

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

Britain's Premier ASL Journal

Issue 38

Jul - Aug 2001

UK £2.00

US \$5.00



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FAKING IT ACCORDING TO D.5 - How *ASLRB2* can affect old scenarios

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THE ASL MAILING LIST

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You MUST use lower case letters!

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PREP FIRE

Hello and welcome to the latest issue of *View From The Trenches*. Not quite out at the beginning of July (blame wine, woman and actually PLAYING ASL for that!!), but just in time for the July fortnight for many of you, so you've got plenty of time away from work to enjoy every word of it!!

I've got a few articles lined up for the two issues but nothing in the pipeline for *VFTT* in 2002, so consider this an early call for material to ensure that *VFTT* continues into 2002 and beyond.

See some of you at HEROES I hope. Being a general gaming convention this is a chance for us to get the word out to others that ASL is still alive and kicking so let's put on a good show. Until then roll low and prosper.

Double 1. My last, best hope for victory.

Pete Phillippis

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 ASLers. Don't be a silent voice.

Issue 39 should be out at the beginning of September 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.

Back issue prices are:

VFTT Special Edition 98 £3.50 (overseas £5.00)

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VIEW FROM

INCOMING

SASL II PROVIDES BETTER RELIEF FOR LONE ASLers

After a slight delay caused by last minute production problems *SASL II* has now been released. *SASL II* is basically an expanded version of the original *SASL*, with the rules printed in the larger font style of the *ASLRB2* and also covering new topics such as night, PTO and seaborne assaults. Seven new missions are included, among them a river crossing and a seaborne assault, and the Generation tables now cover all nations except the Finns and Axis Minors (it is planned to have these in the appropriate module in the future). An updated Basic Table Chart (updated) and a new Campaign Game & Miscellaneous Chart are also included. Although plans to issue an update kit have been scrapped individual components are available for those who do not wish to buy the new version. *SASL II* retails for \$43.00 (£34.99 in the UK).

CH IN SPAIN

Guerra Civil is a major new module release from Critical Hit which covers the Spanish Civil War.

Created by Juan and Francisco Cebrian, two Spanish historians, it shares the same format as the recently released *Genesis '48* module, with new rules, two maps, 736 counters and 12 scenarios. The rulebook comes complete with historical, ordnance and AFV notes and a full DYO presentation with rarity, aircraft, SW, ELR and artillery data. Among the new rules are rules for the Dinamitero (dynamite-wielding MMC) and Field Chaplains. There are also two new play aids.

The maps come with full-size 'escarpment type' overlays, and a large 8" x 8" 'Spanish Castle' overlay is also included. Among the many new counters are Republican Militia; Vasque Infantry; Guerrilleros and Commissars, and Nationalist Legionnaires; African Troops; Requetes; Falangist; and Carlist. There is also a large number of AFV and ordnance counters (many new, but also including some existing types in Republican or Nationalist colours). There are also aircraft counters, including the Polikarpov I-15, the Henschel Hs123, and the Heinkel He 51.

Priced \$49.95, *Guerra Civil* should be

on sale as this issue of *VFTT* goes to print.

BURN-OUT DELAYS WORK ON BUNKER 13

A touch of editorial burn-out, coupled with work beginning on the *Central Stalingrad* play-test, has led to a slowdown in the schedule for *Dispatches From The Bunker* for a while, with issue 13 not expected to be released until sometime between Labor Day and Thanksgiving. The following issue will be ready for the Nor'Easter Tournament next March. After that the plan is to get back to a schedule of an issue every 4 months or so.

For those unfamiliar with *Dispatches From The Bunker*, it is an amateur *ASL* Newsletter from the New England *ASL* community, published every 4 months or so, with two new scenarios, along with designer notes and analysis, and a number of articles on all aspects of *ASL* play. There are also tactical tips for both novices and veterans, and the latest *ASL* news, with the emphasis on the New England *ASL* Community.

The editor is also looking for new scenario designs for possible publication in future issues of *DFTB*. If you are interested

you may send your design on paper or on a floppy disc (in plain text, Word, or Word Perfect format). All submissions sent by snail mail will not be returned unless accompanied by a SASE. Any scenarios/articles published in *DFTB* will earn a free copy of the issue in which they are published.

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.

Central Stalingrad will be their main priority until the play-testing is finished (hopefully) by year end or (realistically) sometime next year.

Ω



A portion of the first map from CH's new Spanish Civil War module.

ASL Journal 3

Trev Edwards

It can be a frustrating thing, being an ASL player in the UK. The new *ASL Journal 3* was released in May and we got various reports, mostly favourable, from the US on the Internet ASL mailing list about this eagerly awaited product, but we couldn't get our hands on one for some time. The wait while the merchandise crossed the Atlantic was plenty long enough without the added angst of the postal strike we had here in the UK that week. I finally got three copies (I had ordered for friends as well as myself) and it has been close by me ever since as I work my way through the contents. It was worth the wait, containing as it does a bigger than usual helping of scenarios and articles.

We had last seen a new issue of the *ASL Journal* at the beginning of 2000 and the lengthy wait for this issue was presumably down to MMP being engrossed in the re-write of the *ASL Rulebook*, an immense and largely successful project which I have already written about in a previous issue of *VFTT*. Although I'd like to see these *ASL Journals* issued regularly at that time of year in order to ease the effects of the post-Christmas depression and those long winter nights, I can certainly understand the delay this time.

ASL Journal 3 is a biggie, weighing in at 80 pages including outer cover. At first I thought "How pleasant to see only one advert," for a non ASL ACW game from MMP. However on reflection I realised that the absence of even a half page advertising the upcoming *Armies Of Oblivion* bodes ill for the nearness of completion of that project. It must still be a long, long way off if the logo and some counter art isn't available. However, it could also be absent because there was so much other material to be crammed into the publication. Possibly.

The cover of *J3* has artwork representing some just landed (and mysteriously already well-armed) Fallschirmjäger in a snowy landscape which sets the tone nicely for the first theme that you notice when looking at the content: three historical articles and eight scenarios concerning the Norway campaign at the start of the war. The articles are well written and informative enough and the authors are also credited with scenario design. Obviously this is a pet project for these guys. These Norway

scenarios vary in size and length and look rather good. On the Allied side we see the Brits, French and Norwegians vainly trying to stem the ever rising tide of German mountain troops

The scenarios are what I usually anticipate most when a *Journal* (or in years gone by an *ASL Annual*) lands in my mailbox. In keeping with the size of the new *Journal* we have a real glut of scenarios here. Aside from the themed Norwegian scenarios, there are others which can be identified as part of a group. A lot of Chas Smith's work, six



scenarios, see print here. Although some of Chas' scenarios are from the shortlist from the *Herman Goring* pack which was never published, a couple can be recognised as having already seen publication in his *Hell On Wheels* pack that he released a couple of years back. One of them recreates an incident laden with irony from the history of the US 2nd Armoured Division: One Cpt Robert E Lee, a descendent of the great man himself, met death at the hands of a PF totting Volksgrenadier in January 1945. The Irony? He died commanding a Sherman tank.

The articles are many and varied. Curt Schilling has offered some insight into the complicated business of counter production.

Brian Youse makes a good point about the two edged sword (there's a joke in here somewhere) that is HtH combat and the effect it can have on the numbers of Japanese as a scenario progresses. He puts forward alternative tactics to give them a chance to avoid heavy losses. Perry Cocke offers a nice piece on trucks and, more interestingly to those of us still getting to grips with the new rulebook, an article highlighting the changes between the 1st and 2nd edition. This actually makes interesting reading and will prove useful to those of us who needed a summary of the changes. One cautionary note, as Pete will no doubt be printing elsewhere in this edition, MMP have issued an erratum to this article telling us to ignore references to changes B1.16. This must have been an April Fool joke, or something similar, as it would have made CE DRM cumulative with TEM!

Other articles include a scenario review of 'J33 Slaughterhouse', a gem of a scenario from the last *Journal*, a write up on the history behind a new Kakazu Ridge scenario 'American Tragedy' that appears in this issue and two detailed examinations of aspects of the mechanics of air support.

By far the best articles in my opinion are those written by a friend and sometime opponent of mine, Mr Ian Daghish. As many of you will be aware, Ian has produced a lot of *HASL* material for another publisher that has mainly been set in the bocage of Normandy. Given that he has spent considerable time roaming around these battlefields with a notebook and camera, is ridiculously well read on the subject as well as designing and playing the scenarios, he must be acknowledged as an expert. In his *Journal*, Ian combines historical perspective with a discussion of the rules and then adds tactical insight to produce a really excellent article with well illustrated examples. There is also a very detailed explanation of the way the new rulebook makes the WA rules, and therefore scenarios involving bocage, much easier to understand. It also confirms that it is really tough to attack a well constructed defence in the hedgerows. Ian has also produced a small *DASL* scenario that is included in this issue involving a close order fight involving SS infantry and Panthers attacking poorly prepared British Sextons and their support. An outstanding effort

from Ian this outing.

Pete Shelling is a prolific scenario writer who has produced a number of scenarios for this *Journal*, three of which are particularly fascinating. Each is set on consecutive days in July 1943 and represent actions during Operation Citadel, the battle for the Kursk Salient. What makes these particularly attractive are variable Orders of Battle which will increase the fog of war for a time. Also included in this issue is a mini Campaign Game set at Kursk by the same author that has received favourable reviews on the *ASLML*. I hope to give this a try later in the summer. One thing that became apparent when I got around to playing the first scenarios is that board 48 is used. I don't have this yet as it is due for release in *Armies of Oblivion*. MMP have the boards available to buy now on their own, but I'll wait.

Speaking of CGs, a new one for *KGP* is included in this issue. Another old friend also gets a new lease of life with a smallish scenario set on the Nphum Ga map from the '97 *Annual*. For those who enjoyed the scenarios of *A Bridge Too Far*, a scenario set on that map is also present.

I have by now played a few scenarios and my first reactions are as follows:

'J63 Silesian Interlude': can't see what the Russians can do. Three Panthers and a PzIVJ will overpower the IS-2 and T-34/85 well before the Soviet TDs arrive. I'm missing something I fear.

