

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

Britain's Premier ASL Journal

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COVER: A Bren carrier and infantryman cautiously move down the narrow street of a French village.

THE ASL MAILING LIST

The ASL Mailing List is devoted to discussion of *Advanced Squad Leader*, and is run by Paul Ferraro via a listserv program at the University of Pittsburgh. To subscribe send email to majordomo@list.pitt.edu with the body of the message reading:

subscribe advanced-sl

You MUST use lower case letters!

You will get a message from Majordomo in reply asking for confirmation.

To subscribe to the digest version send the following in the body of a message:

subscribe advanced-sl-digest

The digest is mailed out whenever it has queued 100,000 characters of mailings. You may receive more (or less) than one mailing every 24 hour period. The digest is NOT sent at a certain time each day.

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES is the bi-monthly British ASL journal. All comments are welcome. Even better, contribute. Write an article. Design a scenario. Share your ASL experiences with others. *VFTT* allows you to communicate with other ASLers. Don't be a silent voice.

Issue 31 should be out at the beginning of May 2000.

VFTT costs £2.00 per issue (overseas £3.00), with a year's subscription costing £10.00 (overseas £15.00). Payment should be in pounds sterling, with cheques made out to PETE PHILLIPPS. Readers are reminded to check their address label to see when their subscription ends.

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VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

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PREP FIRE

Hello and welcome to the most difficult *View From The Trenches* to produce to date. I could bore you with tales of too much work, too much drink, and not enough time, but I won't. Quite simply, it's becoming increasingly hard for me to find the time to write the majority of the content of *VFTT* anymore, and if things carry on like this it could mean the end of *VFTT*, Britain's Premier ASL Journal. I might carry on with *VFTT*, the newsletter of the British ASL scene, but if I do, it'll be like the *VFTT* of old, 8, maybe 12 pages of news, reviews, tournament details and player listings with perhaps the odd article here and there.

If you don't want to see this happen, you'd all better start writing something. I'm not asking for big, masterful insights into every aspect of the game, but articles which look at something such as foxholes, or concealment, or Bypass Movement, or... You get my drift. Think of the old SL Clinic articles from years ago in *The General*. Or try your hand at scenario analysis. Look at what Scott Holst did on the first HOB SS pack, or what the Schwerpunkt guys include in their pack.

Anyway, I've filled this issue up with a lot of stuff that I have taken from the internet over the past four or five years. Some of it is a bit rough in places because it was waiting for me to polish it off. Other stuff is pretty complete but by author unknown – if you are that author, or know him, let me know so he can have a copy of this issue (and a name check next time).

Double 1. My last, best hope for victory.

Pete Phillipps

EMOTICONS

With the growth of the InterNet, emoticons have originated to allow people to show expressions in text. I find these very useful for the printed word in general, so you'll see plenty of them in *View From the Trenches*.

An emoticon is created with keyboard characters and read with the head tilted to the left. Some typical emoticons are:

:) humour or smile
;-) winking
:> devious smile
<g> grin
:(sad
:o shocked or surprised
#(hung-over

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INCOMING

MMP 2000

MMP are currently working on getting all out of print *ASL* material back into print, including all *ASL* boards, both mounted and unmounted, *Streets of Fire* and *Action Pack 1*. However the most ambitious part of the plan is to reprint and update the *ASLRB*. This new *ASLRB* will be pretty similar to the original in content, but with additions and changes to incorporate errata and updates to the rules and the dividers. Among the changes due to be incorporated are:

- more examples of play (such as a comprehensive CC example in Chapter A);
- the addition of some of the HASL terrain which can be found on normal mapboards in Chapter B;
- the porting of the Chapter E DYO details into Chapter H;
- the incorporation of post Chapter E rules clarifications and additions into their appropriate sections in Chapters A-E;
- changes to rules sections such as wall advantage and Bocage.

An updated index will be included (based on Tom Huntingdon's index which can be found on various *ASL* InterNet web sites) and the OVR and OBA Flowcharts. What will not be included in chapters such as F and G and the *HASL* chapters (whether Chapter E will be included or not has yet to be determined). The IIPT is also unlikely to be included.

Many questions have yet to be answered about the new *ASLRB*, including its format and cost. MMP are hoping that the new *ASLRB* will be no more expensive than the original *ASLRB* in order to encourage newcomers to try the game.

No decision has been made yet about how to let players get individual chapters if they do not want to buy a new *ASLRB*, nor are there currently any plans to have changed pages downloadable from the MMP web site.

MMP are also working on an *ASL* introductory set. Alongside a set of introductory mapboards, counters and scenarios is likely to be a version of the *ASLRB* on CD ROM which can be read in any web browser [I have an early copy of this and it is VERY good :-)-Pete]. This is likely to feature a number of 'live' examples of play. This is unlikely to be released any tie before the middle of 2001.

Expected to see daylight before then though is *Armies of Oblivion*, the long awaited Axis Minors vehicle and ordnance module. It is expected to contain 5 new

boards, around 16 scenarios, the Finns (probably in the same colour as the original *BV* Finns but with the Finnish National Symbol on the counter), Hungarians, Romanians Bulgarians and several other minor nations. There are also plans to include Lend Lease American/British vehicles in Russian colours and some new German and Russian vehicles (such as the German Nebfz, Diana, RSO and the Russian Aerosans and a few others). Although MMP would like to release *AoO* at ASLOK in October, they do not think this is realistic.

Former *Time On Target* man Mike Reed has been hired to work as Outside Playtest Co-ordinator and will be administering the play tests of a wide variety of MMP materials, pretty much from initial play throughs until turnover for finishing by the Yousehouse group.

A former West Point graduate, Mike has been wargaming for over 25 years. In the *ASL* field he is responsible for the March Madness *ASL* tournament and until last June was one half of Kinetic Energy Productions (producers of *Time on Target* guys), mainly responsible for play-test co-ordination/development.

Despite recruiting Mike, MMP have not been able to secure an agreement with Mark Neukom to use any *TOT* material in *AoO* and future *ASL Journals*.

MMP have raised the price of most *ASL* products by 10%. The only items not to be affected are the most recent products (all magazines, *Action Pack 2*, *Blood Reef:Tarawa*, *A Bridge too Far*, and *Doomed Battalions 2nd Edition*).

In addition to their *ASL* projects MMP have also announced plans to revive a number of old AH titles including *Up Front*, the *Great Campaigns of the American Civil War* series, *Panzer Blitz* and *Panzer Leader*, the *Storm Over Arnhem/Thunder At Cassino/Turning Point Stalingrad/Breakout Normandy* system, *Across 5 Aprils*, *Patton's Best*, *Britannia-Maharaja* and *Wrasslin'*.

Finally, MMP have moved to 403 Headquarters Drive, Suite 7 Millersville, MD 21108. The new telephone number is 410-729-3334, while the fax number has changed to 410-729-1312.

COMPUTER SQUAD LEADER PLANNED

MicroProse are working on a computer game called *Squad Leader*. Based on the *Chaos Gate* engine the game play will be similar to others in the genre in that you command individual soldiers during turns, using or saving action points to perform various actions such as firing, moving, and providing cover. The player will command American squads in Normandy, British troops during Operation Market Garden or German units in the Battle of the Bulge through a series of ten mission. As an example of the depth in the game MicroProse note that all the troops involved will have their own unique bio and skills (for example a farm boy who has driven tractors before might be more adept at driving treaded vehicles). There will also be a boot camp tutorial, a scenario editor and support for four-player multi-player games. It is supposed to ship in October 2000.

SCHWERPUNKT MAINTAINS DRIVE

Despite the possible threat of legal action, *Schwerpunkt* have announced that work on their next scenario pack continues. *Schwerpunkt #5 "The Medal of Honor"* is due to be at the Florida *ASL* tournament at the end of April. Playtesting of *Schwerpunkt Volume #6 "The Victoria Cross"* continues and this pack is expected to be released at ASLOK in October.

All prior issues remain available for \$13.00 each. Each issue containing 12 scenarios printed on card stock and a booklet containing detailed scenario analyses and designer's notes for each scenario. Issues 2-4 also contain articles relating to *ASL*.

Send a check or money order in U.S. funds payable to Sherry Enterprises to Sherry Enterprises, P.O. Box 3, Ruskin, FL 33570. Add \$3.00 (\$5.00 outside the U.S.) for a single volume, for shipping and handling, plus \$1.00 for each volume > 1 ordered (for 2-7 copies outside the U.S. add \$9.00 [\$10.00 Japan and the Pacific]). Florida Residents must add 7% State Sales Tax.

CH MAGAZINE UPDATE

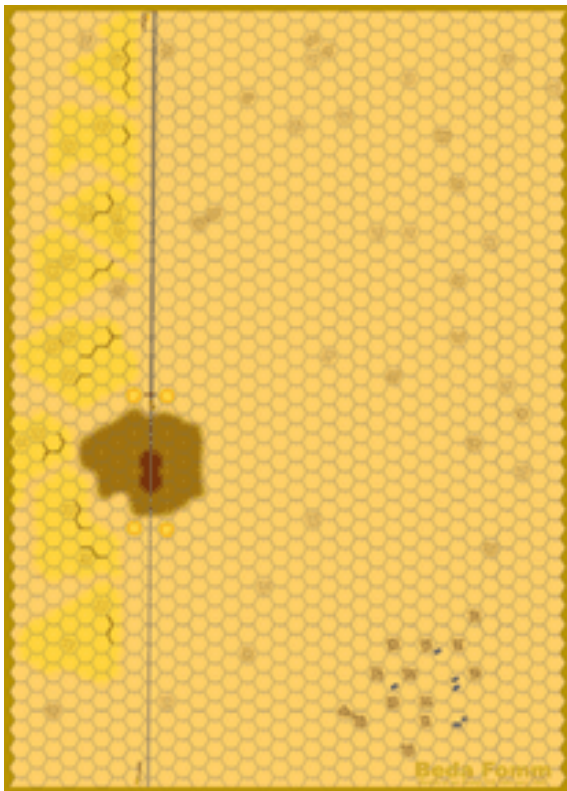
Critical Hit have released the long delayed *CH SPECIAL EDITION Magazine*, *Operation Compass & Wavell's 30,000*. The



issue covers the entire campaign from the Italian invasion of Egypt in June 1940 to the dramatic ambush at Bada Fomm in February 1941 through 22 brand new scenarios.

Also included is a historical 22" x 30" map for use with a Battle of Bada Fomm presentation entitled "Death of an Army".

The issue costs \$22.95. Subscribers will receive the issue as part of their subscription, representing the 'Special Edition' that is a part of the subscription. Subscribers who ordered it as part of the 'Patton Plan' will also receive a gift certificate for \$15.95 in CH merchandise (MiH merchandise not applicable to this offer).



NINTH BUNKER FOUND

Despatches From The Bunker 9 should be released soon. The issue will feature an analysis of 'Used And Abused' from Heat of Battle's *Recon* magazine, a preview of the New England ASL Championship Nor'Easter IV, Tactical Tips for the Veteran, Novice, and SASL enthusiast, and the usual ASL features.

'Onslaught At Orsha' is another East Front knock-down/drag-out, this one during the destruction of Army Group Center, with a 'Kursk in reverse' feel as the Soviets are trying to penetrate a fortified German line.

The second scenario will be a *DASL* action taking place in Danzig on the first day of the war. This sees Polish Civilians and Postal Workers defending the main post office against the German assault of SS, Marine Sturmtroups, and even Pro-Nazi Polish Para-Military elements.

Also due to be included is a free bonus scenario featuring the Maus. 'The Mighty Maus' is a what if/might have been look at the fight over the Kummersdorf Proving Grounds to the southeast of Berlin, right in the path of the 1st Guards Tank Army supporting Chuikov's 8th Guards Army. As well as a pair of Maus (one of which is only semi-functional) the scenario also features the full range of late war Soviet heavy armor, including the JSIII, JSII, ISU122, ISU152, SU-100, and the late war OT-34 flame tank.

Two scenarios originally printed in previous issues of *Despatches From The Bunker* were recently published in the new

ASL Journal 2, "Round Two" being an update of "Sowchazew" from issue one while "Kampfgruppe at Karachev" was originally published in issue 4 as "The Forest North of Karachev".

Four issue subscriptions are available for \$13.00 (\$15.00 outside the USA). Issue one is available free with a subscription or an SAE, while other back issues are \$3.50 (\$4.00 outside the USA). Payments should be payable to Vic Provost and sent to *Dispatches from the Bunker*, 209 Granby Road, Apt: 18, Chicopee, MA 01013. Tel (413)594-4301 (evenings) or e m a i l aslunker@aol.com.



THIRD PARTY PRODUCT UK AVAILABILITY

Following Neil Stevens' retirement from the role, I am now acting as the UK distributor for those third party products not generally available in the shops over here.

The prices are as follows, and are effective until the next issue of *VFTT*:

<i>Schwerpunkt</i>	£8.00
<i>Schwerpunkt Volume 2</i>	£8.00
<i>Schwerpunkt Volume 3</i>	£8.00
<i>Schwerpunkt Volume 4</i>	£10.00
<i>Recon! By Fire</i>	£10.00

Add 10% for postage and packing [EXC: Crusaders are exempt P&P charges] and send your payment made out to PETE PHILLIPPS to The Crusaders, 49 Lombardy Rise, Leicester, England, LE5 0FQ.

For the latest on stock availability telephone me on (0116) 212 6747 (as usual evenings when Man United are not playing are your best bet!), or email me at pete@vftt.co.uk

UK SUPPLIERS OF OTHER THIRD PARTY PRODUCTS

To purchase goods produced by other third party producers such as Critical Hit, Inc. and Heat Of Battle, UK ASLers should contact the following shops.

LEISURE GAMES, 91 Ballards Lane, Finchley, London, N3 1XY. Telephone (0181) 346 2327 or e-mail them at shop@leisuregames.com.

SECOND CHANCE GAMES, 182 Borough Road, Seacombe, The Wirral, L44 6NJ. Telephone (0151) 638 3535 or e-mail them at ahashton@globalnet.co.uk

PLAN 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen, AB25 1NE. Telephone (01224) 624 467 or e-mail them at PLAN9@IFB.CO.UK

I shall endeavour to list all UK stockists of third party ASL products here in the future.



AN OPEN LETTER FROM CURT SCHILLING

Denizens of the ASL World...

I feel the time has come to address some issues as both a hobbyist, and President of Multi-Man Publishing. Let me start off by saying that I do understand there may be some ASL customers that no longer purchase ASL material from MMP after reading this. In those instances I am truly sorry, but what I am going to say, I've wanted to say for a long time.

I'll skip the long and winding road that is MMP, ASL, AH and everyone else's history and cut to late 1998. Late in 1998 we learned from AH that Hasbro was going to be purchasing the rights to all AH titles. We were pretty stunned at the news. Our immediate thoughts were to our existing agreement with AH regarding ASL, and to the future of both ASL and MMP. I immediately placed some phone calls to Hasbro to find out who I needed to correspond with and what could be done with regards to the future of ASL. After weeks of dead ends I was put in contact with a lady named Gail Steiner. We arranged a ftf meeting, instead of sending her a 10 pound box of chocolates, for the following week and I, along with Carl Fago and Brian Youse, flew to Hasbro's HQ to attend the meeting. Fast forward a bit into 1999, January to be exact, and we had reached an agreement whereby MMP now had EXCLUSIVE license to all Trademarks and Copyrights owned by Hasbro concerning the Advanced Squad Leader gaming system. We were euphoric to say the least.

Now let's move ahead to the present day. It's now November 5, 1999 and MMP has been in business almost 11 months. This is where I will now depart from the storyline. I read, as most of you did, some of the posts made to this list concerning Critical Hit!'s Consimworld's web page advertisement [in which they advertised the release of their new module the Third Bridge, days after the release of MMP's A Bridge Too Far Module, and used a play on the term 'A Bridge Too Far' in the advertising – Pete] and to the ensuing arguments made both for/against this company. I also read Bounding Fire Productions press release regarding their Hermann Goering pack.

Let me deviate from the story once again and add a personal note that may help you all understand my viewpoint. Ray Tapio and I dislike each other immensely. Kurt Martin doesn't like me, nor I him [Kurt later commented "Actually, my jury is still out" – Pete]. Eddie Zemen and I don't speak to each other either. Sam Tyson? Met him once, seemed like a great guy. Steve Dethlefsen? One of the nicest guys you'll ever want to meet. Evan Sherry, same thing, great guy. Mike Reed? Once you get him off his SSR's he's as nice as they come. Haven't met Mark Neukom but have heard he's a fantastic guy AND his artwork is gorgeous.

Ok back to the original post. For 11 months now we have held the EXCLUSIVE ASL license, obtained via a contract with the owners of the trademark and copyrights, Hasbro, Inc. In a short time (couple weeks) we will be cutting our first royalty check to them as per the contract. Let's discuss this a second. Our check, when written, will probably be in the neighborhood of

40 to 50 thousand dollars. Now let's go back to all these TPP, and some of the nice guys that work on them, and examine their side of the ledger. Their total royalty checks to Hasbro will amount to about the cost of the paper this is written on, zero. That's right, we will pay Hasbro in the upwards of 50 thousand dollars this year alone for the right to produce ASL, while these other groups will pay them a combined zero. Is that fair? I don't believe it is. This is not meant to make Mike Reed or Sam Tyson mean guys, they aren't. But this gets straight to the heart of the matter and onto other things as well.

I spoke with Sam Tyson at Winter Offensive this past January. I tried, in earnest, to tell him that what he was doing was real cool, but potentially very illegal. I also told him that we were very interested in publishing his product as an official ASL product. He said thanks, but no thanks. No problem, that was his decision.

Ray Tapio and Critical Hit!? They were issued a court order a while back in a settlement with Avalon Hill. In that court order it was stated that they had NO RIGHT to use the terms Advanced Squad Leader, ASL or HASL to promote or sell CH! products. They were also restricted in the usage of hex center artwork, counter artwork, etc. We will actually post the court order here, if people would like, when the copy arrives. Am I concerned about mentioning the court order? No, it is a matter of public record and can be read by anyone. When Hasbro purchased AH, CH this very same court order. Shouldn't this be reciprocal? You will notice that their current Consimworld ad uses these exact terms. They also forced a play on words using the title of our product "A Bridge Too Far" in what appear to be a blatant attempt to misguide customers and cloud the opinions of others. Will potential new customers on Consim read our posts when they think that ABtF is a CH product? Rob Wolkey, a veteran ASLer, was confused by this ploy and summed up his reasons in a post earlier.

Heat Of Battle. We picked up what was a dropped ball on Blood Reef Tarawa. It was dropped by AH, and by us when we were working with AH on ASL. No excuses on our part, we screwed up. Eddie Zemen and I had a major falling out at the outset of this project, no big deal, I'm sure he's played with, as I have, many people he didn't like and in my opinion this was no different in that we'd focus on getting the best possible HASL in the end. We focused on finally getting BRT out the door as it should have been much earlier. My issue here was with the black counters they produced. I spoke with Eddie very early on this year about this. I told him that Hasbro was not open to this kind of thing, he made his own decision. Per our contract, HOB was to assist us up until the day the product went to press.

Why bring this up? Well it has now come time for things to move. The legal ball will begin 'rolling' soon and MMP is going to get crushed for this. Whether we ourselves write the letters or have NOTHING to do with it we will get crucified. I have reached a point where I am not as concerned about this as I once was. Why? When the amateurs were merely supporting the official game system, no one was incorporated. Now, everyone

is. Why? To me this suggests that the incorporated parties KNOW they are potentially infringing upon someone else's intellectual property. Why else go through the expense of setting up a company? What I am amazed by, however, is that legally abiding people who play ASL turn the other cheek with respect to ASL. Would you knowingly purchase potentially stolen property? Yet many knowingly support "companies" which pretty clearly infringe upon Hasbro's intellectual property! Many do this with glee!

To further expound on this point, it became very obvious to me that they were turning away from working with us for another reason. We wanted to work with them, but they had no interest in submitting it to us as a licensed product. Heck why would they? They could publish this stuff, not pay a royalty or take a percentage, and make more money. No brainer, except for the fact that it just ain't legal and they know it.

The bottom line is this. We aren't in the "AH deserted us", "TPP are the savior", 'without TPP ASL would die' days. I'm not saying they didn't happen, heck I was the founder, with Rob Wolkey, of FFE. Those days did happen, and they were in fact a horrible time for us all as far as official ASL is concerned. Some awesome people kept this hobby alive at a time when no one would ante up. They published 'how to' articles, some cool scenarios and tourney reports that were must reads. Times have changed. Then they progressed to counters, full blown scenarios with ASL artwork, finally to HASL maps and mapboards with overlays.

We, at MMP, may be the only ones looking out at this and seeing that it is wrong. In some cases it's flat out against the law. As I said before, the ball is now rolling on this from the legal side. We, however unfortunate it may be, do understand that when this happens there will be another 'revolt' against the 'man'. Sad part is, we are now the 'man' and we did everything we could to avoid this. People will stop buying our products because someone out there broke the law in publishing something they had no legal right to publish, and they will blame us for others making this decision! You can ask anyone that has submitted something to us since January 1st of this year. WE are open to anyone and anything as a submission, regardless of the people submitting. Our goal is to put out as much quality material as possible. How about the Provence pack? Laurent Cunin and his guys did a marvellous job on this, we had no way to fit it in the schedule, and upon review of the material, realised how good it really was from the research standpoint, and how much work had gone into it, and asked Laurent to allow us to do it officially. And we offered it up for free. **[this pack can be found at www.advancedsqadleader.com – Pete].**

Those of you out there that want to be upset with Hasbro I would ask you why? They own this stuff, it IS their rights to do with it as they please. I'm not a lawyer, but I have been told by lawyers that you cannot pick and choose where you want to protect your copyrights and trademarks, you must be consistent in your approach to all of this.

I'm finished. For those of you I offended, I apologize. Our goal is, and always will be, to produce official ASL material, legally, to the best of our ability. We hope to be able to make a little money doing so. It is not fair, or right, for others to dismiss the legal owner of these properties and 'do as they please', you know it, we know it, and judging by their actions the "others" know it too! There is almost no one alive that we won't work with. We won't 'fast track' something into publication but I'd like to think that with Journal 1, AP2, BRT, ABTF and the DB reprint this year we showed you all we were serious about reinvigorating our hobby. That's 'our' as in you and us. Next year will see the release of Journal 2, the ASLRB 2nd Edition, Armies Of Oblivion, and reprinting the core games which go out of stock as well as offering new AH titles in reprint and new editions, and finally, developing a workable, fun, and enticing introduction to the ASL game system which will hopefully draw new blood into the game to keep this system alive and thriving. We aren't joking here, we are dead set on making ASL the 'Game' again as well as pushing wargaming back onto your store shelves in major quality and quantity. As always, thanks and god bless.



THE MATHS OF LOS (corrected)

Seth W Fancher

*Seth asked me to point out an error in his example (shown in **bold** below). Since the article only takes up a little bit of space I decided to reprint the corrected version instead – Pete*

Some people [*me among them!* – Pete] have trouble grasping the LOS rules and the number of blind hexes an obstacle can form. I'm decent with numbers, so I tried to reduce the blind hex rules to a simple mathematic formula.

The number of blind hexes is equal to:

1 for each full level of the obstacle (A6.4)
 +1 / 5 range from firer to obstacle (FRD) (A6.41)
 -1 for each full level elevation advantage greater than 1 over the obstacle (A6.42)
 +/- the difference in elevation of the target and the base level of the obstacle (FRD) (A6.43)

So, if a unit on a level 2 hill eight hexes away from a ground level woods hex is trying to see a unit two hexes behind it, is there a LOS? Well, the number of blind hexes is:

1 hex for height of the woods
+ 1 (8/5, FRD) for range to obstacle
 the base of woods and target are at same level so +0
 the unit is not > 1 level higher, so +/- 0 is 2 blind hexes, so no, the unit would not be in LOS.

I keep this on a little Post-It note as:

Ht obstacle
 + Obst. Range/5 (FRD)
 - (# levels HA -1)
 +/- (chg elev base obs & tgt elev)

Ω



VIEW FROM

Will ASL Producers Survive Y2K?

SNOW ON THE BARRICADES

As you will have read in the letter from Curt Schilling to be found elsewhere in this issue, the threat of legal action against third party producers has once again surfaced. Although no actions have been taken yet, the repercussions have already been seen, with production of the *Herman Goering Battle Pack* (from the *Hell On Wheels* team) being halted at the last moment, and the project turned over to MMP – parts of it can be seen in *ASL Journal 2*.

In a later post to the *ASL Mailing List*, Curt posted a partial list of what was still acceptable. “You can still run your tournament, you can still publish your newsletter, heck you ARE ALLOWED by law to publish a magazine discussing the rules of play on any and every aspect of playing *ASL* from setup to end game. What you can’t do (and this is not all of it, but what I do know, there is more) is publish counters, maps, scenarios and rules using material, artwork, layout format that is copyrighted by Avalon Hill games and sell it for \$\$ without a license from the people that own that intellectual property, and that’s Hasbro.”

I am not so convinced about the fact that third party producers are not allowed to publish “counters, maps, scenarios and rules using material, artwork, layout format that is copyrighted by Avalon Hill games”. I know that you cannot use official counter art as Hasbro owns the copyright on it, but why can’t you make your own counters using your own artwork? Why would the unarmed Fallschirmjäger and ‘ICE HOLE’ counters printed in *VFTT13* (for which no official counter even exists!) be a breach of copyright?

And why can’t you publish your own maps? How can Hasbro have copyright on maps? They surely can’t have copyright on many of the map symbols - the symbols used in *ASL* for woods (for example) have been used in wargames from dozens of companies small and large over the past 40 years.

