

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

Britain's Premier ASL Journal

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PREP FIRE

New year, new millennium, new *View From The Trenches*. OK, so I'm a bit late with this issue but by doing this double issue I hope to give myself some time to gather material for next year so I can get back onto the regular schedule. At the moment I've got eight blank pages in *VFTT36* waiting to be filled; since there it won't be out until March 2001, that gives you all plenty of time to write something to fill them!! It might be a new year but as usual don't just buy, play and read about *ASL*, **WRITE** about *ASL*!!

As you will see from the opposite page legal action has forced Schwerpunkt to fold. Unconfirmed reports also suggest that a cease and desist notice has been sent to Heat of Battle. As the heart of these orders is the illegal use of copyrighted material such as counter art and the *ASL* scenario card layout. The maps in Heat of Battle's recently released *High Ground* pack are also said to use copyrighted artwork, although many of the symbols used on *ASL* maps have been used since the origins of board wargaming and elsewhere so I am not sure about the accuracy of this. As no orders have been sent to me regarding *VFTT* I would assume that *VFTT* is legal. I'm sure we will hear more of this again as the year unfolds.

Double 1. My last, best hope for victory.

Pete Phillipps

COVER: An artillery battery opens up at night.

THE ASL MAILING LIST

The *ASL* Mailing List is devoted to discussion of *Advanced Squad Leader*, and is run by Paul Ferrara via a listserv program at the University of Pittsburgh. To subscribe send email to majordomo@multimanpublishing.com 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.

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

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 *ASL*ers. Don't be a silent voice.

Issue 36 should be out at the beginning of March 2001.

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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You can also download free copies from:
<http://www.vfft.co.uk/vfftpdf.htm>

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

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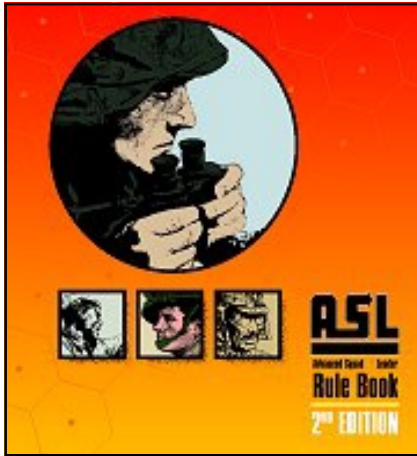
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VIEW FROM

INCOMING



ASLRB 2 RELEASED

The *ASL Rulebook 2nd Edition* should be available from 15th January in the States and soon after elsewhere. The revised rulebook is an updated version of Chapters A-E, H (German and Russian) J, K, and an updated and expanded index. No rules have been changed, except for a few (such as Bocage and Wall Advantage) which have been 'fixed'. The most important change is that the past 15-20 years worth of errata and Q&A have been incorporated into the rules themselves. In a few cases there has been some rules movement, such as the DYO from Chapter E has been moved to Chapter H, while some rules from F and G have been moved to E and B. In these cases there will be a reference to the new location (thus if Plasma Rifles used to be W12, but has moved to C97.4, W12 say "See C97.4.").

MMP are planning to put a 'crib notes' type document together to have ready for *ASL Journal 3* to outline all the changes and updates incorporated into the new rulebook.

Also due for release at the same time is *Beyond Valor 2nd Edition*, which is a reprint of the original *Beyond Valor with Red Barricades included, Paratrooper, The Last Hurrah, and Hollow Legions*.

West of Alamein will not be reprinted in its original form but will instead be split into ETO and DTO parts. The ETO part (which will be printed first) will include the British OB, chapter H notes, boards 1,7,8,12 and about 8 scenarios (a mixture of new and old), while the desert module will have desert boards, Chapter F, and desert info counters and scenarios. This will allow players to have the British OB without also having to purchase the desert rules which they

THE TRENCHES

Schwerpunkt

An Announcement

Last year MMP indicated that the Hasbro Co. was going to shut down the independent publishers of *ASL* related material. It has taken some time but now Multi-Man Publishing represented by Curt Schilling's attorney (NOT HASBRO) is making good on their promise to end the independent press.

The members of the Tampa *ASL* Group and myself have agreed that this is merely a hobby and is not worth the effort to continue producing new issues of *Schwerpunkt*. We have decided to end production of *Schwerpunkt* and leave the future of the *ASL* hobby to Multi-Man Publishing.

We will not print any further volumes of *Schwerpunkt*. When the existing limited stock of *Schwerpunkt Volumes 1-6* are exhausted that will be the end of the availability of *Schwerpunkt*.

The Tampa Group has had a great time making scenarios for you the player but it is time for a change and a time for us to move on to other pursuits.

I want to reiterate that ALL issues of *Schwerpunkt* are still AVAILABLE and will remain available until we determine our ending date or stock is exhausted.

All issues of *Schwerpunkt* are currently available priced \$15.00 each (add \$3.00 for shipping and handling, or \$6.00 outside the U.S.. Add \$1.00 for each additional issue ordered) (Foreign Orders for 2-7 copies please use the following Global Priority Mail shipping rate: Canada and Europe \$9.00; Japan and the Pacific: \$10.00).

may not be interested in.

Following the reprinting of the maps from *Streets of Fire* and *Action Pack 1*, the scenarios have now been made available for free download from the MMP web site. If you do not have InterNet access and want a copy of the scenarios send me a large SAE with stamps valued at 44p (for one set) or 76p (for both sets) and I'll post you a copy. MMP are also working on ways to get the articles and scenarios from old annuals and *The General* back in circulation as well.

MMP's plans for the rest of the year include *ASL Journal 3* (Feb/Mar 2001), *Armies Of Oblivion* (1st quarter 2001), the Finnish Module (3rd quarter 2001), introductory *ASL* (complete with *eASLRB*) (mid to late 2001), *Central Stalingrad* (late 2001), and *HSASL Sicily* (late 2001). Beyond that, *Red October* (a Charlie Kibler module linking the *RB* maps to two new ones), *HSASL Guadalcanal*, *HASL/HSASL Operation Bagration*, *SASL Hurtgen Forest*, a Kursk CG (an expanded and updated version of the Stalnie Prostorci CG originally printed in French *ASL* magazine *Tactiques*), and *ASL Journal 4* are in the pipeline.

STORM IN THE TROPICS

Tropic Thunder is a new scenario pack from Heat of Battle covering the fighting in Borneo between the Australian 2nd Imperial Force and the Japanese Naval Base Forces from May to July 1945. The pack comes with 12 scenarios and a three page historical preface. Most of the scenarios are short and hard-hitting and should be ideal for tournaments. *Tropic Thunder* will cost \$17.50 plus \$1.50 for US S&H (or \$3.00 for overseas S&H) and orders should be sent to Heat of Battle, PO BOX 15073, Newport Beach, CA 92659. If you are online you can also use Paypal.com to pay HOB at stevdeth@incom.net.

Also available are unmounted maps for *High Ground*, priced \$10 for both plus \$1.00 S&H (\$2.00 for overseas orders).

ENGLISH LE FRANC TIREUR TO BE RELEASED

Le Franc Tireur 5 is scheduled to be out any time now. All the scenarios will be in English and printed in colour, although it is not clear what format and counter art they will use at this point. Five of the scenarios depict a little known operation that took place in April 1945 between the Free French



and German Gebirgsjaeger along the Italian border. There is also a small overlay (7 hexes) depicting a special building on a level 3 hex, that can be seen in the pictures provided in the magazine. A small sheet for the non-French speakers will provide some general information about the operation.

LFT5 is available for 70.00 French Francs (\$14.00 for US readers) from Xavier Vitry, 1 Imp des Jardins, 35340 Erce Pres Liffre, France. You can email Xavier at vitry658@wanadoo.fr or check out the web site <http://www.histofig.com/asl/>.



CH RETURNS

Expected to see daylight soon is *Critical Hit Tactical Level Gaming Magazine, Volume 6, Number 2*. There will be an extensive tactics article for *Stonne 1940* by

Scott Holst and an article by Pedro Ramis on the making of the module, giving an insight into the development process. These will be supported by two new scenarios, a CG which is a follow up to the CG in the original module and a big CG combining the 2 CG's. There will also 13 regular scenarios, most focusing on the early war/1940 French Campaign.

BUNKER 11 LOCATED

Despatches From The Bunker 11 is expected to be released in the New Year, following delays due to summer surgery and computer problems.

'Crisis on The Abucaay Line' is the latest in the Early Philippines Series and sees two distinct actions occurring on the same board configuration. The first sees an assault on the main defences of the Abucaay Line itself, while the second sees a flank attack into an Ad-hoc unit led by Regimental Commander Eugene T. Lewis.

The latest in the German Pioneer Sgt. Rudolf Brasche series, 'No Soup for You' sees both sides back at the Radau Bunker, the site of the previous two Brasche Scenarios, with the same board set up. This one is a large, Eastern Front, combined arms bloodbath, which has a Russian juggernaut trying to recapture the Bunker Complex and get into the Lime Kiln Factory beyond.

As well as the two new scenarios there will be the usual accompanying analyses and design notes, an analysis of 'SP60 Commando Kelly', a preview of the New England ASL Championship 2001, tactical tips, and the usual ASL features.

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 email aslbunker@aol.com.

Ω



Microprose's new computer game Squad Leader, which despite the name is not a computer version of the board game of the same name.

9.32 WALL ADVANTAGE (WA): A unit may claim WA over a same level wall/hedge hexside if it is an armed, unbroken ground level unit which is not: a vehicle eligible to receive in-hex TEM of ≥ 1 [EXC: Height Advantage (10.31)/Cactus Patch (14.7)/Olive Grove (14.8)], in Column/Convoy, in a Fortified building possessing a Gun, on a bridge [EXC: over a Roadblock], in a pillbox/cave, beneath an entrenchment counter, above Wire/Panji or in a Location containing a non-hidden, non-prisoner enemy [EXC: "broken" vehicle (A12.1)] unit. A unit in Bypass may claim WA only over the hexside it straddles and the two hexsides of its hex that join that hexside. Units in a Location do not need to share the same WA status, but are still considered in the same Location for all purposes. Broken or unarmed units may (must if 9.323 applies) claim WA if other units in the same Location claim WA. A unit claiming WA is still considered occupying any obstacle/terrain as it would if not claiming WA for all purposes (e.g., Concealment Terrain, firing backblast weapon from building) [EXC: 9.31]. Lack of WA does not prevent LOS through a wall/hedge hexside of the viewer's hex [EXC: Entrenchments (9.21); bocage (9.521)].

9.321 A unit always has WA over all possible (as per 9.32) wall/hedge hexsides of its hex; if it forfeits/is-denied WA over one of those wall/hedge hexsides it cannot claim WA over any other hexsides [EXC: in Deluxe ASL, WA is claimed/retained/lost per hexside—not hex]. Adjacent units of opposing sides can never both claim WA over a shared wall/hedge at the same time; thus one of them claiming WA over the shared hexside prevents the other from claiming WA over any hexsides at all

[EXC: Deluxe ASL].

9.322 A unit claiming WA must always be marked with a "Wall Advan" counter. Placing a "Wall Advan" counter and claiming WA are synonymous, as are removing a "Wall Advan" counter and forfeiting WA [EXC: 9.323]. A Pinned, TI, or Immobile unit cannot voluntarily claim or forfeit WA. Claiming WA is voluntary [EXC: 9.323], and can be done by a unit at five times: during its setup; at the end of any RPh (step 1.32B of ASOP, ATTACKER first); during its MPH/APh (either as part of, or before/after MF/MP expenditures); when losing HIP status; whenever all enemy units lose/forfeit WA over shared wall/hedge hexsides. WA must be forfeited immediately if a unit no longer fulfills 9.32 and may be forfeited at any other time. Claiming/forfeiting WA is not considered an action for RPh limits (A3.1) or concealment loss (A12.141). Claiming/forfeiting WA can never be done between an enemy action being declared and that action being completed, e.g., fire vs the unit claiming WA.

9.323 MANDATORY WA: A unit unable to claim in-hex TEM of at least +1 must claim WA as soon as possible (even if having in-hex Hindrance), and cannot voluntarily forfeit it. Neither Emplacement, Gunshield, Height Advantage, nor a friendly AFV with WA are considered to provide an in-hex TEM for this purpose. A "Wall Advan" counter is not necessary in this case, unless there is an enemy unit sharing one or more of the unit's wall/hedge hexsides.

An extract of the new Wall Advantage rules from the ASL RB 2nd Edition.



VIEW FROM

INTENSIVE FIRE 2001

26-28 Oct 2001



INTENSIVE FIRE is Europe's premier **Advanced Squad Leader™** tournament. Now in its 7th 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 Fire Team tournament, one of Friday's mini-tournaments or simply enjoying some friendly ASL gaming INTENSIVE FIRE has something to offer everyone. Admission to the event is just £6. Pre-register and receive a tournament program in September.

The hotel offers bed and breakfast for the special rate of £31.00 for a single room or £26.00 per person for a double room if you book prior to 1 October (just quote "INTENSIVE FIRE" when reserving accommodation). Normal rates apply thereafter. They also offer snacks during the day, and the hotel bar is open 'til late in one of the gaming rooms for those who need to drown their sorrows after another defeat!

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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 33p stamp to the above address)

INTENSIVE FIRE 2000

Over the weekend of 27-29 October Bournemouth was hit by intensive fire and the worst storms in 13 years. Yes, we chose to hold the annual INTENSIVE FIRE tournament the same weekend that intense storms caused devastation across southern Britain and major disruption to the rail system. Yet none of this was of much concern inside Bournemouth's Kiwi Hotel from Thursday evening to Sunday morning, as people only seemed to have *ASL* on their mind.

The Opening Hours

The first players began to arrive early on Thursday and by the end of the day a number of games had already been played. A small corner of the downstairs suite had been turned into Stalingrad as Iain McKay and Roger Cook began playing the monster *RB* scenario 'RB5 The Last Bid'. Pre-planning had been going on for some time prior to the event on this one so they were able to soon get started. By Saturday night they had managed to get about halfway through the game, with the Russians having the advantage, so at this point they decided to finish the game.

The Mini-Tournaments

New at IF this year were mini-tournaments. These were designed to be three round straight knock-outs, playable during the day to give more players a chance of winning a trophy. Thanks to the sterling efforts of Shaun Carter, Iain McKay and Derek Tocher there were three tournaments to choose from, themed around desert introduction (Shaun), the Aussies at War (Iain) and night (Derek). These seemed to be quite popular, although we didn't have enough players around on Friday morning to fill out all the places so the desert and Aussie tournaments were reduced to two rounds. This worked out quite well in the end as the selected scenarios took longer than planned to play and finishing the third round on the Friday would have been difficult.

The night tournament draw a strong field, including reigning INTENSIVE FIRE champion Bjarne Hansen, who had to play 'WCW 9 Sweep Up', 'TOT 8 Nightmare' and 'TOT 18 The Aller Waltz' to win the tournament.

Rather appropriately, the Aussie tour-

namment was won by Dublin-based Kiwi Aaron Cleavin, a strong *ASL* player well-known at *ASLOK* but a newcomer to the European *ASL* scene.

Finally, the desert round was won by Paul Case.

The Fire Team Tournament

As usual the main tournament used a fire team structure, with three players in each. As in previous years there were two divisions with a player's Crusader ladder rating determining which division he was in. Unlike previous years the fire teams were randomly drawn so that each team would consist of one top, middle and bottom ranked player in that division, thus avoiding the possibility that one team could have three strong players. This seemed to work quite well and is likely to be used again next year.

The theme for the Saturday morning rounds was the British at war, with 'J9 A Stiff Fight', 'J32 Panzer Graveyard' and 'A119 Showdown In Syria' being on offer. Somewhat surprisingly, no-one elected to play 'A119 Showdown In Syria', with 'J9 A Stiff Fight' being the most popular choice.

As the Saturday afternoon round is the longest, this gives players the chance to tackle some meatier scenarios. On offer were a selection of eastern front classics, 'J1 Urban Guerillas', 'T7 Hill 253.5' and 'TOT35 Death Knell At Kalach'. 'J1 Urban Guerillas' was the most popular choice, with most games going down to the wire. The sole playing of 'TOT35 Death Knell At Kalach' was probably the shortest scenario played during the weekend, lasting maybe an hour as Bjarne Hansen's dice were so hot that Paul O'Donald's German forces had been decimated by the end of the first turn!

By the end of the day we had one team in the lead but two others closing on the inside. The top two teams had yet to play each other so we paired them up for Sunday morning.

The theme of the final round was the people at war, in other words partisans. As usual the scenario selection for this round were not the most popular, but the strict constraints on the scenarios available for such a short round make such problems almost inevitable. 'SP42 Hot In Kot', 'TAC72

Combat for a Tower' and 'DB18 Special Delivery' were on offer. Despite a number of concerns over the balance of the scenarios, the results do not seem to bear these out (although two playing of a scenario are not really enough to draw any conclusions from!).

The Results

As with last year the Elite division was close, but this year it was so close we could barely separate THREE teams! We had three teams who had all gained 18 points, and two of those had beaten opponents worth 19,845 points in getting that

THE SCENARIOS

Pete Phillippis

Here is the table of Scenario Win/Loss records from IF'2000 - remember draws are used in the tournament rules:

Scenario	Allied	Axis	Draw
23 Under the Noel Trees	1	0	0
83 An Uncommon Occurrence	0	1	0
A111 Cattern's Position	0	1	0
A113 Then Things Got Worse	1	0	0
A8 The Agony of Doom	0	1	0
AA11 Absent Friends	1	0	0
AP7 Directive Number Three	0	1	0
D1 Guryev's Headquarters	1	0	0
D6 Draconian Measures	0	1	0
DB018 Special Delivery	1	0	0
G45 Halha River Bridge	1	0	0
HG3 Bumps Along The Tiddam Road	0	0	1
HG6 Corniche Game	0	1	0
J1 Urban Guerillas	4	6	0
J2 Battlin' Buckeyes	1	0	0
J32 Panzer Graveyard	2	2	0
J9 A Stiff Fight	7	4	0
MLR2 Troteval Farm	0	1	0
October3 Ambush At Small Creek	0	2	0
PBP28 Peningkibaru Push	0	1	0
RB5 The Last Bid	0	1	0
RBFI-6 Desert Fortress	0	2	0
SP25 Two Pounds in Return	2	0	0
SP26 Wollersheim!	1	0	0
SP28 Clearing Qualberg	1	0	0
SP41 Bloody Gulch	0	1	0
SP42 Hot In Kot	1	1	0
SP52 The Amazing Tominac	1	0	0
SP62 Ils Ne Passeront Pas	2	0	0
SP64 Valour on the Bou	0	1	0
SP66 Nicholls and Nash	0	1	0
SP69 Meiktila Break-In	0	1	0
SP71 Cutler's Cross	0	1	0
T7 Hill 253.5	2	2	1
TAC72 Engagement pour un tour	6	6	0
TOT18 The Aller Waltz	1	0	0
TOT35 Death Knell at Kalach	1	0	0
TOT8 Nightmare	2	0	0
U10 Trial by Combat	1	0	0
U11 Thrust and Parry	0	1	0
U12 Riposte	0	2	0
U5 Point D'Appui	1	1	0
U7 Han-Sur-Neid	1	1	0
WCW9 Sweep Up	1	3	0
TOTALS	93	44	47



far. As it was both those teams had been first and second at the end of Saturdays games so they had been paired up to play each other in the final round. Because of that we were able to use the results of the round to separate them, and in the end the team consisting of Derek Tocher, Domininc McGrath and Bill Hensby won two of the three games against Bjarne Hansen, Aaron Cleavin and Paul O'Donald to win the championship.

In the First Division things were a lot easier as the team of Shaun Carter, John Kennedy and Tim Macaire won by a big margin.

Both Aaron Cleavin and Steve Thomas managed 6-0 records, and Aaron won the best player award because he had beaten slightly better opponents than Steve had. At the other end of the field, Bill Hensby played 7, lost 7, yet still managed to win a prize

for his performance as part of the winning fire team!!

Some Thoughts

Your esteemed editor managed to play 5 games as the use of the computer to handle the record-keeping gave him plenty of free time. Not that he was able to maintain his BERSERK standing, as he only won 1 :-). Of the other four, one was declared a draw as my opponent had to go and the other three losses all went down to the wire.

One worry was that the number of players attending was 20% down on previous years. I'm not sure why, but the fact that six people who had pre-registered did not turn up did not help. The overseas contingent is also down nowadays, but this is probably inevitable as there as a number of tour-

naments in Denmark, Germany, Finland, and France for them to attend as well. There were also a number of regulars who were not able to attend this year, so maybe it was just a blip. We'll see next year.

Thanks as usual go to Jon and his staff

FIRE TEAM PLACINGS

ELITE DIVISION

POS	TEAM	PLAYER	PTS	OPPO
1st	6	Bill Hensby Dominic McGrath Derek Tocher	18	19845
2nd	2	Aaron Cleavin Bjarne Hansen Paul O'Donald	18	19845
3rd	3	Bob Eburne Russell Gough Steve Thomas	18	19095
4th	5	Keith Bristow Michael Hastrup-Leth Simon Strevens	12	13250
5th	4	Nigel Ashcroft Trevor Edwards Toby Pilling	9	9365
6th	1	Ian Daglish Paul Sanderson David Schofield	6	6640

FIRST DIVISION

POS	TEAM	PLAYER	PTS	OPPO
1st	C	Shaun Carter John Kennedy Tim Macaire	21	19380
2nd	D	Paul Case Steve Grainger Justin Key	13	11295
3rd	A	Tim Collier Ben Jones David Tye	12	11120
4th	B	Wayne Bamber Paul Kettlewell Paul Legg	7	5580

The **OPPO** value is the total value of the Crusader ladder points of the opponents beaten by that fire team



The Elite Division champions Bill Hensby (left), Derek Tocher (centre) and Dominic McGrath (right). A great performance from Derek and Dominic as Bill didn't win any of his games!!
Below: from left to right the champion First Division fire team John Kennedy, Shaun Carter and Tim Macaire.



for the food, drink and excellent facilities they gave us. The specially printed menu, decorated with a military theme, was well liked by everyone in attendance.