'J53 Setting the Stage': lots of OB combinations for both sides, defensive set up tricks and traps and attacker's choice of where and how to attack make this a classic. Will have a lot of replay value and is the best I've yet played from this issue.

'J62 Lee's Charge': US combined arms must get past the LATW's and light OBA of a Volksgrenadier unit in deep snow. Given the firepower of the Yanks in this one, I thought they would win easily but that deep snow reduced the HE effectiveness, slows the tanks up and makes SMOKE NA. The final result is a tense and apparently balanced little fight.

Thirty scenarios, two GG and seventeen articles make this a really belting issue of the *Journal*. There is a small amount of errata but a lot less than you'd expect for this much material. Once again MMP, along with all their team of contributors playtesters and proof-readers are to be congratulated for creating an excellent product which is great value for money.

On the subject of money, I have been

pleasantly surprised of late at the cost of MMP merchandise in the UK. I had been steeling myself earlier this year for a sharp pain in the wallet when the *ASL Rulebook 2* became available. As it was, this sold for about the same price as did the original back in 1985! For years I have been used to paying an amount in pounds here in the UK close to the numerical price in dollars in the US. A \$60 rulebook would usually be expected to cost £60. The same good news followed on with the arrival of the new *Journal*. I paid only £18.99 for a \$28 product which means that something has gone very right recently as far as transatlantic trading of *ASL* material is concerned. Of course, in the time between my getting the *Journal 3* and writing this, the pound has taken a hammering against the dollar, but I have great hopes that we'll see reasonable prices asked for our *ASL* kit for the foreseeable future.

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DEBRIEFINGS

The following clarifications and errata for the *ASL Journal 3* have been posted to MMP's web site to date.

Scenario J38 "Bitter Defense at Otta" Ice rules do not apply.

Scenario J39 "Indeed!" In SSR 2, replace "[EXC: H4-I4]" with "[EX: H4-I4]".

Scenario J52 "Dress Rehearsal" BPSSRs apply (see page 60).

Scenario J53 "Setting the Stage" BPSSRs apply (see page 60); in Victory Conditions replace "33G6" with "33GG6"

Scenario J57 "Guards Artillery" In the British set-up, replace "any whole hex of board g" with "on board g" (i.e., not on board f or hexes shared with board f, but half hexes of board g not shared with board f are OK).

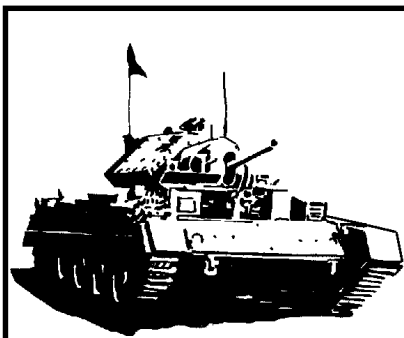
Scenario J60 "Bad Luck" in the Victory Conditions, replace the second instance of "Germans" with "Americans". Also, scenario design should be credited to Mike Licari.

"Keep on Truckin'" Page 6, 3rd column, 2nd paragraph, line 7 and again line 8: "the Basic TK #" should read as "half of the Basic TK #".

"First Do No Harm", Page 78, column 3: delete the entire paragraph on section B1.16.

"Broadway to Prokhorovka", page 60, BPSSRs: the HS passenger of any SPW 250/sMG and/or SPW 251/sMG is a 3-4-8; page 61, table 2: chit #4 reinforcements enter on turn 1, not turn 2; page 61, column 2, Example of CG Play, line 7: replace "2 fatigue chits" with "1 fatigue chit".

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THIRD PARTY PRODUCERS UK AVAILABILITY

As well as editing *VFTT* I also help to distribute those third party products not generally available in the shops over here.

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

<i>Leibstandarte Pack 1</i>	£7.00
<i>Leibstandarte Pack 2</i>	£7.00
<i>WinPak 1</i>	£7.00

O/S - Out of stock temporarily

Add 50p per item for postage and send your payment made out to PETE PHILLIPPS to The Crusaders, 49 Lombardy Rise, Leicester, England, LE5 0FQ.

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

UK RETAILER STOCKISTS OF THIRD PARTY PRODUCTS

To purchase other third party products such as Critical Hit, Schwerpunkt or Heat of Battle contact any of the following shops.

LEISURE GAMES, 91 Ballards Lane, Finchley, London, N3 1XY. Telephone (020) 8346 2327 or e-mail them at shop@leisuregames.com.

SECOND CHANCE GAMES, 182 Borough Road, Seacombe, The Wirral, L44 6NJ. Telephone (0151) 638 3535 or e-mail them at 2ndcgames@currantbun.com.

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

If you know of other shops stocking third party *ASL* products let me know so I can include them here in future issues.

ASL Notes from Down Under

Experiences in the land of the digger.

Toby Pilling

The inexorable march towards my thirtieth birthday certainly had a strange effect on me. All the chortling I'd done at the expense of older friends who'd turned overnight into "old farts" at that age was coming home to roost. I'll admit to feeling quite depressed at the imminent prospect of losing my twenties.

I planned therefore to go out with a bang by visiting Australia. Not only would I be doing something memorable to kick off a decade of obscurity (as I saw it) but also I'd be able to avoid having to endure a birthday party in the UK attended by all my gleeful friends. Sadly though, the only ticket I could get was the day after my birthday, thus destroying the latter plan. Still, it came to pass that on Sunday the 8th of April 2001, I set off on my journey to the other side of the planet. Towards koalas, kangaroos...and ASL.

Fate had lent a helping hand before I ever left these gilded shores. Examining the Paddington Bears web site, I discovered the Anzacon tournament was due to take place on the weekend of the 21st. Liasing with its organiser, Jamie Westlake, led me to time my trip to Melbourne to coincide with it. Then, Steve Linton's rebuttal within the pages of this august organ, of my accusations of unbalance towards the HOB scenario 'Noble Craft of War', grabbed my attention. Could this be the same Steve Linton whose Aussie, world conquering team at INTENSIVE FIRE had been beaten to first place in the 1999 final by my own? Still smarting from that away defeat, I assumed, but with the gauntlet thrown so eloquently I could hardly turn the other cheek. Gentlemanly honour demanded I respond, so soon I had altered my itinerary to include his home city of Canberra in my travels.

How I would love to recount all my experiences to you, dear reader. Brevity and relevance however are harsh masters, so my various adventures shall have to be restricted to those of the ASL type. A shame, I'm sure you'll agree. Let us therefore begin my account not with Brisbane or Sydney, my initial destinations, but my arrival at Anzacon in Melbourne.

Madness in Melbourne – ANZACON 2001

I was staying with my sister's ex-boyfriend and his brother whilst in the city and the tournament began at 9am in a suburb just to the south of their flat. Unfortunately in Melbourne, whilst public transport services the town centre well, travelling across suburbs is a nightmare. After an hour and a half I realised it might have actually been quicker to walk the distance. I rang Jamie on his mobile to get a lift from the train station nearest the tournament location and he picked me up.

I'd glibly informed everyone in Queensland when they warned me of how cold Melbourne was, that they didn't know the meaning of the word. How wrong I was! The first thing I did when I touched down at the airport was find a place to change out of my shorts and sandals and into the jeans I wore for the rest of my trip. The tournament was actually held though in a scout hut. Believe me when I say that an Eskimo would have found it cold in there. I knew I was in for a long day when my teeth started chattering even after they had stoked up the open fire. Only a modicum of decorum prevented me throwing rulebooks and mapboards on it to provide an extra centigrade. As I heated my behind on the miniscule heat so provided, a fellow player with the same idea commented:

"Hmm. My arse hasn't felt this warm since I left Sydney."

Figure it out.

One trait our Australian cousins have is an ability to abbreviate anything and everything. In Sydney the previous week, one of my mates had seen an ambulance roar past, siren wailing. He raised his head nonchalantly and commented.

"Ambo."

ASL was no different. Within minutes I'd heard one player regale another with a tale of how he'd lost a game: The opposing player had run a squad through twelve "rezzy" with no effect. Rezzy? Ah, residual firepower!

Round 1

I was up against a player called Bruce.

It seemed apt. Bruce Probst to be exact and we had to play a *Time On Target* scenario called 'This Close to the Sharp End'. My first niggle with the competition was therefore the lack of choice. I know you could say it's a level playing field and all that but it still leaves you rather at the mercy of the tournament organiser. Who wants to be lumbered with a howling dog? Anyway, I had no idea about the balance in this scenario but I did see straight away that it was a very unusual selection: Sequential set up, strange victory conditions and lengthy SSRs. So lengthy in fact that Bruce forgot about a crucial one when setting up and we both forgot about another during the game (both to his detriment). This was understandable due to the fact that it was Saturday morning and we were still half asleep. Also though, neither of us were given a chance to look at the scenarios before the tournament as they were unveiled one by one. This is another bug bear of mine...

Again I suppose it is to encourage a level playing field if the scenarios are not disclosed beforehand. I find though the opposite takes place: An unfair advantage is given to the player who has had the luck to play one in the past. If the scenarios are announced in advance however, that really is levelling the field – everyone has the opportunity to play or study them and if they decide not to do so, well that is their choice.

As for the game itself, I managed to polish off Bruce's attempted withdrawal of his British force with my Germans in fairly short order. I didn't like any of our SSR forced mistakes, which took the shine off the victory, but these things happen.

Round 2

I'm used to the last scenario of a day being a largish affair, something to get your teeth into even if you stay up half the night to get it completed. Here though, the format was another short one to finish in time for the usual group meal in the evening (which I sadly had to forgo). The scenario in question was 'Hamlet's Demise' from one of the *ASL Annuals* and I'd played it before. I reckoned it was pro German so opted for them, giving my opponent Alan Smee the balance.

Basically not only did I not play well but luck deserted me completely too. Alan



played a competent game and beat me. The reason though for my poor performance I can firmly put down to a new factor I'd never faced before – chess clocks.

Of course I'd played to time limits before. In the Scandinavian Open last year two of my games ran over and had to be judged – one win and one loss. Not an experience I liked undergoing, believe me. I don't think I'm a slow player but it goes without saying that the closer the game, the longer it will take. As soon as something starts going down to the wire, time gets eaten up.