Why can’t you publish your own scenarios anymore? AH never appeared to have a problem with people doing this, hell they even encouraged you to do so! In the *ASL Annual ’93b* editor Rex Martin wrote: “There are several fine amateur ‘zines for

which scenarios are an important element of their content. Consider, especially if a novice scenario designer, offering your efforts to those.”

And if you can’t publish new rules, where does that leave SSRs. Do *Time On Target*’s Bayonet Charges and Special Armour count as new rules or just very long SSRs? Are they SSR if printed on the scenario card but new rules if they are printed separately? Where does that leave a SSR that is printed separately when it applies to half a dozen different scenarios, to save space on the scenario cards (EX: the *Red Barricades* or *Kampfgruppe Peiper* SSR?).

I feel that there is actually a very grey area between what is acceptable and what is (apparently) not. And if it came to court I’m not sure how the court would view the fact that for the past ten years or so (until Hasbro brought AH), AH tolerated, even encouraged and advertised, the third party production of *ASL*. Unfortunately I don’t think any of the third party producers (even CH) has the money to fight this in court so I don’t think we’ll ever get a legal answer to these questions :-)

Without the third party producers, people will be faced with having their work published by MMP or not at all. What do they do if MMP decide there is no market for the item (even if a small minority actually want to see that product)? Previously, they could have published it themselves (and many did), but not anymore. Without the option of self publishing, anything MMP turn down will never see the light of day. Would *Soldiers of the Negus* have been printed by MMP - I doubt it. What about modules on World War One, the Spanish Civil War. Korea, Vietnam, Modern *ASL*? Why should some be denied a product simply because MMP think the market is so small that it isn’t worth them doing?

This action raises a lot of issues (many of which were also raised and never really answered when AH issued a court order against CH – see *VFTT16* for more details) and I think we shall see some repercussions ripple throughout the *ASL* world in the next few months. Expect to see developments covered in future issues of *VFTT*.

I have one variant that I am surprised was overlooked when *Red Barricades* first came out. The weather DR can generate overcast conditions, which means rain is quite likely during that scenario. And I know that in the fall the rains generated mud which greatly hindered all transportation in the vast road-less tracks of Russia. However, from my reading on Stalingrad, the first snows started in October. Heavier snows were common by November (certainly by mid-November). From a playability point of view, snow is about the same as rain. So I don’t see snow instead of rain as making much difference, other than in the seasoning of the RB experience. Ground snow could linger a day or more after a snow day (or until the EC are Moderate or Dry if you prefer.)

My proposal (which would be a house rule if you choose to use it) is as follows:

Anytime conditions are overcast for the day, make a dr. On a 1-3 any precipitation will be snow instead of rain. A -1 drm is added if the month is November.

Ground snow is present on any subsequent day after snow if the EC are wet or moist AND a dr <= 4. Add a -1 drm to the EC dr if the month is November for purposes of determining if ground snow is present only. A final dr <1 would indicate deep snow (not possible until November.)

Winter camouflage is not available for either side. (I don’t know that either side was using winter camouflage until the snows came to stay for the winter, which was early November at the earliest. Of course the Russian counteroffensive in mid-November did use it.)

How might this variant affect playability? Which side would it favor? I do know that deep snow affects minefields and smoke placement, so that could be a factor. What the effect of ground snow or deep snow on debris would need to be considered too. Ground snow also eliminates the road bonus, which would hamper German armor more than the occasional Russian AFV. Any comments, thought or suggestions would be appreciated.

Ω



Time for Change?

Derek A. Tocher

As most of you will know the fifth 'INTENSIVE FIRE' tournament was held over the last weekend in October and I would like to start by thanking Pete Phillipps and Dave Schofield for all the work which went into running the event, no-one should underestimate the amount of effort required to ensure that things run smoothly. I certainly enjoyed myself over the weekend and I think that would be true of virtually all the participants. Having said that however it is only fair to report that there was also some disquiet expressed by a significant fraction of the attendees over the competition format and scenario selection, and it is with that in mind I am prompted to write this piece.

When the first INTENSIVE FIRE was held in 1995 it would be fair to characterise the UK ASL scene as immature. Most people found themselves in a situation similar to my own, with perhaps a circle of opponents numbering no more than two or three at most. Indeed one of the major successes of first INTENSIVE FIRE, and then later Berserk, has been in greatly widening the pool of opponents available to all of us throughout the UK. In 1995 and 1996 this was undoubtedly a function of the team format which Neil Stevens devised for the INTENSIVE FIRE tournament. Over the years since then we have seen a hard core of around three dozen gamers who attend virtually every tournament, while at the same time many others have drifted in and out of the tournament scene. Thus it seems to me that with the increasing maturity of the UK, and indeed European, ASL scene we need to reconsider the format for INTENSIVE FIRE if we are to continue to cater for an increasingly wide spectrum of gaming experience. In the hope that I can stimulate some discussion, and I hope catalyse change, I would like to propose a new format for

INTENSIVE FIRE. In doing so I have taken five main criteria into consideration:-

INTENSIVE FIRE is in essence the UK 'National ASL Championship' and hence the individual tournament winner, to be crowned as such, must have defeated the best gamers at the tournament (a situation not necessarily found with the present format).

Many gamers enjoy the team format and a team competition should be retained for those who want it. At the same time those who are not interested in a team competition should not feel obliged to participate.

A greater proportion of the participants should have the opportunity to win a prize (but see below).

Gamers with different levels of experience must be accommodated with different levels of experience and of preferred complexity.

The straight-jacket of scenario choice should be loosened.

On the assumption that we will cater for up to a maximum of 64 'serious' participants, and that anyone who has aspirations to be national champion will have to participate fully on the Friday as well as the Saturday/Sunday, I have devised the following format:-

Friday

Two scenarios will be played towards the championship. After the first round the winners will play each other, as will the losers. Thus by Friday evening there will be at most 16 players who are 2-0 and in with a shout at the top slot. The scenarios played on the Friday are determined by mutual agreement, as is done in US competitions such as 'Oktoberfest'.

Saturday/Sunday

For the 48 players who have recorded at least one loss we will provide six three-round theme'd (Chapters A/B only, PTO, early war, night, commandos, heavy metal, etc.) mini-tournaments (participation limited to 8 players in any one event). These will be single elimination events with a prize/plaque for the 3-0 winner in each category. To simplify matters the scenarios used here will be predetermined by the organiser. Gamers who can only attend on the weekend will be encouraged to participate in these mini-tournaments. In addition anyone wishing to continue with free format gaming will be able to do so.

The 16 players who are undefeated on Saturday morning will be expected to play three rounds on the Saturday, so that by Saturday night there will be two players undefeated on 5-0, who will play off in a championship decider on the Sunday morning (NB if for any reason there is only one 5-0 player then he will be declared the champion). The scenarios played will be by mutual agreement, as on the Friday.

Team Tournament

A team tournament will run alongside the Saturday/Sunday scenarios only. Teams of three can be entered as in the present format and team members can be participating in either the main event or a theme'd tournament. All scenarios will carry equal weight (in contrast to the traditional INTENSIVE FIRE 'points' format) and ties for places in the team tournament will be determined from the strength of the opposition defeated. This might be assessed on the basis of win/loss record, although this can be time consuming and complex to determine, or more straightforwardly on the pre-tournament ASL ladder position.

Others have commented that we

should ensure that adequate facility is given to people - of whatever level of ASL skill - who genuinely enjoy the simple scenarios. I agree here and I think that probably two, or even three of the Saturday mini-tournaments should be devised with players who want simple scenarios in mind.

Clearly this is a more complex format than the one used at present, however it has the merit that both serious and casual gamers are catered for, and it would not be my expectation that one person would handle all of this. I believe that we will need a separate organiser for each of the mini-tournaments and one for the main event and the team tournament. However since each of the jobs is of limited scope I believe there should not be too much of a problem in organising volunteers. Heck, I'll offer to run a mini-tournament right now. One aspect, which might need some thought, since this will be a new idea in the UK, is guidelines for

scenario selection in the free format parts of the competition. Perhaps someone who has attended Oktoberfest could be persuaded to write some notes for making this process as painless as possible.

Ian Daghish raised an interesting point about prizes: "I fear that increased emphasis on prizes will risk taking European ASL down the wrong route altogether. The prizes organised and awarded by Neil at INTENSIVE FIRE and Trev at BERSERK! have been a very nice touch indeed, but to my mind these are tokens and not the primary goal.". My idea of prizes here are just tokens to take home rather than something you would slit your grandmothers throat, or have to increase your home contents insurance for. What I had in mind was one of the following:

- 1) a couple of wooden dice mounted on a small plaque, or
- 2) A 1:32 scale plastic infantry figure painted bronze and mounted on a small

plinth Either of these would then have a small brass plate with the legend "INTENSIVE FIRE 2000 - mini-tournament winner" or
3) a T-shirt with the same legend

As I indicated in my opening paragraph Neil, Pete and Dave have done a great job in organising INTENSIVE FIRE over the last five years. However the UK ASL scene is now much more mature and I think it is time for a change. I hope you will all give that some thought and look forward to a lively discussion in the pages of *VFTT*.

Ω

INTENSIVE FIRE '99 RESULTS

FIRE TEAM PLACINGS

ELITE DIVISION

POS	TEAM	PLAYER	PTS
1st	5	Joe Arthur Toby Pilling Michael Rudd David Schofield *	14
2nd	4	Bjarne Hansen Michael Hastrup-Leth Jes Touvdal	13.5
3rd	6	Paul Haesler Steve Linton Malcolm Rutledge	12.5
4th	1	Andrew Dando Paul O'Donald Simon Strevens	12
=5th	2	Trevor Edwards Iain Mckay Steve Thomas	11.5
=5th	8	William Hanson Martin Mayer Paul Sanderson	11.5
7th	3	Bryan Brinkman Dominic McGrath Derek Tocher	9
8th	7	Laurent Forest Bill Hensby ** Patrik Manlig Raymond Woloszyn	7.5

FIRST DIVISION

POS	TEAM	PLAYER	PTS
1st	C	Keith Bristow Justin Key Tim Macaire	12@
2nd	D	Bob Eburne Russell Gough Paul Kettlewell	12@
3rd	A	Patrick Dale Ruarigh Dale Ben Jones	11.5
=4th	B	Nigel Ashcroft Paul Case Brian Hooper	10.5
=4th	F	Lee Brimmicombe-Wood David Farr Michael Rhodes	10.5
6th	E	John Kennedy Paul Legg David Tye	6.5

* Replaced Mike Rudd during tournament
** Replaced Laurent Forest during tournament
@ Team C were awarded 1st place because they had beaten team D during the competition

THE SCENARIOS

Pete Phillipps

Here is the table of Scenario Win/Loss records from IF'99 - remember draws are used in the tournament rules:

S# & Scenario Name	Allied	Axis
67 Cibik's Ridge	0	1
85 No Way Out	1	0
A101 The Drive for Taierzhuang	1	0
A110 Shanghai in Flames	8	2
A95 The Long Road	1	0
AA12 Westward Ho!	0	1
ABTF3 Arnhem 3	0	1
ABTF7 Arnhem 7	1	0
AD3 Back to School	1	1
AP11 Swamp Cats	0	1
AP12 Cream of the Crop	0	2
AP13 Shielding Moscow	3	4
ASLUG12 One-Log Bridge	1	0
BRT2 Tarawa 2	1	0
BRT7 Tarawa 7	1	0
FF10 Blackjack is Back!	0	2
FF9 Ghost of Napoleon	1	2
G35 Going To Church	1	3
J7 Slow and Steady	0	1
KE7 Tennis, Anyone?	0	1
NQNG1 Fuhrerbefehl	0	1
NQNG4 Noble Craft of Warfare	0	2
PB2 Howard's Men	8	6
PBP14 Under Siege	0	1
PBP2 The RHA at Bay	0	1
PBP28 Peningkibaru Push	0	1
PP2 Provence Pack 2	1	0
PP8 Provence Pack 8	1	0
SON2 Criniti's Escape	3	4
SP20 The Slaughter at Krutik	0	2
SP25 Two Pounds in Return	1	0
SP32 Over Open Sights	0	1
SP36 Desantniki	6	7
SP41 Bloody Gulch	0	1
SP42 Hot In Kot	0	1
SP43 Deadeye Smoyer	2	2
SP45 A Stroke Of Luck	2	1
SP48 Orlik And The Uhlans	1	0
TOT17 Last Stand at Westen	1	3
VFTT10 Riposte At Dusk	1	0
TOTALS	48	56

THE TRENCHES



ASL UK 2000

Taking the UK ASL Scene into the new Millennium

During the debate over the future format of INTENSIVE FIRE, the question of the future of ASL in the UK in general cropped up. David Schofield opened the discussion by writing: "I believe we are at a crossroads. I've seen it with big wargames groups and the Society of Ancients etc. If we aren't careful we can ruin it. And none of us want that. Why are we at this stage? Because ASL in UK has grown dramatically and we are all better and more demanding. We need to grow. We have a critical mass that needs managing, not in an official way but certainly we need a bit more structure. Or perhaps we don't?"

Derek Tocher agreed. "I think there can be no doubt that we are all more demanding in what we expect from our ASL time. As to the point about the need for organisation however I have some reservations in that I am not so sure we need more organisation at a national level. What rather seems to me is that we generally lack local organisation. While we all play locally in our own small groups how many local ASL clubs do you know of in the UK. A big fat zero I bet. Compare that to the US and Australia where there are thriving ASL clubs in many major cities. It is then these local clubs which organise numerous small tournaments and local publicity to attract new players into the game."

On this latter point Ian Daghish noted: "This works in different ways. Yes, I've been to games shops in the USA which were clearly hubs of a local gaming community; equally, in America I've visited local ASL groups based not on a store but around a playtest leader. And in the NW of England, we are blessed with a loose-knit bunch of guys who manage faithfully regular FTF and who cultivate newbies. No organisation, it just happens. For many years I have been involved with AHIKS, the play-by-mail society. There was always a huge contrast between we in Europe (as defined by the Americans: "Europe" was the whole world except USA & Canada) who just played and had a small team of officers organise a newsletter and two meetings a year, and the Americans who seemed always to be re-writing constitutions or organising complex ballots to throw out some member caught cheating. If all that turns you on, fine, but my time is too precious..."

The following points came up during the discussion as issues that need to be considered.

1. General feeling that dramatic change is needed?

Whether or not there is a need for a dramatic change is debatable, but there certainly seems to be a desire for changing some elements, as the discussions on both the format of INTENSIVE FIRE and the scenario selections show. BERSERK organiser Trev Edwards said "Despite some reservations at the outset, and one or two things I felt weren't quite right, I can hail IF99 as a success. What I think we need is a moderate tweak here and there to enhance the experience." Derek felt that "At a national level I think we now need several people to help run the Crusaders and co-ordinate the effort of organising INTENSIVE FIRE. To expect one person to do it year in year out is unreasonable.". Ian added "many societies I am involved in (wine societies and flying club, to name but three) survive long term largely because of one or two people who do more than their fair share. If you can find a Neil Stevens, think yourselves lucky!". I would tend to agree with David when he said that "Neil not being available [for INTENSIVE FIRE] made us realise that he was the glue that held it together."

2. IF no longer satisfies the more mature player?

There is a concern that the scenarios selected for IF are aimed more at the inexperienced player than the top players. The easiest way around this would be to have separate scenario selections for both divisions – in effect you would end up with two tournaments being held.

i) team play

One of the complaints in the past about this was that it was possible for a weak team to end getting hammered by two or three very strong teams. As Trev mentions "To expect newbies to take part in the same event as the Tochers, Stevens Dandos and Pillings is not realistic". The establishment of the two divisions seems to have generally solved this problem.

Paul Saunders has suggested

randomising fire team membership as an alternative to this. One disadvantage of this is that there is a chance of two players who play each other every week might end up having to play each other during the tournament. But I agree that overall it's probably better to go with teams chosen at random - this also helps to encourage people to get together.

However if IF is to be the tournament to determine the best ASL player in the UK then the team format means that the top players will tend to avoid each other. Derek has suggested a way around this in his article and it may be worth considering.

ii) scenario selection

"You can't please all of the people all of the time.". Probably the hardest part of setting up any tournament.

It has been suggested that players should be allowed to pick the scenario they want to play rather than select from a pre-chosen list. As Russ Gifford notes in his article on organising a tournament:

"What scenarios do I use for a tourney? This is tough to do, and ALWAYS the biggest gripe you'll hear. On the other hand, from years of giving free choice, trust me, it is necessary. If you DON'T limit the scenario choice, you'll have players picking scenarios they COULD NEVER finish. They'll also "shark" less experienced players with scenarios they KNOW are unbalanced, and work to get the favored side. Even if NONE of the above happen, you'll watch them take an HOUR or more just to decide WHICH scenario to play!!!"

Russ also adds:

"Make it Short! Trust me, they all play longer than you think. A great rule of thumb is 8 turns is too long — trust me. A SHORT turn number is not the whole story — check out the number of units. Make your scenario choices each round about the same length (This REALLY helps your next round move along as the players are all finishing in close to the same amount of time.)"

Derek suggested "[The organisers need] guidelines for scenario selection in the free format parts of the competition. Perhaps someone who has attended Octoberfest could be persuaded to write some notes for making this process as painless as possible." If you can write a set of guidelines to prevent the



sort of problems Russ mentions, I've got a rulebook that needs re-writing while you're at it!

Ian Daghish asked "that adequate facility is given to people - of whatever level of ASL skill - who genuinely enjoy the simple scenarios." I agree here and I think that probably two, or even three of the Saturday mini-tournaments should be devised with players who want simple scenarios in mind."

iii) variable points

This was originally introduced to encourage people to play the longer or more involved scenarios, but some people felt that giving people as many points for losing a scenario as you got for winning the easier ones was a bit harsh. I toned it down slightly for INTENSIVE FIRE 99 but even so the consensus of opinion seems to be that the variable scoring system has out-lived its usefulness. As Steve Thomas said "The way to get someone to play a scenario is to ensure that it is a good scenario, rather than offering more points for it."

iv) prizes

Derek felt "A greater proportion of the participants should have the opportunity to win a prize", but Ian Daghish said "I do not feel we need or want to use prizes as the aspiration. Well do I recall the Americans who came to the December 1944 meeting at La Gleize and commented how good it was to see players attracted from all around the world 'with no prizes'. I fear that increased emphasis on prizes will risk taking European ASL down the wrong route altogether. The prizes organised and awarded by Neil at IF and Trev at Berserk! have been a very nice touch indeed, but to my mind these are tokens and not the primary goal."

Derek's idea of prizes was to have some sort of symbol of victory rather than something substantial. Among the prizes he had in mind were:

- 1) a couple of wooden dice mounted on a small plaque, or
- 2) A 1:32 scale plastic infantry figure painted bronze and mounted on a small plinth

Either of these would then have a small brass plate with the legend "Intensive Fire 2000 - mini-tournament winner" or

- 3) a T-shirt with the same legend

What I am currently working on is a framed certificate with the appropriate legend for the winner.

3. Crusaders not appropriate in present form?

Derek wrote "I believe 'Crusaders' should remain the national body of ASL UK.", but at the same time Trev wrote

"Crusaders is not presently worth £20 a year! For the first time I have not renewed my subscription. Cause for concern."

i) £20 too much [given changes in products and discounts]

£20 for Crusaders; or £10 for VFTT, £5 for IF, £2 saving for BERSERK, maybe a quid or two on postage of TPM stuff ordered from me (not a lot nowadays since Leisure Games and Second Chance both stock most of the TPMs). You don't have to be a rocket scientist to work out that the Crusaders fee doesn't offer value for money nowadays.

I think that reducing the cost of joining is the only valid option. It would be nice to be able to offer other incentives for membership but I can't think of much that isn't readily available to non-members anyway (especially as most members are online as well, so there's no point in offering them the FAQ, the Comprehensive Q&A, expanded Index, etc).

ii) run by one - unfair on him [Neil/Pete]

Speaking personally, I don't find it too difficult. The majority of the paperwork (on my side at least) is handled by my computer, so it's usually just a matter of updating records and stuffing envelopes when I get orders for the few TPM products the Crusaders still stocks.

4. VFTT needs revamping?

Many people appreciate the work I have put into VFTT over the years. Derek said "I think you have done sterling service for the UK ASL community by setting up VFTT as a mechanism for keeping people in touch and spreading the word about our favourite game. We all owe you a huge vote of thanks for everything you have done so far." Shaun added "Thanks for doing what is for most people a valuable source of info which keeps us informed and playing our favourite game."

Despite this there is some dissatisfaction with aspects of VFTT. Both Derek and Trev have mentioned they see a lot of the stuff in VFTT on the web. This is mainly because few people write for me (a point both recognise) and I don't have the time to write about how to play ASL (mind you I'm probably the last person to tell most people how to play ASL - if I knew that I'd be in the top 5 on the Crusaders ladder, not languishing somewhere around the 100 mark :-). I don't like to write reviews because, as Ray Tapio said to me once, it's a sign of editorial endorsement if I like something, and as the editor I should be impartial in print. And convention reports are hard for me to

write as they tend to be a drunken blur for me :-)

Shaun Carter as noted that the recent erratic schedule can annoy readers. "People get really hacked off when things do not come out when they expect them to. You will lose support if you make promises and do not deliver."

VFTT has been on the line between newsletter and journal for a couple of years now and the lack of material has been the main reason I have not been able to take the step up to journal. As things stand the lack of material could even mean that I will have to either go back to the original eight page newsletter format or produce just three or four issues per year instead, to maintain a regular schedule. Given a choice, I think I'd go for producing a quarterly 20 page VFTT, mainly because it would be more 'shop-friendly'.

Some have expressed concerns about how risky it could be to make VFTT "Britain's Premier ASL Journal" more than just a slogan in light of the comments made by Curt Schilling about potential legal action from Hasbro. However there is no legal problem with producing a magazine about someone else's product. Ian Daghish also raised a cautionary point by mentioning what happened to ASL News when it changed from newsletter to a professional magazine. "At that point, readership broadened from a 'club' of like-minded friends to include people who expected value for money and moaned if it was not forthcoming. Philippe lost control of production to an editor who proved erratic, and we lost a great publication..."

As an aside the main weakness VFTT has (and which many TPMs face) is their lack of general distribution beyond those 'in the know'. There are perhaps 5-10,000 active ASLers yet only about 200 of them buy VFTT (either from me or the few shops which sell it). This is where CH have done so much for the ASL scene (whatever you feel about their products) - they have the distribution network to get their products into stores across the USA and the world so that people are aware of them.

5. Slow play?

i) This is going to be the bane of the hobby

One of the complaints Derek made to me a couple of months before INTENSIVE FIRE was that "Intensive Fire rounds are six hours, yet almost all the scenarios can be played in under three hours." Apart from the fact that the morning rounds are actually 5 hours long and the Saturday afternoon one

8 hours long, I'd have take disagree with Derek that most of the scenarios could be played in under three hours. Maybe by himself and the other top players, but not by the rest of us :- (For example at INTENSIVE FIRE I played both 'SP42 Hot In Kot' and 'SP43 Deadeye Smoyer' in about four hours (including set-up time) each. Does this make me a slow player?

Derek also complained that the Sunday morning scenarios "lack meat". As Trev pointed out though "Trying to get everyone to finish at the same time means you have to go for shorter scenarios there than anywhere else."

ii) implications for new competition formats

Naturally this has implications for any changes to the tournament format. I think it is unrealistic to expect most players to get through three rounds in a day (unless you limit your scenario selection to the smaller scenarios) so you are limited to two rounds per day, one morning and one afternoon/evening. Since not everyone can get to the tournament for Friday morning, and most players leave on Sunday afternoon this limits you to four rounds for the tournament. This means you can only have 16 players involved if you want to have an outright winner at the end (although this can be alleviated to a degree by putting players into two or more divisions based on their ladder rating.).

6. Web sites/Publications not doing enough to get others into hobby

The advent of both *VFTT* and especially the first INTENSIVE FIRE did a lot in bringing a lot of UK *ASL*ers together for the first time. For the first time people were aware of *ASL*ers outside their local scene. What we still need to do is to bring in those who are not aware that there is a British *ASL* scene. Some ways top do this are to have *ASL*ers playing in non-*ASL* tournaments, and have flyers for stores to send out with all *ASL* products. Unless David Beckham takes up *ASL* though I don't think we'll be getting any major press coverage!!

OK, that's some of the points that have been considered so far. No doubt there are things we haven't covered. Consider each of the points raised above and feel free to add any of your own, and let us give your honest opinion. We can sort it out from there.

Limping Leaders - a Tale of Two Crutches

Ian Daglish

Every scenario is a unique story, but some stick in the memory. Here are two of mine.

At Intensive Fire '97, my Germans cleared The Tractor Works (*ASL* Scenario B), but at too high a cost in lives. It became clear that I did not have the strength left to hold the objective to the scenario's end. As the Russian 5-2-7s massed for the assault on the north end of the tractor works, the defenders stood firm in the critical hex 1X2. Then, the last full SS Engineer squad in the hex broke and routed away, leaving only two SMCs. One was a 9-2 leader (Battle Hardened earlier from a 9-1); the other a wounded hero. The first 5-2-7 made its run past the hex. DFF against the ADJACENT road was a 2 on the IFT with (wait for it!) a DRM of minus 5! (Leader, hero, FFMO, FFNAM). KIA and a 1 Residual in the hex. The next Russian squad was pinned by the Residual and Casualty Reduced, Broken, and ELR'ed by the Subsequent First Fire. Then the wounded hero was into FPF, and the carnage really got going. Afterwards, we wished we had kept a record of the devastation caused by just two SMCs before - inevitably - the Hero failed a FPF morale check and died.