Work has already begun on INTENSIVE FIRE 2001. The venue will be the same, so will the format. As for the date, well that's the weekend 26-28 October 2001, so start sweet-talking the other half now and drop the hints at work that you'll not be able to work late in October.

Ω

PLAYER RESULTS

Pete Phillipps

Here are the individual win/loss records from IF'2000.

PLAYER	P	W	L	D
Nigel Ashcroft	6	1	5	0
Wayne Bamber	3	0	3	0
Keith Bristow	3	1	2	0
Shaun Carter	7	5	2	0
Paul Case	6	3	2	1
Aaron Cleavin	6	6	0	0
Tim Collier	3	3	0	0
Roger Cook	1	0	1	0
Steve Crowley	3	0	3	0
Ian Dalglish	7	3	4	0
Bob Eburne	5	3	2	0
Trevor Edwards	6	1	5	0
Russell Gough	4	3	1	0
Steve Grainger	4	3	1	0
Bjarne Hansen	7	3	4	0
Michael Hastrup-Leth	9	5	4	0
Bill Hensby	7	0	7	0
Brian Hooper	7	2	4	1
Ben Jones	5	0	5	0
John Kennedy	3	1	2	0
Paul Kettlewell	4	1	2	1
Justin Key	3	2	1	0
Paul Legg	5	2	3	0
Tim Macaire	3	3	0	0
Dominic McGrath	7	4	3	0
Iain Mckay	2	2	0	0
Paul O'Donald	6	3	3	0
Pete Phillipps	5	1	3	1
Toby Pilling	3	2	1	0
David Ramsey	4	0	4	0
Paul Sanderson	5	1	4	0
David Schofield	7	4	3	0
Neil Stevens	3	2	1	0
Simon Strevens	10	7	3	0
Steve Thomas	6	6	0	0
Derek Tocher	5	5	0	0
David Tye	6	3	3	0

A Kiwi's View

Aaron Cleavin

It was a dark and stormy night as I escaped Perfidious Albion with the cherished trophy grasped tightly to my chest. Earlier that afternoon I had surmounted the final opponent wielding a vicious viral attack; and held the Panzerfaust toting Panzer Jaeger aloft whose brass plaque proclaimed "Intensive Fire 2000 Champion".

I had dodged out of work around 1:30 Thursday to take advantage of those rarest of things "A Direct flight to Bournemouth". As I got to the gate there was a petrol tanker a stairway but no plane in sight despite being 15 minutes prior to scheduled takeoff. It was then explained to me that RyanAir Flights had Land Unload/Load Take-off cycle's not dissimilar to the DC3's used in the Berlin Airlift. Within 25mins of the scheduled takeoff then, we were in the air over Dublin and Bournemouth arrived in a painless 45 minutes later.

A quick Taxi to the Kiwi Hotel, an unloading of non-essentials (clothes etc) in my higher than wide room, and what do you know I was in the basement looking for victim number one. Everyone seemed to be involved in a game though so a few pints and hours later I hooked up with Ian Dalglish for a game. I took the Germans in Valour on the Bou (SP64) and we found that it seems indeed more than a little tough on the Irish Guards (1-0). I think perhaps it should be 6 turns and the Germans should need a GO MMC on above Level 2 for the end of EVERY game turn from the fourth on to win, then it would be very interesting. Ian is great fun to play and knows more about WWII history than most of us do about the backs of our hands. After lots more conversation and beer I got to bed about 1am just in time to turn on the box and see 3 hours of good baseball before the damn Yankees won again.

Up early the next morning to play in Iain McKay's "Fair Dinkum" Australians vs Japanese Mini-Tournie. We only had four players so only two rounds would be needed instead of the three scheduled. This



IF2000 Champion Aaron Cleavin holds his trophy aloft.

was just as well as the second round took quite a while. First up was Dominic McGrath and we played a small Paddington Bears Scenario 'October 2000 #3 Ambush at Small Creek', on the *Ragged Bloody Heroes* Map. I defended as the Japanese and while Dominic was able to outflank me he didn't viciously exploit when the opportunity arose and thus I was able to re-deploy and hold him off (2-0). At last I can say "I've beaten McGrath":-).

Next up was Bjarne Hansen in *A112 Catterns Position*. I got the Japanese and rapidly realised just how strong a player Bjarne was. I was able to form a coherent glob of defenders and not take substantive losses until my reinforcements came. I over-committed my reinforcements to one side though and so the issue was in doubt all the way until I got a critical break on a 6-4-8 in Turn 7 allowing me to take back a victory hex (3-0). One Mini Tournie win down (Thanks Iain) but the scenario took until at least 10:30 PM and I was completely shattered but 3-0. By the way, did you know that putting an advancing a Japanese 2-3-7 into CC with a 4FP squad has a dead even Kill Ratio given no mods on the Ambush (Food for thought).

Saturday Morning and the fire teams were determined, putting me with Bjarne and Paul O'Donald. Bjarne and I got on the same fire team by virtue of my non-ranking Crusader-wise prior to IF, which was to be an issue come Sunday. First up on Saturday was Paul Sanderson in 'J9 A Stiff Fight'. I got the Japanese and despite bogging on wire a few times nothing much else Paul did went right for him, and I all but annihilated the Gurkhas within 5 turns to take an easy win (4-0). Keeping the Gurkhas mutually supporting with no isolate-able units is critical for the Gurkhas in this one.

Saturday afternoon and I have to try beating another Dane Michael Hastrup-Lee, another very strong player (he takes down Toby Pilling the following morning). We select 'JI Urban Guerillas' and I get the Russians. I am very aggressive on attack and his PZIV moves to a HD position to challenge one of my HD T34/85's. BOOM!! One CH APCR round later the PZIV disintegrates with ROF. Then out comes the Panther at the same T34 in the same MF, turn turret APCR and BOOM down goes the Panther too!!! As Michael said playing a "Good AND lucky player" is not a pleasant thing. Things go downhill for Michael from there, with no less than 3 heroes being generated on my Sniper 3 and 4 rolls (5-0). At this point our fire team has won 5 out of 6 games and look to be clear favourites for the trophy to be decided on Sunday. But Derek the Dodger Tocher has a cunning plan.....

Sunday Morning and I'm matched up with Bill Hensby (who was 0-2) owing to the two of us having the lowest Crusaders rankings on our teams. While a technically accurate way of matching, it is also the only possible matching for which going 2-1 for fire team 6 will exactly match our team on the ratings of opponents beaten and thus assumedly beat us head to head, so I'll count this a very cunning dodge on Derek's part. Next time he won't escape so easy! Of course this is exactly how it pans out. Some good luck in creating a berserk German HS on Turn 1 in 'Tac72 Combat for a Tower' combined with a bad cold on Bill's part made for a relatively easy victory for me (6-0), but Paul and Bjarne managed to lose their games and thus the fire team trophy too :(Winning the individual trophy more than made up for this however and the PanzerJager trophy is truly a magnificent figure. Bill Hensby ironically lost every game he played over the tournie and yet walked away with a fire team trophy!!

Thanks to all concerned in making it a great tournament. I'll be back as defending Champion, I hope many of you will be too!



The Crusaders Open ASL Tournament Ladder

Post Intensive Fire 2000 Update

Derek Tocher

There have now been 1200+ games played at the INTENSIVE FIRE and BERSERK! tournaments over the last five years and there are now 43 players who played 20+ games and 15 who have played 40+. The largest number of games recorded is 66 (by your laddermeister) The top 10% of players have ratings of 3290+ while the upper quartile are rated 3160+. Those in the lower quartile have ratings below 2800 while the bottom 10% of participants are rated 2685 or less.

The hot news after INTENSIVE FIRE 2000 is that for the third time in twelve months we have a new ladder leader. The remarkable run that Toby Pilling has had in UK tournament games (29 undefeated!) was eventually brought to an end by Michael

Hastrup-Leth of Denmark. The points Toby lost because of this were enough to squeeze him into second spot when the performance of other participants were factored into the calculations.

The tournament saw the emergence of New Zealander Aaron Cleavin as a major player on the European scene. Aaron was recently posted to Ireland and looks sure to be a potential winner in any tournament he attends. His 6-0 record for the weekend gave him the championship and netted him 565 points on the ladder, allowing him to make his first appearance at number six. Aaron has been a regular competitor at ASLOK and numerous other tournaments for many years and I guess those that know him wouldn't be surprised by his strong showing

here. Our own Steve Thomas also recorded a 6-0 record (+245 points) and only lost out on the championship due to the slightly lower ratings of the opposition he faced. He does however move into third position on the ladder, and was the winner of the 'Night' mini-tournament. Your laddermeister went 5-0 over the weekend and raked in 285 points which just allows him to pip Toby at the top of the list. Other excellent performances over the weekend were made by Shaun Carter (5-2 and +310 points) and Tim Collier (3-0 and +230 points). The illustrious editor of *VFTT* continues his erratic performance as having gained 315 points earlier in the year at BERSERK! he now contrived to lose 205 while in Bournemouth. A number of other players

Position	Player	Played	Points	Position	Player	Played	Points
1	Derek Tocher	66	3840	35=	Bill Durrant	5	3180
2	Toby Pilling	34	3830	35=	Russell Gough	25	3180
3	Steve Thomas	42	3755	37	Jonathan Pickles	8	3175
4	Mike Rudd	29	3715	38=	Grant Pettit	7	3170
5	Simon Strevens	46	3640	38=	Paul Saunders	18	3170
6	Aaron Cleavin	6	3565	38=	Bruno Tielemans	3	3170
7=	Peter Bennett	14	3560	41	Steve Linton	4	3165
7=	Bjarne Hansen	28	3560	42	Mel Falk	9	3160
9	Carl Sizmur	16	3515	43	Ray Woloszyn	28	3155
10	Dave Schofield	55	3440	44	Jeremy Copley	9	3150
11	Michael Hastrup-Leth	30	3375	45	Nick Edelsten	22	3145
12	Bernt Ribom	5	3350	46	Frenk Van Der Mey	4	3135
13	Bob Eburne	36	3345	47	Chris Courtier	13	3130
14	Dominic Mcgrath	58	3340	48	Neil Stevens	30	3125
15	Paul O'donald	62	3330	49=	Lee Brimmicombe-Wood	12	3120
16	Joe Arthur	21	3305	49=	Paul Ryde-Weller	10	3120
17	Frank Tinschert	15	3295	51	Mark Walley	4	3115
18	Philippe Leonard	9	3285	52	Luc Schonkerren	5	3110
19=	Will Fleming	3	3280	53=	Paul Haesler	6	3105
19=	Ralf Krusat	6	3280	53=	Simon Morris	11	3105
19=	Alan Smee	4	3280	55=	Nigel Brown	26	3095
22	Dave Booth	7	3270	55=	Mikael Siemsen	6	3095
23	Andrew Dando	37	3265	57=	Kevin Beard	13	3090
24	Daniel Batey	4	3235	57=	William Hanson	6	3090
25	Christain Koppmeyer	15	3220	57=	Peter Michels	3	3090
26=	Shaun Carter	39	3215	60	Paulo Alessi	6	3085
26=	Tom Slizewski	5	3215	61	Dirk Beijaard	5	3080
28=	Klaus Malmstrom	4	3210	62	Robin Langston	9	3075
28=	Nils-Gunner Nilsson	5	3210	63=	Jean-Luc Baas	3	3070
28=	Yves Tielemans	3	3210	63=	Serge Bettencourt	3	3070
31	Francois Boudrenghien	3	3205	63=	Robert Schaaf	3	3070
32	Aaron Sibley	43	3195				
33	Jean Devaux	3	3190				
34	Armin Deppe	13	3185				

also lost significant numbers of points including last year's winner Bjarne Hansen (-230), Nigel Ashcroft (-280), Wayne Baumber (-265), Ben Jones (-380) and David Ramsay (-300). Perhaps most remarkable however is the performance of Bill Hensby who went 0-7 for the weekend,

lost 285 points and 69 places on the ladder, yet ended up taking home a trophy as a member of the winning elite division Fireteam!

As I have said before I am now noticing that the number of times the higher rated player wins is becoming very

significant. In fact looking at the results from INTENSIVE FIRE 2000 it is clear that the higher rated players are now winning two games out of every three.

Without further ado here is the ladder as of 5th November 2000.

Ω

Position	Player	Played	Points	Position	Player	Played	Points
66=	Alexander Rousse-Lacordaire	4	3065	118	Nick Angelopoulos	5	2850
66=	Bob Runnicles	3	3065	119=	Steve Crowley	27	2840
66=	Jes Touvdal	14	3065	119=	Patrick Dale	9	2840
69	Patrik Manlig	16	3060	119=	Oliver Gray	2	2840
70	Trevor Edwards	50	3055	122	Dave Otway	5	2835
71	Stefan Jacobi	11	3050	123	Jackie Eves	9	2830
72=	Steve Grainger	5	3045	124	Mike Daniel	5	2825
72=	Scott Greenman	8	3045	125	Mark Chapman	6	2820
74	Steve Pleva	6	3035	126	Brian Hooper	50	2805
75	Ian Pollard	41	3030	127	Nick Quinn	9	2800
76=	Luis Calcada	28	3025	128	Bill Eaton	5	2795
76=	Peter Hofland	4	3025	129=	Alistair Fairbairn	3	2790
76=	Jon Williams	13	3025	129=	Nick Ranson	5	2790
79=	Keith Bristow	13	3015	129=	William Roberts	3	2790
79=	Ian Daghish	53	3015	132	Nick Sionskyj	8	2790
79=	Vincent Kamer	4	3015	133	Nigel Ashcroft	42	2785
82=	Raurigh Dale	9	3010	134=	Chris Littlejohn	14	2780
82=	Colin Graham	5	3010	134=	Martin Mayers	10	2780
82=	Paul Sanderson	30	3010	136	Graham Worsfold	3	2775
85	Andrew Saunders	31	3005	137=	Lee Bray	14	2770
86=	Nick Brown	3	3000	137=	Richard Kirby	7	2770
86=	Martin Hubley	4	3000	139	Bill Hensby	31	2765
86=	Ian Kenney	4	3000	140	Andrew Hershey	10	2760
86=	Phil Nobo	11	3000	141	Peter Neale	3	2750
86=	Pete Phillips	55	3000	142	Burnham Fox	23	2740
86=	Duncan Spencer	4	3000	143	Rupert Featherby	3	2735
92	Eric Baker	2	2985	144	Gareth Evans	4	2730
93=	David Farr	4	2980	145	Steve Cocks	4	2720
93=	Malcolm Rutledge	3	2980	146=	Paul Kettlewell	20	2705
95	Michael Maus	7	2955	146=	David Tye	14	2705
96=	Laurent Forest	3	2945	148	Malcolm Hatfield	11	2695
96=	Alex Ganna	2	2945	149	Simon Hoare	4	2690
96=	Pedro Ramis	6	2945	150=	Wayne Baumber	9	2685
99	Justin Key	16	2940	150=	Jeff Howarden	7	2685
100=	Derek Briscoe	1	2935	152	Christain Speis	5	2680
100=	Tim Macaire	17	2935	153	Ulrich Schwela	17	2670
100=	Iain Mckay	38	2935	154	Mike Stanbridge	26	2660
103=	Andrea Marchino	1	2930	155	Pedro Barradas	7	2655
103=	Andy Price	3	2930	156	Paul Legg	30	2650
105	John Sharp	8	2925	157	Paul Case	51	2645
106=	Steve Allen	6	2920	158	John Kennedy	13	2630
106=	Tim Collier	14	2920	159	Martin Bryan	14	2620
108	Edo Giaroni	3	2915	160=	Neil Brunger	20	2615
109=	Joel Berridge	3	2910	160=	Arthur Garlick	21	2615
109=	Brian Martuzas	5	2910	162	Bryan Brinkman	9	2610
109=	Andy Smith	4	2910	163	Ben Jones	19	2595
112=	Jakob Norgaard	6	2885	164=	Adrian Catchpole	6	2585
112=	Bernard Savage	21	2885	164=	John Fletcher	6	2585
114	Simon Croome	11	2865	166	Michael Rhodes	41	2555
115=	Peter Ladwein	21	2860	167	David Ramsey	9	2435
115=	Lutz Pietschker	4	2860	168	Roger Cook	27	2350
115=	Neil Piggot	4	2860				



The Bad

The worst scenarios in ASL, according to Toby Pilling

As a disclaimer here, I should just say before I begin that I mean no personal attack on any designers. God knows they've had the guts and time to invent these scenarios. I've never designed anything for the game yet. I want this article to be seen as constructive criticism.

So please don't beat me up!

The first thing to say is I mean bad as in bad scenarios, not a bad game or bad result. I recently attended the *ASL* Oktoberfest in Cleveland, USA and whilst on my way to winning the *Schwerpunkt* play test mini-tournament received some good advice:

"Remember, if you win it's a great scenario, lose and it's an unbalanced dog!"

Perhaps it is therefore apt that I begin my summary with a look at a dog so psychotically unbalanced it should be locked up in HMP Broadmoor for the rest of its natural life. Without parole.



Noble Craft of War (NQNG! 4)

Third party *ASL* manufacturers designed many of my favourite scenarios, especially the *All American* series. I like these companies and I support them. Unfortunately though, the quality of play testing often leaves a lot to be desired.

Is it only me who has noticed this? Certainly Peter Bennett and I have virtually stopped playing them, unless they are on the scenario list for a tournament. I know there are a lot of good, well balanced scenarios they come up with. On average though, official MMP productions in my experience are better tested. Which leads to a better game with a true test of skill. Tournament designers take note!

This *Heat of Battle* scenario is set in Normandy, 1944, featuring British attacking

SS. I played it as the defending Germans and won embarrassingly easily against Peter, who as I say is an excellent player. The fact is that the Brits only have nine squads attacking seven and a half, with worse ELR, leadership, SAN and support weapons, all against a time limit. The only thing they have going for them are a few tanks, two of which move at a snails pace. However, the terrain is very restrictive and the SS have PSKs, a minefield and an 81mm MTR.

How did this ever come to print? Just looking at it made me shiver because I was only playing it for practice in an upcoming tournament. Imagine having to take the field with the doomed British? OK, so you'd receive the balance but that's scant consolation.

Looking at the ROAR database on the Internet which displays the win/loss ratio of over 25,000 various scenario results shows a 26 to 11 hammering of the Allies. Any tournament organiser should make this directory his first port of call, as should any participant in one. Perhaps organisers should also wait for a newly published scenario to get a few results posted on it before they select it for their tournament. Balanced scenarios are the most important element in a good tournament. It's not that difficult to select them.

With regard to play testing, it is vital I think that designers are rigorous in this. They also need to get very good players to test them, as these are the people who will be able to exploit various loopholes and tactics the average player may miss. I know I've devoted more of my time recently to help play test scenarios. In that way I guess, I am contributing to the hobby in a constructive way.



Aachen's Pall (T8)

There are many unbalanced scenarios

around. I could pick lots of them out and simply highlight the imbalance of force and lack of play testing that let them arrive. That, though, would be rather dull. I also want to look at other reasons scenarios get my thumbs down, even ones that are otherwise balanced. Such as "Aachen's Pall", which I played once but can't remember anything about. I probably lost in that case!

This scenario was designed for tournament play, with an American force trying to clear Germans out of a building on board 1 in 1944. Well, it's certainly short at four turns. There's only five German squads defending against nine American. However, it also features an American assault gun with a WP depletion number of 8. I'm sorry but where's the test of skill here? If the Yanks roll and get WP, they'll usually win. If not, then the odds are against them. All on one dice roll. What a great way to go out of a tournament!

The difficulty with selecting tournament scenarios and indeed designing them, is one of balancing two opposing forces:

Tournaments have time limits. To get the requisite number of rounds in, scenarios need to be able to be finished on time. However, the shorter a scenario is and the less troops involved, the more luck and not skill becomes the determining factor in victory. For a tournament not to degenerate into farce, it should aim to be a contest of skill rather than luck.

"Aachen's Pall" has strayed too far down one side of those scales. Eminently short, it elevates luck to pre-eminence in the decision of who wins: A fatal flaw in a tournament scenario.



Soldiers of Destruction (GEN-N)

This scenario is a late 1944 offering

on the eastern front featuring an infantry/armour force of Russians trying to break through a defending cordon of SS infantry and tank destroyers. Unfortunately not only is it hugely unbalanced in favour of the Germans, the Russian balance provisions tip it enormously the other way, upgrading four T34/85s to IS-2s! Whichever way then, it is a horror. However, that is not my main reason for selecting it here. It is the type of scenario it is, the victory conditions being amassing enough exit victory points.

I often wonder what a scenario designer is trying to recreate historically when they demand that an attacker exit a certain amount. A breakthrough? Surely that implies destroying the force in front to secure an attackers own flank and rear. Otherwise as soon as an attacker exits he's cut off his own lines of supply to ammunition, fuel and everything else. One could have the bizarre example of one player managing to exit the requisite forces but leaving an entire enemy position intact to his rear and winning. Another player might annihilate completely the blocking force, losing nothing and with a free hand to surge forward but still lose. Where is the sense there?

Exit victory conditions only work when they attempt to portray a *break out*, such as an encircled and cut off force might attempt, or when the victory conditions are altered somewhat to reflect reality. In the latest offering from MMP, *GI's Dozen*, one scenario portrays this quite well. "Weissenhof Crossroads" has a German force attempting to break through an American one and exit a certain amount of victory points. However the amount required is reduced for each turn the Germans can force the Americans away from being adjacent to a vital crossroads. This encourages more realistic play, because if there is one thing that happens in exit games it is cheesy tactics on both sides: Board edge creeping by the attacker and sitting on the exit hexes for the defender. The other terrible side effect of these types of games, especially when AFVs are a major factor, is the risk of an all out charge. This reduces the game to a simple dice throwing exercise and takes out a lot of the skill that should be the main determinant of success. I've seen it happen many times.