Playing with chess clocks is completely different. The rule was that for every five minutes you went over, your opponent could take off any one unit of yours.

In the first round against Bruce I'd had a clock but neither knew how it worked or how long I had. I just kept pressing the button at the right time. Ironically my ignorance protected me as I speeded up my play a bit but didn't feel any pressure because I assumed the time limits had to be sensible. How wrong I was!

Once round two began I'd fathomed both the clock and learnt the dearth of available time I suffered from. That knowledge doomed me. I couldn't stop looking at the damn thing which pervaded all my thoughts. I forgot tactics completely in the rush to save few seconds. Without doubt, it was one of my worst ever performances. As both our time ran out, Jamie came over and told us that they wouldn't be enforcing the rule anyway. By that stage I'd already pretty much lost, so it was scant comfort.

It is my firm belief that these infernal machines have no place in the ASL fraternity. I'd rather have the indignity of having a game adjudicated on, which I hate. The thing is that such extreme time pressures take all of the enjoyment out of a game. Normally in a scenario you have time to have a bit of a chat with your opponent. Get to know them, have a laugh at this or that. It helps break the tension, making gaming an enjoyable, social experience.

With the clocks, all of that goes out of the window. If you want to talk, it's going to be in your time, so it doesn't happen at all. That's why at the end of Saturday, not only had I played terribly but I'd undergone a horrible experience that left me with a pounding headache. Thank god this innovation has not caught on over here.

Round 3

I approached this round with a completely different mind set. As often

happens, taking the loss not only relieved any pressure I felt, it also sharpened up my play. I was now only in the tournament to enjoy myself, not win, so I decided not to worry about the clocks at all. I believed that if I played reasonably fast but didn't dwell on the time, I'd play better and have fun. I also thought that Jamie didn't seem too draconian on the penalties – the clocks were meant to encourage quick play, not enforce it (unless someone took eternity).

The scenario this round was 'Armoured Fist' from the first *Journal* and my opponent was a guy called Dave Bardi. A glance at it suggested to me that it was pro Japanese, so I bid for that side.

I should say that the bidding system we used was the Australian one, where there are four levels of bid for each side (three that actually give up balance). So if you go Japanese 3, you are giving up more balance than Japanese 0, 1 or 2.

Though I can understand the theory behind it, I have to say that I find it overcomplicates choosing sides massively. What's wrong with just using the normal balance if both players want the same side? It saves time and the organiser doesn't have to invent increasing balance provisions for every scenario.

The funny thing with this scenario was that the balance for the Japanese 3 bid wasn't worth as much as the published balance anyway. For that reason, I opted for the full bid. Dave went Jap 2, so I ended up pipping him to gain the Japanese.

All I can say is that if the previous round saw one of my worst ever performances, this was graced with one of my best. The scenario basically involves a Japanese force trying to push past a British roadblock to exit a certain number of points off the board. Not only did I exit the requisite points before the last turn but I destroyed all but two British units and all for no loss. In Dave's words, he didn't even "flip a nip!"

It is an unbalanced scenario but even so, I was quite proud of my ability to bounce back from the previous days disheartening loss.

Round 4

By this stage I couldn't win the tournament but still had a chance of qualifying in the top three. My opponent was Paul Haseler, an excellent bloke who I'd crossed swords with before when he was part of the Aussie team at INTENSIVE FIRE. I'd managed to win that time in a very tense game of 'AP13 Shielding Moscow' and I think Paul was out for a bit of good natured

revenge.

The scenario was 'Oh Joy!' from *ASL Journal 2*, set on the *Red Barricades* map. Quite an interesting one, with infantry and armour for each side, including a Russian flamethrowing tank. Unfortunately a bit of an error cropped up when it was realised that no-one had the *RB SSR* – not even the organiser! We all had to go from memory, which led to a mistake or two as I discovered when I returned to the UK.

Anyway, as the Russkies had heaps of leaders, including a Commisar and a 10-3, I opted for them with a zero bid. Paul went one higher for the same side, which I seem to recall increased the German SAN by one. I therefore had to set up a defence for the Jerries.

As I did so I became more and more convinced that I really had the wrong side and that I should have bid all out Russian. Only time would tell...

My main worries were the three Russian tanks and the 10-3 infantry leader. The first trio I managed to take out, one with my PzIIIH (which then died itself), one through falling in a building cellar and the flamethrowing OT-34 through my solitary anti-tank mine! My main moment of glory though came when I broke his top leader and one of two accompanying squads through prep fire. I then proceeded to place a demolition charge on their hex and established a unit on each side to ensure that any broken units would be eliminated for failure to rout. As the demo charge went off, Paul's super leader rolled a double one for his morale check – the worst possible result for me! The subsequent DR to determine the nature of the heat of battle came up – double 6! Disrupted 10-3s. You don't see them too often.

Suffice to say I managed to win, and all amazingly in the time limit. My theory of letting the clock be my guide rather than my master had paid off, though only due to the relaxed mode of the tournament. I've heard that the main Australian tournament takes the clocks and the penalties very seriously indeed. Not a recipe for fun, in my eyes.

Aftermath

After four rounds, every player had lost at least once. The points system was very complicated and I will not attempt to explain it here. Suffice to say that Paul Smee won (the guy who beat me), Dave Bardi came second (who I had beaten in the third round), Neil Andrews came third and I crept into fourth.

Paul walked off with what I must say

Continued on page 14, column 1

THE ADVENTURES OF SERGEANT ROCK IN THE 3RD DIMENSION

Bruce Probst

I recently played 'AP4, 'Abbaye Blanche' as the Americans. Aside from being a generally fruity scenario to begin with, I was blessed with the sort of dice rolls you normally have to sell your soul to Satan to obtain. Nothing epitomised the event like the adventures of Rock, as chronicled below.

Rock was spawned from my Elite US HS. ("But there aren't any Elite HS in that scenario!" you may be wondering. Ho ho, not to begin with there weren't! A few 2MC results from passing SS squads soon fixed that, though.) As such things naturally progress, the same Elite HS, immediately after giving birth to Rock, rolled a Casualty MC on a NMC result, leaving their sole possession, a MMG, to fall into Rock's capable hands. That's OK; he's a Hero, and now it's Payback Time.

Clearly this worried the Germans. First they attempted to Assault Move a squad into a stone building location next to Rock. A few well-aimed economical bursts soon sent them running like the whipped curs they were. So the Germans pulled out the big guns, and sent one of their awesome SPW 251/9 half-tracks to deal with the lanky Yank.

First Rock tried to outright kill the half-track; alas, despite several well-aimed hits, the bullets kept bouncing off the titanium-reinforced hull. In desperation he fired a belt's worth of ammo at the driver; unfortunately the sole effect of this was to make the Nazi bastard tighten his helmet chinstrap.

[In game terms, the half-track has spent about 6 MP in Rock's LOS, and every single MP expenditure has prompted First Fire MG attacks, a Subsequent First Fire MG attack and finally several Final Protective Fire MG attacks, all to no avail, barring a single "Pin" result.]

Rock grimaced. Clearly these square-heads were serious hombres.

The Death Machine lumbered forward, firing round after round into Rock's position. He smirked as he chewed on his stogie, ignoring the blasts. [The half-track's OVR has no effect whatsoever. As an interesting aside, did you know that an OT AFV

with no usable MGs suffers no penalties for being Pinned when attacking via OVR?] They might be tough, but these Nazis can't shoot straight worth a damn. This will be easier than wrestling alligators, he thought.

Time to get unconventional; quickly pulling out his jock strap, he attached it to the end of the MG barrel and started using it to fling grenades into the open aperture of the Nazi Machine From Hell. Beginning to become perturbed by this Death-defying Defender of Democracy, the crew swung the vehicle around in a desperate bid to find somewhere safe to park where they could shoot at the American from what they thought was a safe distance. [Having survived the OVR, Rock's multiple FPF CC RF attacks on the half-track begin to make it feel unwanted. It spins around a couple of hexsides and exits.]

The cowards were running away! Laughing maniacally, Rock wrapped his jocks around his head, reloaded the MG and just "floored" it. Suddenly, the Arcane Automaton swung around, it's deadly gun barrel aimed squarely at Rock's manly chest! [Having entered the next hex, the half-track begins receiving more FPF abuse from Rock, continuing to fire the MG crazily. The half-track turns 180 degrees, clearly intending to write Rock a Telegram of Doom in the next available Fire Phase.]

Rock finally blew the driver's head clean off with a burst of precision marksmanship. [Finally, after enduring something like a **DOZEN** FPF attacks of various forms from Rock and his MMG, the crew blows a MC on the last possible attack and is Stunned.]

Coolly lighting up a new stogie, Rock placed the MG back on its tripod, set up a new belt of ammo and proceeded to carefully aim at the engine block of the half-track. It was only after pressing the trigger several times with no result that he realised the MG barrel had wilted like a young sapling in the Mohave desert heat. [In the immediately following PFPh, Rock fires the MG as ordnance at the adjacent, BU, stopped half-track, and, naturally, rolls a 12 TH.]

God DAMN it! What sort of cheap crap were the army making their guns out of these days?! Then, out of the corner of his eye, Rock noticed his company commander, Captain Anonymous, making advancing motions towards the crippled chariot of chaos. Heh, thought Rock, the Captain may be a wuss, but he knows how to party. Time to make these krauts REALLY sour. [The 9-1 and Rock advance into the BU, OT, stationary and completely-lacking-in-MGs half-track's Location. That's 2 x SMC @ -1 leadership, -1 hero, -2 OT, -1 no usable MG. I'd call those acceptable odds.]

Rock calmly lobbed a jockstrap-bundled parcel of explosive joy into the top of the enemy engine of evil. For a moment nothing happened. Then a small hatch opened in the side of the Krautmobile and, to the astonishment of the two Americans, Rock's Jocks were hastily pushed out, got tangled up in the tracks, and the resulting blast caused nothing more than a wheel to fall off with a poignantly-empty "boink" noise. Then, all was quiet, except for the pitter-patter of various SS soldiers skipping hand-in-hand down the road. Grimly, the two Americans hunkered down by the side of the hedgerow. Clearly, it was going to be a long, long war.