I still see in my mind's eye that wounded hero: leaning on his crutch, MP38 in one hand, and the 9-2 behind him tapping his shoulder and pointing, "Over there. Gut! Now, over that way."

More recently, at IF'99, my Italians prepared to resist the Amis in Sicily (*Hell On Wheels* pack scenario 'HOW1 The Guns of Naro'). Suffice to say that the Italian infantry totally failed throughout the scenario to inflict any damage whatsoever on the enemy! (the game was decided by the Italian guns and especially the ME109s that quickly achieved the CVP necessary to win by bombing and strafing a column of Shermans into oblivion.)

The Syracuse United forward line was accompanied by a 7-0 leader (the boys were not overly enthusiastic about being set up so far forward, so the team coach joined them to prevent any thoughts of Cowering!). The Fire Group went through the drill in quick time: "one-two-three, lose concealment; one-two-three, fire; one-two-three, all break; one-two-three, all ELR; one-two-three, all MMC die in place." This left only the 7-0, now broken and ELR'ed down to 6+1, all alone in the woods. Before the leader could rout away, he was hit again (the only target in sight of massed American tanks and infantry!) and Wounded. Now a 5+2, he limped back three hexes, hoping that he would now be left alone as an insignificant threat.

No way! At the first opportunity, the American player (not a good sport, as we shall see!) drove an unarmed jeep after the poor chap. Overrunning him (no effect, other than breaking his crutch!) and stopping in the hex. Adding insult to injury, he ran a Sherman tank Adjacent, but opted not to fire in the AFPh, for fear of damaging the jeep. The leader cowered under the jeep until his chance came to skulk away another three hexes, into dead ground where he was safe until American losses ended the scenario.

A DEDICATION FROM INTENSIVE FIRE 99

Those of us who have attended INTENSIVE FIRE since its start will know Portugese *ASL*er Luis Calcada as a gentleman and a fine player. I arrived at IF99 on the Friday evening and was told that Luis would not be attending IF99 as his father had taken ill days beforehand. When we wrapped up IF99 on the Sunday afternoon I informed everyone in attendance and asked them to spare a thought for Luis and his father.

Sadly, when I arrived home I received the following from Luis:

This last week was very sad for me because my father died Wednesday. I had so many points in contact with him and one of them was the hobby of wargaming and Military History.

Despite being a doctor he always had the time to stya with his famil and to play wargames. I was a little boy and was puzzled by the boxes with games arriving every month. I barely reached the top of the table to watch him and his friends play Afrika Korps, Midway, Waterloo, Panzerblitz etc. My interest about wargames was already maturing.

In 75 he ordered the purple box Squad Leader and despite his preferences to multi-player and strategic games he followed with interest my crescent and deep involvement with *ASL*.

Ifailed BERSERK last March due to one of his health problems, and agin IF99. On the week before this he had a cardiac arrest and went to hospital where he died last Wednesday. Deep thanks for your homage at IF. I'll be back again at BERSERK 2000.

Ω



VIEW FROM

The Crusaders Open ASL Tournament Ladder

Post Intensive Fire '99 Update

Derek Tocher

There have now been over 1000 games played at the INTENSIVE FIRE and BERSERK! tournaments over the last four years, although the number of games played over the latest INTENSIVE FIRE weekend was down from that of recent years. The new faces we saw in Bournemouth have pushed the number of rated players up to 164. Of these there are 37 players who played 20+ games and 8 who have played 40+. The largest number of games recorded is 53 (by your laddermeister). The top 10% of players have ratings of 3290+ while the upper quarter are rated 3150+. Those in the lower quartile have ratings below 2830 while the bottom 10% of participants are rated 2720 or less. These numbers have remained essentially invariant over the last two years and the distribution of results is virtually Gaussian, about 3000.

The hot news after INTENSIVE FIRE 99 is that for the second time this year we have a new leader on the ladder. Dane Bjarne Hansen went 8-0 in Bournemouth to win the individual tournament and netted 260 points in the process, thus displacing previous leader Toby Pilling, by five points, despite Toby's undefeated record at the tournament.

Other players making a dramatic move include Dave Schofield (5-0 and +260 points) who jumps to fifth place, your laddermeister (4-0 and +235 points) who moves into the top ten, and Paul Sanderson (5-3 and +215 points) who moves into 12th. Bob Eburne also stages a dramatic recovery from a recent spell of poor form with his 4-0 record netting him +300 points and putting him in 24th slot. Of course there are a number of others making equally dramatic movements in the opposite direction and Andrew Dando, John Kennedy, Iain 'Mad Vet' McKay, and David Tye each contrived to lose over 200 points during the weekend.

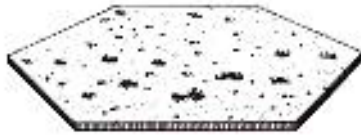
The next update will be published after Berserk 2000 in April.

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Place	Points	Place	Points	Place	Points			
1	Bjarne Hansen	3790	55=	Peter Michels	3090	113=	Peter Ladwein	2860
2	Toby Pilling	3785	58	Paulo Alessi	3085	113=	Lutz Pietschker	2860
3	Mike Rudd	3715	59=	Nigel Ashcroft	3080	113=	Neil Piggot	2860
4	Simon Strevens	3675	59=	Dirk Beijaar	3080	116	Shaun Carter	2855
5=	Peter Bennett	3560	61	Robin Langston	3075	117=	Nick Angelopoulos	2850
5=	Dave Schofield	3560	62=	Jean-Luc Baas	3070	117=	Iain McKay	2850
7	Carl Sizmur	3515	62=	Serge Bettencourt	3070	117=	Neil Stevens	2850
8	Steve Thomas	3510	62=	Robert Schaaf	3070	120=	Neil Brunger	2840
9	Derek Tocher	3465	65=	Alexander Rousse-Lacordaire	3065	120=	Patrick Dale	2840
10	Aaron Sibley	3425	65=	Bob Runicles	3065	122	Dave Otway	2835
11	Michael Hastrup-Leth	3360	65=	Jes Touvdal	3065	123	Jeff Howarden	2830
12=	Paul O' donald	3355	68	Patrik Manlig	3060	124=	Mark Chapman	2820
12=	Paul Sanderson	3355	69	Stefan Jacobi	3050	124=	Bill Hensby	2820
14	Bernt Ribom	3350	70	Scott Greenman	3045	126	Nick Quinn	2800
15	Joe Arthur	3305	71	Steve Pleva	3035	127	Bill Eaton	2795
16	Frank Tinschert	3295	72=	Peter Hofland	3025	128=	Alistair Fairbairn	2790
17	Ray Woloszyn	3290	72=	Jon Williams	3025	128=	Nick Ranson	2790
18	Philippe Leonard	3285	74	Vincent Kamer	3015	128=	William Roberts	2790
19=	Will Fleming	3280	75=	Keith Bristow	3010	128=	Nick Stonskyj	2790
19=	Ralf Krusat	3280	75=	Raurigh Dale	3010	132=	Chris Littlejohn	2780
19=	Alan Smee	3280	75=	Russell Gough	3010	132=	Martin Mayers	2780
22	Dave Booth	3270	75=	Colin Graham	3010	134=	Tim Macaire	2775
23	Daniel Batey	3235	79=	Nick Brown	3000	134=	Graham Worsfold	2775
24=	Bob Eburne	3220	79=	Simon Croome	3000	136=	Lee Bray	2770
24=	Christain Koppmeyer	3220	79=	Martin Hubley	3000	136=	Paul Case	2770
26	Tom Slizewski	3215	79=	Ian Kenney	3000	136=	Malcolm Hatfield	2770
27=	Klaus Malmstrom	3210	79=	Phil Nobo	3000	136=	Richard Kirby	2770
27=	Nils-Gunner Nilsson	3210	79=	Duncan Spencer	3000	140=	Ian Pollard	2765
27=	Yves Tielemans	3210	85	Eric Baker	2985	140=	David Tye	2765
30	Francois Boudrenghien	3205	86=	David Farr	2980	142	Andrew Hershey	2760
31	Andrew Dando	3200	86=	Malcolm Rutledge	2980	143	Peter Neale	2750
32	Jean Devaux	3190	88	Wayne Baumber	2970	144	Burnham Fox	2740
33	Armin Deppe	3185	89	Michael Maus	2955	145=	Rupert Featherby	2735
34	Bill Durrant	3180	90=	Laurent Forest	2945	145=	David Ramsey	2735
35	Jonathan Pickles	3175	90=	Alex Ganna	2945	147	Gareth Evans	2730
36=	Grant Pettit	3170	90=	Pedro Ramis	2945	148	Steve Cocks	2720
36=	Bruno Tielemans	3170	93=	Derek Briscoe	2935	149=	Tim Collier	2690
38=	Steve Linton	3165	93=	Nigel Brown	2935	149=	Simon Hoare	2690
38=	Andrew Saunders	3165	95=	Andrea Marchino	2930	151=	Brian Hooper	2680
40	Mel Falk	3160	95=	Andy Price	2930	151=	Christain Speis	2680
41	Jeremy Copley	3150	97	John Sharp	2925	153	Paul Legg	2665
42	Nick Edelsten	3145	98=	Steve Allen	2920	154	Pedro Barradas	2655
43	Frenk Van Der Mey	3135	98=	Steve Grainger	2920	155	John Kennedy	2645
44=	Chris Courtier	3130	98=	Ben Jones	2920	156	Paul Kettlewell	2625
44=	Trevor Edwards	3130	101	Edo Giaroni	2915	157=	Martin Bryan	2620
44=	Dominic Mcgrath	3130	102=	Joel Berridge	2910	157=	Ulrich Schwela	2620
47=	Lee Brimmicombe-Wood	3120	102=	Brian Martuzas	2910	159=	Arthur Garlick	2615
47=	Paul Ryde-Weller	3120	102=	Andy Smith	2910	159=	Mike Stanbridge	2615
49	Mark Walley	3115	105	Justin Key	2895	161	Bryan Brinkman	2610
50	Luc Schonkerren	3110	106=	Steve Crowley	2890	162	John Fletcher	2585
51=	Ian Daglish	3105	106=	Jackie Eves	2890	163	Michael Rhodes	2555
51=	Paul Haesler	3105	106=	Pete Phillips	2890	164	Roger Cook	2380
51=	Simon Morris	3105	109=	Jakob Norgaard	2885			
54	Mikael Siemsen	3095	109=	Paul Saunders	2885			
55=	Kevin Beard	3090	109=	Bernard Savage	2885			
55=	William Hanson	3090	112	Luis Calcada	2875			



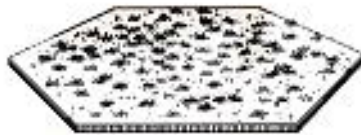
The following notes cover the elements of the desert rules that are needed to play the *RECON BY FIRE* scenario 'Desert Fortress'. This scenario is an ideal scenario to introduce players to the desert theatre as it uses three half boards, has only infantry units in play (as well as some fortifications) and does not feature the more difficult terrain such as Sand, Deirs or Hillocks.



Desert Open Ground (e.g., hex 26B1) is no different than normal Open Ground other than being coloured yellowish-tan and all Entrenching Attempts receive a +2 DRM.

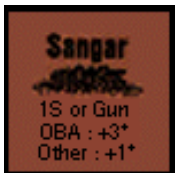


Scrub is represented by a multitude of irregularly shaped olive/brown clumps and black lines/dots. Any hex containing such artwork is a scrub hex; e.g., 26E9.



Hammada is represented by a multitude of black dots and irregularly shaped angular objects with buff-coloured interiors. Any such hex is a hammada hex; e.g., 26D4.

Both are treated as Open Ground for all purposes except that Scrub is Concealment Terrain for Infantry (and their possessed SW), Dummy stacks, and entrenchments (including Sangars). Neither are an obstacle or a Hindrance to LOS, negate FFMO or Interdiction.



A sangar has the same capacity as a 1S foxhole, which may not be increased. No more than one sangar may be placed per hex, and they cannot be created during play. A unit

in a sangar receives a +3 TEM vs. OBA (and Bombardment), and a +1 TEM vs. other attacks [EXC: CC, FT]. A Final KIA vs. a sangar/its occupants eliminates the Sangar if caused by an OBA attack of HE ≥ 70mm, or by any HE CH. A sangar is treated as a foxhole in all other respects.

Infantry beneath a Trench or Sangar counter may move/rout/advance/Withdraw-from-CC directly to any Accessible, non-Crest-status *lower-elevation* Location without having to first exit to above that trench/sangar. Such a move/rout/advance/CC-Withdrawal in the opposite direction, from a non-Crest-status position to beneath an Accessible higher-elevation trench/sangar, is also allowed if that Infantry unit and trench/sangar are in the same side's OB and/or the unit's side Controls the trench/sangar. In addition, if a Trench counter and Sangar counter are Accessible to each other, Infantry may move/rout/advance/Withdraw-from-CC from beneath one to beneath the other as if both were trenches (in the same manner as a Bunker; see B30.8) regardless of which side set-up/Controls the one being entered. A Snap Shot taken at a unit that is utilizing the movement benefits of such a trench/sangar/bunker is subject to *Trench* TEM. If a sangar already contains its maximum stacking capacity, a unit wishing to enter that sangar hex must first exit to above any trench it may currently be in and may not utilize trench/sangar movement/TEM benefits to enter that hex.



When Light Dust is in effect, each TH (and each non-ordnance DR [EXC: OBA; DC; FT; Fire Lane; Specific Collateral Attack] receives a Dust DLV Hindrance DRM equal to a subsequent dr^{21} that is halved (FRD). Being a type of LV Hindrance, Light Dust does not negate FFMO. However a Dust DLV Hindrance DRM is made for each Interdiction DR; but with its sign reversed, which modifies the Original Interdiction DR (thus there is a -2 DRM on a subsequent dr of 4 or 5). The routing unit suffers Casualty Reduction only if it fails its NMC via the Final DR [EXC: an Original 12 still eliminates the unit; A10.31].

Surrender may not be refused - i.e., a surrendering unit may not be eliminated thereby invoking No Quarter (A20.3).

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Keeping the Enemy At The Gates

Strategies for the Russian defence of Stalingrad

When my local group of gamers (all three of us) first played the RB CG, we found the only thing that stopped the Germans the first day was time. The last 2-3 turns consisted of CX'ing Germans running as far and as fast as possible, possibly taking little detours to annihilate the scattered remnants of the Russian defence. 100+ stone locations the first day was not unusual.

After a lengthy break from ASL, we got started with RB again. This time I wanted the Russian side for a change. After all, we knew how tough it was so I wouldn't feel bad for losing. And of course, I had my little nifty plans for the defence.

THE GERMAN ASSAULT

But to plan any defence, the attacker's options has to be taken into consideration. Having played the German side several times, I had found the four major varieties of German attacks.

There is the Eastern breakthrough, with most units and tanks committed on the right flank (the Russian players right flank). Major problem is lack of ANY safe area for rallying. A single FFE in the right place may cause the loss of a whole company. Easy terrain to defend for the Russian, with several roads cutting across the lines of advance and the stone building at X10 (I think it was; I don't have the map with me, doing this from memory) offering a formidable obstacle to any advance. Also few stone buildings to capture. Number two is an attack going straight towards the factories the shortest distance, from the middle of the north flank and south, trying to split the Russian defence in two. Much the same problems as the eastern attack. Also, if the Russian puts up a lot of firepower (or FFE) in the middle, the offensive can stall. Also, the "splitting of the defence" might be more of a crushed offence, with both flanks under fire.

The western approach is so much better. Lots of buildings gives good rally possibilities, the terrain offers good protection and a lot of juicy stone buildings are there for the taking. Two variants on this; after having taken the bridgehead (ie the 3 hex stone building to the south and the north-westernmost 2 hex stone building just behind the railway), the German can either go south,

along the railroad, or go for the factories. Both have their points, but going south might mean a lot of fighting for terrain the Russian would have to give up anyhow when the German entry areas expand south a week (I think it was) later. Also, a good thrust towards the factories will push back the Russian reserve lines beyond the factories, which is a Good Thing (tm).

When playing the German side, I have found no purchase better than 2 Rifle Coys for the main course and possibly a Stuka on the side. The day two firepower with 3 HMG and 4MMG will crush just any Russian fire group (20 FP out to range 16, with a 50% chance of another shot and a -2 leader on that... what can one say?). The number of squads and leaders will mean that any Russian forward defence will be overwhelmed by numbers. Firepower... the Russian player has no chance of matching it.

The primary problem for the Russian player is the German firepower. On Day one the German player has a HUGE advantage. To add insult to the injury, the German also has an 80mm OBA, which forces the Russian player to disperse his troops or watch them go through an endless barrage of 16 FP FFE's. Note that a good German will use the OBA to block the Russian's retreat from the Germans, forcing them to stay and fight and die instead of routing home, rallying and blocking the advance.

DEFENCE

The Russian defence has several sectors. Starting from the right going left in the order of defensibility, the easternmost sector offer much open ground and several open roads giving natural defensive lines. The lack of protective terrain for the German means that any artillery will have a field day. Long range MG fire from the level 2 building south of the big factory (around O19 I think) can cover the open ground out of reach from the German fire groups. Also, the 50mm mortars have their use due to the many times a +1 protection is all that is available for the German troops. The far right flank is covered by the river and the river bank, where even a single squad might cause the German to think twice about running over open ground.

The middle front consists of the northernmost factory and the 3 hex stone building just to the west. The natural defensive line along the wall that follows the road offers good protection and is certain to slow down any German attacker. The factory offers a rallying haven, and can be very difficult to take if the Germans only attack from one flank. Both flanks can be covered by HMG fire from the building at O19(?), at a decent range. Good targets for small mortars shooting from the roof of the U19 (I guess..) factory, and a well placed observer can bring down FFE on lots of +1 tem targets.

The left flank though... I hate it. There is mainly three areas here, the left to the west of the railroad, the middle one just to the east and south of including the stone rubble area at, what F10?, and thirdly the stone building at F6 and south-east towards the factories.

The leftmost part can barely be held against a weak German attack. Stacking up on units there will just invite the OBA, and if you stay in the stone building the attacker has very good cover for his 20+ fire groups in the buildings just outside. Not a chance of holding if the German really wants it (and he does!). So calculate on loosing it, make him pay if possible. Try stopping him at the next stone building further south, where the reserves can start.

The middle ground is ok. Lots of stone buildings, lv11, cellars. Pretty good defensive terrain. Also much of it is behind the reserve line, and fire from the lv12 building at J21 can do a lot to slow down a German attack.

The right part has an interesting forward area around the F6 building. The open terrain behind the building means that the only way out of the building is by routing before you are cut of, alternatively to run like hell before he can break you. Also note that the stone rubble will mean that you won't get INTO the stone buildings at H10 if you are routing from the F6 building. (3mf for the rubble, 2 to go down the shell-holes and only 1 left to pay the 2 to enter the buildings. Tough luck!), which means at best a half-squad surviving the +1 tem and 20+ FP attacks coming in. Death trap. Of course, you might think of using sewer movement to get

THE TRENCHES



out of there, but it will take the units involved out of the game for a pretty long time, and anyone who breaks are dead.

Any MG brought to this place is certain to fall into the enemy hands, and without MG, the place cannot be held. Well, it can't be held with it either considering the firepower disadvantage and the 100% chance of encirclement. Unless you are REALLY VERY lucky...

The next position in that area is the three small houses in a triangle at say H10 or so. Pretty good. Good rally area, behind the reserve line, nice open ground just in front of the buildings... Don't you believe it. Guess what happens if you try to defend here? Look at all the nice things that can happen if the south-western-most house is hit by OBA blocking the retreat to the factory... look at all the +1 protection you can get when running away... No it can't be held either, not if the Germans want it. Putting up a fire group or two on the railway, advancing through the rubble to the left... and possibly tanks on right and an FFE blocking your retreat... (happened to me last time, lost 6 squads and a leader in that place).

After that point though, the going gets a lot better. A nice building backed up by a factory for rallying will make things a lot easier.

Ok, after this analysis time to get the conclusions. To put it short: Defence in depth and survive for another day. Lose ground, fall back, do NOT try to trade fire with the German player. Avoid losing heavy weapons (MMG, HMG, guns). Contain any breakthroughs.

PURCHASES

As I am planning on falling back beyond the reserve lines, all troops bought can be bought as reserves. 2 Rifle would be nice, but that would not leave any points for the ABSOLUTELY NEEDED ARTILLERY! The Russian artillery is not much compared to the German, but it is cheap and 5/2 is in fact pretty good. Gives a decent chance of getting in 3 salvos, and 2 is almost certain. Also note that if you would draw 2 reds at once, the OBA is retained for the next day. It is almost impossible to attack if you are hit by an OBA, and if you break on the attack with an FFE behind you, you can kiss your ass goodbye. This means that a good FFE can stop a whole German flank dead.

So, with that in mind...

Purchase: 1 80mm OBA (1), 1 447 Rifle Coy in reserve(4) and 1 527 SMG coy in reserve (3).

The AT guns is put at 2nd level BB18 and 2nd lvl J21 (I think - it is the hex furthest north in the westernmost 2nd lvl building). That of course means 6 hexes worth of fortification. Another 2 levels of fortification in hex ...I think it is X10 or something, the 3 location stone building just west of the road coming up from the shore on the eastern flank.

Two MG nests, both located in locations which should be out of reach. 2HMG + 2 squads + leader with the J21 AT gun, both MMGs in the X10 building with leader and 2 squads. A leader with a field phone up on a roof somewhere covering the eastern entry area.

The eastern flank is held by 2MMGs in the fortified X10 building, the 45LL at lvl2 BB18, and the 50mm mortars on the U19 factory rooftop. Also, if the major attack would come in on the right, the HMG's in J21 would run like hell and reach O19 by the time the German squads come within 12 hex range from it. Also, as I consider the entire area north of X10 expandable, I need very few squads there, like 2-4 + a like number in reserve.

The middle front. Here I count on the German coming in from the left, but not from the right. Reserves in the factory, preferably heavy reserves that can block his advance. A MG group (HMG, MMG, LMG, 3x447 + 9-1) in reserve on the left side of the factory, within three hexes of the stone building should be enough to hold up any attack for a turn, giving them the chance of retreating south with the heavy weapons and reach the big factory where they will hold, with the help of the J21 HMGs running to O19, covering their flanks.

Another reserve group of 2-3 527 in the northernmost factories north-eastern hex should break any units showing up at the adjacent factory hex to the north-west (30+1).

A few 447's on 1st lvl of the I7(?) building should slow down the German player allowing them to withdraw/rout to the factory in good time.

The left flank. 3-4 units in the left part, just to slow him down and make him commit forces there. Make sure they have rear coverage so they are not surrounded when they break. Possibly a leader here, to rally when they break. In the stone building further south, 4-6 squads (+ leader if possible) in reserve. Remember to carry some ATRs to make the enemy think twice about running wild with his tanks (which he could do if he knocked out the at-gun at lvl2J21, say with artillery...). He should not get much further, as the combat in this second line would be very close and his lines of advance would be threatened by the AT gun and MG's at

J21, plus what's left of the middle part.

In the middle (of the left), try to slow down the German by squads using concealment to survive his prep fire. The cellar is a great place for regaining "???" even if it can become a death trap if the German is lucky and advances quickly. A nice tip : have a 527 or two HIP in the cellars. Can do wonders...IF the German player usually skips checking them. He won't a second time...

Withdraw, try to hold the factory by the rail. Shouldn't be impossible. A few reserves, 2-3 groups. A hip or two.

The right (of the left flank)... The death trap is held by one (1) unit, and that only to keep the German guessing. Add 4-5 "??". Run away as soon as possible. The 3 stone buildings in the next step... unless a tunnel is built to the factory, defend it with 1-2 squads, lots of fake reserve markers and "??". A good policy when it comes to reserves is to sometimes not activate them just because you can - it will force him to treat every reserve counter with respect.

The real defensive line is the factory and the building adjacent to the factory. Here, lots of reserves, good leaders mm. A VERY nice place to have a minefield in is the south-eastern-most of the triangle - it is a natural place to start an advance against the factory from and a natural for a fire group. Also, it will make it very difficult for him to flee with broken units. A 6-0 attack can kill anyone, and note! if he is still there at endgame, he must take a MC or be eliminated.

Using this defence, I have fought the German to an even loss battle, and even forced him to give up after day two. Expected casualties should be approximately equal, unless someone gets lucky. Note that major casualties are caused by squads being eliminated for failure to rout - not so much to direct fire.

The principle is the same everywhere - fall back, slow down. Standing up and fighting does not change the speed of the German advance all that much, and will only cause excessive losses to his firepower. Fall back and let the confusion of the battlefield blunt his spearheads until they can be brought to a standstill or they find that the day has passed.

An effective sniper bait is to put a unit on the roof on top of the fire group to be protected - chances are he won't be fired upon and unless the sniper hits the location exactly, it will be forced to fire on the roof unit.



Ramblings from the rubble

Patrick Manlig

After playing some RB campaigns, some things come to mind that may not be all that apparent at the beginning.

Russian strategy

Building W9/X9 (or something, I haven't got a map right here; it is a three-hex stone building around W9/X9) is the key to controlling the eastern flank. I would fortify it as fast as I could, and since the eastern flank is almost the only place during the initial scenarios where the German player could be expected to use his armour to create a breakthrough, I think it deserves the attention of one of the initial ATG:s. The other, by the way, should go into the upper floor of one of the multi-hex stone buildings on the north/west fringes of the factory complex. (The ATG in W9/X9 did prevent a breakthrough during one campaign by destroying 2 Pz III:s and 3 SPW 251/1. Another Pz III was destroyed by an ATR, along with a PSW 222. Finally, a HMG took care of another 2 PSW, while the last was knocked out in CC. All in the vicinity of W9/X9!) To improve the defensive position around building W9/X9, kindle the wooden buildings/rubble north of the building. (See below on kindling)

Kindling

One way to deny defensive terrain to the German is to use kindling. Turn the houses on the western edge of the map into a shooting gallery by burning them to rubble. The German will be allowed to enter along the entire west edge all too soon, and then those buildings will be easily cut off, so you cannot expect to hold them anyway.