At one *BERSERK!* tournament there was a scenario on offer, I can't remember it's name, which featured an armour heavy German force attempting to get past a British blocking force in 1940. The Brits, apart from infantry, had a couple of AT guns and some French tanks to arrive as reinforcements on about turn 3. Unfortunately, it was possible for the

Germans, by simply surging down the road, to exit before the French arrived. The whole game would be decided in effect in two or three turns, success revolving around the ROF of the AT guns.

What is the point, I ask myself? Why not flip a coin at the start: Heads I win tails I lose.

Getting back to "Soldiers of Destruction", I played this against Peter and set up a good German defence. What I remember most is Peter being so stymied by it that he had to resort to the charge tactic. He even apologised for it in advance! I managed to get a hit or two on his tanks and it was game over in less than half an hour.

Exit games. I hate them.



A Desperate Affair (G39)

In the summer of 1999 I went on holiday with my now ex-girlfriend to Crete. We had a great time and naturally I insisted we visit some of the WWII battlefields (that's not why we split up, by the way!). I've actually got a photograph of myself standing on the original Tavrontis Bridge, which is now a wreck. Anyway, suitably inspired I also got Peter to play a few Crete based scenarios around that time. One of them was "A Desperate Affair". It features a parachute drop on the heads of a very dispersed but elite British force over four whole boards. Now, I've nothing against parachute drop scenarios. I think the rules depict the process very well. However, most of them are pretty random events – as is historically correct of course – and for that reason I treat them differently to other scenarios. I think you can only ever see these scenarios as non-competitive simulations, not really true tests of skill. There's no point getting upset if you lose a scenario of this type, or being over gleeful if you end as victor: A different drop point, normally in the lap of the gods and the whole game would have changed. All you can do is take satisfaction from playing the best game you can.

It is not therefore the fact that this is a luck-based scenario that I dislike it. That

will always be the case with parachute drops. No, the reason it gets my thumbs down is due to the sleazy tactic it offers the defender to win: Massive squad deployment.

The victory conditions state that the Germans have to clear two adjoining half-boards of British MMCs whilst occupying them with one MMC of their own. What does a good British player do then? Deploy, retain concealment as long as possible and skulk around the edges straddling two boards. Exactly what my opponent Peter did in this one, forcing a loss on me.

This scenario then is an example of what can happen when play testing does not adequately foresee how certain rule use can turn a scenario into a walkover. Deployment for the British should be limited or banned, or the victory conditions demand a squad equivalent instead of just an MMC.

I know there are a lot of sleazy tactics that can be used in scenarios. God knows I use a lot of them myself. However, it is not the skilful player who should be blamed but the publisher of the scenario for allowing them to be used. Thankfully more and more scenarios have SSR disallowing kindling and the voluntary abandonment of vehicles, two of the more common offenders. One wonders whether it would not be better to change the rules themselves, only allowing these tactics by SSR? We shall have to wait upon the 2nd edition rulebook to see if any possibilities for sleaze have been curtailed.



Stand Fast the Guards (A15)

This scenario is set in 1940 and features a British force defending the countryside outside Boulogne against a German attacker. The Germans are trying to either breakthrough and exit a certain amount of VPs (grrr!) or clear the main hill of Brits. The defenders have a couple of AT guns, which they'll need against four Panzer Mk IIIs. However, the weakness of this scenario is in the SSR and it features one which is, thankfully, almost unique.

At the start of each of their movement phases, the British player makes a dr to determine how many MMC he can move

that phase.

What's that all about then? I imagine it's supposed to represent confusion amongst the defenders but in doing so goes far overboard.

The quality ASL scenarios involve a lot of manoeuvre. This can be taken as read for the attacker but the more it can be encouraged for the defender, the better. Fall back defences, re-aligning a defensive line, placing reinforcements and counter attacking are all examples of giving the defender a chance to enjoy himself and stretch his playing skills.

Admittedly there are times and situations where this becomes difficult to represent if the historical situation demands it. Look at the scenario "Inhumaine" in the latest journal. Basically the Germans are restricted to setting up in and defending the famous board 6 fortified manor house. Though it is historical and tense it sadly does not make for a very interesting game for the defender.

"Stand fast the Guards" is a very dull game for the Brits. They can't even use the universal skulking defence! Nor do they all get the chance to sit in the mixed blessing of entrenchments. Any good German attacker can make mincemeat of them.

In conclusion then, not only does this SSR make this an unbalanced scenario; it makes it a boring one. A far better way to represent confusion in command and control would have been something less harsh: A DR instead of dr, adding the turn number to the dr or making the dr the number of MMC that could *not* move. Perhaps just limiting the penalty to the first three turns. Anything would have been better than this serious handicap. Enjoyment is a key element in scenario design and that means allowing both sides to use as many different tactics as possible, not restricting them unnecessarily.



The Crux of Calais (A22)

There is a bit of a 1940 theme growing here, but that is I assure you pure coincidence. This scenario features a mixed British force in their doomed attempt to stop the Germans crossing a canal in Calais. The defenders have a couple of AT guns and

some crap tanks. The Germans get quite a few decent tanks to support their main infantry attack.

Now obviously in every scenario the defender must attempt to guess the axis of an enemy's attack. Usually you don't put all your eggs in one basket, as indeed if you did the attacker could react to what he can see and just bypass your defensive line. Also as a defender it is good practice to have a bit of a reserve that can plug any gaps.

Unfortunately this scenario forces an enormous decision on the defender straight away. Any decent German player will force all their forces over just one bridge at either end of the board in true *schwerpunkt* style. Normally, the defender could react a bit with a reserve. However, this scenario permits the Germans to neatly set a kill stack up to watch over any redeployment, making it near impossible. Also, having just one AT gun to defend the bridge being attacked is not enough – you really need both to stand even a chance of winning. But to have both, you have to guess which bridge will be attacked...

It's a scenario where victory for the British depends on predicting a German assault – a one in two chance. Even then they are up against it. Such a decision though robs the game of a test of skill and makes it one of luck.

I played this scenario twice actually. The first time was against Mike Rudd in Newcastle during my formative *ASL* years and I got thoroughly trounced as the British. At least I had enough tactical knowledge to realise it was a dog even then.

The second time I played it, I think in the first or second INTENSIVE FIRE tournament, I'd turned up at the last minute with the scenarios I wanted to play only to find my kind team mates had already lumbered me with this one! Thankfully I got the Germans and it was virtually a bygone conclusion before the first die had rolled.



Rescue Attempt (ASL89)

I really don't like this one, for a variety of reasons. The initial premise for it isn't actually too bad – a mixed armoured and infantry force of Belgian soldiers in 1940 defending against an all infantry

German assault. However, for starters the German's are tripe. All 2nd class line against 1st class Belgians. Why is that? Is it historical? If the 7th German Infanterie Division was that bad I don't know how it made any headway in the first place. Or perhaps the attackers were downgraded to remove the normal range advantage, which would otherwise unbalance things? In that case it's wrong – historical accuracy should take precedence in OOBs.

Secondly, I tend to dislike scenarios, which involve attacking across open ground against an enemy with HMGs and MMGs. The reason for this: Too much comes down to simple luck. "Oh, I got ROF a few times. I've won!"

Thirdly, in attempting to recreate a staged withdrawal, the Belgians earn Victory Points for exiting troops, but they can only exit on turn six onwards. Now, I don't mind tailoring victory conditions to encourage historical play, but it has to be carefully planned. In this scenario what happens in practice is that a shrewd batch of defenders charge off on turn one and skulk around concealed on the board edge until they can nip off. What historical accuracy has that achieved? The game becomes a farce.

Lastly, extra Victory Points can also be garnered by the Belgians having some AFVs within a certain number of hexes of a point somewhere in the middle of the board. I guess this is to encourage the Belgian player to defend the railway crossing – once again an admirable attempt to encourage historical play. Sadly, this too falls on its face: As the Belgian player moves last, he can carry out a sleazy charge with his tiny AFVs at the end, staying in motion. The Germans then get one Defensive Fire Phase to knock some out. If they don't, the Belgian player is rewarded with double points for those tankettes, even though he might not control the crossroads in any way, shape or form.

I played Peter at this one with me as the Germans and recall it as my least enjoyable game ever. It probably would have come down at the end to a tankette charge, but I couldn't be bothered to sit through the whole torturous scenario just to make a few "To hit" and "To kill" rolls. What's the point? Let's roll the dice at the beginning and get it over with.

It still makes me seethe now just thinking about it...

The final instalment, 'The Ugly, in which Toby looks at campaign games, will appear in the next issue of VFTT – Pete.

Nikon's Whirlwind ASLOK XV Tour

Mark Nixon

DAY I

Day One was something like January 1st, 2000. Woke up, drank coffee, thought about ASLOK, went back to bed.

DAY II

Must be about April by now and I better get the ASLOK info out before David Goldman, Mike Zeimentz and John Stadick (the yearly early-birds) preregister without me. Get it done; pre-reg envelopes immediately begin to fill my mailbox. It's like affirmation of faith. Great to hear from all the guys every year. Even Brian Youse makes early contact to sign-up a half squad of MMP guys; Hennie van der Salm is the first contact from overseas.

ASLOK DAY ONE

First contacts from the Radisson are Saturday, September 30th. Joe Devine and Aaron Cleavin are in, looking to gun. Brian Martuzas hits town with Lars-Petter Simonsen, the floodgates open and the Radisson is swarming with Berserk dice rolling ASL Fanatics.

ASLOK DAY TWO

Sunday, October 1st and I'm still finishing off scenario choices for the Mini Tournaments. I rationalize it is always wise to wait till the last minute to ensure all the most recent scenarios published can be included, but in the back of my mind I truly do understand the likelihood these past few days might have seen publication of yet another Journal or perhaps volume #7 of *Schwerpunkt* were remote. Typing the lists of scenarios into my laptop drags and the power goes out. Battery is dead as well. I fret. That bit about waiting till the last minute begins to haunt me. I consider hand writing the lists but realize that would look amateurish, especially when compared to the beautiful name badges being Federal Expressed my way that very moment by good buddy Timbo. With this thought in mind, I persevere; power returns and the lists are completed. Now my scenarios will look every bit as professional as Timbos badges. Why haven't I heard from him? I fret anew.

Reach the Radisson around 3:00 and get into a game of *Weissenhof Crossroads* with Joe Devine. Great to see Joe again after an absence of several years. His .50cal with the 9-1 is in a perfect spot. Yeah right, a perfect spot to take a smoke round from a siG 38 that is. Smoke spreads across the front and my Germans swarm into the US lines. My 150* guns start hitting and pretty soon I have basically diced up a victory. Joe probably played a better game than I did, but what ya' gonna do about the dice?

Spend the rest of the evening carousing and drinking a couple Norwegian beers, courtesy of Lars. Make mental note to remind others from overseas they might bring local brews for comparison; promptly forget mental note, courtesy of Lars' Norwegian beer.

ASLOK DAY THREE

Monday dawns and ASL players are all over the place. For much of the morning I'm doing some mystic duty that has to do with running the tournament but I sure don't remember what. Get into a game of *King of The Hill* (Deluxe 18) with Tom Cvetinovich. I don't really have any good reason for it, but when ya' got Tankdozers and bocage ya' sorta just feel compelled to use 'em, so

my boys proceed to plow the landscape to their liking. If only we had the optional planter affixed to one of these Shermans there'd be one helluva nice apple orchard in Haut Vents, France. Whatever, Tommy makes the critical error of allowing me to use his own dice against him so I pass every Bog check and ESB roll and by the end of the game he decides he doesn't like those dice any more so gives them to me. This is huge to make off with these dice, as my future opponents will discover. My first win vs Tommy, who is always a hoot to play.

Throughout the day I continue to wonder about Timbo's excellent badges. Soon enough the horrible truth becomes quite clear (that is, he calls me) that none are forthcoming. But at least the honorable Timbo has the grace to blame it on his wife, so he gets huge style points. ALRIGHT!!!! He is with us in spirit!

Monday night is out on the town with the crew from Indy and we manage to find the high spots and the low spots. Mike Daniel seems to know every dancer in Cleveland and the one I am massaging is pretty cute.....but I digress. It should be pointed out that Tommy and I thrash Mike and Jason Eickmann at darts (cricket) and do it without even using Tommy's super dice.

ASLOK DAY FOUR

Tuesday the influx of gamers reaches such a level that I lose track of all time and space. Do not play but continue the mystic tradition of tournament directorship. Let's see now, that is: run out to buy more beer, talk with new arrivals, cut out little Squad Leader circles to glue on plaques, pass out T-shirts, buy more beer, so on and on, you get the idea. At some point in there I am quite sure I drink a beer or two.

ASLOK DAY FIVE

Wednesday brings an 8:00 AM crowd to Ballroom #5 for the first Mini Tournaments. Official gaming begins as 7 Mini events kick into gear. Everything runs smooth and the only complaint is that I have failed to make enough extra T-shirts. My day is spent running around and not playing, but that cannot continue for Tommy's dice are still glowing and waiting for action.

ASLOK DAY SIX

Thursday 8:00 AM and 11 new Theme Tournaments begin including GROFAZ. We are in full swing now but I manage a game of *Ils Ne Passeront Pas* (SP62) vs Jason Eickmann. I forget Tommy's nuclear dice but use Jason's own against him to even greater effect. My heroic 10-3 is unstoppable and the final blows land when my 9-2 armor leader in a Sherman IIIa takes out Jason's two reinforcing PzIVH's as soon as they enter the board, frontally, in one First Fire phase. Ya' gotta like that! Jason gives me his dice.

ASLOK DAY SEVEN

Friday brings another 7 Mini Tournaments and *Schwerpunkt* runs an event as well. We are up to 162 players at this point and a lot of them have been here for days and days. Signs of exhausted delight are everywhere: glazed eyes, staggering walk, stumbling speech, disorientation, you know the feeling if you've been there. I get in a game of Round One (84) with Jim McCormick, another ASLOK vet returning after a long absence. My Poles seem destined



to get totally annihilated by Jim's FT so I have to quit Jason's dice and haul out my ace-in-the-hole.....Tommy's dice, and they save the day as Jim gets way too aggressive with his weak armor. I think he has the game if he plays cautious with his armor, but we are playing fast and furious and it works to my advantage.

Pete Shelling starts up his team tournament which features East Front action for three-player teams. Each player need play only one game and it proves interesting to see who plays whom and how the points add up, for each ensuing round is affected by performance in preceeding rounds. How Pete decides opponents is one of those unexplainable mysteries which, son of a gun, I cannot explain, so ask Pete. Our ASLOK STAVKA team sends Rick Troha up against Tom "JAZZ" Jazzbutis, he of the infamous Wild West Fest fame and wielder of the all-powerful "coffee-sock". They play a scenario which lasts about all day and seems to give and take fairly even. In fact, all but one game goes well, but the Windy City team manages to totally cream their opposition, I think Bendis is probably moving double with triple Fanatic infantry or something like that, and so 1st place is immediately out of reach for everyone else.

ASLOK DAY EIGHT

Saturday Mini's get the go ahead at 8:00 AM, as always, and we manage to muster enough bodies for 8 events plus another Schwerpunkt tournament. My team event pairs me with Brian Youse and I set-up my Russians all HIP. Mines, Wire, guns, good golly how I hate HIP! Brian manages to hit my strength and we trade a lot of shots in what I think is an even exchange, but Brian seems disturbed by all the HIP crap and fails his personal morale check. But he carries on and we actually end fairly even; okay so I need a critical hit on one of his HT's to get the upper hand, it all counts and so Tommy's dice do me well yet again. My first win ever vs. Brian and I don't even mention his past win which involved several critical hits from King Tigers against my 10-3 and 9-2 leaders in.....oops, did I say that?

ASLOK DAY NINE

Sunday brings an amazing number of stalwart players into the ASLOK arena. Wild Bill Hayward, a guy I cannot thank enough for running the all-night shift every night, turns over the helm yet again and play continues. Most of the day is spent on Open play and on getting the remaining Mini's finished off and, oh yeah, something called the GROFAZ has to be resolved. Details of all the winners can be found on this website. The day brings founders Bill GROFAZ Conner and Darryl ACTION Burk into the arena; it is great to see them again.

Something seems wrong because I have played five games so far and won them all. It's time for a change, so Sunday evening we open things up and Doug Creutz and I sit down for a speed game of First Crisis at Army Group North. The only thing slow about this game is the damned Russian MMG's progress across the board; it just can't keep up with those tanks. My tanks crash into Doug's lines and even Tommy's dice can't pull out a win with this stumble-bum attack. However, I'm not taking anything away from Doug's play, for he makes all the right moves and my attack might have worked had he not. Game over in about an hour and now we need more serious fun.

We throw together an eight-man tag-team match of Timoshenko's Attack and ad-lib the details. Players rotate boards so there is no point thinking too much since each turn brings you the shambles left behind by your teammate on a different board. The odd man tags in and one player sits out for a rest (like, right, read that, to drink beer). My German teammates include Tom

Cvetinovich, Steve Flicker and Steve Tinsley opposed by Russians Doug Creutz, Jason Eickmann, Hennie van der Salm and Shaun Carter. Others are in there at some point I believe, for I recall Jazz in the neighborhood and surely some others. Whatever, the highlight of the game is Tommy's "brilliant" positioning of a LMG behind the platoon of T-28's. Baby, those tankers have no idea what they are dealing with. Of course Tommy moves on to the next board before he gets to shoot and Doug moves in, starts up the tanks and starts moving. Tommy hollers out, "Flicker, you gotta shoot at those tanks", so we all get a big laugh, Ho-Ho-Ho, "Yeah Steve, nail 'em up the butt with that LMG". Astute player that he is, Steve rolls up EYES followed by EYES to nail it up the butt. Next tank, slam bam, thank you mam, up the butt and dead. Third tank gets through this awesome line of defense and Steve has to resort to using the 37L ATG to kill this one, hardly sporting. Doug makes a lightening quick assessment of the situation and dumps this board. Russians proceed to win on one of the other boards, but it is anticlimactic to the preceeding action

Now it is late and what do we have enough energy to do? TANK RUMBLE!! This is yet more fun and I can't even whine about my Firefly landing in the middle of woods, as Hennie is kind enough to come straight at me and let me nail whatever behemoth tank he is driving at the time. The RUMBLE lasts till we all grow weary and I cannot recall the winner.

ASLOK DAY TEN

Monday morning, a total of 166 have come to play, but it is time we say "so long" to the last of the stragglers. It has been another great time. Look forward to another one in 2001, but for now, it is time to catch up on some sleep.

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Throwing Away The Rulebook

Mike Rudd

I won't be binning my *ASL* rulebook quite yet but like many other *ASL* players there are aspects of the rules I dislike and would like to change.

I first played *ASL* in 1987 with university friends as a change from role-playing games. *ASL* seemed incredibly complex, written in a bizarre abbreviated computer programming language but was also the closest match to battlefield accounts that I've seen before or since. In the early days, we only had one rulebook and a copy of *Beyond Valor*. To replay historical or film battles we wrote the scenarios and invented rules for planes, trains and parachutes. I miss that time of flexibility and creativity. In the last decade or so the *ASL* rulebook has grown, eliminating the need to invent rules. Each rule addition is greeted by players loyally trudging their way through the dreary porridge of the latest 37 cross-referenced paragraphs of canoe and raft errata. Similarly the flood of modules means there's little need to write scenarios. If you want to play a game with bicycle mounted dare-death squads charging Belgium tanks across a frozen lake in a sandstorm, then the scenario's probably available on the web. "Great" you might say a complete game leaves more time to play. I'm not so certain.

Is there such a thing as the definitive set of rules? They have expanded with new chapters and new units published but no fundamental changes have been made, to for example the turn sequence. I believe *ASL* has to change to progress further. There has been little *ASL* evolution in the last few years. As the next stage of *ASL* evolution I'd like to see more diversity and extinction. I think the *ASL* world would improved by a fair portion of the rules/*ASL* material being struck by the proverbial meteorite. Something better, more interesting would replace it. I'm going to ignore the easy

targets like "beach landings" and aim my meteorite at chapters A-D.

Ordnance

What's this business with artillery target types? Do you think a gun crew in WWII under fire from a squad of SS, scratched their heads and said "lads do you think Area or Infantry Target Type" Of course not, they just tried to land a shell near the enemy (except Russians who probably just pointed their guns west & pulled the string).

On D-day Tommy is pinned down by a MG42 hidden in a fortified building/pillbox, what would he pray for to help him out? Probably something with a big gun on it such as a Churchill AVRE or a 95mm Cromwell. In the *ASL* world much more useful than an AVRE would be light ordnance with a high ROF to build up acquired counters to hit the target on the Infantry Target Type. Or worse, three light mortars to pepper the target until you get a critical hit. How many concrete pillboxes were eliminated in the whole of WWII by 50mm mortars? I'm no historian but the number probably lies between nought and zero. In *ASL* infantry mortars knock out loads of hard targets.

And on the subject of light mortars I thought they were so cumbersome that the best army in the world handed them to reservists? In *ASL* they are an outstanding weapon; in open ground they act as machine guns, in woods as airburst killers and in cities as critical hit creators. I don't think *ASL* designers thought out the effect of ROF

and mortars. Yes, they you can reload them quickly but they lob a usually unrifled projectile so you need a lot more shots than other ordnance to achieve a result.

In 1942, heavy assault guns were rushed to the German 6th army at Stalingrad. They saw the StuIG 33Bs as a valuable weapon capable of knocking out fortified positions. If General Paulus had used *Red Barricades* as a battle simulator then he would have requested instead a trainload of heavy machine guns. In *Red Barricades* kill stacks of MGs dominate the battle and clear fortified factories too easily. In *ASL* three HMGs with a 9-2 leader can't kill a man behind 2 inches of AFV armour but 3 foot of concrete or sandbags is easily penetrated. Sorry chaps but if the HMG was an effective attacking weapon WWI would have been over by Christmas and the tank never invented. Kill stacks ruin *RB* campaigns.

