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Welcome to yet another double-sized View From The Trenches. I was on track for getting the new issue out just after Christmas but real-life took over and suddenly the time for VFTT was spent on other things. The next issue should be on time as I have the next part of Michael Davies’ look at Dien Bien Phu ready for it and all that is needed will be the report from BERSERK! 2003. Issue 50 will have the final part of Michael’s look at DBP but there are still about 8 blank pages that need filling, so get writing!! I don’t need them until June so you’ve got plenty of time to write something.

Double I. My last, best hope for victory.

Pete Phillipps

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

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MMP REPRINT AND GO TO KOREA

The first issue of Out Of The Attic, the periodic magazine reprinting out of print material and fanzine material, is due to be printed soon. Although no release date has been announced, it will retail for $16.00. A rulebook reprint is in the pipeline, while a Beyond Valor reprint is on hold while MMP solicit bids for a new board printer. The reprint is also unlikely to include Red Barricades or the Fins to cut costs, although Red Barricades will be reprinted separately.

Of the original work in the pipeline playtest work is continuing on Armies Of Oblivion and ASL Journal 5. 10 of the AOO scenarios are done with between two and six more to be finished. MMP are currently aiming to have it out by ASLOK. ASL J5 has four of its 12 scenarios finished with the rest close to being done. It is possible it may be available at WBC. Scenarios are also being designed and tested for Action Packs 3 and 4.

Barely into the pipeline is a Korean War module. A group of designers have started work on this which will be submitted to MMP for publication. All the combatants are represented, including the North Koreans, Communist Chinese, Americans, British Commonwealth, South Koreans, and even the smaller contingents in the United Nations Command. New rules for the rugged Korean terrain will be included and portrayed with new mapboards and overlays. Among the new equipment to be included are American LMG (the M1919A6 on bipod), the BAZ50 (M20 3.5-in bazooka) as well as a variety of American SW in British/Commonwealth and Communist colours, the M46 Patton tank, M39 armoured utility vehicle, Centurion III tank, and AD Skyraider airplanes.

CALIFORNIAN MELEE

The Southern California ASL Club has released Melee Pack 1, a collection of six colour scenarios, 5 of 6 feature OoB choices and/or FoW options for one or both sides. Also included are Scenario Cheat Sheets, which depict vehicle and Gun notes based on a scenario’s OB, the date of the scenario and any special rules for the scenario. MP1 costs $11.00 including shipping and handling ($14.00 for non-US orders) and is available from Matthew Cicero, 1810 Chantry Drive, Arcadia, CA 91006, USA. You can also order online at http://208.252.203.252/cgi-bin/oecgi.exe/INET_socalasl Melee pack main.

HEAT OF BATTLE IN FIREFIGHT

HOB have released their first FireFights! scenario pack. Designed to be played in an evening, each scenario has a variable Order of Battle and most have variable entry turns and reinforcements. Fog of war is also enhanced through set up and Scenario Variables. As a bonus each scenario comes with its own historically based 8½” x 11” map. Pricing has yet to be announced.

HOB’s upcoming project Kampfruppen-Commander (former Company Commander) is a game system which can be used to simulate more mobile battles then is possible using the existing Red Barricades-derived CG rules. The basic game will include Basic and Special Rules, a Strategic map, Scenario Generation Tables, coloured Reinforcement Group cards, coloured Luck event cards, and play aids such as the Core Force Organisation sheet.

The first campaign game, which will also be included, will be ‘One French Summer’, which covers the drive of the German 7th Panzer Division (Rommel’s Ghost Division) through Belgium and France towards the English Channel. No release date or price has been confirmed.

LSSAH TURN THE TIDE

The Canadian ASL Association have released Leibstandarte Pack 4 - Turning of the Tide. This latest scenario pack in their ongoing history of SS-PanzerGrenadier Division I. Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler covers the actions of the unit at Kursk and Russian to the end of 1943. There are also a couple of scenarios covering the units actions in Italy following the Kursk offensive. Details of the 10 scenarios can be found at http://ca.geocities.com/gckelln/lssah4.htm. LSSAH4 is available for CA $13.00 from George Kelln, 1637-8th Avenue, Wainwright, Alberta, Canada, T9W 1H6. US orders are US $10.00, non-US/Canadian orders are US $13.00. All prices include shipping and handling. George can be contacted by email at gckelln@telusplanet.net.

THE FRENCH RETURN

Le Franc Tireur 8 is now available. Although the 92 pages are in French the 11 scenarios are in English. Priced $27 including shipping and handling it can be ordered from Xavier Vitry, 3 Rue Louis Mercier, 92240 Malakoff, France. He can be contacted by email at xavier658@wanadoo.fr.

16th BUNKER IN MARCH

Issue 16 of DFTB is due to be released at the Nor’Easter 2003 Tournament, and will feature three East Front scenarios; ‘Paking a Punch’, ‘A Holy Contested Crossroads’, and ‘The God of War’. Also inside will be a Jim Torkelson analysis of ‘Acts of Defiance’, Tactical Tips for Veteran’s and Novices, a preview of Nor’Easter 2003, and all the usual features.

Four issue subscriptions are available for $13.00 ($15.00 outside the USA). Issue one is available free with a subscription or an SAE, while other back issues are $3.50 ($4.00 outside the USA). Payments should be payable to Vic Provost and sent to Dispatches from the Bunker, P.O. Box 1025, Hinsdale MA 01235. You can email them at aslbunker@aol.com.
Recently at the bottom of the wardrobe I happened across an old favourite originally published in the ASL Annual 1992 that provides a good introduction to new players and a challenge to older ones. ‘ASL 49 Delaying Action’ features a defence by a tiny German infantry force against seven Russian tanks. At first glance the German position looks hopeless, the crews of the tanks actually outnumber the defenders and would be better armed if they managed to scrounge MGs from their vehicles. Three things give the Jerries a fighting chance, hidden status and a good supply of Panzerfausts and a few Heft Hohladung Granate (ATMM).

The Panzerfaust story begins in 1942 when the Germans sought to develop a hand held weapon for Infantry to use against the T34 and KV series of tanks. A rocket propelled hollow charge weapon proved the answer. An unpromising start of a short hand held tube without any sights was improved to create the Panzerfaust 30 with a range of around 30 metres in production from October 1943 capable of destroying any tank in service. Another Panzerfaust the 30 Klein was smaller and lighter with a less destructive bomb was also manufactured. I have recently seen a documentary including a five second clip showing a Panzerfaust Klein carried by a German Soldier at Arnhem (1944). Later models extended the Panzerfausts range to a nominal 60 metres in 1944, and 100 metres in November 1944. In the field the PF 60 could range to 90 metres and penetrate up to 25 cm of armour. The PF 100 could hit targets at 150 metres by using two spaced propellant charges. Both the 60 and 100 metre versions were produced and served alongside each other. Two final versions of the Panzerfaust with nominal 150 and 250 metre range did not see front line service. Although about 100,000 PF 150 were produced it was not possible to transport them to the fighting areas in time to see action thanks to the efforts of the RAF, USAF, and to a lesser extent Red Army aviation. Thanks are also due to the Resistance movements of a number of European countries. The PF 250 did not reach the production stage. ASL accurately reflects the range and destructive qualities of PF weapons.