Rooftop mortars

While the German player can buy stuka DB:s to interdict Russians, the Russian can accomplish the same task by placing his light mortars on the roof of a level 2 1/2 factory/building. I have managed to force an entire company to seek cover with the fire from three mortars. At first the German may think those mortars to be harmless, but sooner or later you *will* roll a critical hit - and that ought to wipe the smile off his face. Not to mention the 82 mm MTR:s of the HW platoon. The 51 mm babies may be useful mainly for interdicting German units on the move - but the 82 mm ones can do real damage. (Not to forget their ability to fire

SMOKE.) Buy reserves I've played two campaigns as Russian (10-15 CG days), and I still have not bought a single non-reserve infantry RG. I guess that makes my point... Sewers I have had some very nasty experiences of what can happen when you try to attack by using the sewers to go into CC. That *is* risky. On the other hand, the sewers could be used to discourage the German player from attacking, since they provide easy means of isolating forward units if there are no units covering their back.

Notes

At first, the sewers and light mortars may not seem very useful. At first, the German player just laughed at those mortars and the units in the sewers. However, the occasional casualties from the mortars built up, and the advance was stalled by units appearing out of nowhere. He finally asked me how the #@%!? he was supposed to attack with the sewers being infested by Russians and the light mortars unnerving his troops by being able to attack *everywhere*? I don't know why, but when my HMG:s are lucky if they get 3 attacks with their ROF, my Lt MTR:s always seem to attack at least 5 times before exhausting theirs! Bearing this in mind, it is really demoralising to see how the Russian takes a stack of 4 acquisition counters and says: "Oh, I almost forgot my light mortars!" Even if this is Stalingrad, the German forces sometimes have to move through OG/shellholes/debris, and while more protective terrain might provide cover from most other fire, they will *not* be as nice when the inevitable CH is rolled! By now, the Germans have developed a habit of occupying manholes within range of Russian troops, and firing on sight at *any* rooftop unit.

German strategy:

Stuka Air support is nice, but don't expect them to be able to successfully attack and hit enemy firebases in fortified buildings. There's a big possibility that an attempt just results in a mistaken attack if there are friendly troops nearby, and if not, you have to roll 4 or less to hit (if using the infantry target type), or 6 or less to get a NMC result (area fire - 16 FP, with a +4 TEM), which is the equivalent of a 4 FP attack on the IFT. The best use for stuka DB:s are to pin down Russians when you are attacking in an

unexpected direction, or to target large, impenetrable, Russian KV-1/T-34:s.

Armour

Don't expect to use armour the way you're used to. However, since hits on the infantry target type aren't modified by the TEM of the target, they provide a safe (but slow) way to deal with firebases/ rooftop mortars/spotters/observers at long range. Be careful not to get within 6 hexes of unbroken Russians, though. (deliberate immob.) The only time the armour should be up front is when mopping up broken Russians.

Barrage/smoke

One of the best ways to ensure a breakthrough is by attacking in force in one section of the map, and one of the best ways of ensuring that no support will reach the defenders from their comrades is to lay a smokescreen between them and their comrades. This is especially useful when there is a mild breeze in effect.

Riverbank

The riverbank is fairly easy to reach, because the Russian needs his troops elsewhere, and the bank isn't that crucial. However I was baffled when them krauts started to *climb* the cliffs bordering the bank! Suddenly a single squad threatened vital areas behind my lines! As of now, I have made a habit of mining the riverbank, as well as keeping one or two squads guarding the rear. Armoured assaults along the bank can be made more unpleasant by the possibility of using ATR:s to fire at the aerial AF of vehicles on the bank, or simply digging an A-T ditch across it.

Notes

The main advantage when playing the Germans is that *you* choose where to fight. Always try to channel your attack in one section of the perimeter, but don't neglect the opportunity to attack somewhere else when the Russian moves his troops from one sector to reinforce another, thus possible leaving too weak a defence in that sector. Carry the fight to him, and try to strike his weak spots.

General strategy: HIP

Instead of using HIP for nasty surprises later on, HIP could be used to protect your firebases during the initial fire phases. You could even HIP assault troops in the frontline to protect them during the enemy's first fire phase. I have used this to hide six squads and a commissar, that later conducted a human wave attack that did cut off the entire German force from the north board edge!

? counters

Remember that any ? counters purchased may be 5/8". Also, it *is* possible to buy HIP for vehicles in the RB CG. Isolation The pain when being isolated isn't that the units suffer a lot - it's the setup restrictions it imposes. Never fear having a squad or two isolated, they can always escape (and stand a good chance of succeeding too) and it might cause severe problems to your opponent's setup during the next scenario.

Inflict casualties

You don't win by pushing the enemy back, you win by *eliminating* him. To do this, never give him an even break - use all units at your disposal to constantly harass him! The best time to strike is when he can not fight back - that is : when he's broken. While your firebases may achieve a KIA once in a while, I've seen up to 10 squads being eliminated during a single rout phase. Also, this is the time to use the units too vulnerable to attack a good order enemy : DC:s, PSW:s, etc.

OK, guess that's about it for now (I'm writing this offhand, and I can't remember anything else right now.)

Snipers in Stalingrad

The use of snipers is strikingly different in a RB CG than in smaller scenarios.

First, as the Soviet, it's always worth it to invest the one point in a sniper. What else can you buy for one point that is so effective? Look at the number of DR's made for combat purposes in your average RB scenario - it's probably at least 70 each half-turn! In other words, you expect almost one effective sniper attack per half-turn for each SAN above one, so each sniper bought will get you about 8 attacks per game - and probably last at least one scenario. All for one point. By contrast, the 80mm OBA may break about 4 squads in it's entire (short) lifetime; and a MOL-P platoon may never do anything. Now, of course, every RG in RB has it's uses, and sometimes it won't be worth it to buy the sniper, especially for the Germans, who would like a more predictable offence, but the point should be clear. While they are usually more of a nuisance in conventional scenarios, their effect in huge scenarios can be counted on and calculated for.

So for the Russians, unless things are really desperate, always buy that sniper. Other than that, there is fairly little involved in strategy, except for one thing - always relocate the sniper if it's gotten hung up in the rear without any reasonable targets. Almost always, you will be operating in a target-rich environment, so make absolutely sure your sniper stays within range of at least a couple German leaders. An ideal situation would be a single stack that has been isolated on a flank. Depending on how far away other friendly units are, the sniper may continue to hit that flank until the leader is dead; then you can transfer him away.

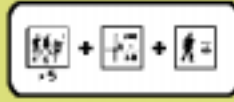
As the Germans, you are probably more concerned with the threat the snipers pose to your wonderful leadership corps. What can you do? Not too much. The half-squad sniper-bait tactic is a valid one, surrounding your valuable leaders with those 2nd line half squads that seem to crop up now and again, but probably the best tactic is to realise that snipers are a very serious threat and to play with that in mind. Never deploy your two best leaders close together, like my opponent did in our last scenario. The Germans can't really win this one without concentrating much of their force in

one area, but if you have a 10-2 and a 9-2, keep them on separate flanks. It's just not worth the risk of losing them both, and if both are in range of the enemy sniper, you about double the chance of getting badly hurt. So pull out the 9-2 and replace him with a 9-1. And always take reasonable sniper checks. Unlike the shorter games, these snipers linger from day to day, so a single SAN factor eliminated can save you endless headaches (and a couple dead leaders). Now, there may be overriding factors - I wouldn't stall your main thrust just to have a killer firebase eliminate a sniper, but the decision is far from being as clear cut as it is in other scenarios.

Snipers are very useful for the Germans in RB. For all the reasons mentioned above plus (as you have noticed), the Russians enjoy the interior lines syndrome such that many of their troops and rallying leader/commissars are impervious to attack except for snipers. Keep that German Sniper as high as you can stand it. These out of reach Russians are a real pain in the butt and a little sniper harassment may make a big difference between a stalemate, and exploiting a breakthrough.

For both players, never forget that the opponent's sniper counter is also a valid target. The Germans should probably be a little more paranoid than the Russians, since they tend to have more exposed, valuable leaders, so if you can easily kill a Soviet sniper, that's a good way to go. For the Russians, that German sniper is an annoyingly good scout, hitting your concealed units to reveal them - but this is usually more of a threat in the earlier turns, when the Germans is still guessing as to what you have and where you have it. However, I'd rather take the shot at a leader - their high-value leaders are what makes the offence feasible. Today, I wounded both the 10-2 and the 9-2 leaders in the German OB; both were shipped out, so while the territory I managed to take was negligible, the leader losses made the victory decisive. 7 German leaders were eliminated - I believe 4 fell to snipers, including the 9-2.





REFERENCE NOTES FOR SW

Geir Aalberg

Typography used in these articles follows standard ASL notation. An ASL rule paragraph preceded by a “” is treated as optional.*

D. BRITISH SW NOTES

Although often criticised for being conservative, there is nothing wrong in this if something is worth conserving. While most of the British firearms were excellent, the .303in rimless cartridge was not. This was not suited to any form for automatic fire, and changes to a smaller calibre had been proposed as early as 1910. More problems occurred when wartime industry could not afford the extensive machining required to manufacture some of these vintage designs. The bombing of the factories in Birmingham accelerated the process of developing cheap stamped-metal replacements, culminating in possibly the ugliest and most cost-effective weapon produced, the Sten Gun.



1. Bren LMG: When the British Army wanted a successor to the Lewis Gun, the prime candidates were the Madsen and the Vickers-Berthier. When the latter was about to be chosen, a specially produced demonstration model from the Czech Brno works was presented. As the Army wanted proof that all submissions worked satisfactorily with the British .303in rimmed cartridge, the Czech had redesigned the ZB vz.30 by changing the calibre, shortening the barrel and graduating the sights in yards. This admirable effort in salesmanship paid off, when the ZB vz.33 prototype proved superior and was put into production as the Bren Gun – from Brno (the place of origin), and Enfield Lock (the manufacturer). Looking very similar to the ZB vz.26, the latter differed in having a finned barrel and a straight box magazine.

Production started with the Mk I in 1937, and totalled well over 30,000 in 1940. Of these, many were lost at Dunkirk, and was subsequently taken in German service as the leichte Maschinengewehr 138(e). The shortage necessitated successive modifications to speed up production, resulting in the Mk 2, 3, and 4 versions for a total of 300,000. For anti-aircraft use a tripod and a 100-round drum magazine was issued.

In action the Bren was very popular, being accurate, reliable, and easy to handle. As a purpose-built LMG, it was probably the best compromise between portability and firepower at the end of the war. Probably the best proof of how superb this weapon was, is that under the designation L4A2 the British use it to this day with no replacement in sight.



2. Vickers-Berthier LMG: A strong competitor to the ZB vz.26. Designed by the French general Berthier as a gas-operated water-cooled MG, it was converted to air cooling after Vickers bought the rights to it. Production began in 1928, and later the Indian army adopted and obtained a license to produce it at Ishapore (as the Mk 3). After being rejected in favour of the Bren the British production was halted, but in India it was retained well after WWII. Apart from India it only saw limited use in WWII by some Baltic states. Externally very similar to the Bren, and often mistaken for it, it was sound and reliable but not exceptionally so.

A derivative of it, called the Vickers G.O. (for gas operated), was developed for open cockpit aircraft, using a spade grip and a 96-round overhead drum magazine. As higher airspeeds necessitated closed cockpits, it was found unsuitable and taken out of service; but in 1940 they were taken out of store and used as AA MGs, a role in which they became very popular. Much sought after by various irregular forces, it was also used by units as the SAS and ‘Popski’s Private Army’ on their heavily armed trucks and jeeps.

† Although not in the same class as the Bren, there is no overwhelming reason to change the factors on the counters. If desired, lowering the range to 6 hexes for LMGs issued to Indian forces would probably be the best option.



3. Lewis Gun: Famous primarily for being the first true LMG, its main reason for conception was that five Lewis Guns could be produced for each Vickers – mobility being of secondary importance at the time. But the tactical possibilities were soon realised, and the Germans wanted them desperately. In fact their medics were instructed to carry those left on the field back with the wounded – one on each stretcher! Its most prominent features were an overhead 47-round flatpan magazine and a bulky air-cooling jacket around the length of the barrel to prevent overheating. Aircraft Lewis Guns lacked this jacket, as the air currents were supposed to provide sufficient cooling. When these were used as ground weapons, the jacket was found to be totally superfluous as no overheating occurred.

The major users of the Lewis gun in WWII were the British Royal Navy and Merchant Navy; it was also issued to the Home Guard and RAF airfield defence units. Front line use was not frequent however; although depicted on the box of *Thunder at Cassino*, the photograph it is based on shows the soldier brandishing a Lee Enfield rifle. It would therefore be most appropriate in any Sea Lion scenario, along with the Danish Madsen LMG.

† Use an Allied Minors LMG counter for the Lewis Gun.

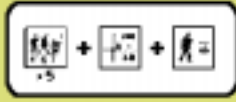
4. M1918 BAR: After Dunkirk, the British Army were critically short of Bren Guns (and most other equipment). The Home Guard, lacking equipment to the extent that riflemen were regularly drilled with broom handles, were in need of any weapon that could be procured, and received large quantities of the original M1918 BAR that had been phased out of service by the US Army in favour of the later A1 and A2 versions. Some later found their way into other second-line units. Having neither bipod, shoulder strap or stock rest, it could only be fired from the hip or shoulder – not an ideal requirement when most users were middle-aged or otherwise unfit for regular service.

5. .303 Charlton MG: Another LMG in use by the New Zealand Home Guard. Designed in 1942, when a Japanese invasion threatened and most automatic weapons had gone overseas with the ANZAC forces, the Charlton was an extensive conversion of the Lee Enfield bolt action rifle into a gas-operated automatic. It used a standard Bren gun magazine, with provision for single and burst shots. After 500 had been produced by the Electrolux Company of Australia, the factory was required for making Owen submachine guns, and the project was cancelled.

† This would probably have been even less effective than a BAR, so no separate counter would be warranted.



6. Vickers Mk I MMG/HMG: By many claimed to be the best MG of WWI, the Vickers was a Maxim with some minor changes, as using aluminium instead of bronze and having a spade grip. The Vickers became synonymous with reliability – at Somme in 1916 ten Vickers guns fired a million rounds in 12 hours, consuming a hundred barrels and untold quantities of water. No failures occurred, and all guns were functional after the spectacle. Operated by the specially trained crews of the Machine Gun Corps, it performed many legendary feats of fire – often firing 10,000 rounds non-stop. This is not to say it could not jam, which it sometimes did. But being crewed by specialists – who had been drilled in some 25 different possible causes along with their symptoms –



such stoppages were usually quickly corrected.

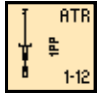
After WWI a .5-in round was developed for AA and tank purposes (as used in the Light Tank Mk VIB), but was found underpowered and succeeded by the 20mm cannon. When the British lost most of their stocks at Dunkirk, production shortcuts were made, most noticeably a straight cooling jacket in place of the earlier corrugated one. In 1943 the Mk 8Z boat-tailed bullet came into widespread use. This increased the useful effective range to 4100m (100 hexes!), and with a mortar sight fitted to the MG facilitated indirect fire [see *Combat Guns*, Chris Bishop & Ian Drury (Temple Press/Aerospace, London, 1987. ISBN 0-600-55178-4)].

As several generations of the Vickers was used, in various states of condition and supply, it represents both the MMG and the HMG counters. Its only fault in game terms is the PP cost, a trait shared with all vintage WWI guns in the game. Vickers MGs were organized in organic MG battalions assigned to corps level. A platoon of four were usually attached to the HQ company of an infantry battalion.

*† When manned by a crew, the repair numbers of the British MMG and HMG are “4” and “5”, respectively.

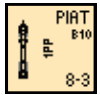
† The British player may purchase Mk 8Z ammunition for a HMG by paying 10 points per such HMG. It is available after 1943, and has a RF of 1.4 (purchased as ordnance).

† A Mk 8Z-equipped HMG may fire with 2FP at up to 50 hexes. Mandatory Fire Direction (A9.2) still applies.



7. Boys ATR: Developed by Captain H C Boys (who died just before it entered service), this was a .55 calibre bolt-action rifle using a belted cartridge case pointing upwards. Capable of penetrating 21mm of armor at 300m range, it could pierce the armor of any contemporary tank at the time of its design. The Boys was probably the best ATR at the start of the war, despite its considerable recoil which neither a muzzle brake, a thickly padded butt or a spring slide could dampen adequately. In 1941 it had outlived its usefulness, but lingered on as no replacement weapon could be found until the PIAT entered service in 1943 (some sources claim it was rarely seen after 1941 {1}). A rifle battalion had 25 ATRs (3 per company).

As it could not be fitted into a parachute container, the Boys was not issued to airborne troops until the invasion of Tunisia in 1942, when a cut-down version was issued. The lack of a muzzle brake and a barrel shortened 4.5in degraded performance to the extent that those few actually used were discarded after a few shots. Apparently it was replaced with the PIAT before the airborne troops saw action again.



8. PIAT: The Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank must rank as one of the most peculiar weapons produced. Although at a glance appearing as a rocket launcher, internally it was anything but. Loading involved standing on the shoulder pad and lifting the weapon, thereby cocking an enormous spring running along most of its length. When released, it drove a heavy steel rod into the hollow fin of the projectile, which had been placed inside the open front. The rod, or spigot, struck a propellant charge inside the projectile. When this ignited, it rode along the spigot, providing directional control; at the same time the blast was supposed to blow the spigot backwards and re-cock it. When it failed to do so, the laborious manual loading sequence had to be repeated.

This peculiar modus operandi was patented by Lt-Col Blacker in order to dispense with the usual barrel, and appeared first in 1937 in an anti-personnel weapon known as the Arbalest. Later redesigned and adapted as the 29mm Spigot Mortar or ‘Blacker Bombard’, this was issued extensively to Home Guard and Airfield Defence units. He then designed a smaller, man-portable version known as the ‘Baby Bombard’, which was later developed further by a Major Jefferis and given a new hollow charge bomb – this was finally approved on 31 August 1942. Although the bomb could reach 750 yards, effective range was limited to 100 yards. Various HE, smoke, flare and signal projectiles were also planned, but never produced. Allotment was as with the Boys.

Weighing more than twice that of a Bazooka, strenuous to cock and violent to fire, the PIAT could never be called popular. But when fired by a resolute man it got the job done, and anyhow after the demise of the Boys it was the only weapon available.



9. FT Portable, No 5, Mk I: This featured a ‘cherry-in-a-doughnut’- design not unlike the German Flammenwerfer 40. Apparently it didn’t enter service until 1944. Contrary to common belief, engineering tasks in the front lines were the responsibility of the infantry assault pioneer platoons and not the Royal Engineers. One of these were included in the HQ company of the infantry battalion, and were assigned one flamethrower and various demo stores.

E. FRENCH SW NOTES

While the French certainly developed many groundbreaking and successful weapons and munitions (notably the smokeless cartridge), there seem never to have been any funding to set them into production until they were becoming obsolete. The largest deficiency was in rifles, as their standard rifle in WWI was the 1886 vintage Lebel. This used a tubular magazine, necessitating using a large-rimmed cartridge which obviously proved to be totally unsuitable for automatic weapons. The Lebel was later replaced by the box-magazine Berthier 1907/15, but not until 1935 were these gradually rebarreled to the newer 7.5mm ammunition. As a result both types of ammunition were used side by side during WWII for both rifles and MGs. Another glaring deficiency was the lack of any anti-tank weapons – other than the 25mm ATG – from squad to regimental level!



1. Châtelleraut mle 1924/29 LMG: After WWI the French initiated the development of a proper LMG to replace the Hotchkiss mle 1909. This combined the BAR mechanism with a newly developed 7.5mm rimless cartridge in a 25-round overhead box. The result was the Fusil Mitrailleur modèle 1924/29, more commonly known as the Châtelleraut. Advertised before development was complete, the first demonstrations of the mle 24 resulted in internal barrel explosions and were disastrous. After a major redesign (including lowering the power of the cartridge) it was eventually accepted as the standard French army LMG in 1939.

Its most prominent feature was the inclusion of two triggers; the forward for single-shot and rear for automatic fire. Despite its widespread use it was not entirely trouble-free, and the cartridge was considered underpowered, having a maximum effective range of 500 compared to the 600+ of most contemporary designs. On the plus side its 30-round magazine was more than adequate for a squad and platoon support weapon. Neither a particularly good nor bad gun, the Châtelleraut was used successfully in Indo-China and Algeria until replaced in the mid-50s. Standard issue was 112 per regiment.



2. Mle 1931 MMG: Another variant known as Mitrailleur modèle 1931 was produced for the Maginot defences; having a longer barrel and a side-mounted 150-round drum magazine, it became very popular in tank and AA mountings. Both models were eventually captured in large numbers by the Germans, known as the leichte MG 116(f) and Kpfw MG 331(f) they were incorporated into the West Wall defences, the latter well regarded as an AA weapon.



3. Hotchkiss mle 1914 MMG/HMG: Hotchkiss was one of many companies trying to work its way around the patent wall built round the Maxim recoil operation system. When approached by Baron von Odkoelek of the Austro-Hungarian army, who had invented a system where gas tapped from the barrel were used to drive a piston, they bought the patents outright, refusing any royalty deal. As the first models overheated badly, a solution was found by adding five prominent brass or steel ‘doughnut’ rings around the barrel.

Its only severe problem was its 24- or 30-round straight steel (originally bronze) strips into which the ammunition was fitted, severely limiting sustained fire. Later a 249-round ‘belt’ formed by 3-round strips linked together appeared; these proved to be vulnerable to damage and small amounts of dirt on them would malfunction the gun.

What the ASL counters are intended to represent are somewhat puzzling. My best guess is that the MMG counter simulates a Hotchkiss



with 24- or 30-round strips, while the HMG uses the 249-round 'belts'. This explains the different ROF and FP, but personally I'd have given the MMG a B11.



4. Fusil Antichar Boys ATR: Used by the Free French and Vichy troops fighting the Axis in Tunisia. May also represent Russian ATR. See French ordnance note 4.

F. JAPANESE SW NOTES

The nomenclature used for Japanese armed forces equipment is somewhat complex, and several errors caused by this is found in various sources. The original system designated each model after the year in the Emperor's reign it was adopted: one period starting in 1867 when Mutsuhito became Emperor (the Meiji Era), another in 1912 with Yoshihito (the Taisho Era). Thus the Meiji 26 Revolver was adopted in 1893, while the Taisho 11 LMG was introduced in 1922. Had Yoshihito reigned as long as his successor this system might have been tolerable, but when he died in 1926 leaving the throne to Hirohito the confusion became total. A system using the two last digits of the Japanese calendar was therefore adopted in 1927, the Japanese year 2587. As the last digit corresponds to the Gregorian calendar this is much easier to interpret: the Type 97 Medium Tank 'Chi-Ha' was introduced in 1937, and the Type 1 SPG in 1941.



1. Taisho 11 LMG: The first LMG used by Japan in WWII was known as the Nambu, after its designer. Its proper name however, was the Taisho 11 LMG, referring to its adoption in 1922. Its Hotchkiss influence is apparent in the finned barrel, but one distinguishing point is the ammunition feed system employed by no other MG. Known as the hopper system after the small hopper protruding on the left side of the receiver; this enabled ordinary rifle rounds to be filled while still in their five-round clips, thus rendering special magazines or belts unnecessary. But the rifle cartridge was too powerful for its delicate mechanism, so special low-powered rounds had to be made, negating the supposed advantage of the hopper. It also shared the cartridge lubrication problems of the Breda M30, along with the hopper making the system unbalanced under sustained fire. A tank version known as the Type 91 was produced in 1931, using a 50-round hopper.



2. Type 96 LMG: Inspired by the Czech ZB vz.26 encountered in China, an improved version using a 50-round overhead magazine was introduced in 1936. Named the LMG Type 96, it had a quick barrel change system, but retained the lubrication system along with its attendant clogging. Although it (and its successor, the Type 99) was a definite improvement, it never replaced the 11th Year Model in service as the Japanese industry could not produce any weapon in quantity to satisfy the demand of the armed forces. One notable feature shared by both LMGs was the provision for a bayonet to be fixed under the bipod, no doubt very handy when committing a 'Banzai' charge!

Although second-rate weapons, these constituted most of the firepower for the Japanese in defensive situations. The small stature of the Japanese soldier, firing from a squatting position, using a long-barreled rifle with a bayonet, and the tactical doctrines stressing the importance of the offense; all these factors rendered the average rifleman ineffective at long range, the LMGs were responsible for most of the Allied casualties in the PTO. As it is reasonable to expect these two models combined into one LMG counter, it will probably have a B11 rating, with a 2-6 strength factor. As such it is exactly matched by the Allied Minors LMG.



3. MMG/HMG Type 92: Early Japanese HMGs were licensed copies of the Hotchkiss, down to the cooling rings on the barrel. But poor manufacturing and the shape of the 6.5mm cartridge caused excessive jamming, forcing the incorporation of a lubrication system. In the early 1930s a 7.7mm rimmed cartridge based on the British .303 was adopted, and apparently inspired by the Lewis gun the Type 89 and 92 HMGs were made. Being belt-fed, air-cooled and gas-operated, they still retained

the lubrication system; as such it would probably qualify for a B11 rating. 4-10 and 6-12 strength factors are probable, for MMG and HMG configuration respectively.