Solution

I would love to see all friendly games played without the rulebook but with mutually agreed rules, representing your interpretation of realism. Remember prior to the British *ASL* community coming together at INTENSIVE FIRE 1995 groups of players had their own interpretations of rules. The rules are only valuable as a tool to create the best possible simulation of WWII infantry conflict. If you have better ideas use them. The balance of games may change but so what, if you're not in a competition then do what suits you.

I would like to play friendly games with rules modified to "fix" the above flaws.

You may not agree with my perception of flaws, but I bet there are *ASL* rules that irritate you enough to change?

Grenadier 2000 AAR

Toby Pilling

Some personal fixes

Ordnance: Vehicle target type is carried out as usual against AFVs. LATWs use their own table with normal modifiers.

All other ordnance attacks use the infantry target type. Case Q (the to hit modifier for TEM) is not applicable for these attacks. HE effects are at full power with a TEM modifier. Critical Hits attack at double firepower but normal TEM.

For example a 70mm mortar and a Sherman with a 105mm gun fire at a squad in a stone building from 5 hex range. Both will hit on a DR=8. The mortar's effect is a 12 FP attack with a +3 TEM modifier. Average result = a PTC. The Sherman's effect is a 20 FP+3 average result = 1MC. The mortars CH will have a 24FP+3 effect DR.

Rate of Fire: Mortars can only ever make one attack per player turn (ROF=0). Nonmortars firing in movement phase (Defensive First Fire) use ROF rules normal. In other fire phases all printed ROF is reduced by one. This still allows 88mm AT guns and HMGs to mow down a Russian charge but limits CH seeking and excessive numbers of attacks on stationary targets.

MG Killstacks: Assume that in any building, fortification or woods there are limited firing positions for tripod mounted machineguns. MMGs or HMGs in any location with a positive TEM must fire using different covered arcs to the others in that location. This means, two HMGs in a building can shoot out the front and back door at the same time but not both out of the front door. Combined with the ROF rules machinegun attacks will still be potent defensive weapons but you may have to send assault engineers to clear a pillbox.

Where do we go from here?

I'd be interested to hear your comments, criticisms or most frustrating aspect of *ASL* and favourite *ASL* house rules. Also if anyone tries out my fixes or would like to play a "fixed" Red Barricades campaign with myself then email me at Guruornutter@hotmail.com or send a note to me at 2 Blaeberry Hill, Rothbury, NE65 7YY.

Do you believe in omens? On being presented with my breakfast on the BA flight to Cologne, I was apologetically informed that the caterers had forgotten to pack any cutlery. As I ate my yoghurt with a makeshift spoon fashioned from a foil container lid, I pondered whether this augured well. Only time would tell.

Christian Koppermeyer who organised the tournament had been very patient in giving me fool proof, step by step directions to its location in the town of Hergarten within the Eiffel region of Western Germany. These I followed assiduously, taking the opportunity to practice the German I've been learning recently at night school:

"Entschuldigen Sie, bitte. Ich bin Engländer. Ich spreche nicht Deutsch. Sprechen Sie Englisch?"

Gets you a long way, that phrase.

I'd examined the scenario list of the four rounds on the Internet with some trepidation. Checking out the ROAR database confirmed my fears that several of the offerings appeared to be extremely unbalanced, especially in the first two rounds. I'd prepared with a couple of practice games but knew if I got the wrong side in the wrong scenario, the bell would be tolling...

The tournament began at 6pm on Friday the 10th of November but I managed to arrive with a few hours to spare. The location was a sort of Youth Hostel type affair, with everyone sleeping in dormitories. I was lumbered with an upper bunk bed. Ho hum.

I began with a friendly game against an excellent chap called Rudi Grossholdermann. We played a scenario from the latest "GI's Dozen" pack called 'Hans sur Neid'. Dicing for sides landed me with the Americans, who I set up a defence for. The scenario is unusual in that the German units come on in random sequence on random board edges. Luckily for me, Rudi had probably the worst sequence of the various permutations possible. Combined with some good play by me and my 100mm OBA that finally did something, Rudi conceded in time for Christian's

opening address and his announcement of the tourneys first match ups.

Round 1

My opponent was a nice bloke called Ronny Novicky and we ended up playing a Schwerpunkt scenario called The Hornet of Cloville. I'd managed to get in a practice game of this back in Blighty and thought it rather pro German. We both accordingly opted for the Germans, I lost out and got the rather meaningless balance.

The key to success for the Americans in this one is not to take cheap morale checks. I therefore tried to keep concealment for as long as possible whilst I crept forward, utilising the SMOKE generating capabilities of the supporting Shermans as much as possible. In short, my plan worked like clockwork. Upon conceding, Ronny paid me quite a complement when he said:

"That wasn't a loss. It was an education."

I was the only player to win that scenario with the allies.

Round 2

The problem with this round was that two of the scenarios were absolute howlers. Marine Ambush and Franzen's Roadblock are both totally unbalanced dogs. This only left the tiny Test of Nerves as the luck based option, which both my opponent and I opted for as the least of all evils.

I was playing Francois Boudrenghien, a very good player who I understand is currently rated third on the French AREA ratings list. We opted for different sides, with me as the Brits.

The game started terribly for me with Francois popping off a superb speculative shot with a Tiger which took out my HIP Firefly. Then my AT gun malfunctioned with its second shot, before being blasted to oblivion with a critical hit from that same Tiger.

Such misfortune though merely spurred me to greater efforts and through some superlative play I managed to repulse his infantry attack, recall a Tiger and destroy a Panzer IV. With one turn to go there was everything to play for. I managed to manoeuvre one of my tanks to a LOS on the victory hexes, which would secure my win, if I survived his next turn.

Ω

As he moved his Tiger into position, I went for a HEAT shot from my Cromwell VI at its exposed hull rear. Rolled a double six.

He stopped the Tiger a hex away, fired and missed, then intensive fired. The modifiers: Buttoned up (+1), Intensive Fire (+2), Bounding Fire (+4), Motion Target (+2), Height Advantage (+1), SMOKE hindrance (+2), Armour Leader (-1).

Overall (+11).

Rolls snake eyes. As he attempted to roll for penetration, I said.

"Hang on a minute. It's only an improbable hit. Roll again."

Rolls a one. BOOM!

Hmm. These things are sent to try us.

Round 3

I couldn't win the tournament now but I was confident of a win in this round. The reason was that Christian had wisely made this the round of the large scenario. I therefore felt that my skill should be able to overcome even an unbalanced scenario. I was soon able to put this theory to the test as I ended up with the balance as the Americans in another Schwerpunkt scenario, Tabacchificio Fioche, against an all round good bloke; the Swiss player called Christian Mazzei.

I found this a very frustrating scenario. The time limit is really against the Yanks, who have to charge forward with crap morale troops. I had to resort to using riders on a troop of Shermans on my left flank, who amazingly survived to disembark and threaten the victory buildings early on.

At one point though I was seriously considering conceding. I'm glad I didn't as I eventually got one 100mm OBA stonk down, which was my lot, but my 50 cal did sterling work directed by the 9-2 leader to clear the way for a charge. My opponent had to put up with me alternately swearing and sulking until a disastrous turn 4 for him, when I broke most resistance and was poised for a mass attack on his few remaining defenders. At that point he surrendered, in part citing extreme exhaustion as a reason. Looking at my watch I realised it was 2am!

Time flies when you're having fun.

Round 4

Amazingly at this stage I was still in with a shout at finishing in the top three. The points system that Christian was using meant that you actually gained and lost them not only for your own victories but also according to the win/loss record of your various opponents. I needed to win my last

game and have everyone else I had played up to now win as well. Then, I just might creep into the awards.

I was up against a Frenchman called Frederic Guillemont and we ended up playing Inhumaine. It wasn't my choice as I feel it can be quite a dull game for the Germans who spend the whole game scuttling around one building. Luckily in recompense, I got the Americans, though had to give him the balance.

I'm pleased to say I carried out a textbook attack and wrapped up the game in three turns. Who needs Churchill Crocodiles?

One amusing moment, for me, was when Frederic had the mixed blessing of rolling Heat of Battle with a leader, who went Berserk. Unfortunately for him he caused the other three squads in his location to follow him. I then spent my next movement phase engineering a trap so lethal and unique it was like a work of art.

Come his turn to move, the nearest known unit to him was my 9-2 leader directing two 50 cal, nine hexes away on a straight road. I was actually a little disappointed that their charge only lasted two hexes into the fire lane. All that was left was a bloody smear on the tarmac.

Life can be cruel.

Aftermath

I was anxiously watching the progress of all my previous opponents. Christian and Ronny had both won, so my fate was intimately connected to Francois' ability to defeat one of the famed Tielemans brothers. Sadly he lost, ending up in third place overall with the brothers netting first and second. I came fifth, which I suppose is decent enough in a field of thirty-two players.

On my way home I managed to explore Cologne cathedral, which is a must. Thankfully, cutlery was supplied on the return flight.

I found the tournament great fun, even if the scenario selection was a bit suspect. Christian was a fantastic host and everyone I met was extremely friendly. If you can put up with roughing it in a youth hostel, I recommend it to any others.

As the only Englishman there, I flew the flag with pride.



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BERSERK!

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BRITISH OBA IN NORTHWEST EUROPE

Paul Case

This is a quick overview of British Artillery in ASL, with some comparisons to other countries Arty. This is not a complete be-all-and-end-all piece, just my interpretation of the Brit OBA as I think it should be. Nor is this a challenge to the ASLRB in any way, shape or form at all!!

Now that I have the disclaimer out of the way, I shall begin.

As some of you lot may know, I served in the Royal Artillery between 1980 and 1987. In a Field Regiment (49th to be exact). Therefore, I should know a bit about the subject (not a lot).

ORGANISATION

Infantry Divisions:- 3 x Fld Regts each - 3 x Btys each - 2 x Trps each - 4 x 25pdrs.

Also, each Trp had a FOO Party (the Trp Commander generally), and a Command Post.

The usual attachment was that each Inf Bde would get one Fld Regt, and each of it's 3 Inf Batts would each get a Bty. These were all towed 25pdrs.

Armoured Divisions:- 1 x Fld Regt of - 3 x Btys each - 2 x Trps each - 4 x towed 25pdrs.

1 x SP Fld Regt of - 3 x Btys each - 2 x Trps each - 4 x Sextons.

As above, each Trp had a FOO and a Comd Post. The Inf Bde would usually have the Fld Regt and the Armd Bde would have the SP Fld Regt attached.

I say usually, because in war nothing goes to plan.

The eyes of the Arty was the junior Officers/senior NCOs in the FOO teams (which is pretty obvious), even though the Bty Commander (BC) would be a spare FOO. His main job was as a advisor to the Inf/Armd Commander. The same is true of the Regt Commander (CO) and the CRA, they would be at their respective Inf/Armd Commanders HQs.

The British OBA module would be equal to a Troop of 4 Guns. That's 2 modules to a Bty!

FIRE MISSIONS

The priority of Fire Missions is as follows :-

- 1; Defence of the Gun Position.
- 2; FPF.
- 3; Normal Fire Missions.

4; General Fire Support.

5; Interdiction (lobbying the occasional round behind enemy lines at, say, a cross-roads. Just to piss the enemy off!).

The first Fire Mission fired from the position (EXC. No.1 above) was also used to provide occasional data (weather, earth rotation, wind direction and speed etc) for the following Fire Missions. Thereby, speeding things up a bit. As a side note: one of my mates in the Bty Comd Post beat the computer in calculating corrections using a similar method that was used during the war, and the computer is not slow.

When the Guns are not on a Fire Mission, they are loaded and laid on the FPF. It is the fastest Mission from a standing start (40 secs from receiving the radio message from the FOO, to the rounds landing on the ground, assuming a Time of Flight of 30 secs).

COMPARISONS

U.S.Army :- Inf Div :- 3 x Batts each - 3 x Btys each - 4 x 105mm Hows (towed).
1 x Batt - 3 x Btys each - 4 x 150mm Hows (towed).

Armd Div :- 3 x Batt each - 3 x Btys each - 6 x 105mm SP Hows (M7).

The U.S were a bit slower than the Brits, but they had a lot of ammo to make up for it. Also, they had extra units from Corps and Army. They also have Plentiful ammo.

German Army :- Inf Div :- 3 x Batts each - 2 x Btys each - 4 x 105mm Hows (towed).

1 x Bty - 3 x 105mm Hows (towed).
1 x Batt - 3 x Btys each - 4 x 150mm Hows (towed).

Pz Div :- 1 x Batt - 3 x Btys each - 4 x 105mm Hows (towed).

1 x Batt - 3 x Btys each - 4 x 150mm Hows (towed).

1 x Batt - 2 x Btys each - 6 x 105mm Hows (Wespe).

1 x Bty - 6 x 150mm Hows(Hummel).

The German Army was slower than the Brits, by a fair bit, except in static situations. They also rarely had Plentiful ammo, Scarce Ammo being the norm. A lot of their communications would be wire based.

Soviet Army :- Rifle Div :- 3 x Batts

each - 2 x Btys each - 4 x 76mm Field Guns.
1 x Bty - 4 x 122mm Hows.

Tank/Mech Corps :- 1 x Regt - HQ - 1 x SU-152/ ISU-152.

4 x Btys each - 5 x SU-152/ ISU-152.
1 x Batt - 2 x Btys each - 4 x BM-132 (Katyusha).

The Soviet Army was like WW1 Artillery, and relied almost entirely on wire communications. Therefore, they would only qualify for General Support Arty in the game sense, but late in the war, their Artillery would have Plentiful Ammo.

All the above does not include Mortars and AT/AA units.

RULE PROPOSALS

(These are mainly taken from Jim 'Gunny' Thompson's article in Critical Hit! (Vol.4 No.1) called 'STEEL RAIN')

Direct Support Arty.

Number of missions per Direct Support module:- 1 per 3 turns (FRD).

Additions/Subtractions:- Plentiful Ammo +1 mission.

Scarce Ammo -1 mission.

On defence +1 mission and 1 x Pre-Reg hex.

There is no chit draw for Direct Support missions, only for General Support .

Accuracy is as normal, but with the following drm for FOO's :- Elite -1. Green +1.

The following are guidelines:-

British and US FOO's are Elite and their Direct Support Arty has Plentiful Ammo.

German FOO's are Elite in Panzer, Pz Gren, SS Panzer and other elite units, but are Normal in most other units.

Soviet FOO's are Normal in Guards units, and Green in non-Guards units.

POSTSCRIPT

This is just my observation as an Ex-Artillery soldier. I would like to thank Jim for putting his thoughts in CH, thereby, easing the writing of this article. Finally, I would like to thank all who make this Game the best in the world!

Lets hope the only wars are cardboard ones!

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VIEW FROM

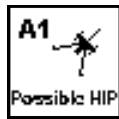
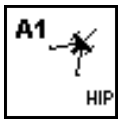


Now Where Did I Put That Gun?

HIP Guns for Solo Play

Chris Riches

As a solo ASL player, Hidden Initial Placement (HIP) has always given me a problem. Not with the rules, but with how to play against oneself whilst seeing what should otherwise be hidden. This is particularly important for anti-tank guns, which when visible are easily bypassed by an enemy vehicle. The following system aims to cater for this, with each gun being potentially present in any one of 3 locations until it is proven to be in one of them.



How the system works is to allocate 3 "Hidden Gun" counters to each Gun in an OB which can set up Hidden. These are individually numbered (A1, A2, A3 B1, B2, B3 etc). They have a front side (status "H") and a reverse side (status "P"). H is a Hidden Gun, and P is a Possible Hidden Gun (one which has been tested and is either not in that location, or is there and chose not to fire when it had the opportunity). A gun may be present in a counter of either type, but is less likely to be in a "P". All counter set up as status "H", and may do so in any allowable locations by the owning side, with a facing as per the marker.

For game purposes the Gun is treated as Hidden until it reveals itself, ie it fires or has to reveal itself when mandated to do so by other rules (eg Searching). The process of revealing a gun is similar in both cases.

Firing

The owning player declares that he wants to take a shot with a hidden gun, and rolls on the Hidden Gun Check table below. He cross references the number of "H" or "P" counters still in play for that gun, and reads the result under the relevant column, depending on whether he was firing a status "H" or "P" marker.

For a status "H" counter, the result will either be that the Gun can fire, or that the counter is flipped to its "P" side. When rolling for a status "P" marker, it may fire, may be removed entirely from the board, or may remain in place. Only one attempt may be made per firing opportunity, and if a gun is not revealed, no further attempts may be made until the gun would be able to fire again. Mark it with the appropriate Prep/Defensive Fire marker. Use the coloured die of this roll as a ROF roll.

Leadership DRMs may be applied if one

is set aside at the start of the scenario as being part of the Gun crew. Leadership DRMs of other leaders who happen to be present in the hex are N/A.

If the gun fires, put it on the map and continue as normal. Also remove all remaining H or P markers for this gun. If the counter is flipped or removed, do so. Note that in the latter cases, this will increase the probability of the gun being present in the other Hidden Gun location(s). If there is only one Hidden Gun marker left for a particular gun, then the Gun is automatically in that location (but remains hidden). It does not have to roll on the Hidden Gun Check table when it wishes to fire.

getting close to defeating the object of the exercise.

For the mathematicians, the probabilities are pretty well served by the table below, assuming a 1/3 chance of the gun being in any one of the counters, and an 80% chance of it firing on request. One may question why leadership modifiers are allowed, but I have restricted it to leaders which must be hidden with the gun (and hence otherwise unusable), and it reflects the likelihood that the canny leader has been more likely to second guess where the attack would come.

Rolling to Prove

If a check is required to prove whether a gun is in a location or not (successful search, entry of the hex by the enemy etc), then roll on the Hidden Gun Check table and roll as many times as is necessary (following the normal sequence) to prove whether the gun is there or is not.

General Notes

The three counters for a gun are each able to make a check during the same fire phase, and the probabilities for each roll will vary depending on the outcome of the first roll(s). The owner may also choose, during a fire phase, to make a roll even if there is no target present.

Another feature which I find works well is to allow hidden guns to be manhandled from one concealment terrain location to another or change CA without changing their H or P status, but this counts as their action and precludes a revealing die roll.

Two hidden gun markers may set up in the same hex, and each may attempt its own check roll in the same fire phase, but this is

Example

At the first opportunity of a defensive fire shot, a gun makes a check. It is one of the three status H counters, and rolls a "7", so is flipped to status "T" and marked with a defensive fire counter.

A second counter attempts to fire at the same target, and uses the H HP row (as the first counter is now in status P). It rolls a 7 too, and is flipped to status "T". This marks the end of firing for this turn. The target AFV fires back at one of the hidden gun counters in an attempt to cause destruction of it (if it were there) - no hit is achieved.

At the start of the defensive player's Prep Fire Phase, the first gun (status "P"9, rolls under the P column, using the HP P row, and gets an 8. It is removed.

The second gun also fires, using the H P row and the P column. It rolls a 4 and the gun fires. The remaining H counter for this gun is removed.

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Hidden Gun Check Table (2D6)				
Status:	Hidden		Possible	
	Fires	Flip	Fires	Removed
H H H	2-5	6+		
H H P	2-6	7+	2-3	4-11
H P P	2-7	8+	2-4	5-11
H H	2-6	7+		
H P	2-8	9+	2-4	5-11
P P P			2-5	6-10
P P			2-6	7-10

Leadership DRMs apply.

HIGHWAY TO PSEL

An analysis of the *Hell's Bridgehead* scenarios

Michael Davies

The *Hells Bridgehead* pack from Critical Hit covers a number of small actions during the Battle of Kursk. It contains six scenarios, some special rules, a rather nice map, a campaign scenario and some counters. The counters are a mixed bag; there are some very pretty ½" wreck counters with PzIII, PzIVs or T-34s on, some black and white control counters, SS squads, leaders and heroes and some new counters for ramming tanks. The infantry counters are black and white, with the white outline being very thin in the pack I purchased, they use non standard artwork which is nice, and non ASL standard symbols, including a new innovation indicating units with the ability to self rally by a '*' rather than a box. For players who like black SS counters and don't have either the SS Packs or MMP SS counters from the Arnhem pack these counters will be a bonus.

The map is rather good, easy to read with clearly defined levels. Special rules for ramming tanks and partially overcast weather are consistent with stories I've read about the battle. The scenarios cover attacks by the Totenkopf Division against a number of Soviet Formations. A rather nice idea addresses German Armour Leaders which are used to command platoons rather than individual tank; this is something that might first have been used in the *Scotland the Brave* series, allowing armour leaders to act like infantry Leaders. I think this shows promise and rewards players who use tanks as units rather than single units. I didn't play

either of the two Campaign games, from a quick glance they look rather good.

HB1 Psel River Line

The Germans win by ensuring the Russians have no MMC within four hexes of I26 and X24, and cannot direct sufficient firepower onto those hexes.

The Russian set up must seek to delay or prevent the Germans crossing the River Psel and to oppose the arrival of German reinforcements on Turn three. A cliff runs east from Y21 which I think can be left undefended, given the difficulty in crossing the river and scaling the cliff. It might be worth occupying a cliff top position to interdict the German river crossing but I don't think it's a particularly good idea given the firepower they would attract on turn one.