The Russians, British, Americans and Japanese all developed anti-tank grenades of varying effectiveness, every army used regular grenades and demolition charges against armour on occasions. In the German Army a very effective magnetic grenade was designed. Powerful magnets fixed the weapon to an enemy tank, whilst the attacker ran for cover. Placed on top of the engine any tank would be destroyed. The ATMM had a secondary use against bunkers or strongpoints, either placed on a flat surface or hung on a brass hook and chain already fixed to the mine. Remarkably effective the Germans expected the Allies to develop their own ATMM, as a counter painting their own tanks with Zimmerit an anti magnetic paste. As no Allied ATMM were developed this proved unnecessary, and was discontinued.

Against these weapons the Allies relied on infantry in close support or improvised spaced armour. The Russians used salvaged, requisitioned or rather looted mattresses and bedsprings to deflect shaped charges. The Americans and some British tankers favoured sandbags, welded tank tracks or general kit for some protection. I have seen photograph of British tanks with metal mesh serving as spaced armour in 1945 but am not sure if this was a widespread practice, or the earliest date for this modification. My brother came across an account of an American field modification... welding the glaci of a Panther to the front of a Sherman, used to lead columns when attack was expected.

Returning to the scenario in hand both ATMM and Panzerfaust are crucial important. There really is no substitute for reading the rules for these weapons, the scenario special rules, and the Chapter H notes for IS-2m and T34/85 Tanks. Also essential reading the rules for Marsh and Woods with particular reference to vehicular action. Also essential reading the rules for Marsh and Woods with particular reference to vehicular action. Apologies for repeating some of this information in the analysis that follows.

German Set and Initial Plans
You win by preventing a Russian victory. He needs to exit his entire force of seven tanks off the North edge less one tank for each of your half squads or SMC eliminated. As you start with three half squads, two Leaders (a 7-0 and 9-2) and one Hero your opponent will have to exit at least one tank unless you generate another leader or Hero. Although it might be possible to delay the Russians and win, it might be easier to trade your units for tanks at a favourable rate.

Enemy forces are impressive. Four T34/85, is scary enough, three IS-2m with 122mm guns add impressive guns and protection. The Russians strengths include awesome firepower, numerous machine guns, good mobility, smoke dischargers, and in the case of the IS2-m frontal hull armour that can resist a direct hit from a Panzerfaust! Perhaps the greatest Russian asset is range. At three hexes he is impervious to PF fire but able to dish out strong attacks. The enemy does have some weaknesses. Without infantry support your hidden troops will be hard to find. It is difficult for him to move through buildings, woods or hexes adjacent to marsh. Time may become your ally, your opponent has a lot to do in the time available.

Half squads, two leaders and a Hero must be one of the smallest OB in ASL to date. Troop quality is excellent, an ELR of four, all your MMC are 8 morale and elite. Rule C13.311 is in effect, you can carry PF equal to your units usage number. With nine PF its possible to destroy all seven tanks without recourse to ATMM or close combat. Unfortunately PF range is limited to two hexes. Basic to hit numbers are reasonable at point blank and one hex range but you will struggle to hit a moving tank at two hexes range. Most opponents will try to keep you a distance, eventually you will be presented with some chances. Once you hit, destruction is very likely. A T34 should burn, a IS2-m is a bit tougher but still vulnerable. Watch out for bailing out Russian crews they can fight you in close combat or scrounge MGs to shoot from a distance. Remember you have a sniper, relocate him if the Russkis are buttoned up, pick off tank crews if they are exposed.

Usually terrain is fixed before play starts. Here you decide the location of a marsh overlay, which is not revealed to your opponent until he is actually adjacent to it rolling for bog. SSR 3 allows you to do this, and at your discretion to reveal the Marsh location earlier. It is important to site the Marsh effectively, keeping the Russians ignorant of its location makes sense to me. There might be scope for a cunning ruse, if you reveal the Marsh at the game start it might channel the Russian attack away from it. Hard to judge which is best, both ideas have some merit. The only really daft things to do are either completely forget to place the Marsh, or fail to reveal its hidden location, before watching a column of vehicles drive over the proposed site of your obstacle.

Terrain is really important in this one. Both players need to study it, with a view to attack and defence. Marsh is impassable to tanks, woods can be entered risking bog to create a trailbreak, buildings risk bog and cellars. Hexes adjacent to Marsh also require a bog roll. Chances are few Russians will enter buildings without a good reason. Woods will probably be avoided early in the game, later on a column might try to exit through a newly created trailbreak.

Use the terrain to plan or rather guess a likely route for the Russians off the board. Looking at the H, I and J hexes the tanks must pass through either I3, I4, I7, I8 or I9. An ambush party in the I5 woods area could contest this move. Placing the M1 Marsh on the F hexrow complicates enemy movement. F3 is a good spot, as is F9, F8...
You should destroy some tanks, if you do enough fire and any bog rolls the enemy make. Hope over enemy movement, the success or failure of strong. This is a tough scenario. Expect to agonise of gun fire. Most important of all be mentally.

Holes provide some protection against overrun but best protection is hidden status. Admittedly fox-Entrenching will not work too well, your troops Try not to waste PF shots against immobilised reasonable chance of a kill even without an A TMM. ing overrun. A SMC and half squad, have a rea-

close combat attack, through choice or when be-

in your position. Later you may get a chance for a

off your ‘Fausts run away, head for cover deeper

important. Choose a T34 if you have a choice,

are an unusual and effective spot, that the SSR

robbed of victory by alleged sleaze F3 is almost

sarcasm, if your opponent misses an advancing

odds against your opponent by giving him no

effective at longer ranges, against moving targets

suspected ones. Similarly Panzerfausts are less

avoiding known enemy locations, and skirting

vehicle, destroy any Panzerfausts you capture.

Close combat threats can be reduced by avoid-

ing known enemy locations, and skirting sus-

pected ones. Similarly Panzerfausts are less

effective at longer ranges, against moving targets

without Leadership or Heroic modifiers. Stack the

odds against your opponent by giving him no

shots to take or ones that are very low odds. Avoid

sarcasm, if your opponent misses an advancing

phase shot against your moving T34/85 at two

hexes range. The game is not over till its over.

Keep a record of the units you find your options

improve as more German units are discovered.

A few minor tactics help. Make use of smoke dischargers every turn you can, there must be somewhere you would like to place smoke! Keep your turret covered arcs and vehicular cov-

er different allowing you to shoot at dif-

ferent targets or potential targets. Stay in motion

unless you plan to fire accurately in the next player
turn.

A few opportunistic ideas might be worth

considering. Bailed out crews can help by search-

ing for enemy units or fighting known ones. By

all means try to scrounge a MG from a wrecked

vehicle, destroy any Panzerfausts you capture.

Soviet Entry and Opening Moves

Your objective is straightforward, exit all seven tanks off the north board edge. Even better each German half squad or SMC eliminated counts as an exited tank. Playing on a Desert board a win would be almost certain, the terrain of Lithuania and the calibre of its German make this more of a fight.

Enemy troops are limited to three half

squad, two leaders and a Hero, bolstered by nine

Panzerfausts. If you expose your crews to small

arms fire or sniper attacks you could be affected by IFT attacks at up to eight hexes range or snap-
ing anywhere on the board. Buttoned up close

combat at 0-1 hex range or Panzerfausts out to

two hexes represent a very real danger. Another

enemy unit to consider is overlay M1, a Marsh

that behaves like a fortification.