[Yes, I rolled an "immobilise" result in CC, and so the two SMCs are now locked in Melee while the surviving SS units – which weren't many! – ran around them, heading for the board edge and SANCTUARY]

[But I still won. Like I said, my dice were hot and the SS were not.]

Ω



ASL Into The 21st Century

Nigel Ashcroft

The aim of this article is to try to elicit a response from the UK ASL community to answer the enclosed questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire is to see what the players out there are looking for at the various meetings and to ascertain what to offer. Also to make the events balanced catering for many facets. Variety is the spice of life. Also from a personal point I am looking at trying to develop alternative options to competition play. This questionnaire will enable me to determine if there is support such a venture.

My reason for writing this is that others and I have noticed a drop in attendance at some of the tournaments. I have managed to get to all but the first *BERSERK* and *INTENSIVE FIRE*. The reason I missed the first ones was that I had just stumbled across the trail of the events and it was too late to organise time off. It was a very fortuitous encounter that led me down that trail.

There is another reason for me asking you to fill out a questionnaire. If we want to encourage new blood [or the old blood back] I feel that we need to advertise our offerings to a wider audience and certainly to a younger one. The Birmingham event organised by Steven Grainger is a great idea. I can't go as I'm on holiday and she who must be obeyed would shoot me if I suggested changing our holiday to Birmingham.

As for encouraging new blood, now that is not an easy task. In one of my other roles in my job I needed to ascertain what young people did after school. We looked at Primary and Secondary school to see if age made any difference and targeted across society, i.e. from the more deprived areas to the private sector. One staggering result was that 'hanging out with my mates' and 'playing on the computer/video games' featured proportionally across the age and society spectrum

The video/computer games are quite a threat to us to encourage new young people into the field. It is much easier for them to just sit and use the joystick to move, solve puzzles, and fight. No weighty tome to peruse, no intellectual [or not] arguments about the validity of such and such a rule, no social contact. I enjoy playing ASL for several reasons, I enjoy playing scenarios and then digging out the information on that action,

reading about an event and then trying to find a scenario for that event. But most of all the social element of sitting down and playing a game against a human, and being able to chat and have a laugh as well. I also enjoy campaigns very much as it means you have the scope to do more long term planning, can try out that flanking move, pull out if casualties are too high. It's more like assuming the mantle of a company commander. The research side that is sparked off by playing the game is very interesting and rewarding as you correspond with lots of other people. Unlike the video games where the human element is non-existent.

So another problem is to attract the young, well that's my perception. How do we drag them away from the cosy life of video games and get them to study that massive tome. Hence the beginners ASL seems a great idea, and 'Up Front' I think is a good tool to get a person started. The young people love Digimon and Pokemon cards. So maybe swamping the school with 'Up Front' is the way forward ☺ [joke]. I am looking at a way to broaden our advertising – like Dave Schofield's press release for the D-Day ASL slugfest. But we do need to look at what to offer at our events.

Now back to the main theme, why have our members fallen? When you compare the number of people at the early *INTENSIVE FIRE*'s and the numbers at *INTENSIVE FIRE* 2000, there definitely is a drop. So is there a problem? So I hope by asking the right questions and getting your feedback it will enable me to look at what the ASL community as a whole is looking for and wishing to do. The poor attendance may be because of geography, people wishing not to be involved in purely Tournament, or what?

What must be said though, is that it is easy let other people organise and run events and criticise them for not providing this or that. The contribution that the organisers of *BERSERK* and *INTENSIVE FIRE* have made to the UK ASL community I feel is on par to that which Curt Schilling has done for ASL as a whole. They brought together a lot of different people and as a result our ASL scene has gained much by this. For this, I for one would like to pass on my appreciation

for the enjoyment that they have brought me. It's definitely not easy to organise these sort of things. I organise a lot of multi-agency initiatives and that's hard work, but I always have the advantage of regulations to fall back on if a particular agency fails to provide what it is supposed to. These guys don't have that, so to run and make the tournament enjoyable is hard, for instance just getting the right sort of scenarios must be a nightmare. How do you find those 'balanced' scenarios when the actions they are portraying are not 'balanced' anyway?

Hopefully from the information people provide me and as there are about 190 or so UK players out there. We should get a good set of data and from this I'll be able to look at the viability of providing additional items at the events. To enthrall those who wish to enjoy something other than tournament play, or cater for anybody who is left out due to an odd number or can only make one of the days.

One final reason for me to do this questionnaire, is that there is a danger of over specialisation at an event. If you only offer tournament play then the others might drift off and form other ASL groups and probably host other events. We then become fragmented and as numbers dwindle the viability of running an event becomes from a financial point difficult. The hotels aren't likely to give us the sort of service we've been getting if only ten or so die-hards turn up. I have seen this happen too often with community groups and other types of clubs. It would be sad for us to all go our diverse ways.

A couple of major events a year which provide a balance of options to satisfy any players whims seems the best option. It also means that if you do get a new player interested he will be offered many choice titbits to sample rather one choice on the menu. Hopefully you are more likely to keep that player.

If I've missed anything on the questionnaire please put your suggestions down [well the polite ones anyway] and I'll see if I can get that gorgeous blonde barmaid

Continued on page 14, column 1



The Noble Craft of Warfare

Michael Davies

After reading Toby Pilling's article on 'Noble Craft of Warfare' and Steve Linton's semi-serious rebuttal I thought a few notes on the scenario might be timely.

GERMAN SET-UP AND DEFENCE

The British win by amassing more Victory points than the Germans. VPs are awarded for casualties, building Control, and exiting troops off the southern map edge. No CVP are awarded for the 81mm mortar unless IFT/TH fire or overrun destroys it.

Extreme strategies for the Germans could be to win by inflicting high casualties, or to fall back and exit the victory area in force whilst preventing any significant British forces exiting. Probably a more viable approach is a delaying action, falling back or routing to form a series of three or four defensive lines. The precise nature of this defence is determined by the attacking force composition. Against infantry the SS have high firepower, good range, and machine guns; additionally a high rate of fire mortar and some AP mines are available. For defence against tanks the panzerschreck is deadly, and there are also ten inherent PF capable of destroying or burning any tank they hit. In extremes, close combat and ATMM can also be considered. Remember the PF range is two hexes, which is out-ranged by the Churchill Crocodile's FT, 75mm gun and MG armament! Until the German force starts to take casualties it can set up a very strong

defence across the entire board.

Although the Germans can set up on board 43 hexrow AA, I don't think they should. A possible set up would be as follows:

Squads in 43FF2, 43GG2, 43EE5, 43EE6, 43FF7, 42B4, and 42B9. LMGs can go on the flanks, perhaps 43EE5 or EE6. I favour putting the 9-2 leader with the MMG in EE5 or EE6 but there are other good spots; 42B9 or even 42B6 could work well. The panzerschreck and a half-squad need a position just back from the front line; I like the look of 42B1. The hero could go with one of the LMG squads, with the leader and MMG, or (my choice) with the panzerschreck. I think the German benefits greatly from killing armour at long range, and the hero's -1 modifier could result in a hit for the panzerschreck, which is surely more advantageous than adding another -1 to attacks against infantry in Open Ground?

The mortar can go in 42C6, or if rubbled 42B6 or B7? Alternatively you might want to consider 43FF2. Spotted Fire is an option some players are pretty keen on; this sacrifices rate of fire and accuracy to trade off better protection from fire and a few more set up options. Given the victory conditions, using Intensive Fire with the mortar is a good idea if you expect to be overrun; after the mortar is disabled the crew could usefully man the panzerschreck.

Deploying a squad might be an idea. I am tempted to put a half-squad in 43AA1 or 43BB1 to hinder routs and the initial British

moves. Without doubt this unit will be killed or captured but it can do a lot of service before it goes.

Rubble doesn't have a big effect on set up besides creating a few options for the mortar and slowing movement a bit.

Quite where to put the mines is difficult. All the minefields are known but the type of minefield is not. In these circumstances the mines are present to delay and disrupt the attack rather than spring surprises or make movement more cautious. The British can clear mines by using the spigot mortar, demolition charges, the flail tank, or in the case of AT mines by picking them up. By setting up mines south of 43EE clearance cannot be attempted before turn 3 without some risk taking by the British. Try to use mines to form speed bumps, remember mines can set up on road hexes, and try not to tarp your own units with AP mines! I recommend deploying AT mines in one factor fields as most players will not charge into any hex containing a mine marker; if you are playing against someone more reckless or brave higher factor mines should be considered. More numerous fields slow down clearance. If you can cover minefields with fire they will be harder to clear and any damage they inflict can be exploited. Obviously the more dummy minefields you get the better by setting them up close to the real thing they can delay or restrict British movement.

After set up make some educated guess work about the British force after they are

set up. Try to guess the likely line of attack to see if this frees any units on the opposite flank. On turn one try to restrict infantry movement by Spraying and Residual Fire. Although this might allow some tanks to charge down the road towards you I doubt this will happen. At this stage your plan should be to separate the infantry from their armour support. At a pinch you will forego some low odds PF shots but should survive any Advancing Fire and be in position for some better chances to hit in your PFPh.

Judging how and when to fall back is very difficult. Perversely, breaking units make the decision for you, falling back anyway to make a new defensive line. If you pin the British down and are winning the firefight don't fall back for the sake of it. Conversely if you have taken a bit of a kicking, fall back rather than expect some lucky low odds attack to improve your position. High casualties weaken the German defence and eventually allow the British armour to make a push to exit units.

In close combat the Germans have a distinct odds advantage but should avoid melee if at all possible. The British can trade squad for squad and still come out on top. I would hate to lose a CC where a pinned British half-squad recovers and fights a protracted melee with Mr 9-2, a squad and MMG for two or three turns! Falling back one hex in the APH works rather well; slightly riskier is breaking, routing and hoping for self rally.