I think the Russians need to set up a killing ground to slow down the German river crossing. Keeping the Germans out of the woods around Q26 by using wire and mines on rows T and U is an idea; I'd go for 6 factor mines as they have a fair chance of a KIA or K result and almost as many morale checks as 8 or 12 factor mines. Putting wire in the same hexes as mines has some merit but I would half expect this to attract a DC which if successful would clear both obstacles. Any spare wire or mines can go towards defending I26. Any obstacle needs to be covered by fire, a small force can hide in the woods and move forwards as the

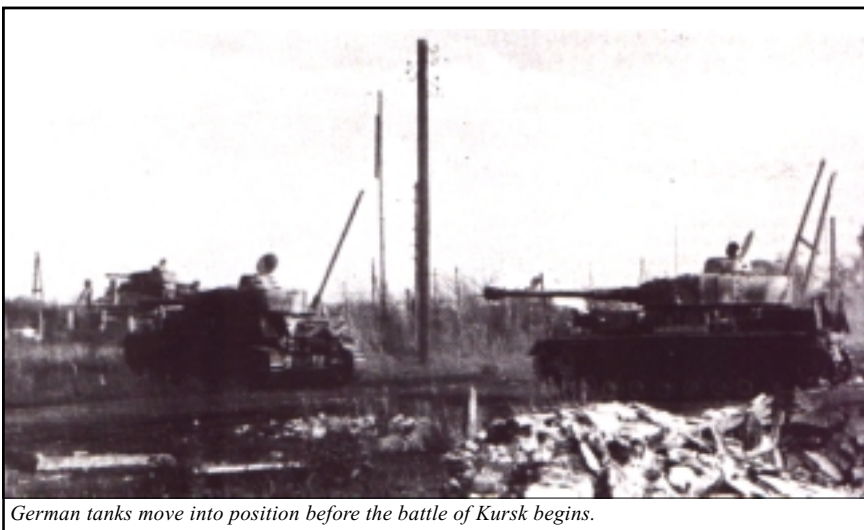
Germans cross the river, whilst heavy weapons should be sited to cover the River obstacles and likely entry points for the turn 3 Germans. Some positions stand out as worth considering, L19 looks good for a bunker with the Observer in it, I22 might merit another bunker or trench. I22 and N18 could be sites for the 82mm Mortars in trenches. The infantry mortars are harder to site, maybe L21, M21, G26, H26, G27, or even K26 could be considered but I feel none of these is ideal. The fortified building could go anywhere, P20, P21, L25 and M24 all look reasonable. The remaining forces should be dotted around the village. Don't forget the HIP allocation. One idea is to hide the Artillery observer in B20, this has excellent line of sight and isn't a particularly obvious location. Consider hiding squads close to I26.

Once the firefight starts fall back slowly towards the Village. Do not expect too much form either OBA, wire, mines, MGs or Mortars, together they may delay the Germans enough to pull off a win.

On turn four two T34 M41S' arrive, they can move to attack German breakthroughs or put paid to broken units. Remember their susceptibility to mechanical failure - only move them when you have to.

The German turn three reinforcements are a problem for the Russian player. Do what you can against them, make a reasonable effort to kill any flame-thrower armed troops.

The Germans deploy on a narrow strip of land south of the River Psel, this is more of a wide shallow stream. The Psel can be forded or crossed in small assault boats. There are limited amounts of good cover available. Putting a kill stack in CC25 is a fair idea, the artillery pieces go into open ground, brush or at a pinch woods. It might be worth setting up another killer stack in the remaining building. On turn one open up against any visible Russian troops then judge whether to charge across the river or if another turn is needed to suppress the defenders. The OBA can be used as HE to attack Russian units, to try and remove wire or mines or to generate smoke. It hurts a bit to use 105mm OBA to create smoke but I think it's the best use for it until the river is crossed. Placing smoke in X23 would be ideal as the wind will extend the coverage



German tanks move into position before the battle of Kursk begins.

allowing the boats to get across without suffering too much interdiction. Ideally the Russian will draw a red chit and the troops can get across on turns two or three, if the German chit draw is red they will struggle. After the river is crossed the OBA should be used against any exposed positions or to gap any wire or mines. Once across the river use DC to breach wire or known mines, and try to push through the woods to the village.

The arrival on turn three of a flanking force really helps, this can help the river crossing or go straight for the village if no help is needed. If there are still HIP units around a couple of half squads can precede the advance. I would expect the immediate area around I27 to be cleared by turn four or five, the next step is to prevent Russian troops firing onto the victory hexes.

Don't be too scared of the Russian tanks they may succumb to OBA, flame-thrower attacks or even close combat before they have too much impact.

This is a tough scenario for both sides, the Germans have to cross a small river against a strong defence. The Russians have to face a flanking force, strong OBA and considerable firepower. This compares favourably with other river crossing scenarios I've played.

HB2 Battle at Arms Length

This is a meeting engagement in which both sides are caught flat footed in less than ideal terrain. Much of the combat in the first two turns will consist of low odds shots that will likely miss but could occasionally lead to victory, even so I would rate this one as balanced.

The Russians have several options, one idea is to arrive on the North edge, seize three TVP locations then hold on to these till the game end for a win. This allows the Germans to take the initiative and increases their chances of a win. By arriving on the north or north east board edges the Russians can position some tanks along the level three crest line gaining height advantage or with hot dice hull down status. Leaving passengers on the tanks then forcing them to bail out by firing the main armament saves movement points at the risk of broken squads. At the end of turn one the Russians will be in front of the Germans stopped and ready to fire. A complicating factor is the thick armour of the Tigers, target them with the SU152 and try to roll low. Use the T34M41s against the PZIII/IV or any transport. It is worth considering using part of the Russian force to try and outflank the Germans to try and hit the weaker side armour of the Tigers. At the very least a

flanking force would expose the side turret armour of the German tanks.

Entering on the eastern edge saves some movement when seeking a swirling melee. If this is attempted the whole force can charge or you can use some armour to provide covering fire. The SU152 units are more suited to fire support than close combat, aside from being NT vehicles they are the only Russian units that have a decent chance of killing a Tiger. Personally I'm not in favour of charging the Germans on turn one as the Russian player has a good chance of low odds shots on turn one in the AFPh, followed by some better chances in the following player turn before the Germans can reposition or stop to engage in a firefight. The next shots come in the turn two PFPh when any surviving Russians will be shooting with acquisition benefits if they have not hit anything yet.

Don't forget to use APCR, or even smoke to cover enemy armour. Do what you can with the infantry and anti tank gun, I think their main role is to seize victory locations.

Hells Bridgehead makes use of German command tanks (Panzerbefehlswagen), allowing an Armour leader to direct the fire of other tanks in his platoon. I would opt to put the Armour leader in the PzIII attached to the Tigers.

German set up is made a bit easier by their limited deployment area and the limited areas the Russians can enter on. It is likely the Russians will enter on either the east or north eastern map portions. German covered arcs should be towards the NE, tanks can be crew exposed, in a line to screen the half-track and trucks. Try to keep passengers off the Tigers and one PZIV.

If the Russians are cautious and stay out of sight on turn one you can take control of U12, start moves towards LL9, advance and start to disembark passengers. Next the Germans need to decide whether to go for a

third victory location, or start killing Russians. However the Russians deploy they will have to spread themselves across a wide area and will be vulnerable to an attack by the entire German force. I think this option favours the Germans considerably.

If the Russian enters then stops to engage in a freight I would be tempted to stop and engage in a long range firefight. Hit the SU152s first then go for the T34s. In your first movement phase button up to protect your crews from long range MG or HE fire. Both sides have a chance in a long range firefight but I've a gut feeling the Germans would do better in it. I can't really prove this without some pretty involved mathematics, and am happy to die ignorant.

A Russian charge is an option. If it happens I'd still stand and fight but would try to get the Germans infantry in a position to help, a lucky CC attack could take out a tank, at the very least they can shoot at any bailing out crews to try for 2 CVP. The antitank gun is important, and should be in action as soon as possible. If the crew dies use a vehicular crew to man it or at a pinch a half squad, it has a good rate of fire, APCR and can kill any Russian tank on the map. If you don't feel too confident about a long range firefight or after following my bad advice are losing it, think seriously about popping smoke then manoeuvring to a better position. If there are a number of hull down Russian tanks on the level three crest line running away might be a sensible option.

I'm not sure if firing on the move is worthwhile on turn one, I'd do it myself as the chance of a malfunctioned gun is lower than the odds of a hit. Blowing up a tank on turn one would be a good start to the game, if you do manage to do this try not to look too surprised.

If a tank duel develops direct truck or half-track mounted infantry to move towards TVP locations. I expect they will be opposed by light Russian units in what should be a



One of hundreds of 45mm AT Guns the Russians moved in into position around the Kursk salient.

fair fight. The Germans might gain a Victory location which would serve as a distraction for the Russians.

Don't forget to use APCR, and the vehicle MGs.

In brief the plan is to expect an attack from the east or north east, set up in the formation I expect to fight in, then stop moving and start shooting.

On the last turn if you need one or two more kills to win use intensive fire to bang off an extra shot as a malfunctioned or disabled weapon won't count against you but another dead tank might win the game for you. I don't think this is a sleaze tactic but represents tanks running out of ammo towards the end of a firefight, but if my opponent were likely to take significant offence I wouldn't do it.

This is a dandy scenario that should be fairly close, Victory will either go to the luckiest or the player who tries hardest. I genuinely believe both sides have a realistic chance of winning a long range firefight provided they react to good or bad fortune, select targets by comparing armour to kill tables and make use of special ammunition. Make no mistake you have less of a chance of winning if you simply line up and fire away at the first tank that takes your fancy.

HB3 Just Over The Highway

In this scenario the Russians must defend a large woods against a strong force with armoured support. The Russians have a number of trenches, wire, mines, two antitank guns, a bunker, a strong infantry force and a bunker. The main Russian problems are determining which direction the Germans will attack from and secondly how to face an attack from that direction.

Virtually the entire Russian force needs to set up in or around the CC1 woods. The woods are upslope so can be seen from most Level 2 locations, although hexes GG11 and FF11 are not upslope and cannot be seen from Level 2. If I read the Victory conditions correctly the Germans win by controlling four of the nine upslope victory locations rather than four woods hexes. One way of looking at this is to task the Russians with holding six upslope woods hexes at the game end.

The most likely area to be attacked is the western edge of the woods. It is hard to see how an attack on the eastern edge of the woods could develop and a direct frontal

attack on the Southern edge of the woods deserves to fail miserably, and probably will! One idea is to set up trenches outside the woods and cover them with wire and mines. The main advantage of this is strength against OBA, there are several disadvantages including the loss of concealment and the difficulty of withdrawing from these positions. A better idea is to use wire and mines to cover the open ground outside the western portion of the woods, backed up with a line of trenches from Z1 or Z2 to DD2 or EE4. Wire goes in XO, XI, Y2 and Z2. An AT mine in some or all of these hexes makes it harder for the Germans to clear the wire with their armour. AP mines can go above the trenches or in front of them, I'm tempted to use them east of row Z.

The remaining AT guns could be added to those in the wire or set up in cunning ambush positions, I added mine to those in the wire as I couldn't think of any



German Marder IIIs advance thru the ruins of a Russian village.

cunning ambush positions. The trenches should be occupied by 5-6 squads and support weapons. The ATR can go here to try for deliberate immobilisation shots, and the mortar to cover the woods around T7, if you're feeling frisky chance your arm against the German armour. There might be a case for putting an ATG and the field phone in AA3. It's a good spot for commanding fields of fire but will attract a lot of German attention. A better spot for the ATG might be further east, or even hidden away in a grain field hex using one of the two HIP squad equivalents? The 76mm gun can be used against infantry or armour, it needs to be somewhere in the woods.

I really can't think of a good spot for the bunker, once it is found it is vulnerable to AP fire, it might work fairly well in Z1 or Z2 with an ATG at least for the first turn or two. My main worry is it can't be moved if the German attack falls elsewhere. Don't be afraid to move guns once the focus of the

German attack becomes obvious.

In the east position the rest of the Squads in foxholes they can relocate if needs be, or be supported by troops from the west if the attack comes from there.

If you are absolutely convinced the attack will come from the west give thought to setting up a double trench line there. Squads not in trenches or bunkers can set up in foxholes which offer equally good protection against fire.

If you get a chance for CC decline it unless you have a chance of an ambush, trading the Germans squad for squad will lead to defeat but quickly killing a squad or two for no corresponding loss is worth doing.

Finally remember the Field phone can set up hidden, give some thought to placing it in a grain hex this might surprise the Germans or at the very least distract them a bit.

German deployment must take account of the Russian positions and the terrain. Although some Russian units set up hidden the bulk of the force is under concealment counters and gives some idea of the best defended sectors.

Probably the best line of attack is towards the western edge of the woods. This approach has the advantage of limiting the number of units that can fire at the attacker in the opening turns, and it might be possible with some luck to suppress all troops defending this sector by fire. If the Soviets have concentrated their entire force in this area stay in your foxholes and engage in a firefight in which you do have some advantages notably leadership, Armour, and firepower. If it is blindingly obvious the Russian has concentrated in the West your deployment should include a small 3-4 squad flanking force to try for Victory hexes.

The first German decision concerns the Armour leader, I'm tempted to use the armour leader in a PZIV, it's a personal opinion I wouldn't argue against putting it in a StuG. In this scenario it is likely the Leader will direct their own fire rather than that of another AFV in its platoon.

Although the German intends to assault the western woods this move should be preceded by one or two game turns of fire, open up with MGs to strip concealment then target individual hexes with Armour to gain acquisition.

The Artillery observer could go in hex N2 with a half squad and ATR. Use either the 8-0 or 7-0 Leader as I don't think it matters too much which is chosen. Try to bring down HE with a view to hit the trench line and any wire or mines in front of them. With a few good rolls you might clear some

wire or mines, There's a chance you might break a squad or two, you will definitely strip some concealment and as an added bonus against some opponents you will find them reluctant to move into an OBA area with reserves. Don't be too upset if the OBA doesn't do very much or you draw a couple of red cards against troops in trenches its not a tremendously effective weapon. I've not mentioned smoke yet, the glitch is rain, its bound to start part way through a well placed smoke FFE 1 or 2 and disappear immediately! If you are confident about the weather then use smoke.

A 9-2, HMG, MMG and two half squads or squads go into NO, N1, O2, P2, Q3 or R4 to be used to blast away concealment and later to kill units. Priority targets should be any ATG, then MGs, leaders or stacks of squads. If the MGs malfunction and are disabled be prepared to move forwards out of your foxholes. Other units should go in nearby foxholes, maybe one or two squads to a hex. Maybe a mini kill stack of 8- 1, two squads and LMGs could go in R3? I would deploy a half squad and give it a flame thrower and Demolition charge, I don't think there are enough Leaders to justify giving one a support weapon.

I also think its worth putting a small flanking force of two or three squads and a Leader in W6, W7 and X7. This might be a bad idea but I'm not too keen on having everyone in one big block ready to attack the woods.

The AFVs could go above the trenches or immediately behind them, I don't think setting up on a flank gains very much. I'm also adverse to putting passengers on the armour to surge across open ground through wire and mines, fire main armament, bail out throw DC's into trenches and advance into close combat to win by the end of turn one.

On turn one open fire and try to strip concealment and gain target acquisition. Keep this up through the Russian player turn. Stop and think before turn two. If the Russian defence has evaporated weigh up your chances of crossing open ground before the Russians recover, if the weather is nice go for smoke if you can, if it's raining place HE to make it harder for the defenders to reoccupy the trenches and clear some wire or mines.

On turn three you really must attack. At the very least move forwards in your APH if the Russians are still strong you aren't going to win this one without a lot of luck. Keep in mind your opponent is probably enjoying the game don't sulk, be positive and keep fighting till the game end.

Try to guess where the mines are likely to be, once found try and keep off them! It is worth using DCs to clear wire or mines they are more help doing this than breaking a squad that is likely to be hit by advancing fire and belted in CC a phase or two later.

If you can get a force into the trench line you can move into others. Don't be afraid of close combat but make full use of any remaining DCs or even the flame thrower if you still have one. On turn six make a big effort with all remaining forces, casualties really don't matter in this scenario. This includes being reckless with the Armour give thought to intensive fire on your last player turn or even overrunning an entrenched Russian unit in woods. Slightly less extreme using Vehicular bypass movement to move along the edge of the woods and tie up a Russian unit. I'm not sure this would rate as sleaze tactics, it might be reckless and ill advised though!



A Panzer III emerges from the smoke of a burning grass field.

Finally some players might see advantages in an attack against the centre of the woods. This doesn't suit me particularly, but is worth considering if you are confident most of the Russian defences are set up to cover the western portion of the woods. On the downside there will be more Russian positions or rather Hexes to suppress, more Russian units will be in the fight from turn one and the attack will have slightly more open ground to follow. On the upside this would rank as a "slight" surprise tactic, should face slightly weaker opposition, allows dispersal of German forces and with a dispersed attack might create an opening somewhere in the Russian defences that can be exploited.

HB4 Graveyard of Steel

I think this one should be called "Cemetery of Steel".

The Russians win this scenario if they can amass more casualty or exit victory points than the Germans. With some infantry, a 45mm ATG, twelve T34s, two SU122 and four T70s they have a large armoured force. Opposing them is a smaller German force of three Tigers, three PZIII, three PZIV, a small amount of infantry and a 75mm ATG. I suspect the German force is slightly stronger in combat value; consider a T34 is worth the same VP as a Tiger, whilst both PZIV and PZIII are worth less than a T34 which rates the same as a T70 or SU122, and finally a 45mm ATG rates the same as a 75mm. From this I think the Russian is better off trying to exit units rather than fighting whilst the Germans are better off going for casualty VPs. The exception to this rule is probably the SU122 which is more use in combat than for exit.

Elements of the 33rd Guards Rifle Corps set up on board. I think their main roles are the make the German exit a bit harder, and possibly restrict the acquisition of concealment. Set up is very restricted and there are few good locations for any Russian unit. The ATG may be useful in N2 as this has an excellent field of fire which might yield a lucky kill, at long range you will notice APCR is less effective than AP. I found this out the hard way! The infantry can set up close to the Gun or in the T7 woods to move against German infantry. Remember to set up in foxholes unless you want to save movement points. Odd ideas worth considering briefly are putting the Leader with the ATG, and linking up the infantry to ride on the AFVs, I don't think these are excellent ideas but might appeal to some players.

The German force has the advantage of setting up second and has a more favourable area to set up in. The most important unit is the ATG. By setting up in or around T11 or W4 you can fire on Russians units east or west of the woods. As it is raining heavily I would be tempted to place the gun in W4 or V11 to make movement along the east edge harder for tanks. If the rain stops hexes T10 and T11 become attractive. A third option is in a wadi or V17. The ATR and a squad or half squad can go in T10, T11, or S11 and try for deliberate immobilisation or even a kill against a T70; picking off a bailing out crew isn't very sporting but worth a go. The HMG gets the Leader and a squad, it can try for crews or have a pop at any air support that

materialises. The rest of the infantry can set up to defend the ATG or in position to move against the Russian infantry. Its not impossible for the German infantry to exit and gain some VPs.

Russian armour leaders should go in the T34 M43 tanks, they might do better in the SU122 assault guns if you are engaged in a long range firefight. They probably shouldn't go in the T70s or T34 M31.

If the Russians move first they should try to avoid German armour by heading east or west of the woods. If the German force has split up go for the weaker force and try to kill a few units before charging off the board. A Russian fantasy would be moving second and finding the Tigers and PZIVs are east of the woods, and the PZIIIs are spread out along the Western edge and still in motion.

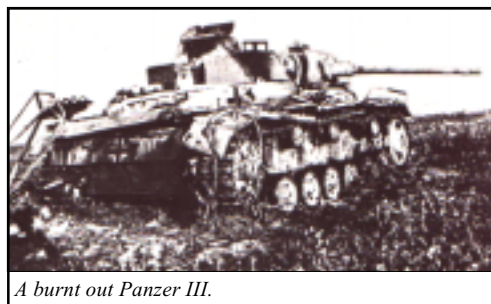
The basic plans for moving second are similar to those for moving first with the important difference of knowing roughly where the Germans are! Plan A is to move East of the woods then double back if faced with serious opposition leaving a small covering force to delay pursuit. Plan B is to move along the Western edge where even if opposed there is some room for manoeuvre. Or there's plan C splitting your force to tempt the German to split his force. None of these plans is a match winner but merely serves to get you onto the board and into position for further movement or fighting. In this scenario moving second gives you the initiative as your opponent has to commit his units before you decide on your attack. If you get to short range and retain numerical superiority you might just be able to give Jerry a bit of a kicking this would be more satisfying than a win on exit VPs but don't risk it unless you are well positioned. Air support might or might not arrive if it does you might blow something up after rereading the rules and rolling a few dice, if the ATG is visible I'd be tempted to bomb that.

As the Jerry's you need to kill some or rather a lot of Russians armour to win. Although *Hells Bridgehead* introduces command tanks I'm not sure they are very useful in this scenario. I would put the 9-2 Leader in the Tiger platoon, and the 8-1 in the PZIV platoon. You might be advised to use the leaders to direct the fire of other tanks at long range but later on in a general melee it's everyone for themselves! It's probably overkill to have one tank directing the fire of two others when your basic to hit is over 7 or 8. Ideally you want the Russians to slowly charge in a big solid column towards you, the next best thing is a long range firefight which you should still win unless dogged by bad luck. In all probability

you will have a short long range firefight, followed by a short range combat in which you will either eliminate the Russian tanks or die trying. If the Russian has split his forces send the Tigers (supported by some other tanks) against the strongest concentration then use a small force to block the smaller Russian flank. The 75mm gun is a potent weapon, particularly if the rain stops. The infantry might kill a few Russian squads or some tank crews. A concerted effort might allow them to exit off the north edge. The German do get the chance of air support, if it arrives first drop your bombs quickly then dog fight with the Russians.

A few general points. Don't forget APCR, intensive fire, MGs, and deliberate immobilisation. Above all when tanks blow up appreciate the effect this has on your own plans!

This is a tough scenario for both sides, I don't think there is a winning strategy for either side but its easy to lose by sticking to a plan that simply isn't working or waiting for your opponents to make a mistake. Certainly this is a scenario that could be replayed several times and might be a good one for tournament play.