The terrain is not quite neutral in this sce-

nario. Even without the German troops you could

lose against an opponent who remains totally hid-

den if you blunder into a Marsh and bog, and later

immobilise or simply fail to remove bog in the
time available. This is unlikely as most German
defenders will want to make their presence known

by destroying at least one tank and there are a

limited number of places to hide. Woods and

Buildings also restrict movement. Due to the risk

of bog, immobilisation or even total loss, moving

through them should be avoided. Begin by look-
ing at the map and deciding roughly how you will

either move to exit the map or manoeuvre to de-

stroy the enemy.

It is hard to see a route north that does not

pass through V5. There are a series of bottlenecks

between rows R and L where you will have to

move adjacent to concealment terrain which may

contain German troops. After Row L you have a

choice of moving north east or north west past

the woods around I5. Next you will find the Marsh

or avoid it completely, apologies if that sounds

trite. Finding the Marsh as you exit is annoying,

not too bad if you have time on your hands and

have wiped out a number of German units, frus-

trating if you are unable to accept the delay.

I can’t guarantee where the Germans will be.

By plotting your movement before the Game

starts you can guess where he might be and at-
tempt to counter accordingly. For example to hit

you in V5 expect units in the V7 Marsh, or the

Woods in T4 and V3. By searching these loca-
tions with fire you can improve your survival

chances. In effect you can use tanks as fire and

manoeuvre elements, one platoon moving for-

wards in bounds covered by probing fire from the

other platoon. This simple plan can be fine tuned.

There are judgements to be made on the compo-
sition of each unit, when to limit movement to

one or two tanks and when to rush all seven for-

wards. This approach can be repeated at the next

set of obstacles.

If you are lucky you will hit the entire ambush party around V5, more often you will not! Keep a record of the units you find your options improve as more German units are discovered.

A few minor tactics help. Make use of smoke dischargers every turn you can, there must be somewhere you would like to place smoke! Keep your turret covered arcs and vehicular cov-
er different allowing you to shoot at different targets or potential targets. Stay in motion unless you plan to fire accurately in the next player turn.

A few opportunist ideas might be worth considering. Bailed out crews can help by searching for enemy units or fighting known ones. By all means try to scrounge a MG from a wrecked vehicle, destroy any Panzerfausts you capture.

Close combat threats can be reduced by avoiding known enemy locations, and skirting suspected ones. Similarly Panzerfausts are less effective at longer ranges, against moving targets without Leadership or Heroic modifiers. Stack the odds against your opponent by giving him no shots to take or ones that are very low odds. Avoid sarcasm, if your opponent misses an advancing phase shot against your moving T34/85 at two hexes range. The game is not over till its over.

Assessing your own units read, and reread the chapter H notes for the IS2-M and t34/85. Gen up on rear machine guns, smoke dischargers and low ammunition rules. Check the Panzerfaust to kill tables and appreciate a hit is almost certain death in a burning wreck. Except for the IS2-Ms’ really thick turret armour which will stop a fair percentage of shots.

With enough time you could almost guar-
Donations can be made to:

The Victoria Cross
Memorial Appeal

The 16 living holders of the Victoria Cross are attempting to raise £250,000 to build a memorial at Westminster Abbey to commemorate those awarded the VC and the George Cross.
The VC has been awarded 1,354 times since it was introduced 146 years ago.

Donations can be made to:
The VC and GC Memorial Appeal
Horse Guards
Whitehall
London
SW1 2AX

Conclusion

Although I really like this scenario I’m not sure it is suitable for tournament play. This is only a personal opinion which could be entirely wrong. I do think it is good fun to play, suitable for quick play in 30 minutes to an hour with replay value immediately afterwards. The scenario could be used to introduce the use of Panzerfausts to new or developing players, with a good chance of a well earned win to the less experienced player.

Personally the attractions of the game are varied, ranging from the IS2-Ms, the effectiveness of infantry against tanks in close terrain to the psychological grief that trying to get inside your opponents game plan creates. Both sides will work hard for a win, in some respects the German has an easier task by a whisker.

There is scope for scenarios to be designed along similar lines, perhaps including PIATs firing from buildings or an early war action using ATRs or LMGs. I’ve a few ideas along these lines but am a bit short on the skills to develop them!

The following comments about OVHS were posted to the ASL Mailing List by MMP:

Playtester Stephen R Trujillo:
It is a great module that has it’s own challenges for both sides. The terrain, order of battle and choices make this a completely unique experience from any other historical module. It is also a very balanced campaign that keeps you on the edge of your seat until the last day.

Of the four different campaign games that I have played, this is one of my top two along with Red Barricades. It is challenging, fun and the replays incentive is great.

Playtester David Reenstra:
OVHS continues the trend started in OWT where MMP expands the scope of the project by including scenarios played off the historical map on the geomorphic boards. Some of our favorite scenarios are “Water Foul”, “The Good Shepard”, “A Few Rounds” and “Lawless Ways.”

“Water Foul” is probably the most unique scenario in the entire collection of official scenarios, depicting a night assault (but without the night rules) on a flooded village, depicted entirely with overlays. “The Good Shepard” is a tight deluxe scenario which is destined to become a tournament favorite. “A Few Rounds” features the SturmTiger, and “Lawless Ways” is large enough to accommodate three or more players.

Playtester Guy Falsetti:
I think the heavy mist and the use of “reverse slope” defenses make for interesting combination. As a player you have to decide what areas you can defend and in what depth. As the attacker, you need to look at what areas you can overrun without leaving your flank open to counter attack.

Playtester Observer Oliver Giancola:
The CG simulates late-war German Panzergruppe/counterattack tactics, as the German player typically assembles a Lehr strike force off board, pounces, then withdraws the bulk of his armor. I think this is unique.

Playtester Paul Sidhu:
The night, amphibious-assault-on-a-flooded-village scenario is a total blast. Of the nine scenarios I played, seven are first class gems.

Design Comments - Ken Dunn
“When we started out we (the design team)

were looking for a unique battle that seemed to offer something different from what had already been done. We had no preconceived ideas; we simply went looking. It could have been early war Philippines or Poles/Germans or French/Italian or anything as long as it met the following criteria:
1. Created a campaign game that was playable in a reasonable amount of time; 2. Fun; 3. Different enough from other available modules.

So how is it different? Well, from my point of view, the main thing is the terrain. It’s a lot of open ground and with the larger caliber weapons we have in OVHS that’s creating a challenge that really has not been seen yet in a HASL. This HS will force the attacker to think differently than previously in order to cope with the open ground.”

On the geomorphic scenarios:
“... We tried to be creative and provide 'different' scenarios than what you might be used to. I’ll admit to a bit of chrome when designing but in my opinion these geomorphic scenarios are well thought out and fun. The chrome just adds to the experience.”

The Time Scale In ASL

John Overton

This is a call for ideas. As a long-standing solo gamer I am always looking for good rules systems. With ASL, as with most smaller scale games, the time scale doesn’t ad up to reality, with whole scenarios happen in a few minutes. To some extent, so what!; however, more solid problems are that it can take most of the scenario to bring up reinforcements, and flanking attacks are often a bad idea as you run out of time. In real situations you get lulls with rushes of activity. So does anyone have any good ideas to help with this, or know of rules sets with good ideas or suggestions.

This is not a criticism of ASL, the system is more than adequate for the task.

View From
FKaC Scenario Errata

(Scenarios are listed by their old ID with the new ID in parentheses)

The following Scenarios are being updated and re-released in For King and Country with new scenario numbers. This errata to the previous incarnation of the scenarios incorporates previous errata and new update changes, but does not include some minor word-smithing. The new scenario number is listed after the scenario title.

A1 Tavronitis Bridge (93)
Add a 4-6-8 and a glider to the German OB.

