatever! So, without further comment, I leave you to a consideration of our discourse on "The Crux of Calais". You be the judge, and let us know what you think!

CRUX OF CALAIS
BRITISH PERSPECTIVE

RATING: 505-502
ADVANTAGES: BRIDGES, ATGs.

The British have two advantages in particular: (1) There are only 3 bridges, and the Germans must get across at least one of them in order to have a chance at winning; and (ii) the MG 2-pounder ATGs. The British defense can obviously focus on the checkponts created by the Germans' need to make a bridge crossing. The 2-pounders are excellent ATGs in their own context (i.e. 1919-41), and are capable of taking out any of the German AFVs in this scenario.

DISADVANTAGE: AFVs

The British armor, however, probably has more value if it simply survives the scenario intact (note the VC) than if it actually tries to kill Germans. And survival for the thin-skinned British AFVs is highly questionable, given the potent AFVs available to the German.

BRITISH SET-UP

I want to make it clear that I do not believe that this scenario is "pro-British". However, I differ with Mark in that I would argue that the Brits do have an equal chance at victory. Set forth here is a defense strategy which, in my opinion, offers the British player the best prospects for success in this scenario.

F4 8-0, 2 squad, MMG, ATR
F4/1 1 squad, ATR
F3/1 1 squad, 3P0 ATG, crew
HIT
C7/1 1 squad
X6/1 1 squad, LGM
X6 1 squad, LGM
Y6/2 1 squad, ATR V5 1 squad
Y6 51mm HIT
Y7 0
EB5/5 75mm HIT, crew
HIT
MS 9-1, 2 squad, MMG, LGM
MS/1 1 squad
O10/1 1 squad
N5/1 40L ATG, crew
HIT

Although Mark is likely to concentrate on driving the spearhead of his attack across only one bridge, and almost certainly will not try to force more than two, I begin without knowing precisely where his attack will fall. Indeed, his decision is likely to be significantly influenced by my own set-up. Thus, my Brits must cover all three approaches. The most isolated bridge, from the British point of view, and the most likely target for the Germans in my view, is the easternmost bridge at 23K4. This bridge is the most inviting target for the Germans because it is both on a flank and because building 23K4, a key to its defense, is close to the German set-up area. Therefore, this portion of the British defense warrants allocation of a small plurality of the British forces: 5 squad, the MMG, 2 ATRs, the 8-0, and a 40L ATG with crew. Because the hexes immediately north of the E6-R4 road are obscured by smoke (see SSR 3), the British on this flank are compelled to defend from buildings 23K4 and B7.

I would put two squads, the 8-0, the MMG and an ATR in hex E4 at level 0, a squad with another ATR on level 1, and a squad on level 1 of 23F5. Dispersing the force a bit in this manner offers some protection against smoke or avialing devastating attack in a particular hex or location. The 40L ATG and crew set up HIT in 23O6 where it has a good sight down the road and across the bridge. The fifth squad goes in 23C7 on level 1. From there it should later advance to E5, level 1, if H4 turns out to be the focus of Mark's attack.

The western bridge is guarded by two squads, each with an LGM split between levels of 23X6. Another squad with an ATR is on level 2 in Y6, and the 7-0 goes in Y7, level 0. The 51mm HIT and a squad go in 23Y5 from which they might be able to use air bursts to good effect if any Germans take up positions in 23K4, U3 or N2. WE offers no protection against incoming fire, but there are few good places for that mortar, and these guys won't be hanging around there long if Mark's troops do come this way.

The center bridge is defended by the remaining squads, SW2 and ATG. I like to set up two squads, the MMG, an LGM, and the 9-1 in 23I6, where they should give German infantry second thoughts about moving on the road from 23G7-Y2, thus also covering the approach to the western bridge. In addition, this TG is then well placed to move toward either flank, if necessitated by German actions. Finally, this position receives good cover from the smoke drifting just south of it. Another squad goes in each of the level 1 locations of hexes 23N9 and O16, from which they can protect...
the 40L and crew setting up using HIP in 2394/1. This ATG can then cover both 23P6 and X4, at least one of which the German armor will have to move through if it tries to force either bridge P7 or X3, respectively. An interesting variation is to set up the 40L in 23MS/2, with the 5-1's FG on level 1, or perhaps with the 3-1's group placed in N9.

This leaves only the 76mm MTR (and crew) and the British AFVs to be positioned. The MTR is handicapped due to its six-hex minimum range (always check the ordinance notes). An intriguing possibility is to set up the MTR with HIP in N5, with a Spotter on the second level of P4. Note that as long as the MTR is out of LOS of a Go enemy unit, even if it fires (i.e., using Spotted Fire), it remains HIP (A12.34 is therefore incorrect when applied to Spotted Fire; the A12.121 Concealment Loss/Gain Table is correct. See also the Squad Leader Clinic from The General, Vol. 26 41). This position offers a relatively good field of fire, and this technique can really rattle an opponent who is neither experienced with nor expecting Spotted Fire.

However, I believe that the Spotted Fire penalties are too limiting to use effectively in this scenario, so I prefer to set up this Gun using HIP in 23E5/5, where it can cover the western bridge, and has a decent LOS to the hexgrain from 23B4-2 (where the Germans might pile up on the exposed mortar team at 23J5). This MTR isn't a bad anti-tank weapon, either - it will hurt any of the German AFVs with a TH DR < 5.

The British AFVs are a fairly unusual and ineffective lot. I've left these until last because it doesn't really matter where they set up, as long as they are dispersed and stay out of the LOS of the Panzers on Turn 1. Since I don't know where Mark will attack, I will spread the AFVs around, and when I see where he is concentrating, I will move these AFVs as far from that point as is prudent. I don't want to go toe-to-toe with the Panzers. But if they do break through and there is no place to hide, I'll use my speed to try to swamp at least one, using Bounding Fire from PB range at the Rear Target Facing. I might as well try to take one down with me. On the other hand, if my ATGs and/or ATVs succeed in neutralizing most of the German tanks, I might take advantage of specific opportunities to go after the German infantry with the Mk Vls. The 8C can also be useful to cut rout paths (it's fast enough to get anywhere you might want to go, including on Board 20) or to over broken infantry in the open. And I'll keep my AFVs in U until I need to use the road MP rate - there's no point letting them get taken out by Snipers.

Guns at the ready, we await the German onslaught.

CRUX OF CALAIS

GERMAN PERSPECTIVE

RATING: 75% German

ADVANTAGES: FIREPOWER, INITIAL PREP FIRE, SCHWERPUNKT, SHORE, GAME LENGTH, AFVs.

I can't believe the British weren't given some dummy in this scenario to hamper my initial Prep Fire. Robert has done a decent enough job of trying to hide as much as he can, but he has to leave some troops exposed to prevent me from charging across the bridges on turn 4. A rough count of ROP adjusted FP looks to be about 222 German vs. 136 British. Since I will send about 85% of my strength directly at one bridge, my FP advantage at the schwerpunkl will be about 197 to roughly 50, a true Hiller ratio.

Even stone buildings can't stop 20 and 30 FP attacks forever. So I won't just rush across a bridge, but will pound with my FP, and when the assault does kick off, will lay in as much smoke as possible and flood across with infantry and tanks against a weakened enemy. Once I secure a bridge and am into the buildings north of the canal, the British lack the strength to push me back.

DISADVANTAGES: BRIDGE CROSSING, THIN ARMOR.

I anticipate heavy losses during the actual crossing. To expect otherwise would be delusion. The British concentrate their fire on the three choke points, and I won't be able to wait till it is all expended before I send the orders for the assault to commence. My tanks are no universal cure-all, either, for, despite their excellent offensive punch, they are a bit lame in the armor game. The enemy possesses 16 weapons which can knock-out my panzers; in addition to CC and Reaction Fire. Despite the relatively low TK of much of this fire, the 8C's Shocks, ATs, immobilizations and even deliberate immobilizations from those ATGs, will force me to concentrate fire on the enemy SW units.

To this end, my infantry have been ordered to fire on targets in this priority: ATG, HMG, ATV, 9-1, MG, 76mm TTS, 50mm TTS, LMG, infantry.

GERMAN SET-UP:

The bridge I choose to hit will depend much upon how the British deploy. As Robert mentioned, H4 is the most attractive because it can be hampered from 29/29d, 09/29d, P9/29d and then from the 23K to 21 buildings once the rest of the infantry have advanced. With the tanks added in, building 23 E3 defenders will be mauled. Indeed, this is usually the best building to go after, and maybe I should do so here. The only drawback is that once I reach 29H4 itself, any broken units I suffer will never be able to rout back to my lines, because from H4 they see enemy units in 23J5 and X6 2nd level positions. Men broken in 23J5 would not see those due to the smoke in H5 and W6, but from here I would have to rout to 23J6 anyway, unless the British were clever enough to start a H5 in that location.