4. MTR Taisho 10 50mm MTR: This 50mm MTR was incorrectly dubbed the 'knee mortar', which led to many US marines injuring themselves by firing captured models with the baseplate resting on the thigh. It could fire a normal HE shell or switch to a standard fragmentation grenade at close range (the standard Type 91 Hand Grenade with propellant container screwed on). A smoke grenade was made but seldom used, as this did not pack a great deal of punch, it had a range and weight much suited for the close confines of the jungle. Standard issue was 3 MTRs per platoon. It may also represent the earlier Type 98 50mm MTR.



5. ATR Type 97: Weighing over 60kg, this ATR was one of the heaviest ATRs ever produced, and the task of carrying it was shared between four crewmen. Operating on a combination of gas and blowback action enabled it to fire in automatic mode; but using only a seven-round box magazine the gain was questionable. Although using a 20mm calibre, performance was hampered by a low muzzle velocity; this resulted from design requirements to reduce the recoil blow to the level the Japanese soldier could withstand. Thus, maximum armor penetration at 200m range was only 20mm, much less than other contemporary designs. As such it was adequate in the Chinese and Manchurian campaigns of the early war, but it soon fell out of use and was rarely encountered by the Allies; most notably at Malaya and Singapore. Further research on AT weapons was concentrated on tanks and guns; as a result the Japanese infantry developed some interesting methods of dealing with enemy armor – like running up close to the tank and detonating a mine or aerial bomb, or even a demo charge strapped to the bearer's body!



6. FT Type 93: The Type 93 flamethrower was rather rare, and I haven't found much info on it. It was probably copied after early European models.

G. ITALIAN SW NOTES



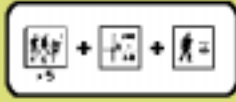
1. Breda M30 LMG: The Fucile Mitragliatori Breda modello 30 'served' Italy as its main LMG through WWII. Operating on a combination of recoil and blowback, it featured a novel feed system where flimsy 20-round chargers were inserted into a delicate forward-folding magazine; the slightest damage upon either would prevent the gun from being used. Another problem arose as the gas operation was too weak to extract the used cartridge cases; rectified by adding an internal oil pump, the sand and dust in North Africa would mix with the oil and clog the mechanism completely. Carrying was also cumbersome, as its odd shapes and projections snagged in clothing and no handle was fitted; this also made barrel change awkward as the operator had to wear gloves.

Indeed, if any ASL weapon deserves a B10 rating this is it, and lowering the X# in addition would not be excessive. Unfortunately, Hollow Legions has only awarded it with a B11, which is unfair to weapons like the DP 1928 and ZB vz.26. Players concerned with realism should take this into consideration and use a B10.

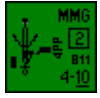
† Use Italian LMG for the Breda M30 [EXC: B11 AND X12]



2. Fiat M35 MMG: Depicted on the cover of Hollow Legions, the Mitragliatrice Fiat modello 1914/35 was a development of the M1914 FIAT-Revelli HMG used by Italy in WWI. In the 1920's FIAT sold its armaments industry to Breda, but Mussolini's military modernization programme brought in 1934 a request for its renewed production, albeit calibrated for the new 8mm cartridge just adopted. It was eventually redesigned from water-cooled magazine-feed to air-cooled belt-feed operation, but attempts to overcome the M1914's extraction problems was largely unsuccessful. Envisioned as a form of 'semi-light' MG, some were even fitted with a folding shoulder butt (as on

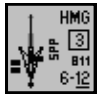


the counter). But being too heavy it was an unsuccessful compromise; some even describing the M35 as worse than the M1914 it sought to improve upon.



3. Schwarzlose M12 MMG: After WWI the Italians received several thousand Austro-Hungarian Schwarzlose Maschinengewehr Modell 12 in post-war reparations, in addition to a quantity captured in the latter half of the war. Being of good manufacture, these were retained in WWII to complement the Fiat M35. See also Hungarian MMG.

† Use Axis Minors MMG for the Schwartzlose MG. [EXC: B12].



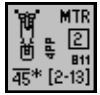
4. Breda M37 HMG: Fortunately for Italy, Breda did not succeed in making a MMG as terrible as its LMG. The gas-operated 8mm Mitragliace Breda modello 37 had only one significant design blunder: the spent cartridges were methodically replaced in the metal feed strip during extraction, whereby they had to be manually removed before loading fresh rounds. Whether they were worried about garbaging or metal shortages has never been satisfactorily explained! Nevertheless, the M37 enjoyed a reputation for being reliable – compared to the M30, it no doubt was.



5. ATR F cc S: The 20mm Fucile contracarro Solothurn, described in the Italian Ordnance Notes.



6. ATR wz.35: Captured examples of the Polish Karabin wz.35 ‘Maroszczek’, received from the Germans. Apparently these were only used on the eastern front (see Polish ATR and Italian Ordnance Notes).



7. MTR Mortaio da 45 M35: The ‘Brixia’, described in the Italian Ordnance Notes.



8. FT Lanciafiamme M40: This item, as with flamethrowers in general, is hard to find any data on. If I should find any more info, it will be included in an addendum in the series.

To be continued.....

The SW Reference Notes, of which the first part was featured in the previous issue of VFTT, began life around 1988 as a part of an ASL zine I never got off the ground. It was subsequently expanded and featured in Brian Youse's email newsletter ASL Digest around 92-93. Sadly, the last section was never printed, due to an unfortunate combination of a delayed publication schedule and the loss of my university email account. While I always had wanted to finish the series and present it in a format as close as possible to the ASL rulebook, a lack of motivation and suitable technology put the project on the shelf.

Since then, the web, PDF and affordable colour printing has changed gaming completely. Some time ago I received a phone call from an ASL player who had found my name and phone number on the web, who told me that the editor of a British fanzine wanted to reprint the series. I was naturally flattered, but unfortunately I did not find the time to edit the first installment before it was printed. It was therefore printed with the introduction to the ASL Digest, which might seem somewhat confusing (especially regarding the 7-bit character set, an issue which fortunately no longer is a problem).

Having now converted the original documents, the remaining parts are being reviewed and completed for inclusion in this magazine. On that note I would be most interested in hearing from anyone with detailed info on the equipment of the Greek, Yugoslav and Croat armies. Contact me at geir@fandom.no or through the pages of VFTT.

Geir Aalberg, 7 March 2000

DEBRIEFING

This is the known Q&A for *BRT*, *ABTF* and *ASL Journal 2*, which has been posted to the InterNet *ASL* Mailing List by MMP.

BLOOD REEF: TARAWA

Q. Is PTO Terrain (G.1) in effect?
A. No.

Q. Does an LVT wreck in a BRT shallow reef hex (level -1) create a hindrance between a hinterland (level 0) and another shallow reef (level -1) hex?
A. Yes, per G13.21 all these LOS are treated as being at Level 0.

T3.2 Can Pillboxes set up in a beach hex?
A. No, nor can trenches; add “in Soft Sand” in T3.2 line 1 after “(F7.4) are NA”.

T6.4 Delete the word “counter” in lines 1 and 3.

T6.4 Can a Passage connect Locations that are 2 hexes apart?
A. No, Passages only connect adjacent Locations.

T8.1 & T15.6141 Do the CG automatically begin with two 8-in. Guns? May the Japanese purchase an additional two 8-in. Guns?
A. Yes to both.

CG2.2 In the last sentence change the two occurrences of “Formation” to “BLT”.

CG2.3 When CG2.3 says that one or two Formations get assigned to each Assault Wave, does this mean one or two Formations from each BLT per Assault Wave, or one or two Formations total per Assault Wave?
A. One or two Formations total per Assault Wave.

CG2.3 Can >1 Assault Wave enter on the same turn, in the same Entry Area?
A. No, only one Assault Wave may enter per turn per Entry Area. In CG2.3, at the end of the next to last sentence after “any CG scenario” add “one per turn per Entry Area.”

CGI Is the Scout-Sniper Platoon available (per CG2.2 Formation Table) for use in the Initial scenario of CG I?
A. No, it is not “available” at all in CGI (just as the 3/2 isn’t “available”). Its components are part of the at-start Marine forces.

CG I SSR4 This SSR says the Air Support arrives per E7.2 not per CG6, is it excepting all of CG6 or just the arrival mechanism?
A. Just the arrival mechanism is excepted. The rest of CG6 still applies.

CGII In the Japanese OB for Black Beach Two change “31⁵ CAPP” to “13⁵ CAPP”.

CGII and CGIII Change “LVT1(m)” to “LVT2(m)”.

CGIII SSR6 Why does this SSR refer to LVT(A)2s being equipped with wire-grapnels when Vehicle Note 59 (to which the SSR refers) is about the LVT2(m)?
A. The SSR should refer to the LVT2(m) but it doesn’t make much difference in game terms.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

R1.12 Is hexside R20/R21 a rowhouse hexside (R1.12)?
A. No.

Q. Does the pillar artwork (and the rowhouse hexsides) block LOS from units on the bridge to units below the level of the bridge (e.g., does a unit on the bridge in hex R19 have clear LOS to unit at level 0 in hex Q18)?
A. Yes (no).

ASL JOURNAL 2

Page 13 “Assaulting A Cave Complex”. Cave A is not part of the cave complex. Therefore the Note in action 33 is NA, and Caves F, G and H are not revealed in action 37. If Cave A were part of the complex, then those actions would be correct as printed.

Page 21 “Evolution at Naro”. In the Setup, instead of hexes C6 and D6 having a 3-4-7 in a 1S foxhole, there should be a 3-4-7 in a 1S foxhole in hex C4 and hex D4.

Scenario J28 “Inhumane”: SSRs 1, 2, & 3 should refer to building M6, not building P6 (P6 is open ground).

Scenario J29 “The Capture of Balta”: Add SSR 5: “5. The German 8-3-8s/3-38s are considered Assault Engineers (H1.22). The StuG IIIB has AP 10.”

Scenario J34 “Men of the Mountains”: In Italian set up, change “and/or” to “and”.

Scenario J35 “Siam Sambal”: The contact number shown on the scenario card for the French radio should be 7, as is shown on the actual radio counter.

Ω

All you ever wanted to know about BOCAGE (B9.5) and Wall Advantage (B9.32)

Patrik Manlig

Bocage and Wall Advantage are two rule sections that seem to generate a never-ending stream of messages to the InterNet ASL Mailing List and a countless number of heated debates over the subject. So, what's the problem with these rule sections? What makes them so hard? Why is the debate so heated? I will try to answer all of those questions and then some in the following text.

THE ISSUES

There are some questions related to the two issues. These are, in no particular order:

Can you claim Wall Advantage after claiming in-hex TEM in a turn?

Can Wall Advantage be declared when there are no enemy units adjacent?

Can you claim in-hex TEM in Open Ground (or other 0-TEM terrain)?

Does Bocage act as concealment terrain for ?-growth purposes?

THE ANSWERS

There has been a number of questions sent to Avalon Hill related to the above problems. These are the latest, and they seemingly answer all of the above questions:

B9.31: If a unit claims the in-hex TEM as per B9.31 in his opponents PFPh when no enemy unit is adjacent, can that same unit then claim Wall Advantage in his opponents MPH if an enemy unit moves adjacent?

A. No. {MMP}

B9.31 & B9.521: Can an in-hex TEM of zero (e.g. Open Ground, Brush, etc.) be claimed as "applicable TEM to use against incoming fire" instead of the hexside TEM?

A. No. {96}

B9.32 & B9.521:

a) Must there be an adjacent enemy unit to allow Wall Advantage [EXC: Bocage B9.521]?

A. No.

b) Can a unit voluntarily forfeit Wall Advantage when an enemy unit becomes/is

ADJACENT?

A. Yes.

c) Is a unit without adjacent enemy units always considered to have Wall Advantage (even over a Bocage hexside), unless the unit has chosen in-hex TEM (B9.31) during that Player Turn?

A. Yes.

d) If the answer to c) is 'Yes', can the unit choose in-hex TEM and thus forfeit WA even if no enemy units can fire at it?

A. Yes.

e) If the answer to c) is 'Yes', does this mean that a unit at ground level behind a bocage hexside can only see (and be seen) to (and from) a hex not formed by that hexside, if it currently has Wall Advantage?

A. Yes. {MMP}

B9.55: Since Bocage is not listed as Concealment Terrain on the Chapter B divider, how does a unit in an Open Ground behind Bocage gain concealment?

A. If all enemy LOS crosses (without benefit of Wall Advantage) Bocage hexsides of a unit's hex, that unit is considered out of LOS and in Concealment Terrain, thus automatically gaining concealment at the end of the CCPh (if in Good Order). {96}

Why do I say "seemingly"? Because two of the above Q&A are still only unofficial ones. They haven't made it into any AH publication yet. Also, there are certain players on the ASL Mailing List that have vowed not to play according to some of the above Q&A unless AH prints new replacement pages for their rulebooks. Hence, there will be a number of posts about how the interpretations of others, and now the interpretations in these Q&A, are wrong. Sadly, there is no cure I know of for that.

Even so, I believe that this doesn't have to be a problem. I agree with most of the above Q&A. I can live with the others since they give clear answers. In the most contested questions, the above Q&A have been answered in accordance with what the rules say, as I will try to show below. If everyone will accept that this is now the

official way to play Bocage and Wall Advantage, there should be little problems.

How does it play?

A loose description of how these rules play (when playing according to the Q&A described above) is the following:

At the start of every turn, all units will be assumed to have WA over any hexsides in their hex [EXC: if there are enemy units in an ADJACENT hex that are marked with a WA counter]. I recommend placing a WA counter on every unit that could possibly claim an in-hex TEM (i.e. that occupies a hex with an in-hex TEM different from zero) at this point. Also leave any WA counters placed during a previous turn in place.

In a hex where there is a non-zero in-hex TEM, a WA counter now shows the status of any unit. If a unit is marked with a WA counter, it has WA over all wall/hedge/bocage hexsides of it's hex. If it is not so marked, it cannot claim WA in that hex unless it moves (see B9.32). The counter on any such unit can be dropped at any time, but can only be regained in its MPH (as per B9.32) or at the start of each new turn. Remember that only the voluntary loss as per B9.31 render you unable to claim Wall Advantage for the rest of the turn. Losing Wall Advantage by breaking or other involuntary means, does not incur this penalty. Only claiming in-hex TEM does.

Additionally, whenever two units start are ADJACENT while sharing a wall/hedge/bocage hexside and one unit is marked with a WA counter; the unit not marked with a WA counter can "steal" that WA counter when the previous owner loses it, provided it has not previously claimed any non-zero in-hex TEM. *{This last condition is my interpretation of things, and hasn't been treated in a discussion or by Q&A before to my knowledge.}*

Units not in a hex with non-zero in-hex TEM are always assumed to have Wall Advantage, even if not marked by a counter

unless there is an ADJACENT enemy unit marked with WA. As an opposing unit is about to become ADJACENT to a unit that has Wall Advantage, place a WA counter to signify this. A unit in such a hex never loses the ability to “steal” a WA counter, and all the methods to gain a WA counter described in B9.32 applies at all times.

The only use of Wall Advantage is to claim hexside TEM versus ADJACENT units; and in Bocage to see beyond ADJACENT hexes. Versus units that are *not* ADJACENT, hexside TEM can be claimed irrespective of Wall Advantage status (B9.3 & B9.31).

Believe it or not, this is all there’s to it. Place Wall Advantage at the beginning of the turn. After that, you will sometimes lose it after claiming in-hex TEM or break, and the enemy might steal it. That’s all there’s likely to happen. There are of course more special cases in the rules, like not being able to claim WA if you’re on a bridge or in an entrenchment and some other things. Still, this is the basics when it comes to Wall Advantage.

Bocage

Bocage is a less contested area nowadays, and I think most people agree on how to handle it. Still, I’ve been wrong before.

While behind Bocage, you must have Wall Advantage to see to a non-ADJACENT Locations when the LOS cross a Bocage hexside. Since you are assumed to have Wall Advantage unless something prevents it, there is generally only one case that needs to be considered: when you’re able to voluntarily drop Wall Advantage because you’re in a hex with a non-zero TEM. If you do, you will suddenly disappear out of sight.

This allows you to claim Wall Advantage at the beginning of a turn, only to drop it when things get too hot. You can claim Wall Advantage, fire in the PFPh, and then drop it again before the enemy can return your fire in the DFPh. This gives you a tremendous defensive advantage in hexes where there is both Bocage and another in-hex TEM. A good idea is to park an AFV in a Bocage hex to get that in-hex TEM. Once you have that TEM, you can generally not be attacked during your own turns unless the enemy can get around the Bocage.

In addition, you will always gain concealment at the end of your own turns unless the enemy have a LOS that does not cross a Bocage hexside.

However, during the enemy’s turn you are a little more vulnerable. If you want to be able to fire at the enemy during your DFPh, you must claim the Bocage TEM (and Wall Advantage) during the enemy’s PFPh. Since you gained concealment during your previous turn, you will still be concealed, but you have to let the enemy fire at you if you want to fire at him. Of course, if you drop Wall Advantage you could still fire if he got ADJACENT (and probably got Wall Advantage, too) - but that’s often not desirable.

In all cases, you will be unable to see across a Bocage hexside to non-ADJACENT Locations once you lose Wall Advantage by any means (enemy unit ADJACENT and claiming Wall Advantage, being broken, etc.).

As long as there isn’t a non-zero in-hex TEM, Bocage is pretty simple. LOS is only blocked when special things happen



(like breaking and enemy units closing in). Hexes with non-zero in-hex TEM are a little more troublesome, but once you accept the fact that you can fire at the enemy without them firing back they should pose no great problems.

Prohibited from claiming Wall Advantage?

As far as I can see, this is the only matter that is still contested that can make a practical difference when playing. It is, however, tied into the next issue. Still, as long as there is agreement here it doesn’t really matter.

The objection that has been raised in this matter pertains to the last sentence of B9.31. It says:

“If he chooses the in-hex TEM, the unit automatically loses all Wall Advantage Status it had until at least the next Player Turn.”

The crux of the matter is one small word; “had”. It can be argued that it means a unit only loses Wall Advantage in this manner if it had already claimed Wall Advantage during a turn.

Obviously, if the unit is always supposed to have WA unless it specifically drops it, this is no problem. From correspondence with the designers, I believe that this was the intention behind the Wall Advantage rules. The reason it isn’t spelled out clearly in the rules is that he thought “it didn’t matter”. Oh, how insignificant this turned out to be, indeed!

But even if we allow that Wall Advantage can only be claimed when enemy units are ADJACENT, there are questions. The rule has a pretty strange wording in my opinion if it really intends to say that you don’t lose Wall Advantage if you didn’t have it; what is really the meaning of “all Wall Advantage status” here?

If this includes the ability to claim Wall Advantage, you will lose that ability if you had it when you choose the in-hex TEM. Losing the ability to claim Wall Advantage would prevent you from getting Wall Advantage for the rest of the turn, and all would be fine. However, of course there are objections and interpretations that want to make us believe that the rule *only* talks about actual Wall Advantage.

In that case, that would also mean that while you lose the actual Wall advantage in accordance with this rule, you would *not* lose the ability to *claim* Wall Advantage since that ability wasn’t included in “all Wall Advantage status”. There you are. You may claim Wall Advantage, but you cannot actually *get* it. Or can you? This seems like a paradox to me.

Before going further, it might be a good idea to think of how this affects play. Assuming that we don’t lose Wall Advantage unless we have already claimed it, what would that mean?

It would mean two things. One, units in a building would be able to claim the building TEM during the enemy PFPh and still deny any hexside TEM during the MPh when the enemy moves ADJACENT. They can both have the cake and eat it. This is not an insurmountable problem.

Two, units behind Bocage doesn’t need to claim Wall Advantage during their opponent’s PFPh to fire at enemy units in the MPh/DFPh. This would make units in a building behind Bocage totally invulnerable to enemy fire, with the exception of OBA

and WP attacks.

Given all this, my conclusion has to be that the Q&A described previously captures the intent and the only reasonable interpretation of the rules. Perhaps I am biased because I admittedly think the total invulnerability of units in Bocage is just too much. Still, there's the matter of the MMP Q&A, the paradox described above, and the strange wording of the rule to compound this.

ADJACENT or not?

This issue has been the subject of the most heated debates, and is by contrast the most insignificant of the issues covered here. That is because the only difference in practise between the different interpretations presented is to support one argument in the previous issue. It is not even the only argument in that debate, and deciding this issue either way would not necessarily solve the previous issue.

For bookkeeping purposes, there is a difference. You will place WA counters a little more often if you allow Wall Advantage where there are no ADJACENT enemy units. You will perhaps have less trouble remembering who can (and who can't) claim Wall Advantage because of this. You will perhaps get into fewer discussions over B9.31 and whether it's too late to claim in-hex TEM or not. You will *not* be able to get any special benefits because you can claim Wall Advantage more often. You will only make it clear who has Wall Advantage in the event that your enemy moves ADJACENT.

Now, what is the core of this issue? It lies in two statements:

B9.32: "A "Wall Advan" counter can be placed only on that side of a wall/hedge which is occupied by a Good Order armed unit without an opposing armed unit on either side of that hexside claiming Wall Advantage over that hexside, and should be placed as soon as an opposing unit becomes adjacent to it across that hexside."

B9.521: "[EXC: ... In neither case is an adjacent enemy unit required to allow Wall Advantage.]"

These two sentences seem to imply pretty strongly to most people that Wall Advantage can only be claimed when there are ADJACENT enemy units (normally, the B9.521 exception describes the case for Bocage).

As long as we agree on how to interpret B9.31, I don't think it matters at all. But, of course the mentioning of adjacent enemy units in B9.521 *could* be for the sake of redundancy. It could be taken to mean that adjacent enemy units doesn't have to give up their Wall Advantage to allow you to claim

it. Also, The quoted sentence from B9.32 could be read in two ways. Either, you could take it as one single requirement stating that there must be an ADJACENT unit to place a WA counter. Then, you could equally simply read it as two different conditions separated by the comma, that says when Wall Advantage *can* be claimed and when it *must* (*should*) be claimed.

That's the problem. There are two ways to read those rules. Neither is an irrefutable proof either way. At least not in my opinion. So, what else is there? I'll try to enumerate the passages that imply that Wall Advantage can be claimed when units are not ADJACENT.

B9.32: "A concealed unit may gain Wall Advantage (if it qualifies otherwise), but if a Good Order enemy unit moves ADJACENT to it the concealed unit must prove that it is armed and in Good Order to retain that Wall Advantage; a hidden unit must first be placed onboard concealed before it can claim (or deny) Wall Advantage."

I don't see how this could say anything except that a concealed unit may claim Wall Advantage without ADJACENT enemy units. How else could enemy units move ADJACENT to it when it already has Wall Advantage? Of course, this passage *could* be talking about Bocage.

B9.3: "If a LOS crosses a wall/hedge hexside through a road depiction (such as 6Q9/Q10) the wall/hedge TEM/LOS obstacle applies only if the target is a non-moving unit that can claim Wall Advantage."

Does this *really* mean that you cannot claim the TEM of some wall/hedge hexsides *unless* there is an ADJACENT enemy unit? This sentence allows you to claim certain TEM only if you can claim Wall Advantage. Or is there another way to read it?

B9.321: "... and forfeits Wall Advantage once an enemy unit is otherwise able to claim it."

Again, the rule is phrased in a manner that makes you believe Wall Advantage is possible *before* enemy units move ADJACENT.

So, what does all of this mean? Well, that's up to you. In my mind, there is more than enough to support the MMP Q&A here. My choice is that I find claiming Wall Advantage at any time a much more convenient mechanism and prefer to use that.

I have said that several times now: claiming Wall Advantage at any time is simpler. Perhaps it is about time I explained *why* it is so. Let's start off with what we agree on, namely that there are two different states regarding Wall Advantage: you can either have it, or not.

Assuming you do not have Wall

Advantage, there are two possibilities: you are still eligible to claim Wall Advantage (possibly only if an enemy unit moves ADJACENT), or you are not. This is something of a problem, in my opinion. We have two very different states that are marked in the same way. If a unit is not marked with a Wall Advantage counter when an enemy unit moves ADJACENT, it might be hard to remember if that unit can still claim Wall Advantage or if it has previously chosen the in-hex TEM of it's hex. Even more so since you are forced to make this decision before being fired upon, or even if not fired upon at all.

Now, how different is it to be able to claim Wall Advantage (possibly only if an enemy moves ADJACENT) when compared to actually claiming it? Well, what rules are affected by Wall Advantage? They are:

B9.3 won't let you have the TEM of certain walls if you cannot claim Wall Advantage. Since I consider it obvious that a unit should be able to claim this TEM even when no enemy units are ADJACENT, I will assume for the purposes of argument that this can be explained, and that the TEM can be claimed in either state.

B9.32 won't let you claim the TEM versus adjacent units unless you have Wall Advantage. This doesn't apply to the former state.

B9.521: Bocage LOS can be affected, but in that case you already *can* claim Wall Advantage without consideration to enemy units. Moreover, if you can or do claim Wall Advantage matter little when determining LOS. The important thing is that you're not prohibited from claiming it.

In other words, there is no practical difference between being able to claim Wall Advantage and actually claiming it except that they're marked differently. In order to alleviate this problem, why not mark both of the above with a WA counter, and remove it only from those who cannot claim Wall Advantage at all? That seems to me to be the only useful distinction here. You *are* able to claim Wall Advantage from the beginning of each turn, so instead let each unit have Wall Advantage from then on. When they lose the ability to claim Wall Advantage, they also lose Wall Advantage and the counter can be removed. The gain is that you do not have to keep track of which units are still able to claim Wall Advantage. Instead, you know at once from the presence of the WA counter whether the unit is eligible or not.