In the mid-game you might need to abandon the mortar. It might be prudent to disable or destroy it before you go or you might witness the abandoned SW being subjected to repeated IFT attacks or overruns. On the other hand these might result in a SAN attack.

Try to keep the sniper close to British leaders, there are not very many of them and even a wounded leader slows down the

British attack.

Some final thoughts: make use of the PIAT if you capture it; consider manning any abandoned vehicle if you get the chance; avoid stacking anywhere near the Crocodile or AVRE. Keep in view walls, hedges and brush significantly slow the Churchill tanks.

Finally gain concealment when you can and entrench when time allows.

BRITISH SET-UP AND ATTACK

Before playing 'Noble Craft of Warfare' the British player needs to be fully conversant with the rules for mines, panzerfausts, smoke mortars, smoke dischargers, white phosphorous (AKA Willy Pete), and the Chapter H notes for all the vehicles he commands.

All three Shermans should roll for Gyrostabiliser availability. A functioning Gyrostabiliser affects both main gun TH probability and the effectiveness of the CMG when a tank has moved.

The rules for AVRE are essential reading. Aside from the special rules for the petard spigot mortar or flying dustbin effective against mines, troops and terrain! Note the vehicle carries four demolition charges that can be used by the Fanatic crew. If the AVRE is immobilised or the MA is disabled using the demolition charges is an excellent idea.

Attack options for the British are influenced by the German set up. If the Germans do not contest control of board 43 advance quickly to the edges of Cambes, timing your attack to coincide with the arrival of the armour by turn three at the latest. Even if you need to pick your way through a few minefields once you reach the village the fight becomes much more even. Unfortunately the Germans are unlikely to

allow a free run across board 43.

If the Jerries will be lining the woods and hedges of board 42 entering a firefight supported by the firepower of the armour is an attractive idea. It might be possible to wear down the Germans force by inflicting casualties to allow the remnants to be bypassed or destroyed.

It is rather more likely the Germans will contest movement across board 43. The defence could consist of a series of small mutually supporting positions with mines carefully covering the most attractive approaches to Cambes.

On turn one look closely at the German defences and form a plan of attack for the first few turns. This is difficult as so much depends on the effectiveness of your attacks and the German response but a basic plan can be formulated.

Possibly the most promising avenue for an attack is through the field centred on 43CC7, towards the woods at 43F6, then into the village. If the FF6 woods are defended in strength or the field is mined this attack becomes less attractive.

Attacking along the eastern flank is a less attractive option unless it is not effectively defended. To be brutally honest neither approach is ideal as both involve some movement across Open ground in the face of automatic fire.

The British infantry do have some inherent SMOKE making ability which can be attempted when crossing Open Ground, while at a one hex range WP can be used as an offensive weapon.

To cross Open Ground assign roughly half the attacking forces to Prep Fire. All remaining actions can be determined by the effectiveness of your fire. Charge if all enemy positions are suppressed. Assault Move and roll for Smoke if most opposition is suppressed. Delay the advance and shoot if earlier Prep Fire was largely ineffective.

A possible German set-up. Plowed field and paved road changes to the mapboards appear courtesy of VASL.



Tanks can be moved after Prep Fire is complete. I would be tempted to fire the Shermans at targets of opportunity in the AFPh. There is a very low chance of malfunction roughly equal to a critical or multiple hits. MG armament is a bit of a gamble but still worth a burst in my opinion. Remember to account for gyrostabilisers if you have them. I doubt a decent shot will exist for either the Crocodile or AVRE on turn one, but do consider using their MG armament. Against the very small German force killing a squad or even breaking it on turn one will hurt. Keep out of panzerschreck range, but don't be too scared of the mortar; a shot that hurts a tank would do serious damage to an infantry target but a near miss would cause a Morale Check that tanks are immune to. Make use of any vehicular Smoke you can. Try to put tanks in a position to allow infantry to use assault Movement next turn or at least benefit from LOS Hindrance or positive TEM.

The key to improving British chances in this scenario is smoke, or rather SMOKE. Some aggressive players prefer HE to most forms of SMOKE. I would suggest shooting in the PFPh, roll for WP first, if it is not available consider Smoke, then HE. I would be disappointed to lose a tank which still had WP or SMOKE ammunition unused. If you do lose a tank and it brews up make use of the smoke this generates; it shouldn't be part of the master plan but make the best of the misfortune.

Mines are a bit of a problem, the AVRE is best used against these from as close as possible without exposure to PF or panzerschreck shots. The mine roller is very slow but can be effective. Remember, on roads any mines must be either dummies or AT mines, and neither will kill infantry!

At some stage around turn three or very occasionally turn two you will either be losing very badly or have slowly advanced to the edge of the village. Once into the buildings and rubble you face a much more even fight, which moves in your favour as the Jerry force is smaller than yours is. Use infantry fire to suppress, break or draw the fire of the defenders then move in armour to finish them off. Avoid close combat against squads but pile on pinned half-squads or lone leaders, and the mortar crew. Very rarely you might see units voluntarily break then fall back to form another defensive line. Given the high morale of the SS this is a valid tactic. Make life more difficult by keeping troops under DM. If you play enough games you might see a self-rallying squad generate another leader of rather better suffer Casualty Reduction due to Fate. Take prisoners if you can.

Help the Germans by keeping a record

of successful PF shots; when this hits zero you might still need to dodge the panzerschreck but you can consider overruns, and have greater freedom of movement. If the mortar is abandoned destroy it using an overrun; your opponent might laugh but it's worth two VPs, which you can't earn by capturing it.

By turns four or five it might be possible to consider exiting units to gain VPs. This makes a lot of sense for the tanks who will earn more VPs by exiting than they can expect to earn by way of casualties in the last couple of turns.

Even with the balance provisions this is a very hard fight for the British. You don't need to be a rules lawyer to play but you must make use of all your units capabilities to win. One top tip is to keep the Crocodile moving as it is less vulnerable to PF or panzerschreck shots and saves MPs but still fires the FT at full effect. Keep Mr 6+1 at the back rallying broken units. Use infantry to pick up AT mines.

IN CONCLUSION

I am not entirely sure this scenario is balanced; most players would probably agree that it favours the Germans. I do think this is a very interesting scenario featuring a small elite force in decent defensive positions against a decidedly average infantry force supported by five armoured vehicles. I think it would be eminently suitable for a quick game between friends, each player taking the role of attacker and defender in turn and comparing VP totals to address the vexed question of 'balance'.

I would recommend both the *No Quarter No Glory* and *Fuhrer's Firemen* packs to anyone who hasn't seen them. I particularly like 'Bear Hunt' and 'Chateaux Nebelwerfer', and as a wargamer from the early 70s I do like the black and white SS counters. I must admit the Adolf Hitler counter went straight into the bin though!

Ω

THE ISRAELI ASLers STRIKE BACK

Daniel Kalman

This is to establish Radio Contact from Israel, and let everyone know how much we enjoyed the BERSERK! 2001 tournament, and I presume to speak for Josh and Ran as well when I say that. It was a truly profound experience, meeting the global community of fanatics who share the same obsession we've only had among ourselves for 17 years. Said fanatics also proved one and all to be great human beings, and made us feel extremely welcome in England. Coming in third place was an unexpected bonus for me. Need I say, I am now hooked, and you may expect me to attend tournaments with some regularity (much to the chagrin of my girlfriend) and take away more trophies.

Special thanks to Trevor Edwards, for picking us up in Manchester, hosting such a great tournament, and refereeing rules disputes with the wisdom of Solomon. Thanks to my opponents, Adrian Catchpole, Dominic McGrath, Toby ('I win again') Pilling, Sam Belcher - a true gentleman and builder of my now cherished dice tower, and David Tye. Thanks to Pete Phillips for keeping us good company the last night in Blackpool and selflessly availing us of this worthy forum.

May all ye ASLers, near and far, visiting this part of the world, consider yourselves welcome to my hospitality and an impromptu scenario. It would be an honour and a pleasure.

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PS: to Ben Jones: I believe the cover of 'Genesis' features the Israeli flag being raised in 1949 at Umm Rashrash, known today as Eilat.

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Combating Kill Stacks

Chuck Payne

Back in *View From The Trenches* 8 Neil Steven's discussed killer stacks. After having played a *Red Barricades* campaign game where some kill stacks were bound to occur, I found that often the best way to eliminate a kill stack is with your own kill stack. At least in *Red Barricades* the German kill stacks are often too far back in +3 TEM for my infantry to use multi-Location fire groups effectively against them.

As the Russian, I made a point to keep all MMGs and HMGs well back from the front lines (I lost one of each on day 1 and not any after that.) The German had initially maybe three good locations for a kill stack. So I HIP'd my two best rifle squads with HMGs and a 10-2 in a location that could see 2 of the three spots on day 2. The German fired during his turn #1 at some of my bait, I mean, troops. In defensive fire, I had a 20FP + 1 shot against his 9-2 lead kill stack. Normally, I would have a tremendous advantage at this point. Unfortunately, I gacked my rolls during DFPh and my next PFPh (no ROF either time). Then I got chewed up and spent the rest of the day trying to recover the HMGs. In the following campaign game days, this tactic worked much better. The lesson I learned was that I am not guaranteed either ROF or an effective attack despite laying the best of traps. And I also learned to keep the HMGs farther back. Four or five hexes from the front lines is too darn close to risk losing an asset like a HMG.

In the following campaign days, I would move my kill stacks around while they constantly got bigger, stronger and more numerous. One day might have a kill stack on each flank. The next day has one in the centre and another elsewhere. The secret was to guess correctly where the German would locate his kill stacks and for me to HIP mine in different locations. I had many more viable spots to hide in that still had decent LOS's to his positions. But the key was to have his location already in my LOS to give me the first shots at drawing blood. I would have two fire phases before he could effectively hit me back. With average to good DRs, I could hurt him sufficiently to neutralise his kill stack for most of the day. With bad DRs, he would return the favour.

One time I moved my kill stack from O18 to P18 after finding that my LOS to X9

was barely blocked. I got hammered hard before I could ever get a shot off against him several turns later. Whoever has to move into position to challenge the opponent's kill stack will likely be the one hurt most.