In any case, I find the attack on H4 quite mundane, and would rather discuss the more elaborate assault upon X3, where I feel my overwhelming FP will carry the day just as well. Here is my set-up for the attack on the defense Robert picked:

MKIII- DD9/4/CR, GC9/4/CE,
Y10/4/CR, Q10/3 D4/3/CE

MKIV- R9/3/CE

BB9 8-0, 3 squads
AA10 7-0, 3 squads
Z7.2 6-1, 2 squads, HMG, HMG
OY10 9-1, 3 squads, HMG, 2 LMG
X9 8-0, 3 squads, 3 LMG
W10 2 squads
Q10 1 squad

The attack opens with an 89 shot at 23T4 from the MKIV; any TH DR less than 10 yields smoke in the hex, although I hope to roll less than 9 in order to have more smoke in future turns. Note that the hedge does not affect the Area Target Type shot. If successfully landed, this shot and its drifting smoke will obviously lessen the threat from the British 9-1 and HMG FG, allowing me to concentrate on the
enemy in building Y7. Next come shots from the MK111's in D9 and CC9 on the 23Y6 2nd level ATR outpost, featuring two 8.3 MG shots, notice that the BMGs also fire, as insurance against an untimely roll of boxcars, as this leaves a 41% chance it will be the BMG, and not the NG which breaks allowing for the 16% chance that both break). Even the MA's fire, as any hit here will bring a 4 EVEN attack, with plenty of ROF potential. My Bill MA's will eventually break down, but I won't try to repair them unless the NG is kaput. Next the 27 MG firebase unleashes a 18-2 at 23Y6 if still in GO, or otherwise at X6. Luck with BOF will continue to shoot-up these targets until broken, and then, could I be lucky, move on to hit the 51mmtr position at V5 with a 11-3 or 11-1, whatever is still firing. I'd like to move forward with the 2-1 platoon, but I bet I will be firing it instead, most likely at X6, for I should hope the Y6 ATR boys are down by this point. Finally, I'd also like to move forward with the MK111 in Y10, even if only to 23Y1 to provide cover for the 2-1 platoon when it advances, but if GO squads still exist in Y6/X6, this tank, too, will ship on them.

The other doreen squads move forward in M2H to A11, Z2, X1, X2, V2 and armored assault to 23F3. Probably the only tank move is the armored assault MK111 continuing on to P4, which is where the squad will advance, to nail down the P8, 9, 10 choke point. Finally, the forgotten man in 2008 defends the H4 crossing point, exactly twelve hexes from it with one of those horrendously devious LOS we AGL players are known to love. He hits I4 with the MG5s 8 FP, and additional 1 FP from the BMG at long range, and, once 2 acquisition is gained, a 66% chance of scoring a critical hit on any infantry, leaving the hex PPAM and PFMG, which would be resolved as an 8-2 on the IFT. Now, I can't claim all will go as I'd have it, but assuming these moves were to work, I would be able to fire APM with 12 FP from A3 and Z2. 8 FP from X1 and 4 FP from W2 and V2. This might finish someone left in building Y7, or, at least, knock off the 51mmtr squad in V5. If I have been reasonably successful, and also if smoke did land in T4, I will end my turn by advancing out onto the W3-23 road with single squads in most cases, but with large stacks in X2 and Y1 if not subject to significant enemy Prep Fire. I will also button-up every place where CG status would no longer be helpful. Notice that my D4 outpost is so far from the rest of my trooper that he will never be subjected to any sniper attack.

One potential weakness in setting-up an ATG in the N3 region, is that a spreading fire EO might place a flame in V5 or W5. Should one or both of those fires burn a blaze, the LOS from the ATG becomes very poor indeed. I would normally expect to see an ATG in building Y7, although Robert is correct that stationing it in N9 does make it a much more difficult matter for me to knock it out. I would also expect the British to normally have someone in reserve inside building Y7, for if I do get lucky and break the four squads (requiring luck, but entirely possible on Turn 11), there is no one for the British to APh out to the front of the building to deny it to me on turn 12; they would have to rely on long range fire from the east, and yet that might be effectively screened by any smoke. Notice that the right amount of smoke hindrance along the orchard road, placing 8N out of LOS, will allow my broken troops in X3 to rout to building Y7, once secure. The Rout Phase, in this case, allows safe crossing, and I may even intentionally break X3/X4 units to let them across the canal safe and sound quickly.

My attack has tried to capitalize on weaknesses in the British defense of building 23Y7. The V5 squad, if he breaks, will drop the 51mmtr and rout to V6, to wonder how he will ever rally and get back to V5 to reclaim the weapon. If I do get lucky and break all four squads on my initial turn, someone must rally from EO status on the British turn #1 in order to advance forward to enforce some caution on my turn #2 MPh. Consider how much better it would have been to retain a 4-5-7 in Y7 to gain concealment after set-up, and then advance out to X5 concealed to deter my turn #2 moves! For that matter, one of the four squads defending F7 could have been committed for this reserve; four squads at F7 is overkill in my book. They certainly aren't needed there at set-up. Another option would have been to start some of the central British force west of the P row, such as in Q9 or S9/2. That could have precluded my MK111 and squad in P4 from throwing a lock on the P row choke point. As it is, though, the added fire from Z3 and AA3 will stop or slow British efforts to move across this bottleneck. No doubt the enemy will try to lay smoke to cover the area, and will be wishing that 51mmtr were in the region to also try its ROF potential.

Remember that infantry cannot lay smoke in the three upwind hexes during a mild breeze, so that option is out. I would like to mention a few choice spots where I anticipate seeing those pesky British APV's. My favorite is a MK111 in Y7/4 TCA/6, which covers Y6 and X6 with 20PP, and BVP SPP. Sure takes the attack on this building tougher! The other MK111 in P4 and the MK111 in E5 help nail down G5 and entice MK111's towards the 40T in D6, and even the Daimler is quite safe in E5 while covering E5.

CONTINUING ATTACK

The 76mmtr is going to catch me by surprise on its initial shot; its 6 FP attack doesn't scare me but, as Robert said, it can hurt my tanks. Once sighted in E55, it will distract me a bit, but a little 161 attention from 2027 should silence the tube. Notice this mortar cannot fire SMOKE in 1940. I expect my FP to control building V7, and start working on the enemy 5MG position as soon as any smoke I've placed clears. Especially once I move the big machineguns to 22/1st.

I will blast away all targets and begin assault moving and advancing across the bridge on turn #2. To draw out the ATG, I have begun with a MK111 exposed in 20Y10, and done all I could to suppress enemy light antitank fire in my initial Prep. Should this fail to reveal the 40L, I will toss a MK111 across the bridge, fully expecting to lose this tank, but to also find the ATG in the process and create a bit of wreck cover in X2/X3/X4 or W6, which will hopefully be a burning wreck; a blazing hulk on the bridge itself would be incredibly wonderful! Once located, the 40L becomes my #1 target, and will allow me to identify the best spot for another round of 39 from the MK111, cooperating with an ample supply of such shells, in my dreams at least. If that ATG maintained ROF on my initial MK111 thrust, the
rest of the tanks hide from it while the infantry take it out over the next few turns. But if the gun lost ROF, all tanks rush across the bridge immediately, as only one Intensive Fire shot is available to the gun, since I won't overrun it in a building at this point, anyway. Once my Mk III's can romp on the northern shore, the threat of their 20 FP Overruns will help discourage any British Free-wheeling thoughts, and also force their AFV's further from my bridgehead.

The enemy immediately before me on the north side of the canal simply cannot withstand my FP; the British in the Mk III environs cannot throw out enough of their own FP to overcome the range, smoke/ vehicle/ bridge/ orchard hindrance and TEM and my wealth of squads; and even any reinforcements which manage to come at me will, themselves, be cheved. I expect to cross with enough squad equivalents that the British will have to counterattack, and this they are not equipped to do. This, in fact, is why I rate the scenario heavily pro-German; the British will be forced to come at me, and when that happens, they have, basically, already lost. On those occasions when I cross a bit short of squad equivalents against an enemy who pulls away from me, I will still have plenty of time, about 5-6 turns, to chase them down on the north bank with my superior FP and AFV's, freed now to work on the foe without the restraint of that bridge crossing. My 2304 tank leaves its outpost and makes the crossing in two movement phases, and, overall, the British might win one out of four encounters, usually occurring when the 40L commands impressive ROF and I experience poor luck with the 59 and 69 rolls.

BRITISH RESPONSE

At first glance, Mark's carefully planned attack sure seems to make a shambles out of my defense. But wait a minute. It's true that if everything goes right for the attacker, and everything goes wrong for the defender, the attacker will win. That's the way it works in real life, and that's the way it works in ASL. However, as Mark acknowledges, that's probably a bit much for him to expect.

For example, I believe that it is reasonable to hope that the ATR outpost at 2316 will weather the FP from the MkIII's; their 8x3 shots aren't too frightening, and their MkA's have to get a hit - not at all a sure thing - before even trying a 4 FP attack. In fact, the chance of Mark getting a hit resulting in at least a SC on the first HA shot for each (6.5%) is less than the chance of malfunctioning the HA (5.3%). And if the outpost also manages to withstand the fire it draws from 27, Mark's timetable could begin to crumble. On the other hand, even if the AHK guys succumb to 27, it's not unlikely that at least one of the two squads at X6 will still be standing after the PFPH. At least, that's what I'm hoping.

Mark seems to disagree with my decision to keep two squads up front at X6. The main reason for this is statistics. Three squads, instead of two, up front in building Y7 increase by 50% the chances that somebody will be able to fire in self-defense after German Prep; or at least it will force more German units to fire to try to break them all. As Mark admits, he doesn't expect to have any units which will dash across the bridge on turn 1 anyway. If the front line squads in this building go down too easily, I very well might see Germans across the canal on turn 1. Mark's suggestion that some Brits be redeployed to reinforce the west is an excellent idea, if you happen to know that the Germans will attack X3. But if the attack instead falls in the east, these units would then have to cross the same FS-9-10 checkpoint to bolster the defense.