A2 Bofors Bashing (94)
Add a 4-6-8 and a glider to the German OB.

A3 Descent Into Hell (95)
Add a 4-6-8 and a glider to the initial Turn 1 force and also to the Turn 4 reinforcements.

A15 Stand Fast the Guards (92)
In SSR 2 delete one AT Gun (and its crew). 
In SSR 4, change dr to DR. 
Replace British balance with SSR 4 and 5 are NA. 
Replace German Balance with In SSR 3 replace DR with dr.

A22 The Crux of Calais (96)
Add a 4-5-7 and a LMG and 6 to the British OB. 
Replace the British balance with Add a 4-5-7 and an ATR to the British OB. 
In German balance replace three 4-6-7s with two 4-6-7s.

A24 Regalbuto Ridge (100)
Shorten Game Length to 7 turns.
Replace the Victory Conditions with the following: The Germans win at game end if they have more Good Order squad-equivalents than the British on hill hexes of board 2. Good Order MMC on Level 3 hexes count double. 
Replace SSR 4 with the following: One German 8-0 possessing the radio must set up HIP to direct the fire of a single offboard 7.5* leIG 18 INF Gun (German Ordnance Note 15). Radio Contact must be gained/maintained normally, but Battery access is NA. The 8-0 serves as a spotter (C9.3) and all principles of spotted indirect fire (C9.3-.31) apply [EXC: Gun Malfunction is NA], including ROF decrease (C3.33) and target acquisition. For TH# determination purposes, range is counted from hex 3A5.
In the British balance replace 7 Turns with 6 Turns.

A35 Guards Attack (108)
Add a 2-4-8 to the German OB.

A38 North Bank (110)
Add 8 to the British OB.
Add the following SSR: 5. Prior to play the British player may secretly record which units possess PIATs. The presence of a PIAT will be revealed when the possessing unit fires/transfer/drops the PIAT in LOS and within 16 hexes of an unbroken enemy unit, or is no longer Good Order. 
Replace the British balance with Add one 3-3-8 to the British OB.
Replace the German balance with Delete the 8 to the British OB.

A40 Ad Hoc at Beaurains (91)
In Victory Conditions replace 35 VP with 30 VP.

A43 Probing Layforce (99)
In Victory Conditions replace 20 VP with 17 VP.
Reduce British OB by one 6-4-8.
Replace German balance with Delete a 9-1 from the British OB.

A102 On Silent Wings (98)
Add a 5-4-8, a LMG, and a glider to the German OB.

G22 A Day By the Shore (103)
In the VC add assembled after Good Order.
In German Turn 3 reinforcements replace enter on Turn 3 with enter on/after Turn 3.
In German balance replace on Turn 2 with on/after Turn 2.

G43 Kangaroo Hop (106)
In SSR 6 replace 150+mm OBA with 100+mm OBA.
Replace British balance with In German setup, delete using HIP (regardless of terrain) and delete SSR 5.
This was our fourth VASL campaign game; having tried Red Barricades three times we graduated to the misty Ardennes in December 1944. We decided to use the historical weather. The X-Heavy Mist is a must play and the feel of the historical events were best met by this option. The Germans didn’t suffer from ammunition shortage throughout the game but the chances are high by the final scenario: 20AM chance of shortage 12/24d6, 20 PM – 11, 20N – 10, 21AM – 9, 21PM – 8.

German: Steve Crowley (comments in italics)
US: Mick Essex

19AM

US at start: 6 Infantry platoons (1 elite, 4 first line and 1 second line, 2x 10-2 one of which ultimately became a 10-3 superhero, 9-2, 3 x 7-0), Med Tank Platoon (all M4A3s) 3 other M4A3s, AT platoon I (forgot to deploy these), 90L AA gun and 4x 76L AT guns, M4 tractor, 2 M8 Armoured Cars, 15 1 Squad foxholes.

US purchases 25CPP: 5x fortifications, SAN increase, 2 infantry platoons (one of each 1st Line, 2nd Line 8-1 and 7-0), and a Jeep section (I counted on getting the MGs with the rarity factor rolls) 1 CPP saved

I took the US and for my at start forces I had 6 Infantry platoons with excellent leadership rolling for 2 10-2 and 1 9-2 leaders as well as 3 x 7-0 ninety day wonders (What more could I expect from the Old Hickory 30th Infantry Division). I thought I set up a solid defence with three AT guns forward and two were further back as was the deadly 90mm AA gun, I think in the excitement I forgot to deploy the extra AT gun team (57mm AT guns) but they would probably not made much of a difference as I had placed all the AT guns too far forward. In spite of the numbers my troops were thinly spaced infantry although I did try concentrations on the right (north) in the wood line and in Roua, a small platoon and a host of dummies were in Stoumont proper together with the flamethrower tank. This was not as bad a set up as it may seem as I misunderstood the potential of the Germans to come in from the rear southern flank on turn one and this would have been a more devastating move if more men had been concentrated there.

The plan was to withdraw slowly while taking some Germans down with me but the X-heavy mist was difficult to defend against. This experience needs to be played to appreciate as the US firepower is completely negated by thick mist. German troops overran the outer lines and I was saved by greater losses by a skedaddle manoeuvre which got most of the infantry back to the Sanatorium. I did lose a 9-2 and a platoon when prematurely turning and fighting just behind Roua. Most effective was the AT Mines which knobbles a couple of Panthers and killed a PzIV (these tanks are very frail in this kind of late war battle). The deadly 90mm AA gun was quickly disarmed when revealed as it literally blew apart a blundering Panzer IV, which just happened to be going that way.

Another mistake was to throw the first lot of US tanks away for limited gain. The flame tank went down in the village the other two on map at start tanks died in Roua and the five reinforcements tried to stem the German tide in a large group and paid the ultimate price. I didn’t make enough of the M8 armoured cars either, which were quickly dispatched by German infantry these are toys which might be better saved for the

The situation at the end of 19 Dec AM.
German purchase: 3 para infantry, sniper, King Tigers, engineers, flamethrower halftracks, 2 SS infantry, 1 PzGr.

Purchases reflect the need I felt for bodies on the ground. The Germans start the campaign with a wealth of vehicles so I wanted more infantry. Engineers in case I could get to the Sanatorium early, the paras for the outflanking ability (by SSR). Flamethrower half-tracks are just too cool to ignore and what’s a Bulge game without the Tigers? In truth, more Panthers would be a better buy since the only Tiger advantage is an 88LL v 75LL (16FP v 12) against infantry and slightly better side armour. As it was, this last advantage became very important in our game.

My overall plan for the first day was simply to find the US forces and destroy them where possible. I reckoned the villages of Stoumont and Roaю would then fall by default. I was hoping for an early chance at the Sanatorium but Mick is too good a player to allow a first scenario loss so although I kept it in mind I didn’t really think it would be possible.

The first scenario ended up with a good German victory – hardly surprising given the juggernaut they have. Loss ratio was particularly good especially in vehicles. Although I lost a few tanks to AT guns and mines, I felt that Mick committed his armour too quickly and I was able to knock out the bulk of it using Panthers and the Tigers. It was apparent early on that the mark IV’s were not really up to this battle.

I fell short of the Sanatorium but the surrounding villages and much of the higher wooded area was taken given me a good jumping off point for the afternoon.

19PM

US Purchase 24 (yes we rolled 11!) : 2 infantry platoons (2nd Line 9-2 and a 8-1 which briefly raised to a 9-1 then finally elited to a 8-1 again), 5x fortifications, another Jeep section, 2CPP saved.