Another time I had 2 rifle squads with a MMG each HIP with a concealed 9-1 leader on level 1 (X14 or X15?) waiting to nail a kraut kill stack that might move into or set up in X10. Across the board the German sent a reinforcement squad across some shell holes 14-18 hexes away. I held my fire. A couple of turns later the German desperately needed to get reinforcements into the centre factories, so he stacked 3 more reinforcement squads with an 8-0 leader, all concealed, and tried to get there ASAP. I used the 9-1 leader to strip his concealment at 16 hexes after the stack used only 1 MF in the shell hole hex. After deciding this was a prime target I took a long range 4FP - 3 attack and rolled a 3. A 1KIA later the leader and a squad were dead with the rest broken. I went ahead and nailed them again in the DFPh for good measure. I had noticed that this path was a favourite reinforcement alley for my opponent. So by being patient and passing on the little fish earlier, I scored a very damaging attack later.

I'd also pre-register likely hexes with OBA or at least have a spotter positioned to blast them. I tended to drop HE concentrations on kill stacks much more than smoke since my goal was to cause casualties more than just temporarily blinding him. During the campaign I scored quite a few critical hits with my OBA against his kill stacks. I was surprised at how effectively OBA could neutralise them until I drew my second red chit. (I dropped a nasty 150mm barrage on him once that caught 2 9-2 led kill stacks in it. And one of the stacks sucked up a critical hit. Yeah! Later the same module nailed his remaining 9-2 kill stack when it moved forward to support his attack. I eliminated the entire stack and recovered the 2 HMGs and a MMG when a conscript eliminated them for failure to rout and then advanced into the hex on the last turn.)

If I had smoke capable weapons, then I could smoke the kill stack into ineffectiveness. Both the Russian 82mm MTRs and their ART pieces have good smoke numbers.

Another common tactic was to place the sniper in area where the kill stacks would likely be. His sniper picked off a Russian 9-2 or 10-2 leader who was stacked with a HMG kill stack. It crumbled and had to be abandoned for the day. No way to get back in there without first getting nailed by his local kill stacks.

The last useful tactic to nullify kill stacks was the local counterattack. Once I had broken up the German's supporting fire base, then I would counterattack in force in that area. Sometimes I would force his kill stack to rout away to avoid becoming trapped while broken. Other times I would just maul his forces nearby while keeping his kill stack DM'ed or out of position. These were the times I really made use of CC. To avoid CC, the German player frequently had to self-break to extract his now vulnerable forward units. And as the Russian, I would always risk CC at even odds or better. In time this forced the German to switch to multi-hex fire groups which were either led by lesser leaders in each hex or only with a single leader in the fire group. Without a leader in each hex, cowering became a factor. With a leader in each hex his troops up front lacked the leaders they needed to carry the attack into the factories. Also, by forcing him into multi-hex fire groups any leadership modifiers were generally less than I would have faced otherwise.

While most of these comments are based upon a campaign game, many can apply to single scenarios too. In a scenario, smoking the kill stack or a key hex in its LOS can neutralise it for some time. OBA smoke may be used to completely smoke in a defender's prime kill stack, which allows units to move adjacent easily for CC or to bypass its location completely.

The best ASL advice I have ever read was an article by Mike McGrath on when to stack. Stack one MMC and SW with a -1 leader, up to two MMCs and SWs with a -2 leader and maybe 3 with a -3 leader. By avoiding stacking as a rule, I very rarely have any single DR hurt me irrecoverably. This technique is easier to use on the defence since leaders often must aid more than one squad in moving forward rapidly. But once the

action gets thick and heavy, spread out even on the attack. In *Red Barricades* I violated this rule more often because I had a large number of infantry units after a couple of days. But even with the quantity of units, most of the time I did not stack. I would only stack at strongpoints and with my local reserves, who might need to get somewhere fast using a leader to help.

I hope the above will help other players make good choices of when to stack and when not to do so. If you want to contact me about anything covered above my address is: Chuck Payne 107 White Sands Drive Cary, NC 27513 USA, or you can email me on payne@fuji.uicc.com

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ASL NOTES FROM DOWN UNDER

Continued from page 7

is the finest tournament prize I have ever laid eyes on. Jamie Westlake builds and paints model diaramas in his spare time and this one was a large, superb rendering of a couple of Afrika Corps soldiers exploring a knocked out Matilda in the desert. A work of art, make no mistake and completely unique.

In conclusion I really enjoyed myself, apart from the affore mentioned problems I have with chess clocks. Maybe it was the small number of players, but it was also the friendliest tournament I've been to. Aussie hospitality is splendid and it's a real shame I couldn't have joined them all for the meal on Saturday night.

That then, was my experience in Melbourne. But what of my showdown with Steve Linton? The "grudge" match. Why, that was in Canberra the next week. And it's a whole new story...

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ASL Into The 21st Century

Continued from page 9

from BERSERK 99 back again. I've never seen so many games stop dead in mid play so quick. I don't know where the dedication gone these days!! So get filling out the enclosed form and send it back to me. If you want more facets to the events now is your chance to keep the faith going or as Buzz Lightyear says "To infinity and beyond".

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Faking It According To D.5

Michael Licari

I just got the new rulebook the other day. I didn't get it right away, as some of the excitement surrounding it wore off since I was a proof-reader. So, I ended up seeing several drafts in PDF format before it was finished. As such, when it was released, it hardly felt "new" and hardly worth parting with over \$50 for. But, after playing a few games where my opponents had them, it became clear that I needed to "keep up with the Joneses" and stay compatible.

On the whole, I really like the new book. It's laid out well in a font that is easy on the eyes. And although it'll take some getting used to in terms of where rules are located, I've come to realise that the incorporation of the Q&A and errata alone is worth buying the new book. Furthermore there are a few rules areas that received some crucial clarification, especially the section on walls and hedges.

There has been controversy over a few sections, however. Although the most vocal debate arose over the platoon movement rules, I don't find that section to be the critical issue. The platoon movement rules were not changed from the first edition; they play the same way, and I suspect that people who played them incorrectly in the past will do the same now. What I *do* find problematic is a new little sentence that Perry Cocke (the MMP head rules guy) nestled in D.5, which reads:

"Fake DR/dr, e.g., for non-existent A-T mines, or for unnecessary Reliability DR, are NA, whether secret or not."

This seemingly inane rule prevents players from "psyching out" their opponents by rolling for phantom events and has some huge consequences. Furthermore, its justification is perhaps the absolute worst reason to change a rule (more on that later).

First, let's examine why this rule change may have some drastic consequences in many scenarios. The more significant issue is the performance of dummy stacks. In order for dummy stacks to be valuable in a scenario, they must act like real units. Part of acting like real units can often include making DR/dr for certain actions that would be appropriate or required of the unit if it were real. Of course, there are risks of revelation if a dummy stacks makes a roll that requires some consequence (a dummy

stack "succeeding" in digging a foxhole with a fake entrenching DR for example). But the point remains that part of making dummy stacks seem real is to have them try and do real things, like making Bog DRs, hull-down attempts, and Reliability DRs for vehicles.

As for the other fake DR/dr that D.5 prohibits, I'm not sure that they were much of a big deal in the first place. I've never met nor played an opponent that made fake minefield rolls, and I wouldn't play a person again if he did that. Those types of rolls are *cheating*, as minefield attacks need to be declared. Simply put, unless it's a secret DR (i.e. like for Mud Bog), your opponent is entitled to know why a DR/dr was made and what the results are. That alone negates this sleaze, and it doesn't require the amendment to D.5.

Why is all this a big deal? After all, you might be asking, don't dummy stacks still have the capacity to fool an opponent even without making a fake DR/dr now and then? Of course they do, but there are certain instances, and certain scenarios, where these fake DR/dr become crucial to the proper functioning of dummy stacks. One situation that will be common in many official and third party scenarios is where the defending side gets some dummy counters and some AFVs, some or all of which require Mechanical Reliability rolls. With the new sentence in D.5, there's hardly any point in setting up 3/8" dummy stacks. If you do, then you can't move them! The mechanical reliability roll is illegal for the dummy stack, and if you move the stack without making the roll, your opponent will know it's not a real AFV! Another example is the fact that D.5 makes fake Bog rolls illegal...now your dummy stack can't move into bog terrain, since making the Bog roll is illegal, and *not* making one will give away your stack. Even steering clear of Bog terrain that otherwise would be sensible to move through can tip your hand. Hull-down attempts by dummy stacks, even at the start of the scenario, are now illegal as well.

My personal experience shows that the elimination of certain fake rolls will have a large impact on the way we play. Even worse, the new wording of D.5 can, and probably will, upset the balance of many scenarios. In short, Perry used hasty judgement and completely failed to take into account the ramifications of his change. Take



these examples of official scenarios that should be familiar and that were *not* play-tested with the new rule.

J60 BAD LUCK

This scenario, yours truly, is from *Journal 3*. The Americans get 6 dummy counters, and it might be a good idea for them to use two to fake a tank, since the German tanks will be on the prowl. There are also a lot of woods hexes that make good firing positions, and while it won't be common, it will probably be a good idea for the Shermans to duck into the woods now and then, especially to get the +1 TEM. Of course, any dummy stack pretending to be a tank will not be able to use this move. Furthermore, once nice spot to maybe place a dummy or a real tank (and try for hull-down) is 44D3; the lack of a hull-down roll will give away the dummy, and making such a roll will automatically mean there's a real tank there.

ASL57 BATTLE FOR ROME

When I played this as the Italians, I used a dummy stack to act like one of my armoured cars to pretend to shore up part of my line that was being pressed by German infantry. To do the move keeping concealment, I dipped briefly into the board 22 stream, making a fake Bog DR on the way out...this would be illegal now!

AP11 SWAMP CATS

In my opinion, two of the German dummy counters *must* be used to fake the Panther at set-up. This is the only thing keeping the Russian tanks from completely sweeping into the town. Of course, Panthers need Reliability DRs to start, so this tactic is severely hampered by the new rule, and wipes out a very useful (and fun!) trick.