The mortar team at V5 will try to smoke AA3, messing up the German's AFV attack. If they get ROF or don't have smoke, they'll get their chance to use air bursts against N2, with their inherent FP directed at wherever it might do the most good. The 76mm MTR is another story, though, and Mark might find it to be a little scarier than he expects; with a 6-1 against W2, 6 FP on V2 and the W3-Y3 road, and a good ROF (I can dream, too), this piece has the potential to do serious damage to his infantry. Mark should unknowingly present a juicy target. Otherwise, it can remain HIP until some big stacks of AFV's move in front of its sights. When this MTR does fire and reveal itself, I expect that its presence will dissuade Mark from advancing substantial forces onto the W3-Y3 road. If I am lucky and retain its concealment, Mark might have to work awhile to put a stop to that mortar fire. And he probably won't try to cross the bridge until he does that.

With the first British player turn I can begin to react to Mark's attack. Everyone in Y6 and X6 moves to Y7 if they haven't already routed there. The MGs which can do so will advance back to X6/Y6 in the AFH and try to hold back the German tide for another turn. They will continue to rotate like this in each of my player turns as long as they are ambulatory. If the mortar team at V5 is still on duty, it will drop the light mortar and move through V6, under cover of smoke, to W7, from where it will later advance into building Y7. If the situation in the building gets as bad as Mark expects (and eventually it might but not, I hope, on turn 1), or if LOS from my AFH is threatened with being blocked by smoke, someone is going to have to volunteer to make the supreme sacrifice. Despite what I said before about keeping them out of harm's way, the tankers get nominated. There just isn't anybody else. Assuming that I can manage it without moving into the LOS of the German tanks, one of the Mk Vs that I have parked in the backfield could be moved to B6/J6 or E6/G6 - or maybe one to each hex, if really necessary. They probably won't last long, but should deter a German bridge crossing for a turn or two, and will certainly draw some heat from building Y7. This will also give any broken units in Y7 more time to come around. If one or two of the Panzers have malfunctioned their HA firing at stone buildings, these tanks might actually be around for awhile. And since each Mk VI could get several TK rolls against any German tanks that move up to greet them before the German gets a reasonable shot themselves, even with my low MK8 I have a decent chance to bag one of the German AFV's as a bonus.

The FG at H8 (which should have moved east if H4 had been threatened) moves to N9 if the PzkKw IV had smoke, later to advance to level 1 (so as not to inadvertently draw fire to the ATG). From there it covers X4 (and can always return to level 0 if it should need to see out to X2). The 8-0 in F4 says "Go west, young man!" and everyone in that building takes his advice. The 8-0's own FG, joined by the squad from C7, can be in O10 by the end.
of Turn 3, thanks to the help from the leader. The squad that started in N9 joins his buddy at O10 (but on a different level) and together they begin the effort to break down the squad at P4 (it's a close shave because of the smoke in O6, but there's a clear LOS from O10-P4). The large force assembling in N9/O10 can be organized to interdict X4 or X2 with less PP from N9 and/or to suppress the Germans at P4 from O10, as the situation requires. With two ATRs eventually in this area, even the German tank will be threatened. Ultimately, some or all of these units will try to get across the FS-9-10 chokepoint - maybe as early as Turn 4.

When Mark's first AFV does charge across the bridge, I've got to hope for ROF with the ATG and to maintain concealment. There's just nothing else to be done about it. The risk of a blaze spreading to the orchard road, blocking my ATG's LOS, is an acceptable one, I believe. The Final Spreading Fire DR for V5 is a '10' or more, and for V6, an '11'. Although it is not improbable that a blaze will eventually appear here, hopefully this will not occur during the first several turns of the game. And if the worst does develop, and a blaze should start in one or both of these hexes, the ATG at K9 still has a decent LOS to X2 (only 4 Hindrance from Q8). The burning wreck Mark would like to see on X3 isn't going to happen - after all the ATG doesn't have a decent shot to X3. A blaze on the orchard road will marginally diminish the effectiveness of the gun, but will not eliminate it as a serious threat to the Panzers.

I am a bit surprised that Mark would expect an ATG in Building Y7. It's a safe bet that one is covering N4, and if the other is in the west, the bridge at P7 would be pretty naked, given my dispositions. Imagine the debacle if all the German tanks should roll across P7 on Turn 1 without an ATG to present serious opposition; the Brits would probably be well advised to concede right then and there, before further embarrassment. Any German who really anticipated this British set-up might be tempted to strike in the center - where my ATG is waiting for him. That would be OK by me.

The only real quarrel that I have with Mark's strategy is that he opts to have many of his tanks CE. He's going to be doing a lot of dice rolling, and I wouldn't risk losing one of those Panzers to a Sniper. They're just too valuable. I'm also not sure I'd take all of those relatively low-yield MA shots with D11, either. Those are VP, after all, and anyhow should be preserved to knock out the British armor.

With reasonable luck, I think that the Brits should be able to interdict X4 (or to a lesser degree, X2) with sufficient strength to deter a German crossing until at least Turn 5 - or cause unacceptable losses if the big push comes before them. This should afford the British enough time to reinforce the western flank before the Germans cross in strength. It may not guarantee a British win, but it should give them a fighting chance.

**GERMAN RESPONSE**

I would like to finish by addressing a number of points covered by Robert, only viewed from the German perspective. These I have numbered in the sequence they are mentioned in his "British Response" section.

1. The 236F ATR outpost will escape my two MKIII shots without taking my two NHM shots on their first shots, or less on their third, or less with ROF and "6" or less once doubly acquired. They might enjoy an occasional CH/Multiple Hit, and the HG's register at least a NHM on a roll of 5 or less. Robert is correct that I don't really want to break down the MA, and that is why the HG's fire first. But if they fail to break the ATR squad, the MA won't hesitate to open up, for that ATR and squad can hurt me more than breaking a JTL would cause me alarm. These tanks have four or more chances to roll a 4 or 5 and possibly break the 4-5-7, and I'll try that attack every time.

2. I'm still not afraid of the 76mmTR. The 6 FT attack makes it just one more piece in the enemy arsenal to be 'dispatched', and certainly not the most intimidating piece at that. Once revealed I might pull tanks into A32/BD2 and pummel it without fear of retaliation as I would be under its effective range. The mortar will fall early.

3. Robert's decision to move armor out into the open at B66 and E66, or anywhere for that matter, surprises me, as my MKIII's will maul the British AFV's. Even my SW's can kill these critters. Notice that my eight HG's enjoy better T6's vs. British tanks than that armor has against my panzers, and my RGF advantage both with HG's and 37L's is outstanding.

4. Notice that all British plans for defenders in O10 and N9/10 are largely foiled by the orchard road: this building does not provide terribly effective shots on the X3 bridge area.

5. The 8-0 group will have a hard time reaching O10 by Turn 3 due to long range fire from 2027/212D. This firebase controls the road from 23M6-B5 with a 2-3 shot should anyone try to cross during MPH.

6. Robert is certainly cavalier in his dismissal of fire spreading to the orchard road. There is 66% chance at least one flame will spread to V5/N5 by the end of Turn 12, and don't forget that even once a flame exists in a location, additional flames can spread there and subsequently also roll to spread into a blaze. Since orchard flame becomes a blaze on any DR of 9 or higher, my book makes that the extremely rare scenario in which fire does not burn the orchard road in Crux of Calais. [Note that the drifting smoke could disappear should the wind level increase/decrease, but any wind direction change would aid the German cause.]

7. It is just an interesting tidbit to note that the chance of the ATG hitting and harming a moving tank at X2 is about 15%, as it would require a DR 4 of 4 or less to hit.

8. We would have to see practically nothing defending the bridge at P7 to expect the German to go for it. Of course the British would love to see the German make for that bridge; that would at least convince me to give the British a 50% chance to win the encounter. But if the infantry try to cross at P7 they have no decent jump-off point, cannot even threaten a crossing until Turn 2, and will be
subjected to fire from both flanks (Y6, X6, F3 and P4 2Nd levels), as well as their front. German broken have no place to rally which cannot be hit by enemy fire and any British AFV driven into their rear will provide a major headache thanks to the open LOS around the area bounded by the hedge; that enemy AFV could deny rout to a lot of broken units. As for getting the tanks across the canal, that is normally not really much of a problem even in a direct assault on one of the 40L defended bridges. One of the problems with Crus of Calais is that it is a valid enough tactic to simply throw all six tanks across a bridge immediately, on the first turn of the game. Any British player shocked into an early surrender by such a move may as well avoid the scenario in the future, as the move is a good one and will be repeated, despite it not being the attack I have chosen to illustrate on this particular outing.

3. CE tanks are a matter of taste and style, I suppose. I want them CE to enhance their offensive punch via added hits. I prefer to try to kill the enemy rather than spare my MA and hide from his sniper, especially in a situation like this, facing only slim enemy firepower against my overwhelming strength. I choose to view my tanks as offensive weapons which I might use to reduce the enemy, more than as victory points I might coyly hide and sneak across the canal to help satisfy a VC I should have no problem attaining in any case.