I foolishly tried to hold on to the Sanatorium during this one and lost 8 or so elite 667 squads as well as leaders (including one of the 10-2s) and vital support weapons. They then realised that resistance wasn’t going to do any good against fanatic SS troopers and were caught out by the attacking mechanised German force. Some losses were put on the German force. One Panther went down to a side shot from the only surviving AT gun, which was latterly knocked out and another was caught by a Bazooka rear shot as it overran a US position with a HIP hs in it. Of the surviving troops from the first scenario, not one made it away off board and the air power failed to turn up when the mist cleared (for only one turn).

While trying to make the most of the threat of air power this scenario was a bad one for the US. The loss of such numbers meant that a night counterattack was impossible. Subsequent experience was to show how important that was.

German purchase: 2 SS infantry, OBA mortar, one fort point.

The plan here was to put a massive assault against the Sanatorium so I bought extra infantry, more to protect the flanks and clear up the northern woods than anything else. My forces went fanatic for this battle to ensure that the Sanatorium was taken. The OBA mortar was meant to soften up and then provide smoke for the infantry assault. With contact and access problems it only got off one mission and was a bad buy. The assault cleared the remaining approaches to the Sanatorium easily enough and here I think Mick made a bad mistake in hanging around for a turn too long. The German power is awesome in this stage of the battle and a lot of good quality US units were eliminated for ftr. Good scenario for the Germans this – although a few losses among the previously untouched Panther force were embarrassing. Also the few infantry losses I took seemed to come from the engineers who couldn’t pass a MC to save their lives (literally). They were down to half strength by the end of the scenario. Good idea by Mick to buy the air support – would have caused quite a few losses I suspect.

Scenario ended with the Germans in complete control of the map.

19N

US Purchase 44, plus 2 from before: 3 infantry platoons (2 1st line, 1 Green, 1x 8-0), Platoon of 1 M4A3(76)w and 4 M4A3(75)w with 9-1 armour leader, 2 M10 Tank Destroyers.

US played a Pass here to lick their wounds and get a force together to take on the Germans. There were only 9 and a half squads surviving from the days battle and there were no forces on the map at all.

German purchases: SS infantry, 5 fort points, sniper.

Here I go idle and basically dig in and fortify. Complete waste of fort points here as I build a belt of about 4 hexes of mines in the woods to the north of the san. Complete waste since the Germans do not have many fort points although they may have slowed the American assault thru there for a turn. Given the way the LVPs are not mounting up, I reckon the US will have to attack next day even though he may not be ready since it will be an uphill battle from then on. My idea is to delay as much as possible and force him to play for the Sanatorium, hq and church VC’s which I feel will be very difficult for him. My final attack chit is not needed for this night scenario, which is a huge relief. Unless desperate I will save it for the remaining night action.

20AM

US Purchase 58: 2 infantry platoons (both Green!!, 9-1 and a 2-1, he eventually got promoted through to 8-0), Platoon of Combat Engineers (with 10-2), Bombardment, Platoon of 5 M4A3’s, Platoon of 2 M24 Light Tanks, 1 load of Fortifications (for the dummys largely).

Dawn broke on the Ardennes front although you weren’t sure you could make it out in all the mist. Two converging attacks were now tried by the US. Along the main highway came one platoon of M4A3 and the M10s with 5 infantry platoons. From the north through the narrow defile came the M24s and 5 more Shermans along with the Assault engineers and 2 more infantry platoons.

The preliminary bombardment was not all that effective but did succeed in rubbing much of the Sanatorium (3 hexes) and a King Tiger was immobilised. The main thrust was reasonably successful along the highway; a German halftrack got knocked out trying to counter the move and although one Sherman became bogged in the woods the rest made good progress. However, the M4A3(76)w with 9-1 armour leader and an M10 both gacked their main armament and retired to try to repair it in the interphase (and yes neither returned to the fray).

Unfortunately the northern ongile was a nightmare. Three Shermans went down quickly and a Panther moved into the flank of the attack and forced the rest of the force to retire, only 1 and a half squads exited successfully with the new M24 Chaffees and two M4s. Four more of the squads and the 10-2 leader of the engineers joining up with the US troops moving upstream from the road.

German purchases: PzGr and 2 forts. The forts were foolishly used to extend the mine belt and to dig foxholes to join up the set-up area. I had already done this by the night but now added in some more foxholes for redundancy in case a vital position was lost.

The Trenches
The initial bombardment was well judged and caused a few casualties. With more luck Mick might have bagged my ht mounted reserve as well. I resolved to keep the ht reserve further back. Throughout the game I kept quite a large force of infantry/leaders and sw on ht’s along the main roads to help seal off any breakthroughs.

The one thrust from the north was easily blocked – I had the fords covered and I managed to get a Panther around the US flank with a good LOS to a large part of the American tank force. Coupled with an assault with PSK toting infantry, the US position fell apart quite rapidly here although loses in Mk IV’s were again heavy. I developed a heavy respect for the BAZ 45 and a near loathing for the Mk IV too of which 2 had MA malfs and one only had one mg functioning.

I didn’t set up too far forward so the main US effort established themselves on board although a few loses were inflicted when I set my MG team up in the san with the best leader I had (a 9-2).

Although my loses to combat were not that high, the number of units which were malfed or immobile were starting to take their toll. The refit phase saw a Tiger and a Panther become mobile while the other Tiger repair its MA. 2 Mk IV’s didn’t repair their MA so became MG platforms.

20PM

US Purchase 38: 2 infantry platoons (1 1st Line, 1 elite, 7-0 and 8-1), Bombardment, 5 M4 Shermans.

Abandoning the defile the US concentrated on moving on from the western edge frontally assaulting the German positions astride the road. The bombardment succeeded in revealing a large German Anti-

Personnel minefield but not much else. It became apparent that the King Tigers had regained their mobility when the US Sherman force tried unsuccessfully to swarm attack one of them. Three point blank rear shots from the puny 75mm guns bounced off the flank and rear armour. The King Tigers became a real problem. They just couldn’t be killed and although both main armaments were broken at some point in the campaign they were both repaired.

A German force on the north side of the stream were causing some problems to the infantry trying to link up with the north but a reinforcing group arriving late in the afternoon consisting of the remnants of the TF Jordan troops pushed back in the morning caught 5 SS squads for failure to rout. This is the biggest success to date for the US army. There are still no VP locations captured although now the two flanks were joined together and the sanatorium in sight.

German purchase: MG section (HW1) and 4 forts.

The MG section was bought to bring more infantry on and to give some long range SW support. My tank force was starting to feel the pinch but I’ve had good luck with the Tigers. The US opened up a massive assault with what looked to be an attempt to link the 2 American set up areas. This they managed early on in the scenario and then a swirling tank battle ensued. How one of the Tigers escaped I really don’t know. Mick did everything right but couldn’t seem to penetrate the side (and in once case rear) armour of the Tiger. I managed to inflict a few tank loses on the US force but good use of motion status and smoke coupled with the mist meant that most got away. The Tiger was riding its luck in this one and really should have gone down.

I am down to one Mk IV with only MGs after I lost the remaining MK IV’s to tank fire and to BAZ fire. For the rest of the game I will have to rely on the big cats – and one of the Tigers has again broken its MA. Third time that has happened to the Tigers to give some indication of how much fighting they have been doing.