A burnt out Panzer III.

HB5 To The Last Round

I liked to look of this one and Clash of Titans when I first opened the pack. The attacker has a numerically superior force which needs to cross open ground in the face of considerable MG and AT firepower. The defender has to organise a defence of several significant locations and the Village of Krasny Oktabyr (Red October?).

German defensive set up needs to cover the village and a number of the nine Victory locations in their set up area. Firstly decide which TVP should be defended and how to do this. The Germans have four leaders, one of which is tied up as an Artillery observer. If you accept a reasonable defensive position will require at least one leader this restricts you to three defensive islands or positions. With a broken side morale of nine an SS squad could self rally very quickly and there is scope for some

satellite positions manned by just a squad or half squad. A force of platoon size (3 -4 squads) should be able to hold a line for a couple of turns then retire or more likely rout to form another defensive line. The strongest defences are needed in or around the village, with two other posts in the T7 and Y1 Woods. Tanks and Guns can be located individually to support these sites. There is scope for a very small reaction force.

The village is the hardest place to defend. One approach is to set up in grain, brush or orchard outside the village. This has the advantage of supporting the T7 woods units but exposes the Germans to attack straight off the bat and it is unlikely any routing units would make it to the village. By all means try this and prove me wrong!

I prefer to set up as follows. Fortify M23 and place a squad (6-5-8, or 8-3-8), MMG and leader there. Mines go in H22, I22, J22, K211 and K20 or L20 to cover the north western approach to the village. Using 6FP mines will give a good chance of broken or killed squads. The remaining mines could go in L21 or M21 or somewhere really cunning if you have an ideal spot of your own. Fortifying N20 and placing a squad and LMG there appeals, and one more squad should be enough infantry to frustrate a strong attack until other troops can support the village. Anti tank defence is difficult. Maybe placing the 75mm gun in the village would do it, possibly it's better to use a tank. The advantage of a tank is it can move if the village is not threatened. If you use a tank place it in a woods hex, and conceal it! On turn 1 it can move to a better location or start moving away from the village.

The next defensive island is around U12. Trenches go in S10, T10 and T11 to be occupied by a leader, MMG, LMG and 3 or 4 squads, backed up by an ATG or the 88mm. Any guns need to go in trenches, but the squads could conceivably be placed in foxholes supporting the main position or rather more radically in foxholes behind the main position to spare them the Russian prep fire. It's a tough judgement call deciding how much force needs to be up front to stop the Russians. By making use of spraying fire you should be able to use maybe 2 or three squads for a very effective screen. If the Ruskis run through this well you are unlucky, and could withdraw through the woods and try to support another position. The wire could go in front of this position or on its flanks.

The third defensive position around AA4 gets the remaining trenches, along the western edge of the woods, occupied by

three or four squads, a Leader, MMG or HMG. This isn't a bad spot for the 88mm or the 75mm. Given this defensive position might be bypassed it might be worth using a tank for AT protection, it's a difficult choice that depends on how the Russian is likely to attack.

A small reserve of the Half track, an assault engineer half squad and a tank could set up in the Village and move elsewhere if no attack heads for them. Any remaining tanks and guns should set up to support the three defensive islands. Firing at long range is not much of a problem for the Germans so set up back from the main defensive line. The hardest unit to locate is the artillery observer. I would like to use a field phone either in the Village or the Central woods. It's probably better to use a radio in case the position is blitzed. Without Artillery support this one becomes very hard for the Germans.

The hidden squad can be very useful to try and reclaim a TVP or surprise an attacker charging through woods, grain or brush. If at a loss for ideas hide a valuable stack and leader from snipers until it chooses to open fire.

Feel free to juggle forces around these positions, maybe exchanging a gun for a tank, or adding or removing a squad. Take your time and just before you start play try to put yourself in the attacker's shoes and see if there are any gaps you can identify and cover before you start play.

Before setting up the Russian must consider the Victory conditions, terrain and German dispositions. Victory can be gained by controlling six buildings, including the four buildings south of the river. Alternatively control of three TVP earns a win. The most accessible TVP are U1, AA3 and U12. Further away in the village are N20 and I27. Further away still GG22, LL9, X24 and LL1.

I think the Russians are best aiming for a three TVP Victory. The village is difficult to capture in the time available unless the German has neglected its defence. By directing some effort against U1 and AA3 the Russian may be able to gain two TVP then threaten LL1 or LL9 if a breakthrough results. Even modest effort should grab U1. Using OBA to support this attack appeals to me; pre-register Y2 or Z2 as this will hit the woods and persuade defenders there to pull back or be broken. More TVP will be needed for victory, there is another TVP hex in the central woods at U12. A determined infantry attack should be successful.

Success in both areas will yield a three TVP victory and a win after a tough

fight. If the German reacts to you attacks by reinforcing from other areas keep feeding in your own troops, the Russian has a significant numerical advantage that will lead to victory in close combat.

If you find early in the game one of both of your initial objectives are too strongly held to contest re-evaluate your plans. If there is time switch a proportion of your forces to assault the village. Don't leave this decision too late or you will simply lose. There may be time to switch OBA to support this attack.

Sooner or later you will encounter minefields, go round them if you can but charge through them if you have to. Use a tank to create a path if you have armour to spare. Do not let mines cramp your style, a six factor minefield is about as deadly as a squad, less deadly than OBA or a decent MG. If you really must create a gap OBA can be used, this is an attractive idea if the minefield is closely supported by infantry as the attack may do some damage to both.

An alternative idea is to go for the



Russian infantry advance past a burning German tank..

Village from turn one to try for six buildings. The woods will flank your attack and will need to be suppressed by some of your forces. Mortars are more effective due to airbursts against the woods than a fortified building. A strong attack on the village should be helped by OBA, there is a small risk of fire but I'd take my chances. For one or two turns prepare the way by fire breaking or killing the defenders. Charge south when you judge the moment right. Be careful not to wait too long you really must be in the village by turn 5 to have the time to fight for buildings. I'm not entirely sure this is the best way to win this scenario.

Well that's overall strategy, lets look at individual units. I'll describe a set up trying for a TVP win – if you plan to go for the Village the main difference would be pre-register a village hex for your OBA and set up at the southern limit of your deployment area.

The hardest decision is where to put the 76mm guns, and not because you have some really good choices! At best you can

go for crest positions in a Wadi, or at worst an open ground hex, at a pinch they can be relocated by pushing if you kill everything in sight, I doubt you will need to do so. The mortars are best used against woods, set up back from the main Infantry position. Use half squads for crews, set up in foxholes and roll low! I would expect a critical hit from one or other mortar some time during the game, with another low roll this might do some serious damage. I don't think its worth using spotted fire.

Moving on to the infantry I couldn't resist a kill stack of 2 MMG, HMG, three squads and the 9-2 Leader in L9, this probably isn't a sound idea but I'd still do it. Against SS units you do need to kill squads rather than breaking them, they rally very quickly and in this scenario there is plenty of room for the Germans to rout safely. A line of squads goes from K3-K9, and L3-L8 equipped with LMGs, ATRs and DCs with two 8-0 Leaders. These are the assault troops that will drive into the woods, with some troops heading for AA3. The remaining Russian infantry set up in brush hexes. Entrench everything you can to provide cover on turn one and later on for routing.

Pre-registering XI, Y2 or Z2 completes a rather lame set up. These are starting positions that the Russians must move out of to win. Admittedly turns one and two will see some pretty hectic Prep and Defensive fire to soften up the defenders. After a decent preparation use the assault phase to move forwards. Expect some casualties, indeed a lot of casualties, they are of no real significance I this scenario.

On turn one Russian armour arrives along the North edge moving towards the AA3 woods provided they are not covered by every AT weapon in the Germans OB! Lead with the T70 tanks they can draw fire or if ignored get behind German units. Keep all the tanks together they fight better as a big clump rather than piecemeal across the whole map. On turn one if German tanks appear I would give thought to either a charge or stopping and entering into a firefight. I would expect to trade two or with bad luck three T34s for each German tank and be delighted if I ended up with just a T70 or a lone T34 in amongst a mixture of burning tanks. The wreckage will help cover an infantry attack against AA3. If you shoot well and have more tanks than expected give thought to transporting personnel to remote TVP, belting German infantry or restricting the movement of reinforcements.

Worth mentioning in passing avoid charging through firelanes, OBA, minefields

or residual fire markers without good reason. Note the Russian SAN is four, expect some attacks. With a small force and very few leaders the German would be damaged by a “lucky” KIA against a Leader even a wound hurts as it degrades performance and makes rout harder.

Although the At Start OB is pretty daunting by turns three or four there will be noticeably less of everything. The real beauty of this one is not the massive Russian assault but the attempts by the Germans to hold a line and plug the gaps with ever decreasing forces.

A few more loose ends, I struggled to find a use for the concealment counters. After some thought I used a number to generate Sniper bait dummy stacks. If I’ve missed something better I am happy to learn! The armour leader goes in a T34. Using the 76mm guns to try for smoke is reasonable the mild breeze can make this useful as a screen for your infantry. Pick up the Mortars when you run out of targets then move to new firing positions.

For the Germans you will spend most of the game trying to carefully reinforce threatened areas with troops from other sectors. Try to keep a tiny force in being close to a TVP are to contest control in your last game turn. A half-track and squad tucked away till the last two turns threatens a wide area. The Germans will not go down without a fight, win or lose they will kill more Russian squads and vehicles than they lose.

I certainly enjoyed this one, it’s a big scenario with a lot of thought needed before you set up and during play.

HB6 Clash of Titans

At first glance you might think this is a beefed up version of scenario five, well it is and it isn’t. Aside from the considerable difference in both sides OB the Victory conditions are very different. The Russians gain VP for control of Level 3 Cliffs, TVP locations each have a value of 1-3, and each building location is worth a VP. There is also a sudden Death Victory if the Russians hold I27 and X24; this isn’t very likely but might just happen in once in a while.

German set up is important, as they must defend a wide area with limited forces. If you do fluff the set up and over defend one sector at the expense of another this error might be salvaged by the turn three reinforcements.

As in the previous scenario, you need to organise small defensive islands to protect

important terrain or create killing grounds. Each island needs a small number of squads (3 or 4), a Leader, MG or two and an anti tank weapon. Of the six leaders you start with one will be tied up calling in OBA, I suggest using a 7-0 or 8-0 for this task. If you think of each leader as a platoon commander this allows for five small defensive positions. I think the key sectors are the orchard around B20, the grain around H17, and the woods around O8, T11 and finally AA3. It’s a pity none of these features is named!

I think the woods in AA3 and orchard B20 need good leaders, maybe the 10-2 and 9-2; the other three positions can get by with an 8-1 or 8-0. Don’t be afraid to swap MGs or squads between one platoon and another. Everyone should be in a foxhole unless they are in a trench. Avoid stacking in three squad lumps, it really isn’t necessary the troops and MGs are there to stop the infantry running across open ground on turn 1 or 2.

The two small mortars can’t be expected to do very much, they can be used to cover the western edge of the central woods. If they set up concealed they might



Russian infantry and tanks move forward under the protection of an artillery bombardment.

look a bit like something they are not, failing that they can be used as last ditch anti tank weapons.

Placing the artillery observer is tricky. There isn’t a single place that strikes me as ideal or even fairly good. Perhaps the best compromise is the B20 orchard. Try to get it working quickly, there is a very real chance the observer will be overrun very quickly or suppressed by fire. There is a very real chance your OBA could fall on Russians moving in the open or onto armour, which would be rather effective, and on a good day you could do a lot of damage. Worst cases are two red cards or a broken radio. If this happens make the best of it, use the leader as a leader, ditch the useless radio and use this as an excuse for losing if things get worse!

The Germans receive two Tiger platoons of two PzVIs and one PZIII each. Gullies are Wadis so you can set up hull down without using a trench. I am very tempted to set up two Tigers in the E20-

H22 area with a PZIII nearby entrenched in Q9 or S10, or in the village. An armour Leader goes in one Tiger, I don’t think this will be a long range fight and can’t see him doing anything other than directing his own fire. The upside is being hull down in a good spot, the downside is it is pretty obvious you are there.

The other platoon supports the AA3 woods sector. Two ideas spring to mind one is to set up entrenched in the woods, the second is to set up entrenched just in front of the woods. Setting up in the woods is fine until you want to relocate, whilst in front has the disadvantage of being unconcealed. Both positions are fairly good and both can hit Russian units entering along the North edge. On balance I’d go for setting up in front of the Woods as I would half expect the Russians to bypass this sector.

If you are confident the Russians will focus on a particular sector it makes sense to put more tanks there if you are right this gives an immediate advantage, if wrong tanks are fairly mobile and can move if needs be.

Next consider the Guns. The 20mm AA gun goes in a trench in I21 to try for shots at Air Support, and to provide a refuge for routing units.

The 81 mm Mortars can set up in foxholes, they have enough range to set up way back in the open or in hexes like M18 and/or GG6. There really are a lot of places these units can go.

Hardest to place are the ATGs. In most scenarios with low counter density a position back from the front line makes sense. Here the Germans

may need to use the guns in front line positions. A gun in Q9 or R8 is an idea, another in AA3 Woods, the H17 grain or for long range shots T17 or AA15. Putting the unit in a trench makes sense. If you set up without concealment a large number of possibilities arise, including using them in support of the tanks or at long range as an anti personnel weapon.

The two half tracks from a tiny mobile reserve. By placing a half squad passenger in one it could look very much like a concealed Tiger at least for a turn or so. Good positions include H20 and T17. These units will become important during the last couple of turns when they should be able to contest control of a victory location. Don’t do too much until the Russian armour has been slapped about a bit or whilst the air support is still around.

Fortifications are available. The given set up doesn’t start many units in the Village but there is a fair chance some fighting may take place there later on. Fortify N20, J23,

K23 or 020, although with luck you will not need to defend these hexes.

Finally the Germans have a number of squads and an 88mm AA gun to set up. Their starting positions are restricted. The AA gun looks good in T20. The engineers start in woods. There is an outside chance the Russians will try and hit these units with 120mm Rocket OBA. Setting up in woods without the benefit of foxholes would be deadly. Whether to take the risk or set up in foxholes is a judgement call. If you really think it's likely setting up in the open in foxholes with units widely spaced might appeal. The good news is that if the Rockets fall here they are not hitting your front line troops.

On turn one the Russians can pick any one defensive island and hit it pretty hard with OBA, Direct fire, armoured units, MG fire, Mortars et al. This sounds grim but there shouldn't be any gaps in the defensive line that cannot be plugged or at the very least covered by fire. By turn three gaps will start to look more threatening and will suggest where the turn three units need to go. Have a rough idea where you think these units need to go at the game start but reconsider just before you bring them on.

The above set up is not perfect or meant to be definitive. If you see an advantage in relocating an armoured unit or squad do it! Here's a few more ideas to consider. There might be value in dismounting troops from the half-tracks either at the game start or within the first couple of turns. Using spotters for some of the Mortars might make sense. Setting up the armour in a reserve position then moving towards threatened areas would spare them OBA on turn one against the very slight risk of mechanical reliability failures. As the German you should enjoy this one. With a fair run of the dice you will bum a lot of Russian armour, you might even get close to the Germans average of a loss ratio of 4:1 during the actual Battle of Kursk.

The Russians receive four wire counters and ten concealment counters that I really did struggle to find a use for. After some thought I used concealment to generate some dummy stacks to serve as sniper bait, and used the rest to hide leaders during set up. The wire left me feeling I'd missed something so it was placed in dead ground behind the front line and away from the entry routes for Russian tanks. I apologise if I've misunderstood the correct use of Russian wire in this scenario I suspect its there by mistake!

The Soviets get air support (1 20mm Bombs), which compares unfavourably to the Germans Stukas (200mm Dive Bombers). If the Russians initiate air combat

the Germans get another two fighter bombers, a game mechanic to give the Jerry's a slight edge. The German start with an 88mm Gun that could possibly damage Aircraft, both sides also get light AA Guns that are probably best used in the AA role - a bit unusual in *ASL*. When using air support try to avoid known Flak positions unless they are protecting something you must whack.

What makes this scenario a challenge for the Russians is the presence of two Tiger platoons that's four PzVIs and two PZIIs. This is a very powerful force, capable of rapidly destroying the Russian Armour quickly. Replace the Tigers with PzVIs and this would be 90% pro Russian. Each Tiger destroyed or disabled makes this Scenario easier for the Russians. It makes sense to try and hit the Tigers with the turn 1 Rocket OBA, Air Support if it arrives, and HEAT from the SU152s. If things are really desperate flanking shots from T34s or close combat might kill the beasts.



A Tiger burning bright..

Before setting up look at what's visible on the map. Much of the German OB will be concealed though it is highly likely there will be very few dummy stacks. Based on this limited information you will need to decide the initial direction of your attacks. Almost certainly you will decide to attack south towards the cliffs and village. The only exceptions to this would be when faced with a near continuous wall of German units between you and the village.

Assuming the village or more importantly the cliffs are your objective it makes sense to ignore the AA3 woods forcing the units there to either stay out of the fighting or relocate. Set up the mortars in foxholes with a line of sight to concealed units in woods. One option is to use a squad to crew both 50mm mortars, this frees up a squad for other duties. Start shooting with the 50mm mortars to try and strip concealment, then use the 82mm mortars to kill or break things. I see no advantage in using spotted fire for these mortars. The AA gun can be used against infantry or kept back to chance a few shots at the Stukas, the brush hex in E8 appeals. The ATGs and ART are

sited to cover any visible armour particularly PZIIs. Don't waste shots against a Tiger unless it is crew exposed or side on to you. In the absence of armoured targets a few shots at infantry or Guns are in order. By keeping the guns fairly close together in trenches you will be slightly more vulnerable to OBA and air support but you will get a +4 DRM and will be able to move crews around should some be killed.

The Russian infantry are of generally high quality, well led, with a hoard of support weapons. Set up 12-14 squads in foxholes or trenches between A13 -K13, with the remaining troops positioned to cover K6-K12. Using a 9-2 Leader with a couple of MGs really does appeal, on a good day you will roll ROF and strip concealment from a number of stacks.

Once you have decided on a direction of attack and positioned your initial OB decide on pre-registered hexes for your Rocket OBA. Expect this to fall off target and try to keep your troops out of its blast area. If you are lucky both Rockets will land on top of Germans, and do a fair bit of damage, if they strip concealment that is very helpful. If both Rocket Salvos miss entirely or fail to do any damage accept you have been unlucky and play on. I'm not sure if the OBA counts as a module in which case it would also land on German player turn one or if it is limited to the Russian prep fire phase only. I expect its only last for the Russian player turn.

After the OBA has arrived use prep fire to expose German units. Make a serious attempt to break any Artillery observer or AT Gun crews you detect, if any German tanks are crew exposed try to kill or break their crews particularly if it's a Tiger. On turn I the only moving Russian units will be the Armoured forces and their riders. Move these into dead ground and drop off the Infantry. Make a serious effort to keep the 10-3 Leader out of harms way. Keeping some infantry on tanks as a mobile reserve to reinforce success is an option but I think all the armour is needed on turn 1. If you can don't stop the T34 M41s in dead ground, they might stay there! If you have a reasonable idea where the German Armour and Anti Tank units are located it makes sense to bring the Russian tanks on board and engage in a firefight. If you've had an unlucky turn one and most German units are still concealed give some thought to staying in dead ground for a turn until the German dispositions become clearer, don't wait too long as after turn 3 German reinforcements become available. Once you come into line of sight of the German armour kill what you can. Use the SU 1 52 HEAT against the Tigers, whilst the T34s' start on

the PZIIIs then try to outflank the PzVIs. As you move it make sense to overrun any broken German units and even to sit on top of them, if you get rid of the German infantry your own can advance to support you. If they get close DCs, flame throwers and even ATRs can take a toll on the German armour. Close combat is unlikely but you might pull it off against a smoke covered tank on a good day. With a mild breeze any burning vehicles will generate a decent smoke screen even if it starts raining, as if by magic these will appear in front of Tigers and restrict their line of sight.

After turn one the German dispositions should be clearer. Gaps will start to appear in the defences try to exploit these. Avoid the temptation to stay under cover and win a firefight, although you need to kill some German units before you run across open ground allowing the turn three reinforcements to come on and reinforce the German front line s not going to work. Keep in mind you start with numerical superiority, some squads are expendable as is the bulk of your armour.

On turn 6 you receive six T70s and an armour leader. I tried using these to swan a couple of Tigers, lost five T70s, immobilised one Tiger and was lucky enough to have the other disable its gun during an intensive fire shot, this took till the end of turn 7. I'm not sure this was a dismal failure but using the T70s against infantry makes more sense. They are not very powerful units against armour, can kill a half-track and can perform a decent overrun on broken troops in the open, the MG and 45mm armament also has its uses against infantry.

Expect a tough fight as the Russians, your first big break will come as you reach the cliffs. Next is a struggle to seize part of the village or more cliff hexes further east. For part of the game you may be defending against strong counter attacks, these will not be too serious unless you have lost most of your armour without damaging the German tanks. Even on the last game turn I would expect the Germans to contest control of victory locations.

Overall I think the Germans have a very slight edge in this one, unless they lose a couple of Tigers to Rocket OBA. Even so both sides should enjoy this one, the Germans have an interesting OB, and a big area to defend, the Russians enjoy a rather large armoured force, hordes of infantry and some choice in the direction of their attack.

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Two screenshots from the new Microprose/Hasbro computer game Squad Leader. Despite sharing its name with the board game, ASL players should be aware that there is NO connection between the two. The computer game is a skirmish-level game with individual men formed into squads. A limited number of AFVs are also represented. Game play is turn-based, with each unit having a number of Action Points which are used as the unit moves, fires or performs other tasks. The player can take either the American German, or British side, and a scenario editor will soon be available on the Microprose website.