CONCLUSION

Were you expecting mud slinging and name-calling? We hope this is only the beginning of a concerted effort to present opposing viewpoints of the many ASL scenarios. No way, of course, will we be able to cover every scenario, so send in your votes, to either one of us, for the scenarios you'd most like to see explored. We'll step onto the firing line and take a shot at whatever the majority want to read. Please feel free to contact:

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PANZER GEGEN PANZER
Part Two: Hit to Kill
Bruce Bakken

Reprise

Part One of this article introduced to the reader the concept of the Tank Engagement, and asserted that the tank's primary task on the battlefield is to destroy the enemy's tanks. The article further stated in somewhat vague terms that "the objective of a successful tank battle at the individual level becomes that of increasing one's own odds while reducing the opponent's", without really getting into the specifics of how this might be accomplished.

Since a tank is characterized by its four principles - namely Mobility, Firepower, and Protection - it became expedient to divide the article into parts roughly correlating with each of these principles as they relate to winning the Engagement. Thus, Part One dealt with Mobility and how to best take advantage of a tank's movement options. Part Two, then, will explore the second principle of the tank: Firepower.

A tank's firepower provides the means by which it can destroy an enemy tank. Each tank is armed with an inherent gun, which is categorized by sub-type (B1.3). Each MA Caliber size (C2.21) is assigned a Basic TK (C7.1) depending upon the ammunition used, which is further modified by various factors and then subtracted from the target's applicable AP to receive a Final TK (C7.11) needed to destroy the target.

Tank combat in ASL is a two-step process: "C3.1... First the firer must determine if he has hit the target; if he has, he must then determine the effect(s), if any, of that hit." It is through this "two step process" that the player can most directly influence "one's own odds" so Part Two will concentrate upon the To Hit Process (C3.1), and the various To Hit Tables (C7.1) as they relate to winning the Engagement.

Before proceeding further, however, it may be well to review in greater detail the concept of the "tank
At close range, a hit may become as "automatic" as it will ever get.

3. Take more shots than the enemy. This may, but does not have to, include using Intensive Fire, which will be discussed later. Similar to Rule #1 in the rule shots you take, the more chances you give yourself to destroy the enemy. A so-called "realist" might point out that more shots means more likelihood of a Gun malfunction, but consider that the odds of this occurring are usually identical to that of obtaining a CH. Think positive!

It can be seen that these three Rules of Engagement are primarily defensive in nature, and this is not difficult to understand. Because the game is played in phaser, one side will be moving while the other side sits, watches, and waits. By striving to achieve all three of the Rules, you will quickly find that your first shot (Rule #1) will likely occur during your DFPF (A.15); that your first shot of the Engagement (Rule #2) will occur during the ensuing FFPF; and that by following rules #1 and #2 throughout the scenario you will accumulate more shots than your opponent.

By taking the first shot in the DFPF, you leave yourself the option of attempting to escape during the next Player Turn or taking the next shot "with odds". If you miss with the second shot, you can then consider using Intensive Fire. If the enemy survives your Player Turn, however, the advantage reverts to him and all you can do is hold your breath and hope for the best. It is the rare Engagement which lasts more than a Player Turn or two. Luck is the imperical element in tank warfare (a topic which will be discussed more fully in Part Four), so one side is bound to destroy the enemy after a couple tries. All else remaining equal, the Rules of Engagement are intended to bestow an advantage upon the firer who follows them.

To Hit...

Once you have decided to Engage the enemy, your next decision involves which Target Type to use. Only two choices are available: you can either use the Vehicle Target Type (C.31), or the Area Target Type (C.33). The Vehicle Target Type is the most obvious, and is assumed barring a declaration to the contrary (C.9).

However, at certain points in the battle you may find yourself facing a formidable APF which your MA has little or no chance of destroying. In such an enemy you have trapped, and the odds of escaping make it seem likely that you will be destroyed in the attempt, you may decide that you might as well go down in a "blaze of glory". Knowing full well that your Gun can not destroy the enemy under normal circumstances, what do you do?

Well, you could fire using the Vehicle Target Type and hope for a CH (C.3.7), an unlikely occurrence not to be relied upon. Or, you could fire HE using the Area Target Type. The odds of a CH remain the same, but a normal hit gives you one more chance to destroy the enemy, resolved as per C.1.55. Applicable DRM may still make a kill rather unlikely, but you may Immobilize the enemy, or shock him (which in itself may result in his elimination; C.7.4). Also bear in mind that if his crew are CH they will be more Vulnerable to a General Collateral Attack (A.1.38) when using the Area Target Type than with normal HE Equivalency (C.3.4) using AP shot.

Since TEM apply to the resolution of an attack on the Area Target Type, if the enemy occupies protective terrain then even this option may be of little use to you. Overall, the circumstances in which you will choose the Area over the Vehicle Target Type are probably pretty limited. Your best bet would likely be to attempt an escape if you find yourself in an unfavorable position to Engage the enemy. Be aware of your options, though. If desperate situations call for desperate measures, consider using the Area Target Type as a last resort.

At any rate, the C3 To Hit Table will have a direct bearing upon the Range at which you Engage the enemy. The table itself is divided into six-bay increments, with the Basic TH in each column decreasing as the Range increases. Obviously, the closer you are to the target, the better are your odds of hitting it. Notice also that there are two Basic TH listed for each Range, one black and one red. Basically, your nationality will determine which color you will use (A25), though this sometimes varies with
The discrepancy between the black TH# and red TH# means that the side which must use the red TH# will probably attempt to get fairly close to the target to insure a rough parity. This is one reason that most Engagements will usually take place within twelve-hex range.

These Basic TH# are modified by the C4 Gun & Ambo TH Modifications to reach a Modified TH#. The C4 Modifiers may further influence your decision of what Range to open the Engagement. For instance, if your MA has an "L" or "LL" Gun Type, you may want to keep the enemy at a longer range in order to take advantage of your gun's "standoff" capability, somewhat analogous to a boxer with a longer reach keeping his opponent at an optimum distance. Most A/S mapboards are so arranged that typical LOS will not exceed beyond twelve hexes, so chances are you would not be able to take advantage of these modifiers. If an open expanse does exist, or if any dominant hills in the area afford excellent LOS, you may wish to Engage at the longer ranges. (This is one reason the Panther is so lethal at extreme ranges - besides its high Basic TH#, of course.)

Conversely, the TH# for "w" Guns, or for smaller calibers, tends to decrease more rapidly as the range increases. The modifier for small caliber may be offset by the "L" modifiers discussed above, but generally such a tank will likely prefer to Engage at shorter ranges. Notice that the modifiers for a Gun less-than or equal-to 40mm are cumulative (C4.2).

Finally, the Basic TH# is modified drastically if APDS/APCR is used. The application of Special Ammunition will be discussed in a future issue, but is mentioned here simply to avoid an oversight.

Any player interested in an excellent experience on the effects of Range, red- versus- black TH#, and C4 Modifiers should play "Counterattack At Sidi Bou Zid". More than any other, this scenario will help you develop a real "feeling" for the C3 To Hit Table.

The Modified TH# thus reached is then modified by various Firing and Target Based DRN. One of the ways an attacker can directly "increase his odds" is via the C5 Firing-Based To Hit DRN. For the most part the firer can control which of these DRN will be applicable to a given shot. What follows next, then, is an analysis of some of the C5 DRN which most commonly affect the outcome of a TH DR during an armored Engagement. For convenience's sake, they will be presented in the order they appear on the table.

Case A; Fire Outside CA. This is fairly self-explanatory: "C5.11 All Guns use Case A to fire targets outside their current CA when changing their CA for a shot in that phase." Ideally, you would rather not have to change CA when firing. This is not always possible, of course, but since you as a player can usually see where your opponent's units are located (the omnipresent player syndrome), you can place the CA of your MA to face the direction of the greatest threat.

Note as well that "the Case A DRN is doubled if the firer is in woods/building/rubble. Furthermore, once such a Gun... fires from woods/building/rubble it may continue to fire during that phase from that hex only inside its current CA." These factors alone present a strong argument against placing your tank in such restricting terrain. The benefit gained from TEM may be offset to a large degree by these penalties, not to mention the initial hazard of Bogging to enter the terrain in the first place. As always, the circumstances will determine your willingness to accept these difficulties.

Also remember that a Gun may change its CA without firing at the end of any fire phase in which it is still able to fire without using Intensive Fire (C3.22). This tactic may prove useful in avoiding the doubled-Case A DRN for woods/building/rubble, though if VCA is changed in this manner while in such terrain (D2.11) you would still have to pass a Bog-DR.

Finally, a vehicle in Bypass which changes TCA to or through a side Target Facing must add +1 to the Case A DRN (C2.321). In addition, a "TCA based on a bypass side Target Facing... must pay appropriate Case A (C5.1) penalties for firing within this enlarged CA...," unless the target is Acquired (Engaged). This is an important consideration in using VBM that was touched upon in Part One.

The simplest way to avoid Case A is to position your tank in such a way that the enemy cannot possibly avoid your field of fire, bearing in mind that precisely what the enemy is likely going to try to do.

Case B; Fire In Affh. Case B applies to all "Guns firing during the Affh which did not enter their current hex during that Player Turn..." It is not very likely that a firer will use Case B by itself during an Engagement. Usually such a Gun would instead fire during the PPff, since waiting until the Affh allows the enemy to intervene with fire during the DFFh.