0 - the magical number

The question of why you cannot claim a TEM of 0 as in-hex TEM in accordance

with B9.31 has not been heavily discussed. Still, it is worth a mentioning. It has been said a couple of times that it is strange that the addition of other features would affect a unit's ability to be protected by Bocage (by dropping out of LOS).

I, too, find this strange. B9.31 only mentions "other terrain in that hex" with no limitations on TEM of that terrain. However, B9.521 states:

"A unit at ground level behind a bocage hexside must be able to claim Wall Advantage to see (and be seen) through that hexside to (and from) any hex not formed by that hexside; moreover, if that unit's in-hex terrain could provide a different TEM (as per 9.31), it must actually claim Wall Advantage to see (and be seen) thusly."

The problem here is that B9.521 speaks of "different" TEM. Since there is no mention of what "different" TEM *is* in B9.31 we have a problem. Different from what? Different from the wall/hedge TEM (+2/+1)?

The answer given by MMP lends from the formulation of various rules like B12.3 that says brush has *no* TEM. This doesn't agree with the chapter B divider that lists "0" as the TEM for brush. For Open Ground, FFMO is listed as a TEM (despite not being a TEM). It seems to be the case that the writer didn't understand the difference between "no TEM" and "0 TEM" (or TEM and FFMO for that matter). In that light, the Q& answer is understandable. It is still strange that driving an AFV into an Open Ground hex will enable you to hide from enemy units, but I guess I can live with that.

"other" issues

"... that unit is treated as being out of all enemy ground LOS for determining both its ability to gain "?" and its possible loss of "?" due to RPh activities and MF expenditures, and is treated as being in Concealment Terrain for all other "?" loss/gain purposes."

This sentence has caused problems for many people. If a unit is treated as being out of LOS for all concealment gain purposes, what are the "other" concealment gain purposes this rule speaks about?

This can be solved by insisting that the word "gain" in "loss/gain" is redundant. That's the way I used to play. Then, you could argue that the "other" purposes are for determining whether the unit has to roll for concealment gain or if it is automatic.

MMP has ruled that the hex *does* count as Concealment Terrain for concealment gain purposes. That's fine with me.

EASING THE HEDGEROW HELL

A Vernacular Guide to Bocage

Bruce Probst

Bocage is weird terrain in many ways. Most of it is straight-forward (TEM, movement restrictions, etc.) but where many people become lost is in the interaction of Bocage and LOS. Closely tied in with this is the application of the WA rules to Bocage.

When a unit is in non-open Ground behind a Bocage hexside, it can theoretically Prep Fire at opposing units through the Bocage and then become immune to Defensive Fire by claiming the TEM of the non-Open Ground terrain in its hex and dropping out of enemy LOS. This seems patently unfair and against the spirit of several rules (reciprocal LOS, "no free lunch", etc.) to some, but others have noted that Bocage was tremendously good defensive terrain and the designers may indeed have intended the rule to play as it seems to read. Indeed, recent Q&A (*ASL Annual '97*) confirms this.

The important thing to note is when a unit can claim WA. The simplest way to interpret the rule is that you always have WA vs. an adjacent hedge/wall/bocage hexside unless there is something to prevent this. Note that you can claim WA even when there are no adjacent enemy units forcing you to make the claim. The usual reasons for not having WA are:

you're not Good Order;

you're claiming a different in-hex TEM instead;

or the adjacent enemy units claimed WA first.

With Bocage, if you don't have WA, you don't have LOS to a non-adjacent enemy unit through the Bocage. Hence, if you lose WA,

you can suddenly drop out of LOS. Note, however, that once WA is lost, it may not be easy to claim it again. Especially note that you can't exactly claim/drop WA "at will"; once you voluntarily drop it, it stays dropped for the rest of the player turn. You must also decide whether a unit will keep or drop WA before any attacks are declared against that unit.

Finally, note that Bocage makes it easy to keep and gain Concealment; a unit can move, rally, recover weapons, etc. behind Bocage and not lose concealment, and a unit behind Bocage can almost always gain Concealment automatically.

Hence, *ASL* combat involving Bocage should become a "cat and mouse" affair, with units on both sides revealing themselves and then concealing themselves with frightening speed, and units never being quite sure what lies in wait a couple of hexes away.

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The Scandinavian ASL Open

Shaun Carter

The prospect of playing six scenarios in 3 days and a very positive recommendation from my friend Derek Tocher meant that the Scandinavian ASL Open was too good an opportunity to miss. After a 5am start and an early morning flight from Heathrow Derek and myself made our way to the tournament at the Danish museum. Arriving early we were informed by organiser Michael Hastrup Leth that hostilities would not begin until 1pm. Thus we had time to find a pub lunch and get ourselves acquainted with Tuborg lager and reasonably priced meals.

Overall 38 players had gathered from the UK, Denmark, France, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, and Brian Martuzas had arrived from America.

ROUND 1

The opening draw was random and I found myself playing George Tournemiere at the WCW scenario 'Eye Of The Tiger'. Using ABS I selected the defending Soviets. The highlights of the game included the 280mm OBA breaking only one squad much to my relief. George put together a very strong attack down the left flank, although a Puma became immobilised after overrunning a ? stack. A Panzer IV eliminated a T34 with a Bounding First Fire shot while the other T34 lost a gun duel trying to shoot it out with a Tiger. The third T-34 died from a panzerfaust shot while trying to flank the Tiger.

Thus far the game was going south rather rapidly, but ASL is a funny old game and a berserk soviet HS forced an immobilisation result on the other Puma; the crew failed the resulting task check and subsequently died in CC leaving an abandoned vehicle. The Soviet 57LL ATG shocked the other Panzer IV with APCR but it survived! The gun crew then became parts of a large melee with an 8-0 and 4-5-8 against 16 points of SS firepower. The 3-1 German attack resulted in the Soviets dying. I had resolved to attack at 1-4 even though George pointed out how unlikely my chance of getting a favourable result was. Next die roll – snake-eyes!, causing German casualties and no certain amount of upset on the other side of the board.

Meanwhile the combined German armoured assault ground down my defenders but the German CVP became an issue when the immobilised Puma succumbed to a flank ATR shot. A belated Soviet counterattack on turn 6 temporarily captured the abandoned Puma but the remaining German forces were too strong. My attempts to use the DC and Close combat on the Tiger were brutally dealt with by superior German firepower. So the record became 0-1 but I felt that I had at least given George a decent game.

ROUND 2

Next round players were matched against those with like records, and I was drawn against Andreas Hinz, a very jovial German currently resident in Sweden. We picked 'Under a Sky of lead' with myself selecting the Free French. Andreas methodically advanced the German flak troops across mapboard 41 getting the control of the majority of building hexes required for the victory conditions. Due to fatigue I forgot that harassing artillery fire should be resolved on the 6 FP column not the 20 column which totally destroyed my forces in the open. But as A.2 applies I went 0-2. The following morning Andreas apologised for the error but I did enjoy the game nonetheless. Afterwards I joined Derek for a couple of beers to wind down at the John Bull pub and exchange tales of the day.

ROUND 3

Refreshed from a decent night sleep Saturday dawned. The third round I played Michael Sackau from Kiel, north Germany and we selected 'Blackjack is Back'.

With Michael as the defending German player, I went for a central thrust through the boards. The German player has a lot of terrain to defend, which meant that they were spread to cover a lot of ground, and I was hoping the special Pershing would be an effective antidote to the normally deadly Panthers.

My personal morale took a nosedive as Michael's first panzerfaust was a snake eyes resulting in a CH and a burning Sherman. I was able to gain ground due to the superior American firepower and the low ELR of their opposition. I decided to attempt to overwhelm the right flank Panther. This tactic got off to an inauspicious start as the hunted Panther destroyed the first M4A3 attempting to flank it with a defensive fire shot. The Pershing then moved into action the Panther using its BMG to face the threat. A BFF shot from the Pershing resulting in a 6 not only gained APCR but also it hit its target and killed it at the end of turn 2. My forces were in a strong position in the middle of the board. Michael's response was to move the surviving Panther into the fray outside of the TCA of the Pershing. Unfortunately for him my DFF shot was another 6 resulting in an APCR hit in the turret and another dead Panther. On game turn 3, with three turns to go and the German CVP loss being an issue with 24 CVP gained, Michael conceded a victory due to the time and forces available to me. Thus honour was satisfied with a win. It makes a pleasant change to play a scenario where a Panther is vulnerable so that player tactics, placement and luck come into play.

ROUND 4

For round 4 I was drawn against Derek Ward, an Australian now residing in Denmark. I persuaded him to play the Schwerpunkt scenario 'A Stroke of Luck' with me as the Soviet defender. As I set up the ATG in a woods hex I was informed by a casual observer of the illegality of the disposition. As this is recommended in the write up a clarification seems to be in order as all Soviet units must set up in buildings.

Derek manoeuvred his flak panzer in direct LOS of the repositioned ATG, which promptly dispatched it. The reward for their bravery was two Panthers lining up to exact retribution. In the following prep fire phase I decided for a deliberate immobilisation shot. A DR of 2 ensured the desired result, the subsequent shot declared as APCR with you guessed it another 2 this time a CH which forced the crew to abandon their dead tank. Derek took these events with good humour. I managed to manoeuvre my armour into the centre of the board hull down. The Panzer IV shocked the SU100 only to succumb to a CC reaction fire attack from two Soviet squads. However in my delight in inflicting serious vehicle casualties I had overlooked the fact that my right flank was very weak and Derek advanced to gain control of the 2 buildings on mapboard 21 required to win. So even though I destroyed the other Panther with the SU-100 I had insufficient forces and time to launch a counterattack to retake either one of them. A salutary lesson in not taking enough notice of the Victory conditions. Many thanks to Derek with whom I had a superb game which I thoroughly enjoyed. My record was now 1-3.

ROUND 5

The final round of the day found me drawn against Philippe Vaillant from Cambrai, France. Being somewhat tired by this point I was looking for the smallest scenario I could find. Fortunately Philippe was of the same opinion, so we selected 'Moire in Belleza'. This has a fascinating mix of units, with elite Italians including Assault engineers with flame-throwers supported by an 81-mm mortar. They face mixed quality Yugoslav troops with a low ELR who must defend half of mapboard 41. Their main firepower is provided by two 75mm field guns and a HMG. However

their ELR is 2 and half the squads are green 4-3-7, which aren't intended to inspire confidence. I picked the Yugoslavs with a defence design to slow the Italians as much as possible as the victory conditions require control of four level 2 hill hexes at game end.

Philippe got off to a cracking start with a kill stack complete with 10-2 leader marching triumphantly into the middle of the board brushing aside one of the single 4-3-7 green squad deployed as a skirmish line. To further enhance his chances the 81mm mortar broke a 75mm gun crew and put smoke in front of the other 75mm. I decided to try to hold my ground and an 8+2 shot from the MMG broke the 10-2 leader thus forcing the rest of their comrades to go the same way. In the course of defensive fire and the following prep fire I was able to break just about every Good Order Italian unit on the board. Therefore I was able to move enough forces in the path of the Italian advanced. Philippe conceded the game as he had insufficient time and fewer forces to shift the remaining Yugoslavs from the stone buildings. My record was 2-3 by this time and as it was nearly 11pm it was time for a beer.

ROUND 1

Sunday morning brought the final round. I was paired with Johan Salin a Swede. Unfortunately he had never played PTO or Desert, a considerable handicap given the fact that the theme of the round was PTO. Gately he took the Japanese in the 'Halha River Bridge'. The objective is the destruction of a bridge in Manchuria i.e. desert terrain. Fortunately for me Johan's lack of familiarity with Japanese was his undoing as he cautiously advanced over the very open terrain with 2 tanks and 2 kill stacks. I resolved to stay concealed for as long as possible and only to shoot whenever a good target such as a DC carrying unit presented itself. The 37mm ATG achieved nothing after having been broke by Japanese tank and mortar fire. The concealment c counters did their job in greatly reducing the effectiveness of the Japanese firepower. The tanks were used to create vehicle dust to give some cover to the advancing infantry in the open ground. The wire obstacles were useful in slowing down the Japanese. On the last turn I only had one Good Order squad in the game which was promptly taken out by VBM freeze. However only 1 squad was in a position to place a DC requiring a DR of 5 to get a destruction result. When a 9 was rolled I breathed a big sigh of relief. My final record was thus 3-3 which I was very happy about.

I felt the scenario selection was excellent, and my only observation is that big scenarios like 'Orlik And The Uhlans' should be played in the morning round rather than last round at night when players are more tired after having already played 2 rounds. As I understand it Georges Tournemire won the tournament as his opponent didn't get up until 11am on Sunday morning thus forfeiting the game!

As for the British players Derek Tocher ended with a 4-2 record and Toby Pilling gained 5-1 and an overall 4th place, so a good showing overall. I have no hesitation in recommending the Scandinavian Open as an excellent tournament to ASL players everywhere. Many thanks to Michael hastrup Leth for doing such a good job. Also thanks to Derek Tocher for persuading me to go in the first place I had a great time. I hope to be there next year

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A BUNCH OF FLANKERS

Flankers. Valuable Contributors or Waste of Units?

ASL really does a fine job of challenging the players with the decision to move or fire (or both!), and some of the best scenarios force a player to make that decision, or respond to the opponent's decision.

There is an old principle, very popular with Napoleon, called "fix and flank". The attacker needs more force than the defender to attack. But if I merely move to contact, stop, and start shooting, I don't need the force I needed to break through. If I am clever and my positions now hinder your attempts to fall back, my flanking force has an easier job. Once they are in a position to attack down your line, the attack can progress faster.

I think Patton said it best. Grab the enemy by the nose and kick him in the pants. I like to put just enough troops in the middle to hold the opponents stuff where it is and and hit a flank hard. This force will also try to "cut" the opponent by blocking movement laterally with MGs.

Flankers can sometimes incarnate the old uncle's Erwin motto: Move offensively and fight defensively.

Sometimes you've got to attack at one point, but battles are normally won by maneuver. Flankers give you options; even a scenario calling for a schwerpunkt-style attack should get some token force to screen it's sides.

BENEFITS

Flankers are good for encircling fire, inhibiting rout paths, isolating enemy positions, exposing lesser armour of AFVs, delaying the arrival of enemy reinforcements long enough to allow the rest of your troops to accomplish their mission, and other general trouble-making. They may also be useful for Exit VP, although facing an attacker with Exit VP requirements, the defender should never really have an exposed flank. As a rule, these benefits making attacking from multiple directions pose a potential serious threat to the defender (which may be all it needs sometimes).

In most situations flankers also complicate the defender's situation. It's a great dilemma to force on your opponent; "what is he trying to do with those flankers." "should I commit units to face them?" "And how many?" You have him thinking, which is good! This can make him oversee something else, force him to make an easy mistake, maybe overreact.

If a defender wants to guard an area, there's a minimum commitment: basically

one squad. In good terrain, a single squad has a good chance of holding off three squads just by surviving Prep Fire or taking FFMO/FFNAM shots. If the attacker splits into 2 squads here and 1 over there, then a single squad can't possibly defend in both areas.

Without flankers, your opponent's defense can often just form a wall to contain your schwerpunkt. Penetration is difficult, and you let the defender skulk without getting good dfire opportunities. Flankers stretch the defensive line and make defensive skulking more difficult. Even a lousy half squad has to be dealt with if it is trying to flank a defender.

Flanking troops work best when they spend minimal time getting in position before they're ready to fire on the same enemies as the main force, eliminate units for failure to rout which were broken by the main force, and eventually link up to share firepower and leadership.

If you send a flanking force out and the other guy doesn't know what those four 1/2" counters are because they are concealed, he may make a mistake and allocate too much or too little to that side. Either way, you're doing good.

What you ideally want to do is make the defense overreact to your probes and then nail him where he has lost its tactical advantage (both in terms of positions and man/firepower). You want to make him spread wide and tight up the middle, sooner or later some gap will open, then you run an ISO in it.

Flankers can also be used by a defender particularly to encircle enemy units or eliminate them for failure to rout. Nothing better than for a defender to attack an exposed flank to disrupt an attack-with a judicious use of flankers. On defense I prefer a central position with reserves with the flanks covered by delaying forces. The flanks either delay if at the point of attack or act as local flank counterattack force if not. A linear defense is not to be recommended unless strong reserves are available. Sometimes you just don't have a choice.

Never expect a breakthrough from flankers though. Their job is generally to draw the defenders away from your schwerpunkt.

DRAWBACKS

The pitfall is to allocate the proper force to one of these groups. Too much and your main effort doesn't have enough steam; not enough and you're throwing away units.

Too often flanking attempts use far too many troops and thereby whittle away their chances in the main effort. The result is often uncoordinated, piecemeal attacks that are easily stopped by the defender (who normally has internal lines to move in). So there can be some danger in flanking, especially if you don't coordinate effort.

In Orange at Walawbum, for example, the US needs to defend two hills. Generally one hill gets a token covering force and the other is beefed up. The IJA attacker faces a problem: how much force to attack either hill with? If he allocates too much to taking the weak hill, he's wasted some units. If he doesn't send enough over there, the US may wind up keeping the hill and winning the game. But weird things can happen and those 3 4-4-7s on the side with a 7-0 and LMG may get lucky...

You lose force concentration, as usually the two groups can't bring firepower to bear on the same point, hile also increasing the vulnerability of your divided forces, which are often less capable of withstanding damage or countering enemy attacks. You sometimes find both parts wishing they had something the other part has - whether it's the leaders, HMG, the PSK, or just plain inherent FP.

The defender doesn't really have to commit too much strength to ward off a flanking attack - one squad is sometimes enough to keep two or three attacking squads at bay. I tend to be optimistic in the face of that, though, and figure I'll be able to break that defending squad. Guess this is why I tend to put a little more oomph into my flankers - make the defender commit more than one measly squad to the flank.

Therefore, the smallest flanking forces are the most efficient. A single flanking squad can force the defender to react with a squad, but a three-squad flanking platoon may still only draw off a single squad from the main defense.

If the defender has HIP units available, your flankers may actually be walking straight in the area they occupy, and get annihilated.

COMPOSITION

You've got to be willing to lose the force, and it's loss cannot be disastrous one(gives the enemy an automatic victory etc).

As a rule, do not send more resources out then the enemy possesses on that flank. In other words, don't send 5 squads to out

on a flank that only has two enemy squads, all other things being equal. Of course there may be times when it is worth doing though, for example five squads might threaten to break through that flank, forcing the defender to reposition and turning them into the main threat and your main attack into a flanking attack! While the defender is moving to cover that flank, you can be firing at the defender's units.

Sun Tzu describes the whole line of thought as using ordinary (generally the "main" thrust) and the extraordinary (flankers) forces, noting that no attack will be truly successful unless both types are used properly, and that any time the ordinary can become the extraordinary and vice versa. Whatever things that you can do to keep the defender off balance and reacting to you always works to your advantage.

The hardest decision is whether to throw in a leader with the flankers. Even for the leader-heavy Germans and Americans, it's hard to justify committing a leader to just one or two squads, but without the ability to rally, they can become useless pretty quickly. Of course, with the Japanese and the Finns, this is less of a dilemma. However, the added MF can make the flankers a much stronger threat.

WHEN?

As with so many decisions in ASL, it depends on the situation. In some scenarios flankers can make all the difference in the world...in others they would be simply a waste of resources. So how do you know when it might be worth considering?

In general, it is in those scenarios where there is room to maneuver and the defender is required to cover a lot of ground with limited resources that flankers have the most to offer an attacker. In the single board, half-board, and Deluxe scenarios the enemy is usually already centered right in front of you and your focus of attack is already determined.

Now there are exceptions to every rule and there is nothing that prevents a scenario designer from setting up a situation using a half-board (for example) in which a flanking force may be important ("Tiger 222", for example, with the schwimmwagons).

On the whole though, the following criteria should be considered to decide if a flanking force may be worth the effort:

1) The scenario uses 3 or more full boards, or the terrain is such that you can end up with discrete flanks for a portion of the battle. This usually occurs when an enemy formation is split and all your units do not have LOS to ALL the enemy units at the same time.

2) The scenario requires the defender

to cover a front of more than 20 hexes or a point position within the playing area (e.g. BB11 Kangaroo Hop).

3) The scenario allows good position from which a flanking force can bring enfilading fire to bear on the defender.

Fire isn't needed in ASL. If that one HS COULD maneuver to restrict or cut a route path then it is a threat.

4) The scenario has multiple VC (depending on what kind of VC they are).

5) The scenario attacker has multiple entering OB's with different entry locations and/or turns.

6) Attacker has a two to one (or better) advantage in squads (equiv.).

Yeah maybe. An exception being the old half squad hassle flanker ploy.

Obviously the more of the criteria that a scenario matches the more likely it is a candidate for flankers...and vice versa.

These are by no means the only criteria, but no matter how many you come up with there will always be those situations where you cannot foresee where these criteria no longer apply or we never came up with criteria to match.

SOME EXAMPLES

In Front of the Storm. Here the French has plenty of force (12 squads, 3-4 leaders) to use a flanking force, and the best line of attack seems to be 6 squads and 2 leaders move up by the hill/orchard/farm house, 4 squads (with 2 MMGs) and a leader go up the middle, and 2 squads and a leader take harassment duties and take the (left side from the attacker's side of the board) orchard/little hill side. The exact size of each

A lot has been discussed about 'Flankers'. I also think many confuse a 'Flank Attack' with 'Flankers'.

I believe this is most important. With the whole board exposed it's pretty hard to mask your point of attack by unit distribution unless a lot of dummies are provided. Too much dilution of the main attack force allows your opponent time and time is usually your enemy. The best way to stop an attack is to counterattack an exposed flank(s) and pinch it off at the base-provided you are given enough time.

Your Main force must make the main thrust rapidly enough to allow your flankers to hold. Assuming you are not attacking into the teeth of his defense, your Main Force must be able to defeat his forces at the point of attack-quickly to prevent your opponent's main force from reaching the point of attack.

I have seen many an attacker fail because of splitting his forces. Do not split your forces so

force depends on how the German sets up, but the general split up can give the German's fits because they don't have enough force to cover everywhere all the time. They will be falling back towards the bridge, all the time weighing the value of fire vs slow withdrawal.

Hell or High Water: Marines landing along a broad front against Japanese strongpoints. My flanking platoons were able to approach the IJA pillboxes with relative ease while the main force occupied the defenders' attention.

Death Knell at Kalach: Russians penetrating German position just before German mobile units reinforce. In this one, the German has great flexibility in choosing flank approaches (approx. 50 hexes of frontage) with two reinforcing groups; his choice depends on the direction of the Russian advance.

Parry and Riposte: German mech unit attacking a British "box" - with British tanks reinforcing from the flank. The Germans enter on a 32-hex front against a fixed defensive position, then have to guard against reinforcements entering along a 40-hex front. An excellent showcase for the principles of maneuver and flanking.

The use of flankers is, of course, situation dependant, but everyone should add them to their tactical "bag of tricks". The decision to flank will be like any other choice in an ASL scenario. A balancing act between risk and value and then you still have to roll the dice.

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that you can call one of them 'flankers'.

If your main thrust is not strong enough for the job, flankers will probably not save you. Can you afford to weaken the main thrust? How much? What will you gain?

Watch how wide your flankers flank. Your flanking force should be able to join the main thrust or to directly effect the units being attacked by the main thrust. Otherwise you have a diversionary force, not a flanking force. Is a diversion what you want? It is probably better to force a defender wide by blocking his lines of communication, than it is to 'divert' him wide by threatening him with a 'flanking' force.

IMHO it is better to look for flanking opportunities with small parts of the main thrust than to make separate flanking forces. It may sound like mere semantics, but I have messed up more than once by thinking of a flanking force as independant. If it doesn't support the main thrust, if it doesn't lead to the victory conditions, do NOT do it!!!



BLITZKREIG FOR BEGINNERS

A Look At Basic AFV Tactics

Since their introduction in the First World War, tanks have been the dominant weapon on the battlefield. Their combination of firepower, armour and movement makes them extremely versatile as both offensive and defensive weapons. Although a number of theorists recognised this during the post-WW1 period, it wasn't until the Germans unleashed Blitzkrieg warfare upon the Poles in 1939 that the use of massed tank formations gained widespread acceptance in many armies around the world.

The role of the tank is probably best defined by a quote from a 1934 German panzer manual which declared that they were to be used for "rapid concentrations of considerable fighting power, obtaining quick decisions by breakthroughs, deep penetrations on wide fronts and the destruction of the enemy." In performing these tasks, the tank makes use of its combination of mobility, firepower and armour. It is this use of mobility to bring down devastating firepower against enemy units unable to penetrate its protective armour which makes the tank such a powerful weapon system.

The primary function of a tank is to kill the enemy, particularly enemy tanks as these are often the enemy units most capable of taking out a tank. This is done by direct fire attacks using their MA and MGs, and occasionally OVR.

Their protection allows them to occupy positions where Infantry can't survive or get to (e.g. open ground behind

enemy positions, or in the middle of an intersection).

From such a position they may be able to interdict enemy movement, thus isolating a portion of the enemy force. Once isolated, that portion can now be attacked by overwhelming force, which will force them either to defend in place, fall back through the area that the tank is covering, or receive reinforcements through this same area. Such movement is very useful in cutting off rout options and can lead to units being eliminated for failure to rout, and causing DM by driving by broken units.

Their physical presence alone can be enough to prevent enemy movement (because of required PAATC).

Tanks can also provide cover for other vehicles and for Infantry, using any SMOKE capability they possess (including, as Trev Edwards once commented, being Burning Wrecks!!), armoured assault, AFV TEM, CE DRM (of halftracks).