CROSSING THE GNILOI TIKITSCH

In this one, the two Russian T34s probably want to try for hull-down positions on the board 40 hill. They also probably want to fake a tank or two with some of the 10 dummy counters they get...but the hull-down attempts will be illegal for the dummy stacks!

J1 URBAN GUERRILLAS

I've played this as the Russians, and my opponent used two of his dummy

counters to fake a Panther to great effect (rolling for Stall to make it convincing). It factored into my decision about what side to bring my IS-2m tanks on, and added a fun "fog-of-war" component to the scenario.

P THE ROAD TO WILTZ

The Americans at the start only have a handful of decent AT weapons, one of which is the single M10 Tank Destroyer. It's obvious that the American player will use some of his dummy counters to fake an AFV or two. With all the hills, the Americans will be making several hull-down attempts at some point in the game...but not the dummy stacks!

G34 THE LIBERATORS

By design, this scenario has a lot of fog-of-war revolving around not knowing what OB your opponent has chosen. The change to rule D.5 seriously reduces what the German player can do. Dummies can't masquerade as Panthers (which need Stall DRs to start), nor can they enter buildings (including the Factory with its vehicle-sized entrance!) since that would require a Bog DR.

CAMPAIGN GAMES

Dummy counters are a key component of campaign games, and D.5 now seriously limits their usefulness in pretending to be AFVs. Just think of trying to move through the terrain on the Red Barricades map; how many hexes can you travel before you are faced with a Bog DR? Or what about the Germans in any of the KGP CGs? With all those barbed wire hexsides, Reliability DRs, and Out-of-Gas DRs to make, the Germans might as well not even bother with 3/8" dummy counters!

THE REST

This rule will also influence a huge number of third-party scenarios, as well as many other official scenarios not listed above. A casual review of your scenario collection will underscore my point.

The new rule in D.5 forbidding all fake DR/dr is terrible, since it has implications that are far reaching. The change will seriously influence the manner in which many scenarios are played, and may have serious balance and fun-factor consequences. No more faking a platoon of T34s as the Russians

in *Red Barricades*!

Finally, the *real* kicker. Why was this rule introduced? Unless it's a joke by Brian Youse, it's because Perry lost a scenario to Brian due to a die that bounced onto the table and knocked over a key dummy stack. Even if that's not actually the case, his stated reason (in *Journal 3*) is in general to prevent dice from bouncing across the table and knocking stacks over. Yep. That's it. I realise that having control over the rules of the game that you love must be a tremendous power trip, but some perspective is needed in order to prevent the destruction of the game.

First, I can't believe that something as trite and inconsequential as the potential of losing a scenario because of an errant die is the basis for a significant rules change; this is a tremendously dangerous precedent.

Second, rather than changing the rules of the game, Perry should have addressed how his opponents roll/handle their dice. I use a simple rule: don't touch the dice unless you're making a DR/dr, and keep your hand over the glass when rolling. In the hundreds of scenarios I've played, I can't remember a *single* instance where a stray die knocked over something vital. And what are we to do with all of our ham-fisted friends who accidentally knock over stacks? Cut their fingers off to prevent them from handling counters? If the goal was to prevent stray dice from bouncing across the table, it's not going to work anyway...each scenario involves hundreds of real DR/dr!

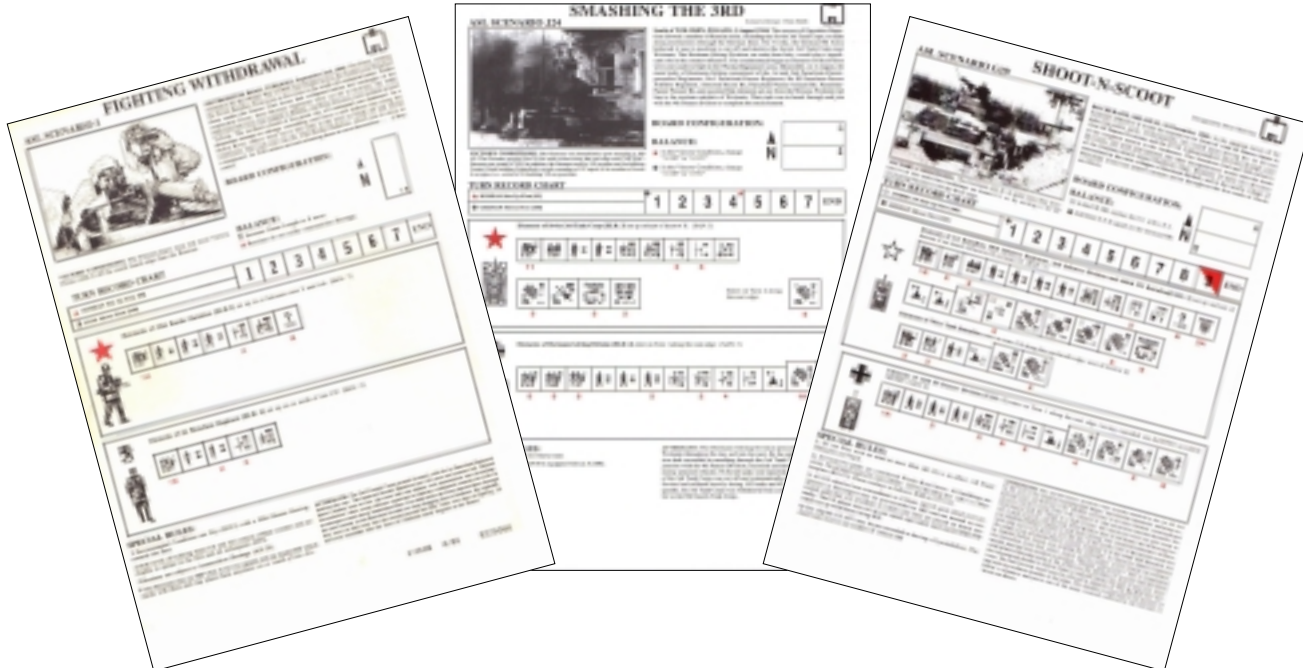
Third, I think that in his haste (anger?) to prevent the situation from occurring again, he utterly failed to acknowledge the consequences. This is quite ironic, given the fact that his essay in *Journal 3* about producing the new rulebook is titled "First Do No Harm". In this player's opinion, D.5 causes serious harm. And that this harm is caused for a silly and trite reason is even more distasteful.

Until I figure out a way to deal with this problem, my 1st edition rulebook will do just fine, thank you. "Just Say No to D.5" in *ASLRBv2*! And a big "thumbs down" to Perry's "first do no harm" efforts...D.5 single-handedly wipes out the fun and balance of a huge chunk of scenarios. In general, I refuse to play with house rules but in this case, I am pretty much forced to refuse to accept the reworded D.5 and thus play *only* with the first edition version of the rule. That is, until Perry corrects his huge error. Get going, Perry, and issue that errata!

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THE TRENCHES





“How Do I Start?”

Tom Repetti

Slumming around the VASL scenario rooms recently I’ve run across a few newbies who expressed something I had forgotten about: Fear and Loathing in the Setup. You just don’t know where to start. So let’s see if the denizens of Groggardia can give some tips on how they approach setting up a scenario.

I’m assuming here that you’ve already picked a scenario to play. The Scenario Selection Phase is a full subject unto itself, fraught with the whole spectrum of human emotion, so we can’t handle it here. You’ve got the OB’s out and are ready to place your forces on the board. Let’s look at the Things To Do, in roughly chronological order of importance.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Finnish player must exit more Victory Points (A26.3) off the south board edge than the Russian.

1) UNDERSTAND THE VC

Gotta know what you’re doing here. Note not only what you have to do, but what you don’t have to do - you may have to take a certain building but the VC’s may say nothing about how many CVP you’re allowed to lose. Can the game end immediately upon some condition being met, or is victory determined at the end of the last turn?

SPECIAL RULES:
 1 Environmental Conditions are Dry (R21.5) with a MM Breeze blowing towards the East.
 2 Both levels of building bases US and G2 contain a Blast counter and are eligible to spread in the first and all subsequent AFPS.
 3 Russians are subject to Ammunition Shortage (AR.11).
 4 The Russians may use HEP (A2.3) for two squads and any leader/TW which checks with them and may place them anywhere on or south of row A3.

2) UNDERSTAND THE SSR

Although most SSR are pretty straightforward; some alter the game in significant ways.

1. All buildings are wooden.

3) CHECK THE TERRAIN

Is Grain in season? Are Orchards? Is that Stream Dry, Shallow, or what? Are the Rice Paddies Dry, Irrigated, or what?

1 Environmental Conditions are Dry (R21.5) with a MM Breeze blowing towards the East.

4) CHECK THE EC

How’s the Deep Snow gonna affect my infantry and vehicular movement? Is Smoke NA by virtue of Heavy Winds, Snow, Mud, Rain, or some other reason? Is it already Raining or Snowing, or is it likely to start

during the scenario? How’s that going to affect my attack or defense? Is there any Wind which will cause Dispersed Smoke and affect how we place Infantry Smoke Grenades?



5) UNDERSTAND THE OB, SETUP AND ENTRY AREAS

Where is my opponent’s? Where is he coming in from off-board, and on what turn?

The above 5 items are pretty much the things that you want both sides to understand, and it really pays off to spend a minute before anybody sets up and just go over them together. “So I set up here and you come in from there and you gotta take that building. Grain’s in season and so are Orchards; this SSR makes all buildings stone. The Mud means you can’t fire smoke. Oh, and you get those reinforcements on turn 4.” Simple, quick, and it can save you both a big headache later. It’s so grievous to spend hours at a scenario only to discover somebody’s made a fatal error in his understanding of

what's going on.

There are some items below that a real gentleman might want to share with his opponent; where you draw the line depends on how friendly the game is, who's involved, etc.



6) READ CHAPTER H - KNOW YOUR GUNS AND VEHICLES

Many scenarios need you to recognise what you have in terms of Special Ammo like HEAT, APCR, Smoke, etc. Most of the info you can get by turning over the counter, but some gems are hidden in chapter H. "Hey wow, this half-track comes with an inherent HS passenger and a PSK!" Don't forget to read about your opponent's guns and vehicles too :-)

Note that you haven't set up a single unit yet, and you're not going to until you....