Of course, it may be that the enemy was destroyed during Prep Fire and that no decent targets remain, perhaps being concealed or outside of the firer's CA. You might want to sit tight and await developments rather than move during the PPff, particularly if you occupy an excellent tactical position.

Case B will probably be used most often when a vehicle changes its CA in lieu of firing as per C3.22, in which case the Case B DRN may actually be less than the appropriate Case A DRN would have been. Keep in mind, however, that a vehicle may only fire once during the Affh, may not use Intensive Fire, and that Case B is increased to +3 for a firer in woods/building/rubble (thus providing another reason for not occupying such terrain.)

Case C; Bounding Fire. Case C applies to a vehicle which has entered a new hex during the PPff, but does not fire until the Affh. Case C is based upon Case B and the vehicle's Turret Type (D1.3), and is the usual situation in which Case B will apply.

It can be seen that using Bounding Fire involves moving into the enemy's LOS (since it may be presumed that you would Prep Fire otherwise), and that the enemy could fire at you in the meantime during the DFFh. Thus, it would seem that Bounding Fire breaks the Rules of Engagement discussed previously, since the enemy would get the first shot (Rule #1), and the enemy would get the first shot using Case N (Rule #2). Indeed, it appears the enemy holds all the advantages in this case and that
Bounding Fire should rarely, if ever, be used.

As a generalization this might do, if the only factors involved were your tank and a lone enemy in open terrain. Since many factors come into play during a typical battle, you may find it advantageous to try to work your way into a favorable position in order to destroy the enemy before an Engagement even occurs.

For instance, it may happen that the enemy is already engaged with a different friendly unit. By moving another tank into this enemy's LOS, you offer him the rather unpleasant prospect of becoming the target of two different attackers, or perhaps the enemy currently occupies restrictive terrain (woods/building/rubble), thus enabling you to maneuver around him and confronting him with an excessive Case A DRM should he choose to fire. In any case, should the enemy fire and miss, and should you fire in the ensuing APFH (Case C) and miss, the enemy would gain the advantage.

If your tank is so formidable as to be virtually invulnerable, then you may have no reservations about moving right up to the enemy and allowing him that first shot. This should be regarded as the exception rather than the norm, because at the very least you should be wary of a Deliberate Immobilization attempt. As always, the situation will dictate your course of action.

Bounding Fire is generally not the ideal way to open the Engagement, but should be considered as a means of destroying the enemy before any Engagement can develop. This is especially true if the enemy's DPH + TH DRM would be greater than your APFH TH DRM.

If you wish to fire without risking the prospect of an Engagement, you may fire during the MHP using Bounding First Fire (D3.3). Unless you have a continuous LOS for three or less MP during that Player Turn, the DRM for Bounding First Fire would be the same as waiting until the APFH to fire. Thus, there is no great disadvantage to firing during the MHP unless Restricted Aim (Case C1) or Limited Aim (Case C2) applies.

Since a target cannot become acquired during Bounding First Fire (D6.55), this is more of a "hit-and-run" tactic, intended to destroy the target in passing than to become involved in a full-fledged Engagement. Especially if your MA has a chance against the enemy armor, but your armor could not possibly withstand a blow from the enemy's gun, you would try to hit the enemy and then get back under cover.

This is all fine and well provided the enemy obliges you by sitting cleanly and letting you shoot. Unfortunately, you subject yourself to possible Defensive First Fire with every MP expenditure. On the plus side, you can declare a Gun Duel (C2.2401) and possibly preempt the enemy's Defensive First Fire. The side with the lowest C5 and Acquisition DRM will be able to fire first, so if you are planning to use Bounding First Fire, choose a route that will allow you to win any potential Gun Duels. (This rule is a potentially daunting one to sort out, but the time spent studying it may prove useful later during the heat of combat.)

It is not actually necessary to stop before firing during the MHP. You can use Motion Fire (Case C4; C5.35), a tactic favored by the Russians more for its psychological effect than with any great expectation of causing real damage. The psychological effect is lost in ASI, but the inherent inaccuracy of such fire remains, that being the appropriate Case C DRM with a doubling of the lower gun. This is indeed the proverbial "long shot", and would only be considered by a Motion vehicle during Defensive Fire, or when you want to retain every available MP during the MHP and yet want to take a crack at the enemy on the way by.

The final thing to consider about Bounding First Fire is that once any vehicular weapon fires, its other weapons may fire in the phase only from that hex (D3.51). Take care not to inadvertently fire a MG during the MHP and thus restrict your MA to firing from that hex.

Case F: Intensive Fire. Once you have exhausted your normal ROF, you may take one additional shot as Intensive Fire (C5.6). Intensive Fire entails a risk for the firer in that the B6 of the Gun is reduced by two (as per A-11). You also suffer a loss of accuracy by adding a +2 DRM to the TH DR.

Since Case F will result in a Recalled tank.

Case N can apply to an Intensive Fire attack, at least the +2 DRM of Case F can be reduced or negated. Further, Intensive Fire can be used to place an Acquired counter, or to flip an already existing Acquired counter to its -2 side.

Yet it still comes down to that reduced B6, and this should be your determining factor in deciding whether or not to use Intensive Fire. You should generally hold off using this option until the Engagement is well under way, when the enemy has a good chance of hitting you should it survive your initial fire. Untimely or excessive use of Intensive fire can only lead to grief.

Case C: Deliberate Immobilization Attempt. "Often an AFV target's AF is so formidable that it makes a kill by certain guns unlikely if not impossible." Even if this were not the case, you may decide at certain times that an Immobile enemy is as good as a dead one (particularly if he must exit units to win), and so may attempt to immobilize him using Case C (C5.7).

To try Deliberate Immobilization, you must have a Basic TH greater than the target's lowest hull AF, and you must score a hull hit at no more than six hex range. A kill is not possible using Case C, but you may force the crew to leave its vehicle (D5.5).

As Acquisition does not apply to a Deliberate Immobilization attempt, the +5 DRM may make such hit a tough proposition. Since Case C is always voluntary, it becomes a tactical decision made on the spot.

Case I: Buttoned Up. The pros and cons of remaining CH or BU will be discussed more fully in Part Three. For now just keep in mind that firing while BU incurs a +1 DRM, and keeps your commander out of pecky small-arms and sniper fire.

Of the three C5 DRM not mentioned thus far, one (Case H; Captured Gun) does not occur under normal circumstances; another (Case E; Firing Within Hex) comes into effect only under special conditions; and the last (Case D; Pinned Fire) does not affect a CT
AFV as such (see A7.82). That leaves only a few miscellaneous DRMs, listed as "other." Of these, the penalty for overstocking (A5.12) should be avoided whenever possible. If your CE crew should happen to become Stunned (D5.34), you will have to pay the price in the form of a +1 DRM for the remainder of the scenario. The rest either do not apply to armor or have been touched upon previously.

These conclude the discussion of the C5 DRM for our purposes, but one very important To Hit DRM remains to be considered. Even though it is treated as a Target-Based DRM, its application depends solely on the firer, and its use forms the basis for the concept of the Engagement. This is of course the modifier for Acquired Target, Case N (C6.5).

Whenever a Gun fires at a known unit, it may place a 1/2" -1 Acquired counter on its target, which then applies as a TH DRM for subsequent shots at that target. The target will remain Acquired as long as certain conditions are maintained, these being listed in C6.5. Most of these conditions are dependent on the firer, since the only way the target can shake off an Acquired counter is by leaving the firer's LOS as per C6.15.

It should be fairly easy for the firer to maintain its target Acquisitio. Of the Firer-based conditions which cause loss of Acquisition, the only one the firer has no control over is having the Gun malfunction. As long as the firer does not leave his present location or change its CA without firing at the Acquired target, loss of Acquisition should not be a worry. Remember, however, that the same restrictions apply to the firer's CMG. Perhaps the most careless loss of Acquisition occurs when the tank's CMG attacks or Interdicts a different target.

The Acquired counter remains on the target for as long as it remains in LOS. Thus, if the enemy moves out of your Gun's CA but is still Acquired, Case N would reduce or even negate the applicable Case A DRM for changing CA when firing. Notice also that if the enemy succeeds in leaving your LOS, the Acquired counter remains in the last in-LOS Location occupied by that target. The Acquired counter would then apply to any other known unit which subsequently entered that Location.

These same principles also apply to Area Acquisition, that is when firing using the Area Target Type. The most important difference between a 1/2" Acquired counter and a 5/6" Acquired counter is that Area Acquisition applies only to the target hex, and may not follow the target when it leaves that hex. This in is not a great concern during an armored Engagement, since the circumstances in which you will prefer the Area over the Vehicle Target Type are probably very limited.

Area Acquisition will most likely affect an Engagement when used against an empty hex. Since "a Gun can fire on a hex not containing a Known enemy unit..." when using the Area Target Type (C6.521), and since you as a player can see where the enemy units are located, you could place Area Acquisition in those hexes the enemy must traverse in order to Engage you. If the enemy entered one of these Acquired hexes, you could then transfer (C6.52) that Area Acquisition DRM to the Vehicle Target Type when announcing the shot. If nothing else, you may influence the route the enemy will take by covering the terrain choke points with Area Acquisition. The only down side to this tactic (and it is a serious enough one) is the risk of Gun malfunction while firing at an empty hex. This is advised here not indiscriminate firing, but rather a carefully crafted target selection plan.

... Perchance To Kill.