A tank's mobility allows it to react quickly to enemy weaknesses during an attack, and to reinforce your own weaknesses on the defence. Tanks provide a mobile force for reinforcing a defensive position on the attacker's axis of advance, or for reducing a strong-point in the enemy defense.

Other, more rare functions, for tanks include preventing enemy DFF by driving into the enemy unit's Location, breaching a fortified building, providing a trailbreak through an AP minefield.

The above items are not necessarily mutually exclusive. A tank may move

forward, provide cover with SMOKE, armoured assault and TEM, fire on defenders, DM the occasional unit, and all with an eye toward exiting the tank for VP.

PREPARING

The first thing to do in any scenario involving vehicles is to read the Chapter H notes for both your own vehicles and those of the enemy's so you know what special abilities or limitations each vehicle has.

Next compare the relationship between the TK# and the AF; a tank with an 8AF is unlikely to be worried too much against a 37LL AT Gun (TK# of 11) but is unlikely to survive if pitted against a 76L with a TK# of 17. Also note any special ammo available and the increased TK# this offers. In early-war scenarios don't forget that MGs can be very effective against lightly armoured AFVs. A look at the penetration bonuses on table C7.31 shows that you should always try to keep any AFV with any AF under 3 (i.e. including those with a circled 3) more than 6 hexes from a LATW or MG if possible. Also, study C7.7 carefully. To Kill DRs that equal or exceed by one the Final TK number have very different effects depending on what shot at the AFV; an MG can only Stun an AFV if it doesn't get a clean kill, and if it rolls 1 higher than the TK number, it has no effect at all.

Also consider the morale of the crew (especially if you've got an Armour Leader) as this can influence your decision on whether to go CE or not. Also remember that surviving Stun effectively reduces the morale by one, even if they exit the AFV, due to the +1 DRM being Stunned adds to all TC/MC.

Finally think about how the AFVs fit in with the victory conditions. Often AFVs can best contribute to the cause by staying out of the way of the enemy, or by firing Smoke, or by working all game long for the one shot that the AFV can do that nothing else in the OB can.

TANK VS. TANK

Beginners tend to immediately try put themselves into positions to maximize their own To Hit chances, that is, stopped and CE at medium range. That usually happens when they try their first few shots after moving and confront the huge modifiers that entails. But stopping to shoot often means that the defender will get two good shots at you before you get one back, and that usually means Big Trouble. Being CE also brings all the small arms in the enemy OB that can reach into play as anti-crew weapons, which can be just as deadly as armor-piercing capability. You have to learn when accepting the modifiers for being In Motion, or BU, or for standing off at longer range are the better part of valor in order to keep your AFVs in action.

Stop to shoot, without Gyrostabilisers you rarely hit otherwise. Being in Motion can help protect you when being attacked but can really hurt you when you are firing. Bounding First Fire allows an AFV to roll up to a target, stop, shoot, then start again and end the MPH in Motion - it's very effective but you don't get Acquisition (C6.55). Also remember that the Point Blank DRM (Case L) does not apply if either the Target or the Firer is Non-Stopped/Motion (C6.3).

If you have special Ammo (HEAT, APCR, etc.) use it whenever the DR needed to Hit is within 1 of the depletion number; if you roll higher than the depletion number, you get no special ammo but you haven't fired yet - in effect you're getting a free shot.

MANOEUVRE WARFARE

When using highly manoeuvrable tanks such as the Hellcat, the trick is knowing how to use the rules to simulate this. These rules include:

- Motion DRs
- Bounding First Fire
- Gun Duels
- Long Range Modifiers

Broadly speaking this means you should keep out of enemy LOS and > 12 hexes away as much as possible, especially during the enemy Player Turn. When an enemy tank does move close enough to shoot, attempt a Motion DR or fire a Smoke

Mortar to make yourself more difficult to hit. Also keep infantry nearby to make him think twice about going CE.

In attack, use your MPs to move around the enemy and attack him in the rear using Bounding First Fire. Since a BFF'ing tank can declare a Gun Duel, you may well get to shoot first even though you will have at least a +4 DRM for BF. Don't forget ROF applies to BFF, so you might get a few shots in. Ideally this should be done by two (or more) tanks working together, as this virtually guarantees that one will get a rear facing shot!

For example against a Tiger at 13 hexes, an M18 with it's "L" gun has a 9 TH vs a Vehicle, so it hits on a DR <= 5 (6 or 7 vs a Tiger or King Tiger) - and don't forget to try for Special Ammo first. The Tiger, on the other hand, if spinning say 2 hexspines and BU, will have: +2 for first hexspine (+1 for King Tiger) +1 for second hexspine (or a total of +4 of it spins VCA to protect itself from a rear hit) +1 for BU +2 for moving target +1 for small target = +7 (worst case +6, best case +8). This means he hits you on snakes!

The bottom line is use BFF extensively and don't allow the enemy tanks to close in. And if OT avoid Infantry FP attacks - an 8FP attack lead by a -1 or -2 Leader can easily Stun you.

Avoid ESB (D2.5) unless you absolutely have to.

Remember to turn your turret towards any potential Anti-Tank weapon if you have to roll past it to prevent side/rear hits.

Tanks can also be useful for transporting Riders and Passengers, preventing enemy movement by their physical presence (because of required PAATC) to enter the Location, and in providing a mobile force for reinforcing a defensive position on the attacker's axis of advance, or for reducing a strong-point in the enemy defence.

DEFENSIVE POSITIONING

Being HD behind a Wall can help to protect an AFV (but be careful moving across Walls in LOS of AT weapons - you might give the bad guys an underbelly shot). Crests can also give HD protection if the AFV attempts an HD manoeuvre (D4.22) - you can roll for it before the Scenario begins (D4.221)! - but only to fire from lower elevations! A Deliberate Immobilisation shot must be a Hull Hit, so any HD vehicle is immune.

BU CT AFVs can set up in single storey buildings, and all AFV can set up in Woods. The TEM makes them more difficult to hit and allows them to set up Concealed, but does mean the penalty for changing CA is doubled. Against a numerically superior enemy this can be fatal, as the doubling pretty much guarantees that you will lose any Gun Duel.

If your side qualifies for Bore Sighting (C6.4), you can BS the Tank's MAs. do it!

Reread the Motion Attempt rules (D2.401) before the scenario begins and keep it in mind at all times; you can attempt to discharge Smoke if an enemy unit pops up at an inconvenient time, and if that fails you can still attempt to go into Motion status.

GRUNT CRUNCHING

The most obvious tactic is move adjacent to an infantry strongpoint and start blasting away. This works well in scenarios where the infantry set up in fairly open terrain, but beware close in fighting where street fighting is likely, especially if there's a good leader in the hex. It can take the heat off your infantry long enough to crack the position wide open. Also be careful of moving too close to late war Germans and units equipped with LATW!

Note that Deliberate Immobilisation will be a concern but if you've moved that turn it's unlikely with small or normal-sized tanks, and if you snuggle up to infantry without DI capability, they won't stick around for a conversation.

Moving to positions where Infantry can't survive or get to (e.g. open ground behind enemy positions, or in the middle of an intersection) where they can interdict enemy movement. By doing so they can isolate a portion of the enemy force. Once isolated, that portion can now be attacked by overwhelming force, which will force them either to defend in place, fall back through the area that the tank is covering, or receive reinforcements through this same area.

Although tanks are often vulnerable without infantry support they are great infantry killers, especially at close ranges. Before 1943, and even after if the enemy does not have LATW, be aggressive with your tanks. The only caveats are (a) to beware of ATGs, and (b) enemy tanks. Once these are neutralized, it's time to romp!

Scouting, because a concealed unit must pass a PAATC to remain concealed.

Yes, you can use sturdy AFVs (like those lovely early-war French tubs) to expose HIP and Concealed units by entering their Locations. The Infantry has to pass one collective PAATC or lose concealment; if they fail the PAATC, they are PINNED and can't effectively attack the AFV. Again, beware the Street Fighting counterattack.

Cutting off rout, perhaps even causing elimination for failure to rout, and causing DM by driving by broken units.

Their mobility allows you to get the AFVs behind an enemy position to lay down Encircling Fire (A7.7) and Interdict brokies (AFVs can only interdict within the CA of a functioning weapon). You can also gang up 3 or 4 AFVs on an enemy AFV to get a more likely kill.

If a defender breaks in your PFPh, use the tanks to surround and cut off rout paths. You can kill broken squads simply by "surrounding" them with tanks. This is an excellent use for CE halftracks, too. They're so mobile that they can threaten stacks of broken guys pretty easily, and their 3 FP can keep units DM.

OVR Infantry/Guns in the open

Remember to apply the -1 FFMO DRM to an OVR if it takes place in OG, even if the target is Entrenched or in a Wreck/Shellhole hex (D7.15).

A Gun is subject to Random SW destruction if a fully tracked AFV survives the OVR and ends its MPH in that hex and the SW/Gun cannot be portaged or is abandoned and it is not in an entrenchment/pillbox. Otherwise, the AFV may check for SW destruction on any weapons (including Guns) possessed by units subject to a KIA result when OVR. The AFV has a -1 DRM at all Random SW Destruction rolls. See A9.74 for more details.

STREET FIGHTIN' TANKS

Tanks can be very vulnerable in a city environment such as *Red Barricades*. They have little chance of hitting anything in a fortified building, especially buttoned up. There is tons of debris which makes trying to cut off routs virtually impossible. Unless accompanied by infantry, they are vulnerable to street fighting.

The heavy stuff (105 and 150) work well against infantry using AREA TT. Also the 75's work fine if you park them 2 hexes away and have infantry nearby (at 1 hex it is too easy to have all your infantry break and then get CC'ed, but you can try it.) After

getting your -2 acq you will hit a fortified stone building on a 6 when BU.

Don't forget SMOKE, both offensively and defensively. Use it against killer stacks, big AFVs or against infantry that threaten the AFV. Some nations, such as the Russian, can't rely on Smoke too much, but most nationalities can and should use it constantly. Sd are also very important, as they give your accompanying infantry the cover they need to get from A to B.

They also provide cover for getting across a street. Need to send a few squads over to take a building but need to avoid open ground? Armoured assault is the ticket!

Once your armour has exhausted its s# of smoke, and you find the Russian dirtball holding out against your infantry attacks, send that baby forward and start creating a few breaches. A nice trick to do on comrade



Ivan is to place a smoke round on a "known" fortified location, if it succeeds, then use your other tank with the infantry not far behind to go and breach that fortified location.

In Red Barricades consider driving them into the factory entrances and firing across the factory floors. Wacks up a few modifiers on the TH roll, but acquisition gets you there. The HE IFT roll is a flat. Good news for the PziIII! Good vs. Russian MG nests, gets them moving along. Probably works well for most Russian tanks too.

The best part is that the tank is shielded by Stone Building TEM for any AT Fire, unless it also is coming back across the Factory floor. In this case, pop the sD and reverse out. If you are feeling brave, you can also drive inwards at 1/4 movement and a Bog Check (+1 DRM).

If set-up in the rear they provide a mobile reserve.

On the defensive, especially against late war Germans and their panzerfausts, consider driving straight into buildings (they'll probably bog, but that doesn't matter in a defensive battle). From there, it is a lot harder for them to be hit. If you do put your tanks in buildings though, try and put

infantry in the location with them. The presence of the AFV hurts their ambush roll, and, even more deadly, makes the CC sequential, with the non-AFV player going first!

Something you almost always find in the urban environment is hull down positions. Walls abound in many of the street fighting scenarios. Take advantage of them as the defender. You can often find a wall that even has a great escape route for when your AFV needs to attempt Motion and run away (I believe you have to declare Reverse Motion prior to your MPH.). You should be able to get a few good shoots in while behind the wall.

Look for obscure LOS where your AFV can set up out of the way yet still have a killer shot on the attacking infantry or AFVs. A good example of such is in PanzersMarch where one of the T34-85s can setup way back in the corner with the bridge boresighted for a flank shot on any AFV (the attacking Panthers can actually maneuver to attack this position but it takes precious time).

Sometimes you have to sacrifice a tank to make cover for your retreat, or to take the pressure off your moving squads. Be careful with this tactic and try to gain the most advantage from the gambit.

If you absolutely have to kill an attacking AFV, have your infantry draw the AFV's attack. If it shoots its MA without retaining ROF, then have your tank maneuver to the flank for a kill. This works especially well if your opponent (1) gets too aggressive and leaves his AFV bare-

a** necked to the wind, or (2) attempts like mad to get that concealed squad carrying the LATW and forgets that you indeed have AFV capable of smacking him!

Lastly, remember Street Fighting. This can be an excellent way to defend your tanks in the close in, urban fighting. I have on several occasions roasted tanks that attempted to flank my infantry position. Make the attacker come to you but try to retain your lines of communication.

Oh, and don't forget Deliberate Immobilization. It works well in the late war scenarios because all of the targets are behemoths.

One should also note that, although a MMC can make two PF shots during a firephase if he does not use his inherent FP, a leader stacked with him can modify just one of the To Hit attempts. Even if the squad firing the PF does not fire a second one, but merely uses its inherent FP, the leader cannot direct this shot, since PF directioning is the sole fire direction for that phase (C13.35).

In conclusion, urban tanks need to be protected but they also need to be

incorporated into your successfully coordinated, combined-arms defense. They aren't just there to be brewed up.

OTHER USES

If you have tanks you know will die (e.g. PzIIs, BTs, Shermans vs Tigers), try to keep them in position to provide cover with their burning hulks. Charge enemy positions and cover them with wrecks!

Note that SMOKE can be used both defensively AND offensively. When attacking fire SMOKE on really difficult positions or choke points to allow your infantry or other tanks to move up. If an ATG or enemy tank is really threatening you, shoot it with smoke. The +3 (+1 within hex modifier) makes it awfully difficult to shoot out of the hex. Remember that Smoke/WP must be the first thing you fire in any fire phase (EXC: BFF/DFF during movement). In general any AFV with s# or WP# should be kept far away from enemy AFV and AT weapons, and used to soften up enemy strong points, not for close-support/OVRs/Tank Hunting.

Also consider using Smoke dischargers and Vehicular Smoke Grenades (F.10). These can be very useful, particularly the Smoke Mortar which can place SMOKE up to three hexes away. These are also very useful for protecting Infantry and other AFV. Remember that if the AFV is BU, there's a +1 DRM on the sD/sM DR. Don't forget about the sN's smoke ability either. I've played twice with people who thought the sN was just for blowing up crazy Americans. They're not as good as a smoke mortar, but still much better than sD.

Preventing enemy DFF by driving into enemy unit's Location, in particular by using the infamous Vehicle Bypass Sleaze.

VBM is very useful in allowing an AFV to avoid a Bog Check in a Woods or Building hex. Don't be too intimidated by Bog though, as most of the time, you'll unbog in a turn or two, so it is only a problem if you have very few AFVs or very little time. Carry some Riders as well, then move the turret around and with an excellent morale, they should be able to pass a Bailing out MC.

Be careful using VBM Freeze as the enemy Infantry/Crew will be able to attack you using Street Fighting (and with an automatic ambush, D7.211); be sure the AFV is BU and still in motion (to gain the +2 CC DRM), and never do it if your AFV has no MGs.

You can also "Freeze" another AFV

by entering it's hex, but you can only do so with another AFV if it's MA could conceivably kill the Target on a DR of 5 (i.e. if it got a CH on the Rear AF - remember that MGs never get CH's!). Not sure that you can factor in a CH, but I suppose so since there is no prohibition against it. Remember that you cannot count on using any non-depletable ammo, though. AND, the 5 TK is at the time and position of entry. You can't count the rear AF if you're facing the front.

A TACTICAL DILEMMA

Here's a question. A leader tank moved up to a firing position, and fired to acquire in the AFPh. The Puma I was acquiring malfed his MA firing prep at me, I missed firing back. So, I have a -2 acquire on him. In my phase, he failed to repair, I prepped, and again did one of my "hit, but roll a 10 on TK" things. He again fails to



repair.

His movement phase - he sends a flanker in at me, which would be firing at my side, but was two clicks out of TCA for me to shoot. With his mods, he needed a "5" to hit (+2 for case B, +2 for bounding fire (case C something), and +1 because I'm a small target, total Firer based DRM is +4). He had not rolled for APCR yet, so he had a chance to reroll if the 1st roll was over 4. Another factor, he has a ROF # of 2.

The dilemma - should you turn and shoot at him (with +1 buttoned up, -2 Armor leader, +2 moving target, +1 for moving less than 3 MF in my LOS, and then +3 for out of TCA - total Firer based DRM is +2)? He was 5 hexes away, and behind a hedge, I guess that's another +1 DRM.

I'd win the Gun duel (assuming he'd declare one, which there was no reason not to), but would still have a +6 TH DRM. I've already blown my APCR, and I don't have rate, plus I'd be giving up the acquire on the other tank. It could be argued that the other tank wasn't a threat at the moment with the malfed MA, but if I miss the turnaround shot, with it's low odds, then I'm screwed both

ways.

So, you armor experts, should I take the shot? Or should I "take" it, and hope he misses, or my armor saves me? Or is the real answer that this is my punishment for not having another tank cover that area, and I should again "take" it like a man?

What would you do?

This is the kind of decision you hate to have to make, which means the ATTACKER has done something right. This is a good example of why if one of your tanks is acquired, it should be the last one you move. You can often force a situation like this, in which the DEFENDER is forced to choose between taking giving up his guaranteed hit later for a much worse shot now or else risking a low but scary TH roll by the moving tank.

For TH numbers around 5, I tend to let the guy shoot. If you rotate to fire at the moving vehicle, the most likely outcome is that everyone will miss, and you'll have given up that near-automatic hit for nothing. In this case, though, with the other tank having a Malfunctioned MA, I'd be sorely tempted to rotate and shoot. You'll probably miss, but then you get an Intensive Fire shot that will not only have no DRM for rotating, but will get Acquisition too. If the original shot had +3 for case A, then the IF shot is better by -2, needing a 6 or 7. The moving vehicle doesn't get this advantage, since it wasn't paying CA DRM anyway and doesn't gain Acquisition.

If you really can't stand the thought of risking the Bounding First Fire shot from the moving tank, there's always the Motion attempt and sD. You may be reluctant to use this, since you seem to be giving away your original advantage, but I find it can work almost as well as hoping he misses and then Prep Firing, so long as you have other vehicles in reserve. If you go into Motion, he'll probably stop and acquire you in the AFPh. If you have other vehicles in range, you can bring them in out of his CA and turn the tables! Now _he'll_ be the one deciding whether to give up his acquisition and take a low-odds shot or risk your Bounding Fire. And of course, if he does fire at your reinforcement, he'll have a very hard time trying to rotate back to IF at the original vehicle, which will already be a Moving target and heading for its own attractive Bounding Fire shot.

I'd tend to not take the shot because I figure Bounding First Fire shots from 5 hexes away aren't going to hit; a 5 to hit is only a 28% chance of success. Also remember that even after hitting, the To Kill # will be

something like a 7 or 8, which further cuts down his chance of killing you.

So to me, he's not enough of a threat at the moment. I'd hold off firing until he became a bigger threat, like if he came up within 2 hexes and stopped in order to get the -1 or -2 Case L Point Blank DRM. THEN his threat becomes bigger since the To Hit # approaches the all-important peak of the bell curve, and you'd think more seriously about trying to win the gun duel, or at least rotating your tank to present a better armor factor to him.

Don't worry about the tank with the malf'd MA that you had acquisition on. The bigger threat is the guy with the working MA. Furthermore, that -2 acquisition isn't really doing a lot for you if you and your target are just sitting there - your To Hit # at 0-6 hexes is 10, and when it's that high, the extra -2 DRM isn't helping your To Hit probability all that much, percentage wise. If you rotated 2 clicks to engage the flanking tank and kill it, you can still rotate back 2 clicks to engage the one with the malf'd MA and still have a To Hit # of around 7, which is good enough for me.

The lesson is that when the To Hit Numbers are already pretty high (above 8), then it's not worth worrying about those extra To Hit modifiers - your odds of a hit are high enough. When the To Hit Numbers are real low (less than 5), then your odds of a hit are low enough that an extra -1 DRM in your favor isn't gonna help a whole bunch. (OK, maybe "less than 4" instead of "less than 5" - whatever). ** It's when you're hanging around the peak of the bell curve (To Hit #'s of 6-8) that you really want to work for every DRM in your favor, cuz every DRM counts for so much, probability-wise. **

The same thing kind of goes for firing on the IFT as well.

At some point I tend to not worry about what can happen if he rolls this well. If I can get his To Hit Number down to 5 or less, especially at close range, I figure I've done my job. If he's gonna roll 4's and 5's, there's not much you can do about it. That's just me, though. Better armor players tend to not even give you To Hit numbers that high, which is why they regularly beat up on me.

The way to counter the Bounding Fire threat to your tanks' flanks is to have your tanks cover each other. Have one guy up front doing whatever Nasty Thing he can do, and keep another guy back to engage enemy tanks who try to outflank your front guy. It makes it much harder to outflank somebody when he's covered from another angle.

Ω

Combating the Vehicle Bypass Movement 'Sleaze'

One common vehicle tactic is moving a tank on enemy units to prevent them from shooting outside their hex. Although some consider this a sleaze tactic, it is a universally employed, time tested and extremely effective game tactic, especially in the desert setting. So how do you defend against this tactic?

VBM freeze is, IMO, a special tactic for special use, not one to use automatically. If the DEFENDER just minds that it exists and prepares accordingly, it's half a threat. For the ATTACKER, the mere threat of being able using it is often better than really doing it.

First, if your opponent is using OT vehicles, even if it is BU you can TPBF against it (with +2 CE DRM). This may leave the enemy vehicle stunned, and at your mercy for CC. Second, even if you can't fire TPBF, you can Reaction Fire (both DFF & SFF) when the vehicle enters your Infantry's Location. This is in addition to regular CC, so you have three tries to eliminate the offending vehicle. If you think it is a possibility, wait for the vehicle to stop before attacking. Third, if the vehicle is in Bypass, in addition to the above you qualify for automatic ambush DRM benefits.

As a quick example, if your squad attacks a vehicle that never stops but is in bypass (a common situation for VBM sleaze), the attacks are DFF at a 4 DR to Immob, sff at a 3 DR to Immob, and regular CC at a 4 DR to Immob. This gives you about a 36% chance to Immob or better the offending vehicle if he does nothing dangerous like stopping. If you have a leader or if he is CE or OT, you are even better off.

Try not having your defense totally dependant on only one or two key positions that can be frozen by VBM sleaze. If you know there is a good chance your opposition will use VBM sleaze then don't put both your HMG and MMG in the same location/hex. Spread out a little, establish mutually supporting positions, crossing fields of fire with MG's. In other words, if you put all your eggs in one basket then expect them to get broken.

VBM sleaze is a very dangerous game. Used judiciously it can cause a defender to collapse but it can also be costly. The AFV can distract a squad about one turn, but there had better be supporting Infantry following along to blow away the defenders or the AFV can find itself in a heap of trouble. If you have interlocked field of fire, your other defenders should be able to keep the supporting Infantry out of the fray, and rather than losing a squad, you will kill an AFV.

Japanese tanks are good for it - they are non-OT, won't be missed, and your real units

might get a full turn of foot advance. As noted above there will be up to three chances to put away the offending tank: DFF, SFF, CC. If you are sure your infantry will follow up and dispatch the frozen hex in the AFPh/close in into CC, the tactic isn't that bad. The IJA usually can do it. If you send a tank first, and the DEFENDER uses DFF, SFF and you're able to follow with a Banzai, things will look bleak, because a well thought Banzai will probably cause some obligatory PPF. Thus, depending on his unit's ML, the DEFENDER will often not use DFF, SFF to be prepared for the following. Well, but now he is really frozen, and you can do what you like (regarding the frozen units).

1. Be in a woods or building hex; if the AFV attempts by-pass freeze, the Defending Inf qualifies for Street Fighting (automatic Ambush in CC). If the AFV enters the obstacle, it may not get out again.

2. The dread PF. Anyone trying AFV freeze against Germans after 1943 should expect to see a flaming wreck in that hex. Likewise, always check the scenario date for applicable ATMM/PF availability.

Which is sometimes a PITA for the Germans. Who, making a PF TK DR has never had his fingers crossed _NOT_ to flame that vehicle, as the ensuing smoke will

make a good prepared position useless, cut LOS etc.. So sometimes if you have a spare crap tank and lots of FP to haunt the target hex later in the MPh, you try to freeze, and if the tank gets ablaze you need not make the follow-up attack, but use your units elsewhere.

3. Keep HIP or Concealed MMC near your Guns. If a tank is able to get on top of the Gun, move in for a CC kill.

4. Forts. Likely OVR and AFV-Freeze locations should always include any available deterrents, such as AT-Ditches and AT-mines, Wire, Foxholes and such (AFV Freeze never works on a PillBox - they're a separate Location in the hex).

5. (Sneaky and often fruitless) Hide a Gun in such a way as to get a rear/side shot on any AFV that might park it's fat ass on your favorite stack.

6. Lastly, the DC "duck and cover" ploy (DC-toting unit in Foxhole; tank OVRs foxhole; unit tosses DC in it's own hex; everyone dies) has it's charms. Although only the Japanese can throw DC in their own Location, other units can Throw the thing at the AFV when its in an adjacent hex before the OVR or just after the OVR.

Ω



TO BU OR NOT TO BU

Does anyone ever fight CE with ASL AFV's? The +1 to-hit DRM and disqualification for road movement rate required by being BU seem a small price to pay for invulnerability to snipers and small arms fire. Aside from the macho value of driving a tank with your elbow out the window, under what circumstances is it wise to make an AFV CE?