7) GROK THE ESSENCE

The VCs are the "What", this section is the "How". Here's where you think about what tactics will and won't work in this situation. This is the part that comes with experience. Grognards simply have seen many game situations before, and it's easy for them to get a feel for what's probably going to happen in this scenario because they've seen other, similar, scenarios. They're not necessarily smarter than you; they've just seen more than you have.

As a newbie, don't dump on yourself just cuz you don't know what to think at this stage. Accept that there's a learning curve to be trodden and that you'll probably rack up a bunch of losses while you tread that curve. On a positive note, you'll hopefully have a ton of fun along the way.

You won't go badly wrong if you think about what you've got a lot of and what you don't have a lot of. Use what you've got. Being subtle is nice, but as Carl Fago (a Smart Guy) said, "Subtlety is overrated." You got a 9-2, an HMG, and a Level 2 Location with a nice wide view of the map? Hey, it's a no-brainer, baby!

Are you badly outmatched in firepower? Then look for Skulking positions for your defenders.

Got some of them nice 60mm MTR's with s7 on the back? Then plan on using

Smoke to cover your advance.

Got diddly-squat Support Weapons but 18 447's? Start thinking Human Wave or the Massed Amoeba Attack style (where you've got a giant blob of MMC's, 1 per hex, gallumphing across the board as a single gigantic multi-hex fire group).

And don't forget to think about what your opponent's got as well. Try to figure out what part of his OB he'll be maximising, and think about how you're going to respond to that. Basically, how are you going to minimise his advantages? If your opponent has tons of armour, you need to figure he'll be looking for OVR and Bounding MG Fire opportunities against your hapless infantrymen.

If he's got 150mm OBA, you need to plan on spreading out your defence, and don't forget the possibility of his using Harassing Fire. Take Cover, boys!

It's a very rich game and the best scenarios offer both sides a good amount of tactical options. As you play more, you'll add more and more tricks to your Bag of Tricks.

At some point during the Grok Phase, you'll start putting counters on the map. Don't look now Bubba, but you've Started. And it wasn't that awful.



SETTING UP

OK, you're starting to get itchy about putting some cardboard on the map. As a new player, you're gonna be a bit short on Item 7 - Grok The Essence - but you accept the fact that your Grokking Power will grow as you gain experience, so for now you're comfortable with the lesser goal of getting the rules right and, of course, HAVING FUN.

Still, that doesn't help you get over the hump of putting counters on the map, so let's throw some ideas out at you for reference in setting up. Of course, every scenario is different, so these tips aren't applicable across the board, but that's part of the fun - learning what works and what doesn't work.

LEADERS

These guys are useful for:

Keeping units with them from cowering. If you really want a certain firelane to happen, better have a leader direct the shot cuz if the shot cowers, the firelane is NA. This is also why the Brits are great - their MMC's generally don't cower, so their leaders aren't needed to keep the lads in line.

Helping MMC move farther and carry more (2MF leader bonus, leader can lend his 1 IPC to an MMC).

Applying his negative leadership DRM for putting the mo' better HURT on the Bad Guys when you fire at 'em.

Initiating Human Waves/Banzais.

Rallying broken units.

Calling in OBA.

THINGS TO BE WARY OF

Snipers. Hate it when your leader goes down to a Sniper. Check the enemy SAN to see if it's going to be a big deal. SAN's of 2-4 are shruggable; SAN's of 5-7 need to be planned against. Protect your good leaders by stacking or surrounding them with other units that the enemy sniper might randomly select (Sniper Bait).

Leader Loss Morale/Task Checks. If the leader goes down, units with lesser morale levels may feel distressed. This is why it's better to stack a 7-0 with a 467 than an 8-0.

GOOD THINGS TO REMEMBER

Pre-10/42 Russians - exchange a leader for a Commissar. Commissars rool.

Some of the "useful for" bullets above apply even to 6+1's.

Leaders can direct LATW To Hit shots (BAZ, PF, PSK). Neat.

A -2 leader with an MMG or HMG can really dominate the area.

Leaders are usually High Priority Targets. Kill or break the leaders and the squads will start wearing down - cowering, not rallying, not moving quickly, etc.

Finally, remember the immortal words of Curt Schilling:

"Always ask yourself 'What will happen if this guy breaks?', and make sure all your MMC have legitimate route paths and access to a leader (if possible) during your initial set up."

Easy isn't it....

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THE TRENCHES



"THIS IS THE CALL TO AMERICAN ARMS!"

THE MISUSE OF HARA-KIRI

Lee Brimmicombe-Wood

This is the latest edition of the North American ASL Players Directory.

It is broken down by country. Within the country, players are listed according to their ZIP/Postal Code.

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Paul W. Works, Jr., 1242 Mountain View Road, Ridgecrest, CA93555
Paul W. Works, Jr., 12018 W. 68th Street, Shawnee, Kansas, 66216
Darrell Wright, 1007 West Cole Street, Dunn, NC 28334
Brian Youse, 309 Chase Hill Court, Severn, MD 31144
Eddie Zeman, Heat of Battle, PO Box 15073, Newport Beach, CA 92659
Steve Zundel, 3601 Dawn Smoke Court, Raleigh, NC 27615
Nadir El-Farra, Front Line Productions, PO Box 10345, Glendale, CA 91209-3345
Tom Huntington, 1425 Bison Ridge Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80919
Evan Sherry, Sherry Enterprises, PO Box 3, Ruskin, FL 33570
Vic Provost, Dispatches From The Bunker, 1454 Northampton Street, Holyoake, MA 01040
Donald Garlitt, 17430 Brady, Redford, Michigan, MI 48240
J R Van Mechelen, Apt 8E, 301 Heights Lane, Feasterville, PA 19053

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

Playing ASL is like sex....

Tom Repetti

... you only get to do it once a month?

... you have to be in a room full of ugly guys to do it?

... your wife pretends to be happy for you?

... it takes a long time to set up and then it's over too quickly?

... the size of your equipment doesn't matter?

... Marines are an 8 and Rangers are a 7?

... after the action, you remember your Smoke?

... there's a lot of Italians turned over on their flip side?

... you do both in lieu of sleep?

... you spend hundreds of dollars for it?

What follows came about as part of an email 'conversation' with David Olie on the use or possible misuse of the term "hara-kiri" in ASL. As you will see, I referred to my wife Motoko, who is expert in all these things.

David wrote "My understanding is that Seppuku is a much more formalised ritual, usually involving a swordsman to administer the coup de grace, whereas on the battlefield hara-kiri (meaning 'belly-cut') was a much more ad-hoc procedure, often being accomplished by use of grenades, etc. Therefore it seems to me that hara-kiri is a more accurate term for the behaviour of many Japanese soldiers on the battlefields of WWII."

I broached the subject with the missus again. Cue much wrinkling of noses. She went to her Japanese encyclopaedia. Always a good place to start. Hara kiri does indeed refer to the belly cut alone. Seppuku used to be a simple belly cut for warriors up to the end of the Heian. Then in the Edo they began the practice of decapitation after administering the cut. Such is the way of a society that created arcane ritual, warrior sports, and a pseudo-spiritual philosophy in order to keep all the young toughs out of trouble. (The revival of Bushi-do in the 20th Century seems to be a romanticised and brutalised perversion of this entirely invented tradition.)

When I mentioned that hara-kiri was an ASL rule Moto was surprised. "I thought ASL was a World War One or World War Two game," quoth she. "They must be very old-fashioned soldiers."

Pressing her further, it seems that the general term for suicide is "Jisatsu". Terms like "hara-kiri" refer to the actual *method* of killing. Half-joking, I asked her whether there was a term for the method of blowing yourself up with a hand-grenade. "Oh yes," she says, "we say 'Jibaku'". Cue surprised look on my face. Back to the encyclopaedia again. This specifically referred to "Jibaku" as the practice of blowing yourself up to prevent capture.

Continued on page 19, column 1



VIEW FROM

ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL

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

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

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

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 email at aslguru@icenet.fi

SEPTEMBER

CANADIAN ASL OPEN

When: 21 – 23 September.

Where: CFB Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Limited accommodations can be had on-base and are about CDS\$20.00 per night.

Fee: To be announced soon.

Format: To be announced soon. The playlist will be sent to pre-registrants 2 months in advance of the tournament.

A mini-tournament is possible depending on the number of participants at the event.

Contact: David Hall by email at Cpl.DJ.Hall@dnd.ca

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

THE MISUSE OF HARA-KIRI

Continued from page 18

So there you have it. The rule should probably be renamed “Jibaku”.

I asked Moto where she knew this term from. It's always a worry when a Japanese girl reveals a knowledge of weaponry. It bodes ill. But apparently “Jibaku” is in use in everyday speech today. It refers to a sort of self-destructive impulse. Just as we might say “I died of embarrassment”, a modern Japanese kid might describe their response to an embarrassment or rejection as “Jibaku”; “I blew myself up”.

I did a little more digging into Japanese etymology. “Jibaku” is formed from the characters for “Ji” (“I”) and “Baku” (“Explode”). However, this sounds like the word “Jibaku”, meaning a verbal gaffe (same sound, different Kanji characters). What we have here, then, is a Japanese pun, a funny, with the embarrassment of a conversational faux pas resulting in the offender wanting to blow themselves to bits.

Gosh. I just learned a new thing. Every day is a school day, isn't it?

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. Players registering will receive a tournament program in September.

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@vft.co.uk.

NOVEMBER

GRENADIER 2001



When: 8 – 11 November.

Where: Hergarten, near Zülpich, Germany.

Fee: The registration fee will be around DM 100.00 including entrance fee and bed and breakfast for two days.

Format: To be announced.

Notes: Friday is for free playing and/or making ground visits to nearby historical locations such as La Gleize and Stoumont.

Contact: Christian Koppmeyer, Hagebuttenweg 9, 41564 Kaarst, Germany, or by email at Christian.Koppmeyer@gerling.de. Additional information can be found on the GRENADIER webpage at <http://asl-grenadier.webjump.com>

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THE TRENCHES



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!

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

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Fax: 01202 789567

Pete Phillipps

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