Scoring a hit is only half the battle, as it were, because then you must make a TH DRM in order to destroy the AFV. The means available to "increasing one's odds" are somewhat limited during this TK process, but there are ways that you can optimize your chances.

First you must consult the appropriate TK Table for the ammunition type used in order to find the Basic TK# for your Gun's caliber size. Since AP and HE are the two ammunition types most commonly available to all nationalities, these are the only two that will be looked at here. Special Ammunition (C8.) will be discussed in a future issue.

There is really little choice in deciding to use AP or HE when using the Vehicle Target Type. The HE Basic TK# for a given caliber lags far behind the AP TK# for the same Gun, so it serves no practical purpose to try to defeat armor using HE if AP is available.

On the other hand, you may be confronted with an enemy AFV that is invulnerable to your AP shot in its current facing. The decision involving Vehicle/Area Target Type has already been expounded upon, but if such an enemy is CE then another option presents itself: Fire on the Vehicle Target Type using HE.

Of course you cannot hope for a kill in this case, but you just might blast that CE crew with a Specific Collateral Attack (A.14A). Since a Collateral Attack uses that ammunition type's IFT FP, even the smallest caliber has a chance to Stun the enemy.

The Basic TK# is then modified by various factors to reach a Modified TK#, which is subtracted from the AFV's appropriate AP to reach a Final TK#. To destroy the target, you must make a DR less than this Final TK#. There are four possible modifications to the Basic TK#, but only three that apply to Direct Fire from a tank, and only two that the firer has any control over.

The first one we will look at is the fourth on the list, Case D (Range Effects). No great mathematical formula is required to use the range chart: simply look in the correct row for the caliber size you are using and cross-index that with the range to the target to find the TK modification that applies. Notice that the smaller calibers tend to fall off more rapidly at longer ranges, while benefitting from a better modifier at very close range.

This range factor, combined with the TK modification for range, will generally dictate that Engagements will take place within twelve hexes for smaller calibers, and up to eighteen or more for larger calibers (terrain permitting). Engagements at one- or two-hex range can be lethal, but are correspondingly more rare because of the difficulty of getting that close and surviving.

24
Finally, keep alert for any Underbelly Hit opportunities (D4.3). As the enemy crosses a wall/bocage or exits a stream/gully, any ordnance within six hexes and with LOS to the specified vertex, will score an Underbelly Hit with any hit that would normally be a turret hit. An Underbelly Hit uses the Aerial AF for that AFV, with a corresponding increase in your TK odds.

From the points raised thus far in Parts One and Two of this article, it would seem that the successful tank commander adopts a primarily defensive posture during an armored battle. In fact, by following the Rules of Engagement and through judicious use of mobility, a tank tends to behave much like a hunter stalking its prey. This analogy of a hunter is a credible one. Depending upon the game being hunted, the hunter will either wait quietly for his quarry to cross his path, or he may try to flush the prey out from cover. Either way, a good hunter uses stealth to approach and surprise his victim. Likewise, the successful tank commander waits for the enemy to move into his sights, or carefully moves into an advantageous position to destroy the target.

Conservative play is the byword here, since the DEFENDER will likely hold the initial advantage during a tank engagement. When the enemy moves into LOS, the DEFENDER may choose to engage at that time, or make a Motion Attempt (see Part One) and escape in the next Player Turn. Whatever the case, allow the enemy to make the first mistake when you wait to take immediate advantage. Above all, patience may be the virtue which most distinguishes the successful tank commander. This is not to say that a tank commander should be cautious to the point of timidity, however. Rather, great prudence should be exercised when venturing out into the battlefield. Far from being an invincible hunter, you are also being hunted by an enemy who is likely to use the same stalking techniques as you use. Destroying the enemy is your primary objective, but your survival may depend upon how well you tend to the third principle of the tank, and the subject of Part Three of this article: Protection.

**PUTTING NAILS IN THE IRON COFFINS**

Ronald Berger

The name of this superb simulation (I do not even call it a game anymore) is (Advanced) Squad Leader; not Tank Leader, not Artillery Leader, not Squadron Leader. The grunt, ground pounder, PBI (poor bloody infantry) is the master of the battlefield! Now please remember that I am a ground pounder from a long line of non-comm! And, as such, I have my own personal prejudices. Here I have put together some of my tactics on how to strike fear into the hearts of any tanker leader who dares to advance with or without infantry in close support.

**Close Combat Tactics**

The first principle to remember when stalking a vehicle is that you need some type of cover, this may be LOS hindrance (LV, Smoke 2/6 in. or 2/2 in., Brush, Grain, Orchard, wrecks, or intervening vehicles be they glider, jeep truck or AFV), or a TEM. This will help you maintain concealment as well as increase your chances for survival to effect the CC.

Try to approach the AFV from an aspect that will require the TCA, or better yet the VCA, to be changed at least one hex spine. This tactic greatly increases the chance for your survival to get into CC and hence destroy the vehicle. If you can, attack with several INF units from multiple directions.

The next most important thing to maintain when hunting an AFV is to have at least one unit in your stack with concealment. Also remember that if the AFV is concealed and in open ground it loses '?' as soon as you have LOS to it, or when it is in concealment terrain and changes TCA or VCA. Also, if the VCA is changed in a building, rubble or in woods a bog DR must be made. The failure of this gives you another modifier for an immobile vehicle. The advantage of concealment is that this gives you a -2 DRM to the ambush roll and the ability to ambush no matter what the terrain. (This is tantamount to creating street fighting advantage anywhere on the board; a very powerful tool in the hands of a
bold sergeant!). If the AFV does not have MANNED, USABLE, and FUNCTIONAL MGs you get another -1DRM. Sorry, non-remote control AA MGs do not count if your enemy is BU, but the BNG does, even though it can not be used in CC.

Speaking of sergeants, the next most important thing to have available is an MDC. Preferably an 8-1 or better who can helpyour troops pass PAAACRs. His help does not end there. His modifier adds (subtracts actually) to the ambush dr; a hero is considered stealthy to boot! Any MDC, but only one MDC per MDC in sequential attack, will add +1 to the CCV of that MDC which he has combined with to attack the AFV. The leader/hero modifier is also a DRM during the resolution of the CC attack.

Regardless of whether or not you have ambushed the AFV you got to attack first, even if your enemy has infantry in the hex--even if the AFV is not manned! Again, a very important point since dead units do not attack back, and who likes the 16p from the German BNW on the IFT and/or MG fire power on the CC ratio table! Keep in mind here that the SMG on the back of the AFV is also the maximum DR for an effect in CC (example gratia, a SMG in 1944 that rolls an 8 or above in CC has NO effect!) and that all units in the hex (even infantry friendly to the tank) are affected by the 16p.

Open topped AFVs and CE AFVs (remember that there is no use of the BNW when the AFV is CE for smoke OR CC HE EQUIV) are truly a joy to attack due to the BNWs on your CCV roll, opposing infantry in a hex adds a +2DRM to the CCV; you would be well advised to attempt to neutralize them before attacking the AFV! This can be accomplished in many different ways prior to CC, or by attacking them first in CC with AMBUSH and taking the risk of AFV return fire before you attempt to kill the AFV. The foregoing choice will weigh heavily on your final CCV and DRMs.

Use of Conventional and Not So Conventional LATMs

The most widely available LATW for the squad leader when playing DYO is the MOL. This wonderful weapon can be purchased for EVERY infantry unit (SMG, Sqd, 1/2 Sqd, and crew) by spending only ONE point extra per MMC. A MOL does not need a TH DR. There are no visibility modifiers to the TK or any effect on the TK for CX. The motion of the AFV adds a +2DRM to the TK#, while OT AFV and CE CT AFVs have a +2 and +1 DRM (noncumulative) respectively. Height advantage and rear target aspect will give you further favorable modifiers. As of this writing there is no penalty for use of the MOL in the APFH either, though this appears to be a subject of discussion amongst some of the recognized experts in the rules.

Aside from AFV destruction, the MOL can be used against soft vehicles, infantry and in the aid of kindling. If you have a scenario where intentional kindling is forbidden (something of which I seem to approve) you could attack burnable terrain with a MOL plus IFT and get around this restriction? (Yes gentle reader, I am indeed a slimeball! Just ask Earl Ryan or any one of my opponents who have faced me on BNW or IFT). With the good publisher's permission I hope to regularly inform you of the many dastardly and esoteric applications of the rules and tactics that I regularly attempt to use. Please note that MANY of these tactics are not original, I have been in the ASL AiT school of hard knocks for many years both in ASL tournaments and in campaign games.

BAZ, PIAT, ATR, PSR, FP are also weapons that can kill AFVs. But do not forget the application of the HEAT IFT and IFT of these weapons when you have infantry targets! In some cases you can choose which INF unit is effected. The most effective use of these weapons is on the attack, rather than as static opposition, since you can maneuver to fire upon a chosen aspect of the AFV within range. The AFV will most likely be in motion. (Although making a motion dr is one way to change VCA freely and is an effective method of modifying DRs for the TK of MOL, the placement of BNWs, and the TH for other LATWs.) On a particularly well armored AFV, do not discount the chance for intentional immobilization, by getting a hull hit with a +5DRM, especially when you have a leader to modify the TH DR and/or the target is +1 or +2 TH for size.