Usually you go CE when

1. your opponent
 - has low inherent FP (no problem to be CE vs. italians or partisans)
 - is quite distant but can do stunts to close in and then threatens to kill you with some special toy (TH-hero, ATMM, PF, DC etc.) in the APh. Here you will appreciate the better hitting chance while he tries to close in.
 - has tanks which can kill you from front using AP ammo. (Does not matter if you are CE, the first to hit has the better chance to survive).
 - is far away and you have some height advantage or otherwise good long range sight.
2. you
 - have good morale (tiger crew, leader, morale 8 crew)
 - have a good tank-leader (otherwise a good tank leader increases the TH chance that much, that it may be superfluous to risk that guy).
 - plan to use some road-movement (B3.41).
 - have decent cover due to SMOKE or other hindrances.
 - know there will be plenty IF going. This point sounds silly, but there are scenarios where shooting as much as possible is essential. IF is always OK if you know your turret will be ripped off anyway. Here the +1 BU especially hurts.
 - plan to do a HD maneuver (D4.22)
 - face 2 IFT +3 DRM fire while scooting in a FL of a B11 MG to make it breakdown. (A9.223) Uh,Oh, not that again! :-)
 - want to use your AAMG for whatever reason (D1.83)
 - are in an OT hvehicle and want to use any weapon other than a bow-mounted MG/FT (D5.3).
 - want to fire a SMOKE dispenser, and avoiding the +1 Usage DRM is worth the risk being fired on. (D13.3)
 - want to use your AFV as an INTERDICTOR (A10.532)
 - are fearless in all situations since you are a lucky dog. :-)

Usually you do not go CE when

1. your opponent
 - is US infantry (lots of FP even without SWs)
 - is weak AFV (usually impotent vs. your front, but has decent chance to make you suffer with HE (A.14A). Just take your time, if there are not too many enemy AFVs it's no use to hurry, enjoy the action!)
 - enemy is very close -PBF-TPBF- you can use your sN only when BU in CC (D13.34).
 - enemy is quite impotent vs. your tanks due

to lack of AT weapons, and infantry toys vs. tanks (LATW etc.)

- call me chinese, it's no use to give them chances.
 - is Cpt. Wetzelberger with high ROF weapon
 - shudder!
 - has very good sniper. (Actually it hurts to lose a tank due to a sniper, but the gains from being CE often outclass the risks from being shot by a sniper. Just estimate the chance the sniper will get you, and eat the inevitable when it happens. This point is very dependent on the counter density of the scenario).
 - 2. You
 - have morale 7 crew (D5.1) and enemy has a 6 FP shot or better.
 - know you will be involved in a gun duel and needing to avoid that +1 DRM (C2.2401).
 - plan to OVR a unit bigger than a HS.
 - Some OBA is due to arrive soon or some existing one has to be traversed (C1.51, C1.55 for collateral attack).
 - Enemy has high ROF HE weapons (big MTR etc.)
 - want to enter buildings (B23.41).
 - are in an AFV with restricted slow traverse (D1.321), one-man turret (D1.322)
 - plan to make a VBM-freeze (A7.211, A7.212)
 - have inexperienced crews (D3.45)
- There are some more occurrences where being BU is bad (ambush, CC without having an sN), etc. but they are sometimes impossible to be planned actively or being CE is simply not worth the risks.

Often it depends on how close the fight is and the enemy forces. If you are looking for a rule of thumb of when to be CE look for a low numbers of enemy infantry with little or no minus leadership DRM, low enemy SAN, and wide open terrain. As the amount of enemy infantry increases, the enemy SAN gets higher, and the terrain becomes closer, so the risks from being CE increase. And this is when it is a judgement call. Is it worth the risk to increase you movement? How important is removing the +1 TH?

I always look at SAN first to determine my CE strategy. The other things to look out are flamethrowers and molotovs, both of which are more effective against CE vehicles. Note also that CE vehicles are more vulnerable to CC. Other questions to ask yourself: Do your AFV's contribute directly to your chance of winning via CVP? Or are they just a glorified SW? Particularly in the latter case, CE status has shown some perverse usefulness in the capacity of drawing fire. I don't consider a stunned (not STUNNED) crew a big problem, and like their chances against moderate to heavy fire attacks (6,8,12,16,20). This is due to the twin combination of (typically) 8 morale and +2 TEM...moving infantry typically has less protection than that...sometimes much less. More often than not, my AFV seem to weather fire pretty well, making it less hot for the

infantry as they try to move around. And then you have the more obvious benefits of TH modifiers, and the usual addition of an AAMG to the MG "pool". This latter can help you apply the greasy "AFV bypass" fire restriction on a building's 1st level defenders. Its not for every scenario, but CE AFV's can make life a bit easier by drawing fire away from your precious infantry. Wouldn't mind hearing from others on the above! Steve

All too often a CE tank becomes the primary target of the enemy SAN, and almost every small arm in LOS too it sometimes seems. A high SAN is a major reason to stay BU, because no matter how well you keep your AFVs out of harm's way, the Sniper can always target you; they can sometimes be the most effective anti-tank weapon in the game! On top of this, reciprocal LOS means that to use the AFV, you have to expose the AFV, and a tanker's torso tends to be a lead magnet from every MMC in sight...

Then there are the consequences. A K result on the IFT effectively eliminates an AFV (and a tanker doesn't get the Wound Severity 'saving throw' that a SMC does!), as does a 1 Sniper attack (although admittedly the effects of a 2 are reduced by not having to take a Wound dr). But compare the CVP value of an average tank with the 1 CVP for a half-squad (or even a leader). Same result, vastly different payoff, not to mention the fact that AFVs are generally more valuable in game terms too!

In the final analysis one thing is clear; when BU in a fully armoured closed top AFV you are immune to snipers and IFT shots. So, unless there is some very clear and measurable benefit to being CE, don't do it.

Probably the main reason tanks go CE is to avoid the +1 TH penalty for being BU. The +1 is important because TH numbers tend to be in the 5-7 range. The difference between a TH of 4 and a TH of 5 is 11% chance of success, between 5 and 6 it's 14%, and from '6' to '7' to hit is a 16.7% improvement. If your target is likely to kill you if he hits you first, then the +1 is potentially fatal. It can also can make the difference in who wins a Gun Duel.

Don't hesitate to go CE if you are after an enemy tank using bounding fire. The extra +1 DRM TH can make the difference here. This is a good rule of thumb I only recently worked out. If you're planning on rushing some enemy armor, always end the previous turn BU. The reason is that you want to be CE when you take your Bounding First Fire shot. If you start CE, though, you have to risk all those IFT attacks as you maneuver into position. Also, you can't go BU after taking a Bounding First Fire shot, so you're stuck for the whole MPH. If you end the previous turn BU, you can run around and around, in front of MG and whatever, then at the last possible moment, go-CE-and-fire. He can't take any shot at your CE crew until after your own Bounding Fire shot.

The rule from the other side, then, is that if you think your opponent may be swarming you,

you should end your own turn CE. Typically, you'll be the defender, so you won't be in the thick of enemy Infantry, and the MG shots from enemy AFV will be halved in the MPH/AFPh.

Be careful about when you go CE during the MPH though as you will be stuck until the APh. If you plan on using VBM to freeze enemy troops button up or you'll be helping your opponent's chances on the CC.

Also use CE to better your chances at using SM/SD (also allows SP use and don't forget vehicular smoke grenades). However to fire sN you must be BU.

Another benefit of CE is the ability to use the AAMG, often a column boost on the IFT w/ the other Vehicle MG's. The Americans, and the Soviet Lend-lease tanks are blessed with the ability to make an honest attack w/ the AAMG alone. Not to mention, you can fire the AAMG outside the TCA without the case A mod., unlike the co-ax. If your relatively comfortable with the infantry opposition outside, it's not so bad to be CE'd, and if your a tank you tend to forget about those things anyway (several tons of armor plate do funny things to a person mentality :). As a grunt your best protection from a tank is not being seen, and as a tank your best protection from infantry is seeing them and killing them with your overwhelming firepower, and being CE'd helps there.

To prevent getting blown up in CC, going CE is an occasional necessity - the trade-off between "no functioning MG" and "CE" was an even break, and I got to shoot back if I lived. I also cut down retreating stacks on a few occasions with a well placed MG burst.

One thing to be remember about CE status - if you're facing an otherwise invulnerable behemoth, say a Sherman against a PantherG's frontal armor who is CE, fire at him using Vehicle Target Type, but using HE. 12(+2) on the Collateral Attack ain't nothing to sneeze at, and it's the only chance you have of doing more than scratch the paint. Well, I guess there's Deliberate Immobilization, but I think I'll take my chances with the 12(+2) in all but a couple cases. FWIW,

Another circumstance when you might need to be CE is when you need to make maximum use of your MP. In Patton's Prayers the Americans cannot afford to miss by one playing it safe. On PF hit and you are history anyway. With only 5 turns, you must be aggressive and that means CE. Riding Shotgun is another armored recon scenario that has tough VCs for the Americans without enough time to sit back, gain acquisition, and finally force the stack to move where you can't see them anyway.

One last thing, don't be like me and sometimes forget that an open topped AFV must be CE to use any weapon other than a bow mounted MG/FT (D5.3). This makes things like British Achilles TDs a real pain to attack with.

VICTORY THRU SUPERIOR FIREPOWER

US Tactics In ASL

Many ASLers reckon that the Americans are hopeless. One of the reasons for this may be that they don't know the right way to use the Americans. Hopefully, I'll be able to teach you here.

We all know that American morale is terrible. Sure a broken 1st line rallies on an 8, but if it is not broke it won't need fixing. A large group of 6-6-6 units w/ELR of 3 or 4 can quickly turn into a group of poor quality troops.

OK, we know what's wrong with Americans, so what's right? Well, they have high FP for 1st Line Troops and they tend to have pretty good support, either in AFV's, OBA, FB's, or SW (.50 cal!!). On top of that, they have decent range and a very good smoke exponent.

So, comparing the weakness with the strength, we see that stacking and/or narrow front attacks are generally unwise. In other words, since you know you're likely to break under fire, Fire Groups & wide fronts may be more productive for you. By wide-front, I don't mean units should spread out to the point where they cannot support one another - on the contrary. Against a wider attack and multiple Fire Groups, a defender can only do so much (VC notwithstanding).

In addition, I'd say that massing your forces in TIME as well as space is quite important with US Army troops on the attack

- try not to expose them to fire in a piecemeal fashion - bring them on line (behind smoke!) more or less all at once and then overwhelm the defenders with high FP. The longer you're exposed to fire, the more that low ELR will hurt (also, by massing in this way you may cause your opponent to back off rather than fight). While defending, it's like those real estate guys say, "Location, Location, Location." Find strong terrain with good rout paths/rally points and plan on massing FP as the attacker comes into view (one group to strip enemy concealment, another to break 'em, etc.).

FIREPOWER

6 FP at a range of 6 hexes, 3 FP at a range of 12 hexes.

RANGE

See above, plus assault fire. Assault Fire works only within normal range which is 6! hexes. I.e. 4 FP at a range up to 6 hexes after having moved, that is the same the Germans can come up with instead of moving!

SMOKE

Usually a 50% chance to get out some smoke from every squad!



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WHITE PHOSPHORUS

A 33% chance to get coverage plus MCs! This is, IMO an underestimated aspect of the US. Normally you try for WP only under severe conditions with other nations.

LEADERS

There are usually enough around to lead the attack and have a couple to rally the broken stragglers. Broken ML definitely helps.

BROKEN MORALE

Broken morale not only helps for rally, it greatly improves survival rate. Usually you fire against broken ones to get rid of troopers, even though there might be unbrokens around (be it for VPs or because some brokens are piled up in a hex). Usually unbroken US troopers are target #1 since they are so easy to break. That leads to unbelievable break/rally/break/rally chains.

FIREPOWER

May I say CC? HtH CC? Those guys usually have 3:2 from the outset, their counterparts 1:2. Makes them extremely tough in CC if they are not ambushed. The only nation to dare to go into CC with Japanese in hope to eliminate them outright (melee vs. IJA is a not so good idea, as this often backfires).

WEAPONRY

Those guys usually have lots of toys to play. One of the best SW-MTRs. 60 mm ROF 3. Very nasty if you are in airburst terrain. The only SW-MTR to have a decent chance if the opponent is in buildings. The best vs. armoured targets because it uses the 4 FP column. Portable MMG, good HMG, super cal.50. Baz.

If there are two or more of this weapons it can get pretty nasty. They really can deny you some woods, and they can be used vs. AFV quite well. With their high ROF they won't be an immediate threat, but if you park in their LOS and they keep pounding at you.... Definitely bad for OT or low armoured vehicles, but I have lost *real* tanks to it. Baaad! And I have immobilised/shocked more than one Panther with it. Cooool!

NUMBERS

US troopers often act in hordes. not as big as Russian ones, but count their FP.

COMBINED ARMS

US troopers usually have nice hts for transporting, fast tanks, good turret traverse,

(note those tanks with ROF on white background, they have an improved chance to do damage)

FIREPOWER

Artillery. Lots of black chits. BIG artillery, with HE, WP, SMOKE. Good radio. If it zeroes in - gulp!

MOBILITY

See combined arms above. Sometimes they have to walk, but often they taxi into action. That makes broad front sections a nightmare, as they come in and quickly shift. PF is nasty, but HT, moving and small targets are not easy to hit.

FIREPOWER

They have nice toys like the meatchopper, and similar hts. US should not stack (very bad idea), but form carpets that blast you into submission. PBF and TPBF makes them nearly immune to be OVR with hts, or any CE vehicle. It makes CE a general bad idea, which greatly helps their own tanks. Hammer into your mind that stacking is the rare exception, not the rule.

Try to be combinative with all of the things above. I.e. a squad that AMs forward, drops a WP onto an enemy infected location, another going forward afterwards for a decent AFPh shot, plus some loaded hts or riders on tanks that pass by if the enemy has made a FF attack can definitely stretch his ability. Stay at greater ranges if possible, no need to get to near. Having a 6FP shot while your opponent has only 2 (vs. IJA) is way better than having a 12 vs. a 8 at PB range.

The number one rule: DON'T do stunts, this works only in Hollywood films, not on the ASL board. Your guys will break like matches if opposed by more than a few Volkssturm troopers. This are not IJA guys (which will, to some percentage do almost any stunt your brain can come up with, problem is if there is enough left for the rest of the scenario). Thus US troops have great coherency & endurance, i.e. the actual kill ratio is usually low, while their permanent broken/unbroken ratio is usually high.

Another thing for the Americans is something unique. I mentioned all the FP they have. They are the only nation that drive you out of your positions by just going into position themselves. The mere threat of what will hit you in their next Fire Phase is usually enough. That's why I like those 666 fighting against 468/568s. FP vs. morale two complete different troops to handle.

Some scenarios that are quite fine to learn

To learn about the US infantry, GOYA is a nice scenario. Here you have even 747s, and lots of murderous big MTRs to backup. As long as the US is approaching the village they are on the receiving end. An endless series of breaks, K#, KIA. The outcome is decided by how many troops the US can bring into the village. As soon as the bulk of the force is there, the whole thing changes completely. By using the buildings as an offspring for the next objective, the Germans are now the ones that get badly kicked. This is a very nice scenario to learn tactics. It's an old General scenario, I think #18 or so. The US has to cross huge amounts of OG, possible only because the German force is 2ndline/conscript.

Another very good scenario is "Thunderbolts" from TOT3. Here one can study combined arms, mobility, AT warfare in urban/village terrain. High morale German defenders with superior tank FP, but low numbers, vs. a highly mobile US force with some neat toys (meatchopper), lots of hts, smoke.

In "The Whirlwind" the US is on the defence. This one is exceptional good to learn. You will probably call it a dog if you are a newbie and get rolled over by your expert opponent leading the Germans. But it is actually a nicely balanced scenario, as the Germans have to do a lot within the timespan he has. PATIENCE is what the US needs here. This is [I think] General scenario S.

"Last Act in Lorraine" (deluxe version) Annual scenario D2. There is also a non-deluxe version from the General which I did not like much. Probable hard for the US, but interesting. You will learn a lot about smoke. There is also a Mark Nixon analysis on this available in some TAHGC 'zine.

"Among the Ruins" - Yanks, scenario 22 or 21. Very nice scenario with lots of US guys storming a city with lots of [unopposed] tanks. But the defenders are no whimpies. Well led, armed to the teeth ML8 guys in very thick terrain. The US has FTs, DCs, good leaders. The German has better positions, PSK, PF, Vierlings-FLAK. THE classic clash of FP vs. morale IMO. Good balanced in my opinion.

OK, I hope your appetite to play the US has increased, and maybe next time you'll have more success!

THE TRENCHES

"THIS IS THE CALL TO ARMS!"

This is the latest edition of the UK ASL Players Directory.

It is broken down by country. Within the country, players are listed according to the county they live in.

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If there are any mistakes, please let me know so I can correct them for the next edition.

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VIEW FROM



ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL

There are more and more *ASL* tournaments cropping up all over the world. In fact, it is possible to be involved in an *ASL* tournament at least once a month, often more, if you were so inclined (and had the financial means to live such a life - I wish!).

If you plan on holding an *ASL* tournament, please let me know and I'll include the details here, space permitting.

If you contact anyone regarding these tournaments, please tell them that I sent you!

APRIL

MONTREAL ASL TOURNAMENT

When: 1 - 2 April.

Where: Downtown Days Inn, 1005 Guy Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3H 2K4. Telephone 1-800-567-0880 toll free or (514) 938-4611 for rates and reservations. Most rooms have 2 double beds. All rooms are air-conditioned and have color television. The hotel has a restaurant, and is near a variety of restaurants, as well as shops and night clubs. Indoor and outdoor parking available (charges apply).

Fee: \$20.00 (US \$16.00), half for single day only.

Format: Five time-limited rounds of action starting on Saturday at 9 a.m. Each round will have a choice of three scenarios, with scenario substitution possible by mutual player consent. At least one choice will require knowledge of only chapters A to D. Each player secretly chooses two scenarios, then they compare choices to arrive at the scenario they will play. There is more to this and it is explained completely in the Tournament Rules included in the information package. A point scoring method will determine the winner at the conclusion of the tournament.

Notes: There will be prizes for at least the top two players, depending on attendance and prize contributions. Last year, there were prizes for the top four players. These players will also receive Certificates of Achievement. As well, there are Certificates for best ROF, most two's and most twelves in the tournament. We have commitments for prizes from HOB, MMP, VFTT and Schwerepunkt.

Contact: For more details email diane-mike@sympatico.ca. Send registration fee (cheque or postal money order, payable to Michael Rodgers) to Montreal ASL Festival, 5187 Beamish Drive, Pierrefonds, Quebec, H8Z 3G4.

BERSERK! 2000

When: 7 - 9 April.

Where: Hotel Skye, South Promenade, Blackpool, England. Shared rooms are £21.50, single rooms £26.50 and include breakfast. Bar meals and good beer is also available in the hotel.

Fee: £8.00, £6.00 for members of The Crusaders, the UK *ASL* Association.

Format: Five round tournament beginning Friday afternoon (arrangements will be made for those unable to arrive until Friday night), with three or six scenarios to choose from in each round. Tournament entrants will be expected to be familiar with the Japanese, although PTO is not necessary. CG and friendly games can also be found through-out the weekend.

Contact: Steve Thomas, 19 Derwent House, Samuel Street, Preston, Lancs., PR1 4YL, or email Trev Edwards at Trev@cableinet.co.uk

ANZACON 2000

When: 22 - 24 April.

Where: Mulgrave Scout Hall, Mackie Road, Mulgrave, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

Fee: \$20.00 Australian.

Format: Five rounds starting at 0900 hours. Original scenario for each round with points awarded to determine the tournament winner. Players will be advised in advance of the items they need to bring to play the scenarios.

Contact: Bruce Probst at bprobst@ibm.net or Neil Andrews at andrewsn@ocean.com.au

FLORIDA ASL TOURNAMENT

When: 28 - 30 April.

Where: The Travel Lodge (formerly Best Western), 820 E. Busch Blvd., Tampa, Florida. Telephone (813) 933-4011 (tell them you're with HMGS' RECON to get the \$59 room deal.)

Fee: HMGS members \$10.00 (\$8.00 before 14 April), non-members \$15.00 (\$12.00 before 14 April).

Format: Five round single elimination event using all new scenarios from Schwerpunkt and the Tampa *ASL* Group based on the theme of the Victoria Cross. Round one of the tournament will begin at 7:00 P.M. Friday. Saturday gaming will begin at 8:00 A.M. with rounds 2-4 being completed no later than 1:00 A.M. Sunday morning. The final round will begin at 8:00 A.M. Sunday and finish no later than 1:00 P.M. Sunday afternoon. Players must be available for the Sunday session to win the tournament.

Notes: Medals for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th place, Tank Commander Award, Close Combat and Last Place will be presented. First, Second, and Last Place recipients will also receive a certificate good for any issue of Schwerpunkt. We'll also have our beautiful Schwerpunkt tournament T-shirts available in both grey and black. Be sure to get one because they are proven babe magnets and are guaranteed make you look oh so svelte!

Schwerpunkt Volume #5: The Medal of Honor will be released at the tournament.

This year's tournament is a joint event at RECON 2000, hosted by Historical Miniatures Gaming Society (HMGS)-South and sponsored by The Tampa *ASL* Group.

Contact: Fees should be sent to Rhett Scott, RECON Registration, 1416 Forsyth Way, Brandon, FL 33511.

MAY

Swiss ASL TOURNAMENT

When: 6 - 7 May.

Where: Lausanne, Switzerland.

Fee: None for the tournament but roughly SFr. 10.00 for the convention where the tournament is held.

Format: Four rounds with a free choice of scenarios.

Notes: Visit www.gameinpack.com/conventions/orcidee for more details of the convention.

Contact: David Lindelof, 17 Le Prieure, F-01280 Preussin, France. Telephone (+33) 450 40 73

39 or email lindelof@space.ch

JUNE

8th ANNUAL AUSTIN ASL TEAM TOURNAMENT

When: 23 - 25 June.

Where: Best Western Seville, Austin, Texas.

Fee: \$25.00.

Format: Open.

Contact: For further details contact Mike Seningen by email at mikes@evsx.com or visit www.angelfire.com/tx2/seningen.

AUGUST

WILD WEST FEST SIX

When: 25 - 27 August.

Where: The Holiday Inn Southeast, Denver, Colorado..

Fee: \$20.00 pre-registered.

Format: Open format, six rounds minimum required to win.

Notes: mini-tournaments and all skill levels welcome.

Come and have fun at the Rocky Mountain's biggest, baddest, boldest, ugliest, weirdest, wildest *ASL* tourney. Come and partake of the elk jerky. Come and whup the tar off the Front Range *ASL* Club. Come and behold the beautiful Front Range (but then LEAVE when the weekend's done, cuz we don't want no more of your kind moving here).

Contact: Tim Wilson at twilson@wyoming.com

OCTOBER

OKTOBERFEST ASLOK 2000

When: 3 - 8 October.

Where: Radisson Inn, 7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights, Ohio 44130. Telephone 440-243-4040. Room Rates are \$79.00 for 1-4 occupants before September 12th. Be sure to mention "ASL Oktoberfest" when reserving.

Fee: To be announced.

Format: Same as always. Weekend Tournament plus numerous Mini-Tournaments.

Notes: Further details to be announced.

Contact: Mark Nixon, 443 Richmond Park West, #201D, Richmond Heights, OH 44143, or by telephone on (440) 473 1680. You can also email Rick Troha at aslok@nwsup.com, or visit the ASLOK Home Page at <http://www.nwsup.com/aslok/>

INTENSIVE FIRE 2000

When: 27-29 October.

Where: The Kiwi Hotel, West Hill Road, Bournemouth, England, BH2 5EG. Telephone (01202) 555 889 or fax (01202) 789 567. Accommodation is available for £30 per night and includes service and breakfast.

Fee: £5.00, free for members of The Crusaders, the UK *ASL* association.

Format: To be announced. In addition to the main tournament it is hoped that there will also be some single day mini-tournaments. As usual open gaming is available for those who do not wish to take part in the tournament.

Notes: Please register in advance if you wish to take part in the tournament.

Prizes are awarded to winning players and the Convention Champion, who is the player judged to have had the most successful tournament with all games played over the weekend being taken into consideration.

Contact: For more details or to register contact Pete Phillipps, 49 Lombardy Rise, Leicester, LE5 0FQ. Phone (0116) 212 6747 (evenings only) or email if2000@vftt.co.uk



THE TRENCHES

INTENSIVE FIRE 2000

27-29 Oct 2000



INTENSIVE FIRE is Europe's premier **Advanced Squad Leader™** tournament. Now in its 6th year, INTENSIVE FIRE attracts people from all over the world to Bournemouth's Kiwi Hotel for a weekend of non-stop ASL action. Whether you are interested in taking part in the tournament or simply enjoying some friendly ASL gaming INTENSIVE FIRE has something to offer you.

The hotel offers bed and breakfast for the special rate of £30.00 per person per night (just quote "INTENSIVE FIRE" when reserving accommodation). They also offer snacks during the day, and the hotel bar is usually open 'til late in one of the gaming rooms for those who need to drown their sorrows after another defeat!

KIWI HOTEL, West Hill Road, Bournemouth, BH2 5EG

Tel: 01202 555889

Fax: 01202 789567

Simply send an SAE to receive more details later in the year to:

Pete Phillipps

49 Lombardy Rise

Leicester

LE5 0FQ

Tel: (0116) 212 6747 (evenings only)

if2000@vftt.co.uk

INTENSIVE FIRE is supported by VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES
Britain's Premier ASL Journal

(for a free sample issue send a large SAE with a 31p stamp to the above address)