VIEW FROM

Dozen GIs At Schwerpunkt Take High Ground

Trev Edwards

Pete, your esteemed editor has asked me to write some more product reviews and, despite my not having actually having played all that many of the scenarios in some of these packs as of yet, I have agreed. Pete's publishing deadline must be met I so here goes...

October begets the *ASL* Oktoberfest, which in turn begets lots of new *ASL* products. Usually that is. The biggest *ASL*-only event in the world (we're talking 150+ people in attendance) has, in years past, seen both official and "third-party" (i.e. not MMP/Hasbro) publishers turn up and release their latest offerings. This was less the case this year, with two of these products I am reviewing here having been released in the summer of 2000 and only *Schwerpunkt 6* having a release date of October. MMP have their hands full at present. They have been working away at preparing the final core module *Armies of Oblivion (AoO)* which has burgeoned into a massive project that will see a very large box full of Finns*, Rumanians, Hungarians, Bulgars and other such types along with boards and scenarios. Then there's the 2nd edition re-write of the *ASL Rulebook*, a project that puts the Human Genome project in the shade when its sheer complexity and the expectations arising thereof are measured. So, no new MMP stuff at *ASLOK*, but the event did give some Brits the first opportunity to get their hands on the *GI's Dozen* scenario bundle. The Heat

of Battle release of *High Ground* was also out well before *ASLOK*. However, I'll start with the official product...

* Since I started writing this, MMP have announced that the Finns are to be in their own core module as *AoO* would have become too big.

A G.I.'s Dozen, Scenario Bundle

This is a straightforward issue of just scenarios -no counters, overlays or flowcharts -therefore making it less than an action pack. I believe this is the first time we've seen an "official" issue of a product that contains only scenarios since the latter days of the old *SL* system. They come printed on cardstock and are presented in a cover with a faithful rendition of the old *GI* artwork (that lieutenant is actually Gregory Peck as he appeared in the Korean war movie "Pork Chop Hill") along with a curious piece of cardboard, presumably inserted as a stiffener (to my knowledge, no errata exists for this cardboard). None of the 13 scenarios in this pack are completely new since all were published before 1985 in either *GI: Anvil Of Victory* or in the *Series 300* scenario pack. There were many of the old scenarios that were classics of their time issued in *GI* as it became known.

Those of you who never owned the old *SL* series may not be aware that there was a programmed instruction format to the rulebook. You would read a new or changed rule and then be presented with a scenario that would use the new rule. Some rules from earlier books would be superseded or changed by later rules, causing all sorts of confusion or unfairness (some tanks had more detail as to areas of weakness on their armour factors, only the US had ELR worries etc). As the system grew on through three add on "gamettes" the rulebooks became more and more difficult to use, hence the eventual release of *ASL* one imagines. One thing that immediately strikes the Groggnard who remembers those days is that there are some rules from the old *SL* system that just never worked all that well and that these never made it into *ASL*.

For example, there was a mechanism for surrender of some inexperienced infantry types in the RPh based on totalling the FP of the enemy units that it could see within a certain range and comparing it to their own. Even though this was only activated by SSR, I can still recall the way the game was so slowed it was almost impossible to play. What a nightmare...

The scenario that followed this rule introduction was 'The French Decide to Fight', set in North Africa during Operation Torch. The new scenario uses weak French ELR to show their lack of conviction for the conflict. I was looking at this shortly after I opened the pack and I was struck by the use of overlays. One of the things that was introduced in the *GI Anvil of Victory* gamette was a series of overlays, and these were used in many of the scenarios from that module. It looks like MMP have wisely decided that no one has these any more and they only use overlays from the present system.

As I said in my intro, I have not had enough time to really dig into some of the new products as well as I might have liked before writing this. This *G.I.* pack has a preponderance of big, long scenarios so I can't look there for too many tourney scenarios (which is what I do mostly with my *ASL* time at this time of year). Therefore, at present, I can only get a feel for many of the new versions of these scenarios from the cards at this time. I note that the VC has changed in some scenarios only slightly in the way they are worded, and in some others quite drastically. For example, in 'The French Decide to Fight', the VC are now described in terms of the French player having an MMC in the VC area, rather than in the original where the US player had to clear the area. However, in 'Climax at Nijmegen Bridge' the VC have changed from the Allied player having to clear the bridge area so that no Jerry had LOS from within 5 hexes range to a bridge hex in the old version, to straightforward building control in the new. As it happens, these are the buildings with the best views of the bridge so the spirit of the old VC are maintained. It probably makes the scenario winnable for the Allies as well because it is



a tough one for them.

'Climax at Nijmegen Bridge' is a scenario which I can still first remember playing under *SL* rules, even though it was sometime in 1983. It was a winner then, possibly the second greatest scenario after 'Hill 621'. If this scenario were a car it would be a Ferrari, if it were a woman it would be Mrs Ferrari. It has it all. A determined SS force is set to foil the Allied attempt to take the bridge from the south bank. Attacking there are US paratroopers and British Guardsmen, trying to reduce the threat from the enemy infantry to a level that will allow the British tanks to come on board. Across the bridge, a conscript garrison and a flak unit are attacked more paratroopers who have crossed the river downstream. The flak guns have opportunities to throw firepower into the streets on the south bank with tight and unexpected LOS from the north bank but all too soon they need to turn their barrels away and defend themselves. Throw in some US artillery and a couple of German AFVs and you have a lot going on at any time. I played this one recently and it was all over by turn four as my German's dice were devastating (wish I could claim it was all skill but I can't). I can say that it has a nice feel to it that really does remind me of the original. Vrrroom vrrroom! (that's my impression of a Ferrari).

One of the others I have played is 'Point D'Appui' which is tourney sized. This is a tense little number with a small force of panzer grenadiers mounted in halftracks trying to seize a roadblock from a larger force of GIs. There is a +1 LV that makes all the difference because there are plenty of BAZ 44 in the US OB. These are made more likely to miss a moving ht than hit it because of the LV. I quite like this one.



The only other one I have played so far is 'Han-Sur-Neid' which randomly feeds small groups of German units from three directions (also randomly determined) against a defending mixed infantry and armour group of Americans. This is another good scenario but, if the German player is unlucky and finds his forces coming on from too many different sides, he will not be strong enough to force the issue at any part of the battlefield and may well fail to win because of this. Except for the first turn, there is also the possibility that he may get no forces at all that turn. All this means that it could not reasonably be used in a tourney, but as a suitable game for multiple playings in a long evening's *ASL* it does have an attraction in that no two games are likely to run the same way. Another winner I'd say.

Of those scenarios I have yet to play from this pack, there are a couple that stand out. 'Sweep for Bordj Toum Bridge' is another where a battle rages simultaneously on both sides of a river. In this, excellent quality Germans are pushing back some less experienced GIs, supported by some US engineers. Its PzIIIs and PzIVF2s Vs M3Lee/Grants across a valley created by boards 2 and 15 with the river behind. This is another one I can vividly recall from years ago and it is on my "must play" list once we've sorted out the BERSERK! scenario listing in the New Year. Another that I really like the look of is 'A Belated Christmas' which sees besieged US glider troops on the outskirts of Bastogne fighting desperately to gain control of gliders that have been dropped loaded with much needed supplies. Of course, the Germans want to prevent this, so both sides send men dashing out into the open ground to seize the gliders.

So, I'd rate this as a very worthwhile product overall. I was a little dismayed to see that 'Swatting at Tigers' from the old *GI* gamette and the classic 'Rehearsal for Crete' have yet to be re issued in *ASL* format. This is a shame because their memory from the old days is again quite vivid. Maybe next time.

Schwerpunkt 7: The Victoria Cross

This latest edition of the excellent publication with an unparalleled reputation follows up the *Medal of Honor* issue I reviewed in an earlier edition of *VFTT*. The basic format remains the same as ever, a 24 page magazine with six loose cards with a scenario on each side. These look just like

the MMP/AH scenarios, which is a contentious point at the very least.

As you might have guessed from the title, the idea of this publication is to present scenarios which depict actions where such an outstanding "...act of valour or devotion to their country..." took place that a VC was won. There is an excellent article describing the history of the award at the front of the magazine booklet and I read it with some interest. Only 182 VC were awarded in WWII, nearly half posthumously.

The main part of the publication has about a page of discussion on each scenario with designer's notes and broad hints on strategy for the would-be player. Some of these obviously refer to earlier versions still under playtest than to the final version presented here, as OBs that have changed are referred to, but this does not detract.

The back of the magazine has an interesting look at an often-overlooked fighting force of WWII: the Indian Army (or Armies as there were technically four). This is written by Brook White who wrote an earlier piece for on the French which was also an eye opener.

As ever with *Schwerpunkt*, the main point of publication of this issue is the scenarios. As in the *Medal of Honor* pack, the way the heroic deed of the winner of the medal is reflected in many different ways. This can be as simple as having a hero, or a high quality heroic leader in the OB. Other approaches include having heroes with special capabilities over and above that which they normally possess present. For example, in 'Nicholls and Nash' there are two heroes who can work together to make a Bren gun seem like a death ray, in 'Weston's War' the heroic leader can use a one-off suicidal attack with great effect against a pillbox. In 'Upham's Bar', the whole battle looks impossible for the New Zealanders at first since they are lightly armed infantry charging across an open desert through wire against AA guns, HMGs and DAK Armoured Cars. The two things in their favour are the lousy quality of the Italians who make up the bulk of the enemy OB and their own fanatic status. A 4-5-9 squad takes some stopping! This scenario depicts the action where the only person who won two VCs in WWII got his bar, despite being seriously wounded.

The variety in this pack is noteworthy since you have scenarios set in all the theatres and also throughout the war. You have infantry only affairs alongside all-tank or combined arms actions. I have played most of these by now and will be playing the rest soon, since they do make for good



tournament scenarios. You can expect to see at least some at BERSERK! 2001. There is plenty here for everyone and I can recommend this one without hesitation.

Sadly, since I wrote the above review, the Tampa Bay boys have announced that they will no longer be publishing *Schwerpunkt*, claiming that legal action from MMP/Hasbro has prevented them from continuing. I shall not bore you with my opinions on this matter, especially since I am not fully aware of all the facts of this case or how copyright law works in the US. Suffice it to say that I am very saddened by the news. I would urge anyone who has the money left over after the upcoming holidays and who has not already got the *Schwerpunkt* back catalogue to go get them whilst they are still to be had.

One other thing to note: The hero of the piece in the scenario 'Valour on the Bou', Lance-Corporal John Kennealley, appeared in the Times obituaries this year... within a week of the scenario being published!

High Ground

To my knowledge, this represents a first for a third party publisher: Heat of Battle have produced two mounted geomorphic mapboards designed to fit with the existing official boards. These are also nearly unique* in that they combine to make one large level four hill mass, or alternatively can make a deep valley. Included with this is a set of eight scenarios, all of which use these new boards, numbered I and II, either as a pair alone or in combination with other boards.

Unfortunately, I have not played any of these scenarios yet, which is no reflection on their apparent value, I have been busy

looking for tourney scenarios for BERSERK! that use commonly available components. I may yet consider some of these scenarios for BERSERK!, but it is unlikely since I am not sure how many of the attendees would have access to these boards. Since I have not played the scenarios and therefore have not used the boards, I can only offer my opinion on the components themselves.

My boards are a little thicker than a "real" Avalon Hill board. That would be the only criticism but for the slightly over speckled artwork that represents a wall, which makes the wall hard to see to my eyes. Otherwise they are beautifully rendered and extremely inviting to be played with. There is a large area of plateau at the 3rd level running along where the board edges join and there is a small area at one end that is level 4, with a smaller group of three hexes midway along, also at level 4. Instead of being completely bare, there are several hex sides of hedgerow and some brush and woods to make things interesting terrain wise. At the lower levels there are some wooden buildings and one of the roads has shellholes, something I've not seen for a long time on a printed mapboard. The boards look fine when butted up against official boards and do appear to be geomorphic, with the exception of their hill top "high ground" side.

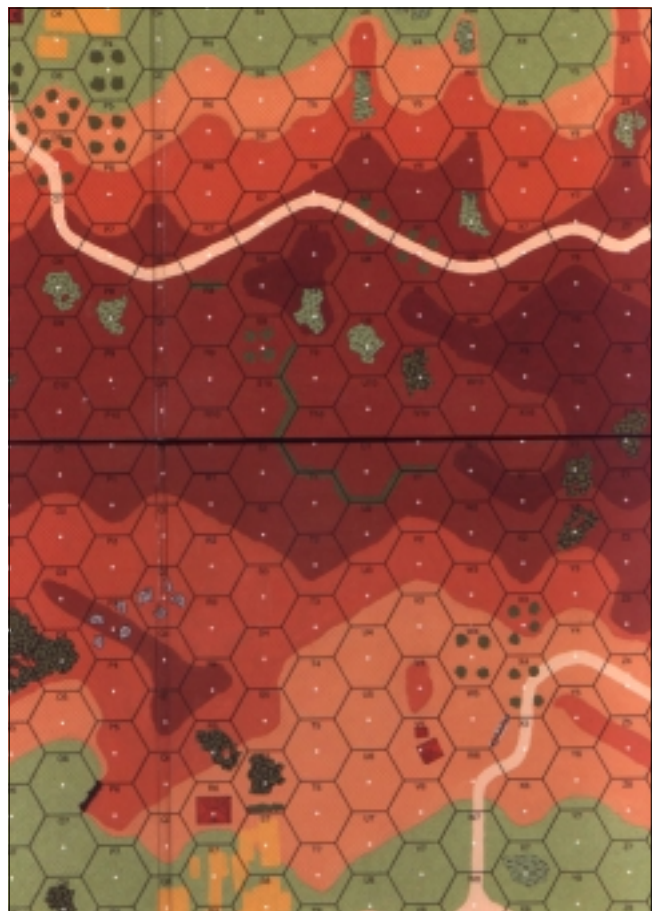
The scenarios are laid out like so many earlier HOB cards, with the exception that the counter art is new. At first glance you can see that they look a lot like the real thing, but close examination reveals that they are outline drawings which, whilst obviously being modelled on the originals, give a highly stylised and unique look. One retrograde step they have taken is not to include the small depictions of the mapboards in the "Battlefield Orientation" diagram (Board Configuration) as they did in their magazine *Recon By Fire* last year. I imagine this is again down to copyright.

The scenarios area mixed bag, from an Australian unit attacking an Italian one in Tunisia with captured tanks in their OB. The owning player must have to mark them in some way I guess so as not to be confused. The other scenarios are set in very diverse theatres: Gurkhas Vs Japs in Burma; US Vs same in Guadalcanal; Italians Vs Greeks, Germans Vs Greeks; Italians Vs French; Russians Vs Germans (two scenarios).

My main reservations about this release stem from the relative expense of the product and the value of the boards beyond these eight scenarios. I paid £25 (about \$40US) from a wargame dealer in the UK which is a lot of money for just eight scenarios. I do hope that HOB and/or others can produce more scenarios to make the investment worthwhile. That being said, it does seem to be a well produced product.

* I say "nearly unique" because I have seen the playtest maps that Kinetic Energy were designing for their abortive Korean War *ASL* project. These were to depict a large hill mass or long valley over four otherwise geomorphic boards.

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666 – The Number of the Squad

Over sexed, Under-rated and Over Here – the Americans in ASL

Trev Edwards

I have often been sat at an *ASL* tourney overhearing some player near bitching about the 6-6-6 squad. This is usually because it was their lot to end up playing a scenario with a US side predominately made up of 1st line squads. I can't understand the problem that most players have with the 6-6-6. I think it is one of the best 1st line squads you'll see in the ETO (outside of Finland). And I'm not the only one, flip that counter and look at the BPV: 11. Then check out the popular competition you'll meet south of the Baltic: 10 BPV for the Krauts (before panzerfausts are taken into account), the same 10 for Brit 1st line squads and only 7 for Ivan. Someone, somewhere "in the know" rates the 6-6-6.

The thing that irks the player lumbered with a 1st line US OB is that last digit on the squad counter: 6 morale stinks. I'm not writing this piece to dispute that, but I think you should have a quick look through the other end of the telescope before pronouncing the 6-6-6 as unplayable. I think that an acknowledgement of the other toys that the US 1st line squad comes with plus a careful approach to combat that will take into account the fragile state of the M-1 G.I. can yield results. You need to work to your troops' strengths and deny the enemy the opportunity to exploit the weak morale as much as you can.

First the bad news: With 6ML you can expect to pass an NMC only 40% of the time. Anything heavier than an NMC and you should just accept that they're going to break and just hope they keep under their ELR (again less likely for a 6ML squad than for others of higher ML with the same ELR rating). This means that the 6-6-6 is one of the greenest squads in the game. Not just because of the colour of the counter, not just because they behave like green squads where morale checks are concerned. No, they're so very "green" because they are one of the most recyclable units in the game. You have to expect a fair few of your squads to

break and then survive because a wily opponent isn't going to try and reduce already broken squads whose morale is eight. It usually far better suits their goals to try and break more GO squads. This means that the US player needs to think even more carefully than players of other nationalities about rout routes and rally points.

The *ASL* player who is on the attack often needs to really lay down some heavy firepower with his OB and the 6-6-6 is very good at this. Lets look at that first factor on the counter: 6 IFT FP. Not all that many squads muster this, let alone 1st line squads. That's 50% more than the main competition. OK you're not getting any LMG in that OB which detracts initially, but every 1st line squad is literally armed to the teeth. That M-1 Garand Rifle with the odd BAR thrown in represents "the business." Without SW only four of these squads makes 24 FP which is the lower end of what I like to think of as heavy-duty FP on the IFT. True, us IFT (as opposed to IIFT infidels) find that the 18 FP from three such squads irritating but the 4 FP MMG that are allotted in most OB can make up a very satisfying 16 FP FG easily with just two squads.

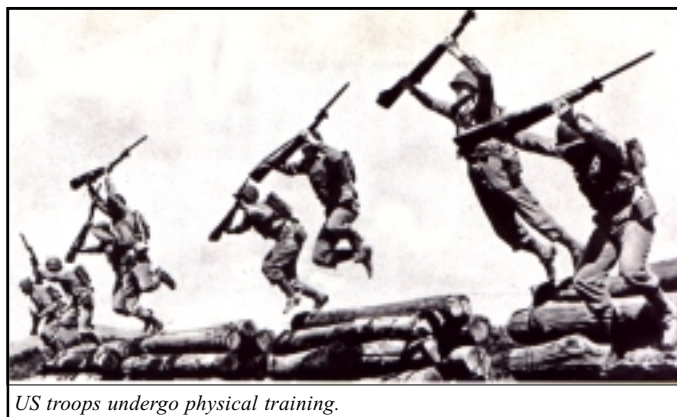
The 6 range isn't shabby either! No-one is going to outrange you with their inherent FP. Therefore, sometimes the key to winning with these GIs is to pick your range carefully. A 6-6-6 has the advantage over the majority of other 1st line squads and, should you find yourself fighting, say, 2nd

line Germans, then you can avoid being shot at by small arms fire completely whilst getting area fire attacks in if you sit back at range 9. Only the German 1st line and 468 elite and their MGs will not be defeated in this way.

Trying to use the great firepower when you have such lousy morale is the trick to winning with the US 1st line squad. Many general (and even GENERAL) articles with lists of "dos and don'ts" of *ASL* play advice warn you not to stack unnecessarily. Well, with the 6ML on this squad stacking becomes a definite no-no. Don't be tempted to create 1 hex kill stacks for anything less than a -2 modifier, and even then you'd better be in a stone building. It simply doesn't pay to stack more than one squad for -1 leadership modifiers because you become so much more vulnerable. Better set that leader up a couple of hexes behind the line for the inevitable rallying that will be needed. If I was a defending opponent who would usually expect to skulk in my turn (skulking: the tactical manoeuvre of dropping out of sight in my MPH to avoid being shot at, then advancing back into position at the end of the turn in the APH), I may be tempted to fire instead at an easily broken US stack. When playing with the 6-6-6 squad in your OB, the best way to bring that excellent FP to bear is by spreading out and creating large multi-location FG. To avoid having your large area FGs broken up, perhaps by an opponent firing at one crucial squad in the middle which is "linking" the flanks of that FG, deploy a couple of squads

to strengthen the link points with the HS. A HS can even be left out in a street as it is a far less viable target as though you were trying to set up a FG in Rowhouses.

Deployment is a two edged sword for the us 1st line squad. The HS created does not cost the side any firepower, but the range being halved has a punitive effect that is more severe than may other nationalities see, compare to that of the squad's. There is



US troops undergo physical training.

also the penalty of the loss of an excellent smoke exponent, which I'll discuss later. Another thing you lose is the assault fire bonus that can sometimes really hurt your enemy in the AFPh. All this means that you may decide to deploy a little less that you might have expected.

The balance of deployment of your forces is so key to winning the game but is going to be so different in each situation that I can't get into too many specifics. Maybe a Zen approach would work: If the enemy couldn't shoot back, how would you attack? You'd not deploy at all! You'd walk right up to PBF range and let rip in the AFPh before getting for some CC. Since they can shoot back, what do you need to change? Well you're going to have to split your force into a prep fire base to keep the enemy heads down, deploy and move in just enough HS to draw the enemy fire (perhaps with the odd full squad to throw some infantry smoke around), and then move up the rest of your force into a sizable FG that can follow through with assault firepower that is as good as most 1st line squad's prep fire. There, simple isn't it?

That smoke exponent of 3 is another thing that should always figure when planning a turn. Think about trying to lay lots of smoke as the first moves of any MPh. You should expect to get plenty of it and, when you get to the magic one hex range, its a great time to switch to WP and make the enemy's eyes water (you'll get WP on a dr of 2). This smoke capability is another strength of the US 1st line that is often under used. There's nothing going to force the enemy to DFF against a squad more than it being in a position to drop a smoke grenade right on top of them, except perhaps a DC!