Late on in the scenario, I pull some of my force away from the northern edge to help the Sanatorium hold. Mick puts in a limited assault in the north to gain ground and manages to break a few units. I rout them and create a stack to rally which is then surrounded by US forces which were still off the northern edge of the map. Good move by Mick and it cost me 5 squads a leader and some SW. Ouch – that really hurt - would gladly swap both Tigers for that little lot. Stupid move by me there. Despite all this, the US has still to capture any VP locations.

The situation at the end of 20 Dec AM.
and I reckon he will be forced for the 3 buildings now as his only way of winning the game. The Tiger saga continues as it repairs its MA and I get another immobile Panther free although there is another immobile one close to the front lines which means I will lose that one next turn I think.

20N

US purchase 46: two more infantry platoons (1 1st line, 1 2nd line, only 1 7-0!), 1 Armoured infantry Platoon (1st Line), 1 platoon of M10 Tank Destroyers, some fortifications.

Night, both sides go active so as to remove the No Move restrictions of the Germans. This saved them some severe grief. Night with both sides firing starshell and with limited movement is a special ASL experience. There were gasps of frustration as first one side then the other failed to make the most of firefight opportunities due to wayward Starshell placement. At one point I lit up my entire position as my guys cowered underneath the converging beauty of 4 starshells.

We did however take the first victory locations for the US on the northern side of the woods. One more Panzer IV goes down (the last) to a critical hit from a Sherman lurking at the base of the slope below the Sanatorium. Some Shermans are trying to move through the woods through the south flank of the main road below the Sanatorium. The blazing wreck made progress more difficult in that area as it lit up the road like a torch. Elsewhere a powerful thrust from the defile area north of Sanatorium was more successful crossing into the trees and capturing the northern clearing around QQ28. Unfortunately the Sanatorium hung on and was well defended by tenacious Germans.

The night scenario was fun. The US made good territorial progress and for fewer casualties than in the previous day. It became apparent that the first night scenario should also be made better use of by the US. Daylight attacks even with mist are less likely to yield good results than two night scenarios one of which the Germans will almost certainly be with No Move restrictions.

German purchase: 2 SS PzGr, HW1 (mgs), sniper 2 forts.

Again my purchases were to get bodies into the battle. The SS Pz Gr would arrive mounted on the ht’s and form my reserve. The MG section was meant to help build a kill stack but this was scuppered as they arrived depleted. The forts were mainly used for dummies to try to conceal my true strength. My remaining attack chit is thrown in to avoid the No Move restrictions. Proves to be a good move as the Americans infiltrate all along the front. I keep moving back and inflict a satisfying amount of infantry loses but the exposed immobile Panther goes down. The US forces are in a good position to encircle the san the next day I dread to think what could have been accomplished by the Americans if the Germans were operating under No Move. Those US infantry loses and first day tank loses are coming back to haunt him I think.

21AM

US Purchase 51: 2 infantry platoons (2 elite, 2 x 7-0, where were those guys earlier?), 1 Armoured infantry platoon (1st Line, 7-0), M36 Tank Destroyer, last Bombardment

The penultimate scenario started with a pretty effective bombardment, which bagged one Panther and immobilised another. The US objective was to clear the woods and take the Sanatorium. Both of which were achieved. The Germans had left a small rearguard force in the sanatorium and some dummies, which delayed its occupation until about turn 2. Both King Tigers were up front, and menacing one near the main road crossroads south of the Sanatorium covered the approach to Stoumont, the other on the tree line above Roua. This one demolished the M10 supporting the woods attack, which had also been supported by virtually all the halftracks. Two other halftracks plus some Jeeps were detailed to seize a springboard in the woods and orchards due west of the Old Chapel in Stoumont for the final afternoons assault on the town proper. Unfortunately these were shot up by the German Sniper (now on SAN 5), which recalled two halftracks and killed...
the 7-0 “lootenant” commanding the force.

In the centre the occupation of the sanatorium was completed by the third turn and with the M36 supporting an attempt was made to prize open the centre of the German defence. With several tanks converging on one King Tiger it looked to be in trouble but once again shrugs off various attempts to get in a side shot. One of the M24s also got killed by a determined bunch of SS troopers in close combat.

On the US Left flank the forces advancing through the woods take a lot of casualties from the other King Tiger. Most of these are halftracks. The US bazooka teams took on and killed at least two German halftracks in return but the KT proved obdurate. Three 60mm mortars are sent to take on the King Tiger first with WP then looking for a critical hit. One long series of multiple hits is rewarded in the last turn of the scenario with a 1,1 followed by a 1,2 goodnight Herr King Tiger.

German purchase: Panther (depleted), 1 fort, sniper.

Yikes - I get few reinforcements now and the panther section is depleted. Ouch.

At last a Tiger succumbs – not to tank fire but to mortar fire. Amazingly the other survives as Mick once again can’t roll low enough to get thru side armour of the few shots he managed to get on him. A light force mainly made of dummies puts up light resistance for the san while the main force centres on Stoumont. The roads leading to the HQ are covered with PSK toting teams as an armour thrust seems to be the only way the US will make big territorial gains here. I lose a lot of halftracks but not much in the way on infantry and big cats so I’m relatively happy at the end. To win, the US will have to take a multilocation stone building off me and move a long way to try to get the HQ from me – all against fanatical SS. A lot of work to do but certainly possible.

21PM

US Purchase 68: Infantry Platoon x1 (1st line, 7-0), 1 HMG platoon (on map), 1 assault gun, 1 medium Tank I (4x M4A3(75)w and 1x M4A3(776)w), 1 MediumTank (5xM4A1) 1 x fortification for 15 dummies.

The last chance to reach the victory locations, we have 45 LVP but require an impossible 130 so have to go for the Buildings in AA15 (the sanatorium), J19 (Stoumont Church) and P56 (the Chapel St Anne). I suspect this is often the prospect confronting the US in a KGP I campaign. The Church in Stoumont is defended by lots
their way into the woods supported by the HW platoon led by Major Easy (the unit CO and superhero 10-3). Meanwhile around the Chapel the two platoon co-ordination failed to bring the two attacking formations into position together in time. With only 20 men closing in on the St Anne Chapel these suddenly faced a vastly superior force of SS, I counted 12 squads maybe more in the area including a Flamethrower and DC assault engineers. Clearly Steve wasn’t going to be suckerized in that area. If I loved my 60mm mortars he was very keen on the FT halftracks one of which was parked next to the St Anne Chapel while the other turned out to be behind the Stoumont Church.

The assault on Stoumont was to be helped by the surviving armour from the previous fighting (an M24 and a M4A3 both with the turret disabled). However the M24 gacked his MA and then tried to repair and got recalled. There might have been some merit in having the tank as a mobile smoke wagon but I felt the risk was worth it. The SM8 capability is very impressive. Although held up by the buildings in the ridge line persistence had placed the US force in Stoumont by turn 6 but without having inflicted much damage on the Germans. A German halftrack moved around the US flank only to be taken out by one of the US assault guns. One idea I had had was to try and skirt the right flank south of Stoumont in Jeeps armed with Bazookas and the flame thrower but this was shot up by the Germans in the bell tower. Firing White Phosphorus from the M4/105s compromised the steetle position in Stoumont. WP was running out in the mortars when the first Shermans drove into Stoumont. We had 8 driving into the area as well as 3 M4/105s. Two of the lead Shermans were destroyed by the King Tiger one came to grief on the wire fence a Sniper bagged one of the M4/105 commanders and the other tanks tried to skirt, sneak and otherwise close in on the formidable position.