My personal favorite LATW, even though it is not classified as such, is the MTR. Many mortars have a 3 RoF and even the biggest, best armed, and best armored AFVs (save the Pzkw Maus) get only a ±1 IFT DRM. When firing on UT vehicles and/or those whom AFVs are all below ±4 you get additional -1 modifiers! My favorite story concerning on a Macro game at the 1989 Origins in Los Angeles where Earl Ryan used 2 81mm MTRs to first immobilize and then caused ball out of the crews of 3 PzJg Elephants (actually FerdinandAs). The crews were then nailed by subsequent MTR fire. There was no way to penetrate the frontal armor of these units; the armor commander thought that they were impregnable. The overall commander had even ordered this individual to "watch out for an ambush! There are mortars on board!" Even 8W mortars can take out AFVs.

Many of you think it is glorious to be riding across the stepping with your turret turning left and right, with a dust plume coming from the tracks of the M113s and IVs, rolling across opposition. Just give me my 10 brave men with a bottle of petrol that has WP and rocks inside and a zag to light in the mouth of the neck! I always take particular joy in running down the crews as they scramble to leave their iron coffins after a KIA.

ANNOUNCING:

THE ROUT REPORT!

NOT THAT IT'S NEWS TO ALL OF YOU, BUT OTHERS: HEY, YOU NEED TO GET THE WORD!

THE ROUT REPORT is published by DAGGER, a suitable acronym for "Detroit Area Gamers Cunnin' thin' Routing" or some such (it varies depending on their mood). Each action packed issue contains scenarios, tourney news, humorous bits and more. Kurt Martin set-up shop a year ago and has now gone intergalactical! Subs are $9 a year and worth it. Contact him at 519 Gardenia, Royal Oak, MI 48067.
Monsieur CX
KURT MARTIN

Shanghaied into writing a column! To what is ATP coming? Resorting to common blackmail and arm-twisting in the name of supporting the hobby. Well, I suppose I should make the best of it. And I think I’ll start by taking on a subject near and dear to my heart, and to yours as well, I imagine. The Wacky World of Scenarios!

It’s come to my attention recently that there are a heck of a lot of scenarios out there; more than 100 "official" ones running around with scads of house brews and "wanna be's". Now there are many things that need to be said in public about these scenarios, (and I hope that eventually all of them come up for discussion) but for now let me address just these few: historical accuracy, playability and balance.

Historical accuracy in ASL scenarios can be a tricky thing. Often the units in question, especially partisan and Japanese units, kept no records or were wiped out in the action or some time thereafter. For example, how much is really known about the action represented in Sylvan Death? A scenario I wrote this year, In The Samurai Tradition, features Japanese paratroopers, all of whom were killed in the action the scenario describes. Thus all accounts of the battle were written by the surviving Americans. There are sure to be exaggerations and other skewed reporting. But in any case, in reading the action descriptions and Aftermaths (a great and popular hobby all to itself) it becomes clear that, generally speaking, a lot of research goes into making scenarios historical.

Even where information is sketchy, the standard has been for scenarios to feature a fair and concise reportage on the action as it happened, with lots of details and frequent mention of units and even particular individuals. In some cases, such as with Soldiers of Destruction, this is of no major consequence. (In fact we could say that this is as close to a DYO as an "official" scenario has yet come.) But detailed action reports make the scenarios more interesting and also set a standard for efforts of scenario designers. (Doing your homework is clearly a pre-requisite to having a scenario taken seriously. Indeed, tournaments that showcase a-historical or fictional scenarios get their share of jeers.)

A close look at the ASL modules released to date shows another interesting way concessions are made to history and balance. An important goal with each module is achieving a good range of scenarios, to avoid the dreaded sameness that would come with eight Italian scenarios that all looked and played the same. This can sometimes mean that a mediocre or unbalanced scenario can find its way into the box by virtue of the type of action it represents. (It has been suggested that Kokoda Trail made it into Code of George Bush because of its scenario type, straight jungle fight, even though it was known to strongly favor the Japanese.)

And with play it becomes clear that some scenarios sacrifice playability for their historical nature (with some saying that this describes any night scenario). Are Turning The Tables and Gavin’s Gamble more hassle than they’re worth? Enough players have been scared away by the rules for dunce, assault boats, anti-aircraft and smoke screens to place these two near the top of the "Rarely Played" list, despite the attractiveness of the actions. This is simply the downside of a comprehensive game played by busy people, and no real fault of the scenarios themselves. On the other hand, we have The Globus Raid. I’m sure that someone has played this respectful recreation of a partisan attack, but I don’t know him.

Some other scenarios have the correct ingredients for easy fun and accuracy but are out of balance to a serious degree. All of us have run into the occasional "official" scenario that simply wouldn’t behave, even after multiple attempts. Just looking at Mr. Nixon’s Oktoberfest lists reveals goodness such as Slaaming the Door and Red Packets, scenarios so out of balance that severe surgery before they approach 50-50. This can be a big disappointment to a couple of guys sitting down, hoping for a chess-like close match or at least an interesting fight. Ouch. And multiple playings won’t reveal the secret that balances them, either.

Of course, with the relative wealth of published scenarios in the world, it’s easy to see that most players don’t have the time to play each of them (or even each of those that interest them) multiple times. Yet, this is often what is required to reveal a scenario’s quirks and potentials. Some players, myself among them, would argue that while multiple playings of a scenario represent a unique gaming challenge, as attacks and defenses are developed and honed, it is least like the challenges faced by the actual combatants, and thus less honorable. But hey, I don’t begrudge you guys for your fun with Guards Counterattack. I don’t. Really. I’m sure it’s just as fascinating the 10th time.

One criticism of Mishcon/Suchar designs is their frequent inclusion of one or two "super" units, such as 10-3’s or King Tigers, around which the scenarios tend to revolve. The fate of these pieces is often closely tied to that of the opening player. On the other hand, a bulky piece like Monastery Hill has the benefit of lots of infantry, whose many DR during a game tend to level the playing field. In general, no single swing of luck will affect enough of them to throw the advantage one way or another, at least until it comes to crunch time near the end.

Gary Portenberry of Texas has begun a survey of sorts to discover which scenarios people think are unbalanced and how they think they could be "fixed." For most players’ enjoyment, I’m willing to venture that a well-mixed to decent mixture of accuracy, playability and balance will suffice, since anyone crazy enough to do this job, excuse me, play this game, will be interested in a variety of situations, be willing to put up with at least a few mighty obscure rules and be unfazed by a completely unlikely-looking victory condition. But when any one of these, particularly playability and balance, gets out of line in a published ASL scenario, it’s not so clear that Binky’s going to be a happy camper. After all, we had to pay to get into this game, didn’t we?

Notes on this issue’s scenario: Long in process and controversial by nature, it’s The First Waltz, an
TACTICS OF
ITALIAN BROTHERS

ERIC BAKER

Italian Brothers is one of the best received scenarios that our little gang here in Motown have come up with. Used as a scenario at the 1980 ASL Oktoberfest "Invitational" single elimination tournament, it fulfills the criteria I consider most crucial to a "tourney" scenario: it is well balanced. The fact that it also possesses the other two crucial qualities is icing on the cake. By this, I refer to its presentation of both sides with viable options (no "best way" strategy), and its excitement, ensured by the fluid situation it simulates. These three characteristics give the scenario a high replay potential. That said, I'm going to give a couple of pertinent tactical tips and strategies for each side.

NATIONALISTS: (The Italian Italians, for all un schooled in the Spanish Civil War)

Your first order of business is to protect building 6N4. If this falls (which it should NOT), you immediately lose. It also makes an excellent firebase for attacking 6K1 and 6K4. Use it.

That said, your decisions get harder. The use of the AFVs depends on how they fared through the first PPH. Statistically speaking, you will lose one AFV for every six shots fired from an MG. Because you must remain in the enemy LOS for a PPH and a BPH on turn one, expect to lose at least one vehicle. Each are worth 5 CVF, so while pretty lousy, they can figure prominently in the VC if lost. Most people use them to cover building 17P2 or reinforce the drive onto 6D. The first keeps the tanks safest; parked in hexes P0 to P4, they are immune to fire until the Republican reaches the hedge line at row N. Reinforced by a platoon in P2, they should be able to keep the Republicans at bay.

Of course, the use of your infantry is what will win the game for you. Generally, you'll have to take three of the buildings to win; the CVF for losing AFVs will give the enemy more points than you will generally gain. Given that you can hold P2 with a minimum of effort, you need to target two of the three remaining victory buildings. I prefer 6K1 and 6K4. They are easily isolated by a position in level one of 6I6. All three building hexes are also in LOS of 6N4.

I'll generally split my forces as follows: all surviving AFVs park around 17P2; enter four 346 squads and a 7-0 at 17P2 as well. Advance three of these (concealed) to the hedge line, with the reserves at 17P2. Put two 346s and a 347 in 6G9. The remainder move into 6K4 and prepare to assault 6K1 and K4.

REPUBLICANS:

Your forces are tougher than your opponents, with better leadership and a Fearless Leader (Der Commissar), so it may be tempting to charge ahead and count on routing those rotten 6 morale Italians with ease. Don't give in to the temptation. You are actually outnumbered (18 to 14) and are facing those AFVs. While they are feebly, your automatic weapons with D1 aren't that great either. It'll be a race to see what you kill first: enemy tanks or your own MGs. Of course, you should take all the shots you can at the AFVs on the first turn. They are just too valuable to let run away unscathed.