I've saved the best 'til last. There is one other aspect of the 6-6-6 squad that is really very good indeed: In CC they are every bit as good as nearly all the opposition they will face, since only 838's will be better... And you don't see too many of them fighting the Yanks. If you can manoeuvre to get into CC with the 6-6-6 squad then you should seize the opportunity every time.

I hope this effort has made you reconsider the value of the 6-6-6 squad. Maybe next time you have them in your OB you'll see them as an asset, not a liability.

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The ASL test

Bas de Bakker

Here is a test designed to find out what kind of an *ASL* player you are. Assign yourself one point for each question answered with yes.

Did you ever ...

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 1 | break voluntarily? | 26 | set a DC during a scenario? |
| 2 | make a motion attempt? | 27 | fire through the marketplace? |
| 3 | declare a gun duel? | 28 | climb a cliff? |
| 4 | use a human wave? | 29 | scale a building? |
| 5 | carry a wounded SMC? | 30 | climb a high seawall? |
| 6 | force a prisoner to attempt clearance? | 31 | exchange M2 mortars for OBA? |
| 7 | attempt kindling? | 32 | assemble a 5/8" MTR on top of a roof? |
| 8 | destroy a bridge? | 33 | remove wire with aerial bombs? |
| 9 | use a mortar spotter? | 34 | use OBA to fire IR? |
| 10 | use ESB? | 35 | fire a AAMG with a heroic rider? |
| 11 | use armored assault? | 36 | gallop with a wagon or sledge? |
| 12 | scrounge a wreck? | 37 | jettison bombs? |
| 13 | assist another AFV with Bog removal? | 38 | make a reverse minimum move? |
| 14 | let an abandoning crew destroy their vehicle? | 39 | commit Hara-Kiri? |
| 15 | let them malfunction some of its weapons? | 40 | ride a bicycle onto a rice paddy bank? |
| 16 | use platoon movement with radio-equipped AFVs? | 41 | lead a horse onto it? |
| 17 | have an MMC assist with Bog removal of a Jeep or such? | 42 | place a fascine? |
| 18 | force prisoners to do so? | 43 | drive across one? |
| 19 | shoot WP into a cave? | 44 | need a broken ice counter? |
| 20 | reveal other caves that way? | 45 | bypass a dense-jungle hex? |
| 21 | use a bangalore torpedo? | 46 | breach a bank hexside? |
| 22 | do so in your own Location? | 47 | swim? |
| 23 | remove dead men from their AFV? | 48 | place a bridge? |
| 24 | capture an AFV with two SMC? | 49 | drive across it? |
| 25 | do this with two heroes? | 50 | drive across an enemy-placed one? |

0-4 points: What are you doing here? Go buy Paratrooper and read chapter K.

5-9 points: You should be reading the rules instead of this silly test.

10-19 points: You seem to be getting the hang of this game, but you too often do the obvious thing. Be creative.

20-29 points: You certainly know how to use the rules to your best advantage. Play some more scenarios for even better practice.

30-39 points: Have you ever considered making a series replay of one of your games? They must be great fun to watch.

40-49 points: They should introduce a heroic 10-3 counter and put your name on it.

50 points: Yeah, sure. And all those snake eyes in your PBEM games are real, too.

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THE FORGOTTEN FLEETS

Charles Harris

What follows is a set of DYO Charts for German, Italian, and French NOBA.

The Germans, on the other hand, did conduct shore bombardments (Poland 9/39; Norway 4/40; and the Baltic coast 1-5/45) and amphibious assaults/seaborne evacuations (Poland 9/39 and the Baltic evacuation 1-5/45). It is possible, however unlikely, that the Italian Navy conducted shore bombardment missions. It is highly unlikely that the Italians conducted an “across the beach” style (or any other style) amphibious assault. It is extremely doubtful that the French Navy (later Vichy French) conducted any shore bombardment missions or amphibious assaults. I have included them information simply for “what if” DYO scenarios.

The Germans used ship’s launches and barges for landing craft, the Italians could have used torpedo boats in this role, and the French could have used ship’s boats or torpedo boats. All German, Italian, and French landing craft are considered the equivalent of the listed landing craft types in game terms.

AIR SUPPORT

Only the French (but not Vichy French) fleet may buy Air Support when outside the range of shore-based aircraft. The Germans and Italians were building aircraft carriers but none were completed in time to be of any use in the war. The French, on the other hand, actually did have an aircraft carrier in service before the war began (after the French collapse the carrier declared itself to be Free French and fought with the British).

LANDING CRAFT

Type	German	Italian	French/Vichy
LCP(L)	X (39-45)	X (40-9/43)	X (39-11/42)
LCVP	X (39-40)		

X denotes that the LC may be used within the dates specified.

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DR	GERMAN		ITALIAN	FRENCH/VICHY
	1939-44	1945	1940-9/43	1939 6/40 (11/42)
2	380 ^{1,4,5}	280 ^{2,4}	380 ^{1,4}	380/380 ^{1,4}
3	105 ^{1,3}	105 ^{1,3}	320 ^{1,4}	320/320 ^{1,4}
4	280 ^{1,4}	150 ^{1,4}	105 ^{1,3,6}	150/150 ^{1,4}
5	150 ^{1,4}	280 ^{1,4}	203 ^{1,4}	135/135 ^{1,3}
6	150 ^{1,4}	150 ^{1,4}	105 ^{1,3}	105/105 ^{1,3}
7	280 ^{1,4}	150 ^{1,4}	120 ^{1,3}	105/105 ^{1,3}
8	150 ^{1,4}	105 ^{1,3}	120 ^{1,3}	135/105 ^{1,3}
9	105 ^{1,3}	105 ^{1,3}	105 ^{1,3}	135/105 ^{1,3}
10	105 ^{1,3}	105 ^{1,3}	150 ^{1,4}	105/105 ^{1,3}
11	105 ^{1,3}	105 ^{1,3}	150 ^{1,4}	150/150 ^{1,4}
12	280 ^{1,4}	105 ^{1,3}	135 ^{1,3}	380/150 ^{1,4}

SIZE BPV
460mm (18") = 400^{1,4,7}
380mm (15") = 358
320mm (12.6") = 316
280mm (11") = 274
255mm (10") = 235
203mm (8") = 190
150mm (5.9") = 158
135mm (5.3") = 140
120mm (4.7") = 126
105mm (4.1") = 105

FOOTNOTES:
1) Must also purchase Observation Plane (E7.6) or Shipboard Observer (G14.68).
2) Comes with SFCP (G14.61)[this represents the Heavy Cruiser Prinz Eugen].
3) Can fire IR (E1.93).
4) Can fire IR as G14.672.
5) If scenario set prior to 7/40 treat as 280mm [July 40 is the earliest date that the Bismarck or Tirpitz were available].
6) If scenario is set in Tobruk during 1940 treat as 255mm [this is the coastal defense ship San Giorgio].
7) The Japanese Super Battleships Yamato and Musashi mounted nine 18" guns in three triple turrets. They are the largest weapons (except missiles) ever mounted in a warship. Neither ship ever conducted a Shore Bombardment mission and this information is purely for DYO purposes.

HEROES 2001

Another ASL Tournament?

Steve Grainger

Let me explain.

Every year I attend a convention called MANORCON. This is one of the annual British *Diplomacy* events, held at Birmingham University usually during the last weekend of July. Anything from 200 – 300 people attend. It gets very busy if the World Championships are taking place.

The organising committee are always on the look out to expand the rang of games played, and bearing this in mind I suggested an *ASL* tournament. To be honest I don't think the fully understand what *ASL* is, but they will learn!

Currently they host official competitions for games such as *Acquire*; *Railway Rivals*; *United*; *18XX* and even *Croquet!* As well as this there is a huge gaming room for free play of any games.

The organizers want to attract new blood to *Diplomacy* and see new events as the way to do it. Likewise if an *ASL* event is successful it could attract new players to our favourite obsession!

So, what am I proposing?

Firstly as many people as possible taking part!

I would like it to be a fun, fast and almost evangelical experience. Use it as an opportunity to welcome new people to the whole concept of *ASL*.

What do we play?

Two possibilities occurred to me. Either a huge campaign game, the likes of which most people don't get a chance to play; or a series of smaller and quicker scenarios which won't scare the living daylights out of *current* non-players.

I am in favour of the latter. In fact I think the Market Garden Mini CG as featured in the Annual would be ideal. Participants would be either the Germans or Allies for the entire event, and play five of the seven scenarios in the series against a different opponent each time.

Points would be awarded as per the rules in the Annual , and there would be a Best German and Best Allied player over the weekend.

If there is enough interest from you, the *ASL* mainstream, then I will go ahead and confirm everything with the MANORCON committee. If the event itself is successful then it could become another annual *ASL* Tournament.

Please contact either Pete Phillipps or myself if you would be interested in coming to Brum next year!

Steve Grainger

sag@lineone.net

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Kingstanding

Birmingham

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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!

2001

JANUARY

WINTER OFFENSIVE

When: 11 – 14 January.

Where: The Comfort Inn, Bowie, MD20718. Tel 301-464-0089. Mention Winter Offensive for the special room rate.

Fee: \$20.00 pre-registered by 31 December, \$25.00 thereafter.

Format: Unstructured format, mutually agreeable scenarios. Special mini-tournaments start Thursday morning with brand new scenarios. The main event free-for-all starts Friday morning.

Notes: Cash prizes based on attendance, plus a special 1st place trophy.

Don't forget to order your WO'01 'ASL for ALS' t-shirts (\$10; \$12 XXL).

All proceeds will be dedicated to the fight against amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig's disease as part of "Curt's Pitch for ALS".

Contact: Multi-Man Publishing, 403 Headquarters Drive, Suite 7, Millersville MD 21108 or contact perrycocke@aol.com or bcyouise@erols.com. You can also sign up on MMP's web site at www.advancedsqadleader.com.

FEBRUARY

WEST COAST MELEE IV

When: 2 - 4 February.

Where: Embassy Suites, LAX, South 1440 East Imperial Ave., El Segundo, CA 90245.

Fee: Club members \$30.00, non-members \$35.00 (players can save \$5.00 by pre-registering).

Format: WCM is a 'structured open' format. Players will be initially paired at random. From that point on, for a game to count toward your overall event record, you must play against another player with the same number of wins, and select a scenario from the year shown on the 'Year Is' board in the main room. Players in the running for a prize must have five games completed prior to Sunday morning. There will also be several 8 man, single elimination mini-tournaments in conjunction with the main event throughout the weekend.

Notes: This year, we will have the 7-0 Leaders corner, where an experienced player will be available to answer questions and explain rules for new and inexperienced players.

Contact: Brandon Liesemeyer, 25300 Corte Sombrero, Murrieta, CA 92563, or email at WCM@socalasl.com.

WINTER WAR 2001

When: 2 - 4 February.

Where: Chancellor Hotel, Champaign, IL. Hotel rooms are available on-site at a convention discount rate (Thursday night through Sunday night) of \$60 single, \$70 double per night.

Fee: Pre-registration is \$12.00; registration at the door is \$16.00.

Format: 5 rounds, one on Friday, three on Saturday, and one on Sunday. These will be timed rounds with 6 scenarios to choose from. Round times will be strictly enforced and may lead to the adjudication of games. The scenario list will be provided to those who pre-register.

Additionally there will be a mini-tourney, limited to eight players and sponsored by Schwerpunkt publications, called "Night-Ops". Play will commence after midnight on Friday and Saturday, and be a single elimination style.

Notes: Winter War 2001 is a general gaming convention which features an *ASL* tournament. This year there will also be a night mini-tournament.

Medals will be awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place; and "Close Combat King", who will be the player that has earned the most net CVP from close combat.

Contact: Pete Belford, or email at pete@otterspace.com. You can also visit the Winter War web page at <http://members.limitless.org/~pete/ww.html>.

ASL SCANDANAVIAN OPEN

When: 23 – 25 February.

Where: Danish National Arms Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark. You can sleep on the floor at the tournament site (there is a bath) and eat there. If you want more luxury then you can get accommodation from £12.00.

Fee: to be announced.

Format: The tournament will be a six round Swiss style affair and each round will have three scenarios to choose from. The organisers will make an ABS for all scenarios. The scenario list will be published no later than 1 December.

Notes: Scandinavian Open is the most international tournament in Europe at the moment, with players from eight different countries attending last years event.

Contact: Michael Hastrup-Leth, Favrholtvanget 15, 3400 Hillerod, Denmark, or email at hastrup@image.dk.

MARCH

MARCH MADNESS 2001

When: 9 – 11 March.

Where: Holiday Inn, Mission Holidome, 7240 Shawnee Mission Parkway, Overland Park, KS 66202. Telephone (913) 262-3010. Room rates are \$69 per night for up to four people..

Fee: To be confirmed, expected to be \$15-20.00.

Format: The tournament format will be the same as last year, with four brand new 'limited intelligence' scenarios. Each side will receive a scenario briefing prior to the round, along with 5 'mission objective' VCs. Score points for each objective gained. The winner is the player with the most points at the end of 4 rounds.

Tourney will begin Friday night at 6PM, two rounds on Saturday, one on Sunday AM.

Contact: Mike Reed, or email at Visit <http://www.sky.net/~mikereed/asl/> for the latest details.

NOR'EASTER V

When: 23 – 25 March

Where: Best Western Royal Plaza hotel, Marlborough, MA. Telephone (508-460-0700). Room rates are \$79 a night for up to 4 people. Make sure you tell them you're with the Nor'Easter to get this rate, and make your reservations no later than two weeks before Nor'Easter.

Fee: \$20.00 before 10 march, \$25.00 thereafter.

Format: The main tournament is Swiss format, with prizes for first, second, and third place. Players choose from five scenarios per round. Five or six rounds of play are required to select the winners. Mini-tournaments start on Saturday but these games do not count toward the main tournament. The number of mini-tourneys depends on the number of participants.

Notes: T-shirts are available for \$15.00.

Contact: Make checks payable to Robert Walden and send to NorEaster IV, c/o Bob Walden, 316 Old Connecticut Path, Wayland, MA 01778. Visit <http://walden.ne.mediaone.net/noreaster/> for the latest information.

BERSERK! 2001

When: 30 March – 1 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 are also available at the hotel.

Fee: £6.00.

Format: Likely to be the same as usual – details to be confirmed.

Contact: Steve Thomas, 19 Derwent House, Samuel Street, Preston, Lancs., PR1 4YL, or email Trev Edwards at trev.hulldown@freeuk.com.

AUGUST

SISSUKONI 2001

When: 24 – 26 August.

Where: Parola Finnish Armor Museum, near Hämeenlinna, about 50 miles north of Helsinki, Finland.

Fee: 100FIM, which includes bed and breakfast, tournament entry, sauna and a tour of the museum.

Format: Five round tournament with the first round starting at around 1800 hrs on Friday, three on Saturday and the final round finishing by 1500 hrs on Sunday.

Notes: Among the vehicles on display at the museum is an ISU-152.

Contact: Eero Vihersaari by email at asl@icenet.fi.

OCTOBER

OKTOBERFEST ASLOK 2001

When: 2 - 7 October.

Where: Radisson Inn, 7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights, Ohio 44130. Telephone 440-243-4040. Room Rates for ASLOK 2000 were \$85.00 for 1-4 occupants and are likely to be similar this year.

Fee: Likely to be similar to last year, about \$20.00 or \$25.00.

Format: Same as always. Weekend tournament plus numerous mini-tournaments.

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 asl@nwsup.com, or visit the ASLOK home page at <http://www.nwsup.com/aslok/>.

INTENSIVE FIRE 2001

When: 26 – 28 October.

Where: The Kiwi Hotel, West Hill Road, Bournemouth, England, BH2 5EG. Telephone (01202) 555 889 or fax (01202) 789 567 to arrange accommodation. Accommodation is available for £31.00 per night (or £26.00 for a shared room) and includes service and breakfast. Normal rates apply if booking after 30 September.

Fee: £6.00.

Format: three round Fire Team tournament (two rounds on Saturday, one on Sunday). There will also be some single day mini-tournaments on the Friday. Open gaming is available for those who do not wish to take part in the tournament.

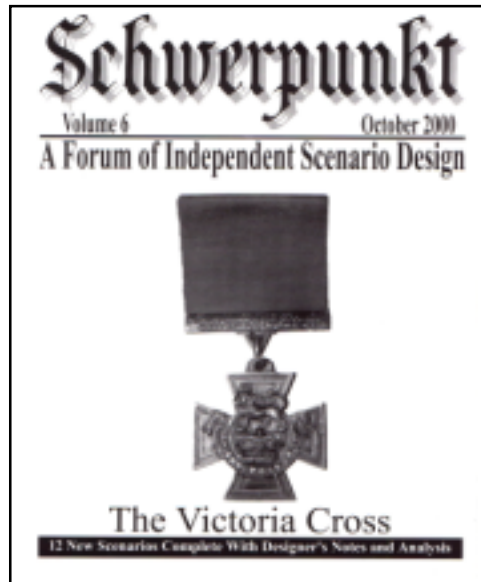
Notes: Prizes are awarded to winning players and the Convention Champion, who is the player judged to have had the most successful tournament with all games played over the weekend being taken into consideration.

Contact: For more details or to register contact Pete Phillipps, 49 Lombardy Rise, Leicester, LE5 0FQ. Phone (0116) 212 6747 (evenings only) or email if2001@vfit.co.uk.

Announcing the release of the eagerly anticipated

SCHWERPUNKT VOLUME #6:

THE VICTORIA CROSS



SP61 Objective Exodus: Royal Marine Commando Corporal Thomas Peck Hunter and his company attacks across board 44 to clear a battered group of Jaegers from a group of buildings on board 23. This is a tense, tournament-sized battle that will go down to the very last dice roll with demolition charges flying!

SP62 Ils Ne Passeront Pas: Captain Paul Triquet's company of Le Royal 22e Regiment supported by Sherman tanks attacks to seize the Casa Berardi crossroads on board 24 and repel a strong German counter-attack. With mortars, tanks and lots of machineguns on both sides, this action packed, combined arms battle is sure to keep you on edge to the end.

SP63 Upham's Bar: Captain Charles Hazlett Upham (a 10-3 leader if there ever was one) leads his Fanatic company of New Zealand infantrymen charge across the desert to destroy a company of Italians supported by German Pak 38s and armored cars. This wild desert melee is an exciting action that tests New Zealand nerves against German light armor and Italian machineguns and earned Upham his second Victoria Cross. If you are a desert warrior, you'll love this one!

SP64 Valour On The Bou: Lance-Corporal John Kenneally saves the day for his fellow Irish Guardsmen using a Bren gun when their board 9, hilltop strongpoint is attacked by a determined group of German infantry.

SP65 Ayo Gurkhali!: Havildar Gaje Ghale and two platoons of Gurkhas attack along a narrow ridge at Ft. White, Burma to clear out a stubborn group of dug-in Japanese. This is a fast playing tournament scenario set on board 44.

SP66 Nicholls and Nash: Bren gunner Corporal Harry Nicholls and his loader Guardsman Percy Nash spearhead a Grenadier Guards attack at Pecq, Belgium smash a German bridgehead on the river Escaut. This tight tournament action will test your nerves in the attack. Boards 33 and 40 are in play.

This issue's 24-page booklet contains three articles as well as our trademark analyses and designer's notes for each of the scenarios. The twelve scenarios feature actions for which the Victoria Cross was awarded. Each of the 12 scenarios is printed on cardstock in the standard format. The scenarios are in keeping with the Schwerpunkt tradition of mostly tournament-sized actions. We have also thrown in a couple medium to large combined arms actions for those players who enjoy beefier scenarios. This pack has something for every ASL player.

SP67 Backs to the Orne: Tigers and Panthers from the 12th SS Panzergrenadier Division (Hitlerjugend) attack to smash Captain David A. Jamieson and his Royal Norfolk infantry's bridgehead. This action packed, combined arms battle set on boards 4, 8, and 17 has OBA dropping on both sides and will keep you busy all day.

SP68 Foote-ing the Bill: Lieutenant Colonel Henry Robert Bowreman Foote leads his defending force of Valentine and Matilda tanks in this desert action at Knightsbridge, Libya, against a combined German/Italian attack. You'll need your dust mask and goggles for this swirling desert tank battle.

SP69 Meiktila Break-In: Naik Fazal Din and sepoy of the 17th Indian Division attack to clear Japanese from bunkers at Kyaukpu, Burma 1945. This is a fast playing tournament action set on board 44. It's perfect for both green and veteran PTO fighters.

SP70 Weston's War: Lt. Weston leads his Indian infantry and Sherman tanks in a combined arms attack against heavily armed Japanese in pillboxes at Meiktila, Burma. This is a medium-sized battle that uses boards 22 and 23.

SP71 Cutler's Cross: Lieutenant Arthur Roden Cutler and his wire repair part set out to repair communications and find themselves in the middle of the Australian 7th Division counterattack against Vichy French tanks and infantry in Merdjayoun, Syria during 1941. This is another tournament gem set on boards 18 and 46.

SP72 One Tough Canuck: Major David Vivian Currie (10-2 leader) and his South Alberta's defend Saint Lambert-sur-Dives against a heavy assault of Panthers and Tigers from the 12th SS Panzergrenadier Division (Hitlerjugend) during the Falaise breakout. This action pack combined action uses boards 7, 10, 40, and 46.

Schwerpunkt 6: The Victoria Cross, as well as Volumes 1-5 are ALL currently still available for \$15.00 each. Please add \$3.00 (\$6.00 outside the U.S.) for a single volume, for shipping and handling, plus \$1.00 for each volume > 1 ordered (Example: Shipping for one copy each of Volumes 1,2,3, and 4 is \$6.00 in the U.S.). (Foreign Orders for 2-7 copies please use the following Global Priority Mail shipping rate: Canada and Europe \$9.00; Japan and the Pacific: \$10.00). Send your check or money order in U.S. funds payable to Sherry Enterprises, P.O. Box 3, Ruskin, FL 33570