By Turn 7 the US forces had made their way into Stoumont and with 30FP under a 9-2 leader and another hero in the advance guard had forced the retreating Germans at the base of the church. The final throw was a ZDC toting’ half squad trying to put a payload into one of the German stacks. This was stymied and attempts to close further were foiled. The final assault engineer squad also went down to heavy German fire earlier trying to place. By the end of the afternoon a melee at the base of the Church tower was as near as we got to the victory location.

German purchase: Panther (depleted) with 8-1 armour leader, Inf gun (depleted) fort

Another set of depleted reinforcements. Getting painful now although I manage to avoid low ammo and get an armour leader t last. My main defence will be based on Peipers HQ with about 16 squads scattered around the woods. The best leaders will go here including a 10-2. 3 Panthers and a supporting FT HT will provide the armour support. I still have a lot of halftracks and I will use these to bolster the FP of fire groups and to get behind the US positions to cause a nuisance. The sun went last turn so I put a string holding force of 11 or so squads plus a panther, the remaining KT and another FT HT around the village near the church to hold on as long as possible. The right flank here is held largely by dummies but with a few HIP to provide surprise. I’ve spent too much on forts so the final scenario leaves me with few choices for HIP and dummies. Bad choice early in the CG by me there. A small mobile reserve is set up but the 2 positions are really in isolation. The usual PSK teams are set up interdicting all the paved roads.

The initial assault moves in against the villages and quickly captures them. My HIP works in one or 2 paces but this is a major US attack and all I do is create a few speed bumps, I fall back near the church and fight toe to toe where the fanatic SS in stone buildings prove difficult to lodge. However, US firepower is enormous as every squad has either a BAZ or a MMG and I can do more that fall back, rally and fall back again. The attack founders getting close to the church as I have a kill stack in it and also the KT and Panther start coming into play. Mick runs out of time to take the church (and a little luck with some of his tanks going down to snipers and MA disablement).

I expected a bigger attack against the HQ but this never materialised and the closest a US unit got to the HQ was about 3 or 4 hexes away. Barraging the path at that time was large stack with an 838 +ft, a ft ht and 2 Panthers plus a MG support team. This area was quite easily held although the nip and tuck in the woods around the HQ was good fun. Game ended up as a German victory with the US gaining one of the 3 buildings he needed for victory.

**AFTERMATH**

Well it was bloody wasn’t it? I started with 6 infantry platoons, bought 16 more Infantry Platoons, 2 Armoured Infantry Platoon and an Assault engineer platoon. For a total of 77 squads, 28 half squads and 21 leaders. These had 22 MMG, 24 Bazookas, 24 Mortars a flamethrower and 2 Demo charges, as well as 1 50cal HMG and 3 other HMG.

That’s losses of 13 leaders out of 21 and 65.5 squad equivalents out of 91. I also lost or broke the flamethrower, 11 MMG, 18 Bazookas and 18 Mortars.

Armour was also significant. I started with 8 M4A3s and bought 5 more Medium platoons for 28 Sherman Tanks in total. These were made up of 5x M4s, 5x M4A1s, 2 M4A3(76)ws and 8 M4A3(5)ws and 13 M4A3s in total. I finished up with 8 so lost or had recalled 2 Shermans and 1 out of 3 M4/105s. I lost all the tank destroyers and M24s as well as all save one of the 8 halftracks I had.

It certainly was. I started with 12 squads and brought a further 41 squads including the 2 HQ plus sections and 3 para infantry. By the end of the scenario the surviving 447 para infantry had been battle hardened to 468 – a useful little force. So of 53 squads I had about 28 left. Until this calculation, I really didn’t think my infantry losses were that bad. Ouch. Leadership throughout the game was pretty much a mass of 8-1 but my prize assets were a single 10-2 defending the HQ at the end and a 9-2 acting as a rearguard defending the church. Of the tanks, I was fairly too timid with the flamethrower halftracks and they survived. One KT survived the game – incredible with all the pressure Mick put them under – they almost became the focus of the game at one point. I started with 8 Panthers, bought 2 sections more, which only resulted in 2 more and had 3 left at the end. 7 out of 10 lost. I didn’t buy any extra M4s, I realised early on that this was not their battle and the losses of 8 out of 8 would seem to bear this out. I’m sure Mick was licking his lips in anticipation as soon as he discovered one of these tanks.

Most potent memories of the game:
1) The German fanatic assault on the Sanatorium – awesome power from the Germans Coupled with a too late withdrawal by the US resulted in a significant German victory. A lot of good quality US squads went down the tinny and a few leaders as well.
2) Mick’s assault on one of the King Tigers in the mid game. He did everything right and after I had fired the MA, MGs, etc to change CA numerous times, the covering infantry had fired their PSK and PF he was left with a few nice shots in the side armour. They all bounced. I remember at the time, across the havoc of war, thinking “You deserved better there Mick”. That’s ASL though.

**THE TRENCHES**
A BERSERK!er at Intensive Fire

Trev Edwards

I travelled down to this year’s INTENSIVE FIRE with Ben Jones since we’re both from the NW of England. Bournemouth is a long way from home by British standards and there’s no motorway, no equivalent of an interstate, for a good proportion of the journey approaching from the direction we were coming in from. A pleasant enough journey, although we were stuck for what seemed like an age behind the same lorry on the windy A roads in Wiltshire. After we arrived, Ben and I sat down to a playtest of an Ian Daglish’s scenario set in Normandy. I don’t think Ian was entirely convinced that our very one sided result reflected the balance of the scenario as it stood.

The thing I like about INTENSIVE FIRE, apart from the ASL, is its vicinity to Bovington Tank Museum. I usually try to pop over on the Friday and I was able to take Luis Calcada, his fellow Portuguese ASL player (whose name I think was John) and also Ian Daglish. I went round Bovington with my new cameraman. However, I’m not used to this piece of kit and the tape needed some editing. I had not pressed stop after recording the Hanomag half-track and there was a lot of tape of nothing but the ground with my legs and feet walking along as I moved from tank to tank. What I was doing was stopping tapping as I pointed the camera at the tanks and starting it as I walked to the next! “D’oh!” Fortunately I corrected this pretty quickly but the footage of some of the big cats I was filming was lost.

Speaking of big cats, I was really pleased that I went along to the Tank museum that day since they had put the largely restored Tiger I on display. One of only 6 in captivity, this was the first Tiger captured intact by the western allies. I was regaled with the story by a veteran who was on hand at the museum a couple of years ago: the tank was apparently being delivered by a lorry with the story by a veteran who was on hand at the museum a couple of years ago: the tank was effectively disabled. The first shot ricocheted off the underside of the barrel of the 88, caught the bottom of the gun mantle and then embedded itself side-on in the turret ring. You can still see the imprint of the tiny 6pdr shell at the join between the hull and turret and the marks left under the gun by its passing. The second shot hit the port side lifting point on the turret and again ricocheted, this time killing the commander (the book by Fletcher reports the commander as being wounded). The crew surrendered and the Tiger was now in British hands. The tank was pretty much stripped down by the allies and very detailed report produced by the School of Tank Technology. The Tank has been in disrepair for the decades since then and has spent a lot of its time with the turret set up alongside the hull on a special stand. I had never seen the tank with the turret in place and was really pleased to see the now restored and repainted (in an accurate colour) sat in a large sand tray. The museum has examples of most German tanks and CT guns but the Tiger II is a Porsche turret and the Panther was built in the UK from parts recovered after the war. Somehow that Tiger I manages to be the star exhibit.