Your first turn choices can hinge on what happens to the tanks. You should set up giving three MGs to two squads, stacking both leaders with them. 15 is the obvious spot. The other squads are placed in 14 and H3. If an AFV is knocked out during Prep, consider pushing these forward to row L. This puts them in normal range of the hedge line, ready to take on the Fascists who enter there. Backed up by MGs, they have a good chance to seize the hedges in following turns. If you're just not willing to take the 2-2 shots from the remaining AFV(s), simply shift these squads west to support the assault on 6K3. Turn two will see the rest of the forces on 1B7 shift to 6d6; if you're not going for 17P2, there is little reason to stay on 6d17.

On 6D, I like to set up three 437s, both LKGs and a 9-1 in C10, three squads, with commissar, in C5, and two 437s in B5. Assuming that you're not going for P2, you have two objectives: first: turn K5 into a deathtrap. Get to K9, CX and concealed, by the end of turn one. Reinforced by the Bd 17 troops, you should be able to beat back all attacks. Second: occupy K1. This building and its surrounding woods offer the best terrain in the area. With the Commissar to rally your troops, you should be able to hold out until the K8 forces can bring pressure from the center.

The middle and end game will probably see a ferocious battle between K1 and K9, as the Italian attempts to wrest K1 from the foe, while keeping K4, and the Republican moves west after securing K8 to interdict the forces from K4 (K7 is the crucial hex in this regard). As I said in the beginning, there are numerous options for each side in this scenario, so your playing may not look anything like what I've laid out. Whatever the case, enjoy!
**ASL SCENARIO ATP1**

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:** The British win immediately when they exit five tanks off the south edge, including ≥2 Matilda IIs.

**WAILLY, BELGIUM, May 21, 1940:** The Blitzkrieg was in full swing, with German armor cutting through the Allied defenses in Belgium, racing for the English Channel. The defenders were disorganized, disagreeing even about how and where to fight. At last the British organized a counterattack, designed to buy time for a proper defense. Coordination with a French armored unit failed, but 50th Division's "Frankforce" moved off to hit Rommel's hard-driving 7th Panzer Division in the flank. The 6th and 8th Durham Light Infantry were footsore, poorly led and ill-equipped. The 4th and 7th RTR Matilda tanks were run down, had no small arms and were festooned with the gear and belongings of the semi-nomadic tankers. In addition, "Frankforce" got a late start, never received their promised air support and lost almost a third of their AFVs to breakdowns. Despite this, the attack soon racked up impressive gains against the surprised Germans. Off on the left flank, the 7th RTR had run miles out in front of the DLI and lost their commander, but threatened to cut Rommel's strung-out division in half.

**BOARD CONFIGURATION:**

**BALANCE:**

- Exit six tanks, including ≥2 Matilda IIs.
- German 105's enter on Turn 3.

**TURN RECORD CHART**

- GERMAN Sets Up First
- BRITISH Moves First

**Elements of the 7th Panzer Division [ELR 4]: [SAN 3]**

- Division AA units, set up in hex 18 X5:
  - 3
  - 3

- Units of the 42nd AT Art Bn, set up on board 16, on between hexrows Z and DD
  - 3
  - 3

- Units of 78th Art Reg, enter on S edge on Turn 2:
  - ART
  - 2
  - 2

- Elements of 7th Rifle Regt, enter on 18 GG6 on Turn 1:
  - 8-0
  - 1

- Elements of 7th Panzer, enter on 17 110 on Turn 3:
  - 14
  - 13

- Elements of 7th Royal Tank Regiment, 1st Tank Brigade [ELR 3] enter N edge of board 16 on Turn 1: [SAN 0]

- C.O., 7th Panzer Division, enter on 18 GG6 according to SSR 6:

**SPECIAL RULES:**

1. EC are moderate with with no wind at start.
2. All British MP are considered printed in red.
3. All British crews use (1)-0-6 counters when on foot.
4. Any German original TK DR of 4 that does not Shock, Immobilize or destroy a British AFV places a Flame counter on that tank. There can be only one Flame per tank. Flame has no effect on the vehicle's abilities but may become a Blaze in each subsequent AP (treat as a wood building), destroying the AFV. The crew must then immediately Abandon the tank, but without a CS roll.
5. No guns may set up HIP. The 37guns have no special ammo. The German AA guns may not fire without an unwounded 10-2 leader on foot in their location.
6. The German 10-2 leader may enter with a reinforcement dr < the number of the current turn.

**Aftermath:** In addition to overrunning scattered infantry, the 7th RTR's Matildas blasted a number of AT guns and tanks; the German guns useless against the heavy British armor. But Rommel himself rushed back from the head of the division to deal with the threat. Gathering a section of AA guns on a hill overlooking the British advance, Rommel directed them to maintain a steady rain of fire, the stream of shells igniting some of the gear strapped to the hulls of the tanks. Lacking real direction and losing tanks to this and other opposition, the Matildas' drive began to run out of steam. Finally, most of the survivors headed back to the north. Rommel's side had been killed at his side, and two Matildas had penetrated miles into the 7th Division's rear before a section of 88s knocked them out. And while it exhausted the brigade's tank strength, the attack did slow the previously headlong German advance. But this was not to be the last British encounter with Rommel or the 88's, nor had the Germans seen the last of the Matildas.
March 14, 1941, between Bir El Tezguddy and Bir El Harmun about 100 km to the west of Bir-Hakeim, Libya. In February 1941, the Free French Brigade (1FF) was attached to the 39th British Army Corps and was sent to cover the south flank of the Eighth Army, far to the desert, at what seemed to be the most dangerous place in the world: a place called Bir Hakeim. While fortifications were built around the new position, orders were received to organize mobile columns to regularly investigate the large no man's land to the west. Three light patrols were named "Jock Columns" following its British inventor, Jonathan "Jock" Campbell. The French troops, mostly legionnaires, quickly learned the basic lessons of desert missions in the desert and were eventually allowed to take more aggressive actions against suspected enemy forces. This hindrance created by the Jock columns was so disruptive that Rommel gave the order to wipe them out whenever possible. On March 14, some forward elements of a French patrol embarked an Axis convoy and destroyed two Ansaldo PL tanks and two Mark III S using their new self-propelled AT gun prototype, the 0.03. This gun was simply the improved version French 75mm gun set up "en portique" on a Chevrolet truck. The Germans created by launching a strong counterattack using tanks, infantry, and artillery. Threatened to be encircled, caught between two tanks, the small French detachment fell attempting to retreat the rest of the column back to the west.

**VICTORY CONDITIONS:** The German player wins at the end of the game if he has gained more casualties DVP than the Free French player but the German player loses instantly if forced to break the pursuit (see SSR 7)

**BOARD CONFIGURATION:**

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**BALANCE:**

- Exchange one German 9-1 armor loader for a 9-1
- Exchange one German 9-1 armor loader for a 9-1

**TURN RECORD CHART**

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<th>German moves first</th>
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**DAK Panzer elements (SAN: 0)**

- **Tank Group 1:** enter on turn 1 on West edge of board 27 with only half of their MP

- **Tank Group 2:** enter on turn 2 on west edge of board 29 (see SSR 4)

**Elements of the 1ère BFL (1st Free French Brigade) (ELR: 4) (SAN: 2)**

- set up in motion on boards 27 and/or 29. See SSR 2

- set up west of row Q on board 26. See SSR 3.

**SSR:**

1. EC are moderate with no wind at start.
2. Each of the 3-ton trucks carries an inherent crew and a 75mm ART gun, 75mm de 75 mle 1917. See British ordnance notes on "en portique" facing the rear VCA. The 52 of the truck becomes (57 for the inherent crew. The 75mm gun "en portique" may fire from the trucks but may not be used as the crew fire the gun in place. Normal RGF and ammo are retained. These guns may not be unloaded from the trucks.
3. The "on board" 75mm ART guns (not the ones "en portique") may not fire from the trucks.
4. All Panzer IIIIs are the H-type. Ignore armor factors of the G-type and replace by those Hor-Mer factors.
5. Any Free French units may enter the east edge without being counted as casualties only if these units are all exiting on the same player turn.
6. Whenever a vehicle enters a new hex, it must chance a bog DR for the entire MP. The bog DR is handled by the opposite player just as if Mud/Deep snow were in effect (ESC, the Mud/Deep snow DRM is not used).
7. Each time a tank group suffers a knocked out/destroyed tank, a TCP must be made for that group and the highest crew member of that group. Failed, the entire group is recalled (but not counted as casualties). When both groups are recalled, the pursuit is broken.

**AFTERMATH:**

Two groups of German tanks chased the fleeing French vehicles. When they appeared in the sights of the artillery battery of the Jock column several kilometers farther to the west, the commanding officer, Capt. Quilot ordered to fire smoke screen in front of the attackers to protect the light of the unit. As soon as the smoke barrage was laid, the gunners were set in row and the whole column tried to escape. At that moment, an artillery tractor ran straight into the field, fell into the fight, and got stuck in the sand. The crew promptly set up the gun in position and prepared to fight while another tractor tried to help also got stuck in the sand. The German tanks were approaching, the range being less than 1 km. Suddenly, a solid shot came from behind the French crew and hit the first tractor, a B63 AT gun had decided to stand fast. The artillery gun also fired and scored a critical hit on another German tank that erupted in flames. Demoralized the other tanks turned back and abandoned the pursuit. The two tractors were then safely recovered as the Free French were very short in vehicles.