Back to the Kiwi hotel and my first competitive game. I met Nigel Blair and we settled on ‘Assaulting Tes’ from Schwerpunkt 8. I’d had this issue for less than a week and was itching to get a game in. I spoke to Ben before I played and he warned me that his experience of the playtest was the Russians shouldn’t set up just in the village or the German firepower would take them apart at long range because there are very few blind spots where the Russians can hide. Having passed this snippet on to Nigel and having got the German side I was surprised that he didn’t take the advice offered. He also hadn’t taken the opportunity to set up the Su-100 HIP. Since the time Ben playtested this scenario, which sees an assault over the board 50 hill into the board 48 “crossroads” village by a strong force of SS including four Jagdpanthers, the German set up has been moved back so that only a couple of setup hexes on the hill can see the village. I set up two of the Jagdpanthers there and didn’t fail to kill the SU100 with the first FPPh. The scenario went all my way as far as luck was concerned. Nigel’s Russkies had a good (by Soviet standards) OBA module because it has a pre-registered hex. Nigel was very unfortunate, pulling two red cards right out of the 6-and-2 mix. It didn’t take too long before I was into the village and a fairly straight forward win. I didn’t particularly enjoy the game and felt bad for Nigel because he hadn’t had much chance.

That evening I got to play Simon Croome. I had played him before, I think it was last year when I was soundly trounced in a game of ‘The Last Tiger’. In that game some really bad play on my part followed by a little bad luck saw me lose heavily. We settled on ‘Husum Hotfoot’ from by brand spanking new Schwerpunkt 8. A late war attack by a combined arms British force against the board 10 village. The main feature of the British OB is the presence of two Wasps, the carriers with a FT as MA. The carrier crews were pinned several times but never suffered more than this. It seemed each time the FT fired the result was a KIA as my dice were really hot. I’ll not forget stupidly running a stack up a road covered by the German HMG, which caused casualties (I just overlooked the Germans covering the roadway) and I guess I was pretty lucky. We also completely zoned out the bog checks my vehicles were due to make for passing next to the marsh hex on the right flank. Derek Tocher pointed this out after the game was finished because he knows I loathe kibitzers. We rolled the dice a few times Simon and I, just to see but no high rolls came so we agreed that the win was fair.

The next morning it was the first round of the team tourney. I was in a team consisting of myself, Dave Schofield and Michael Davies, one of the players who had been new to ASL tourneys at our last BERSERK! event in March.

In the first round I had the pleasure of playing a Dane with whom I have played at least three or four times before at past IF tourneys, Michael Hastrup-Leth. He is a really good player so I was expecting a competitive game. The best scenario of the first round was ‘CH41 Test of Nerves’, a tense scenario from the golden era of early Critical Hit magazines, which had been used at IF before. Well this game went all wrong for me. Playing the Brits, I responded to probing fire on the position of my HIP Firefly by firing in the AFPh. I got one hit on Wittman’s tiger with a 17pdr but it failed to kill. Everything that followed went Michael’s way pretty much. He made a methodical, carefully executed attack, which really paid off, not least because nothing I did worked. I recall not breaking a single enemy squad during the whole of the game. A good example of what as going on: A German
squad runs in the open, right in front of my hidden Cromwell, at one hex range in the VCA and TCA. I get nothing from the PBF (12 at –2) of the MGs and neither of my shots with the MA (including IF) did as much as pin those Jerries. His AFPh sees a successful PF and a dead Cromwell. I have little doubt that Michael would have won anyway, his attack was flawless. My whining about the dice on this occasion is only because I didn’t give him a very good game, Michael was embarrassed for me. Still an enjoyable experience because he is such a nice fellow.

Round two that afternoon and I’m playing my old friend Derek Tcher in a game of ‘First and Inches’—a truly excellent scenario. A light force of US infantry tries to stop a strong German force from seizing a city board. Then a lot of US forces enter and try to take as much of the board back. Each stone building next to a road that the Germans hold counts a point per player turn. My attack as the Germans went really well and Derek’s counter was fierce, but I was successfully holding him off at first. In the mid-game I’m faced with a tough choice of moving an encircled squad and leader into CC with an important, pinned enemy unit. To advance, I have to go CX, my ambush fails and I lose my stack in a subsequent turn. I’ll also not forget in a hurry my losing my Whirlwind FlakPzIV, trying to move it away rather than shoot at the Jackson that had a bead on it. I made smoke and it was whacked as I tried to start it. Derek played a good game, aggressively hunting StuGs with his HeliCat. It came down to the last turn, although my penultimate turn effort of trying to secure new buildings with a few HS was pretty forlorn. I took Derek quite close and we both acknowledged it as having been a good game. It would prove important to the results of the tourney as well.

The next morning I find myself paired up against Luis Calcada, a long time acquaintance from Portugal. I have to say that I found the final round’s choice of scenario to be somewhat limited. I’d have chosen ‘High Danger’ as being the most balanced of the three on offer, but Luis wanted to get away sooner rather than later. I agreed to play ‘Batterie du Port’ and was very lucky to have the Vichy French. I set up with the wire denying the oncoming US the far side of the hedgerow. Luis overran my token “speedbump” squads without incident. He then rolled his tanks around behind my guns. I’d turn, fire and then IF the guns, trying to take as many shots as I could. I was fortunate because none of them malfunctioned. Luis’ infantry was having a hard time making progress as well as my HMG rained down fire from the top of the tower. By the end of the third Vichy turn, my guns had eliminated two of the Stuarts, caused the crew to abandon a third and I had caught a US infantry stack moving in the open with the HMG in the tower which caused havoc. Add to this the poor RPh rolls Luis had and it isn’t difficult to understand why he quit. I think that this scenario was a rare unbalanced effort from Schwerpunkt 5 pack and I feel that getting the French gave me the win.

The tourney was a close run thing. Despite my losing my first two games, my team was still in the running for the main prize. If Dave Schofield had managed to win his game of ‘High Danger’ we’d have taken first, but a final CCPh didn’t go his or our way. I recall David as being up for the individual prize as well, so it was a double blow for him to lose.

The team tourney is split into two, an Elite and a 1st Line division. The Elite team prizes went to Luis Calcada, Paulo Ferreira and Russell Gough, and the 1st Line team prizes went to Tim Bunce, Paul Kettlewell and Graham Smith. The top prize, for the best individual effort was won by Derek Tcher. Adds significance to the game I lost to him since two prizes swung on that result. This means Derek has won both IF and BERSERK! in the same year, an outstanding performance. He is the first person to do the double. I personally enjoyed myself a great deal, it is no shame to lose to players who are stronger than yourself, so I don’t mind my record coming away from this event. Next stop BERSERK! 2003.
Dien Bien Phu (DBP) takes ASL to Vietnam. After resisting the Japanese for several years the Vietnamese next struggled against the French. The game provides a large map of part of the Dien Bien Phu battle site, with plenty of counters, overlays and even some brand new maps.

The main map is good, featuring a number of hills, covered in wire, shellholes and sparse vegetation. Three new board sized maps are added, mostly open terrain with some vegetation. In addition there are two new overlays, a village with rice paddies, and a landing strip. The landing strip is a four hex by seven hex runway. The last map is a compact micro hex copy of the main map useful for planning or post victory tale telling. Trust me it will be a big hit with the ladies!

The counters are nicely done. At some stage in the planning or production process Critical Hit decided to issue the game with two sets of counters. A good idea and hopefully not too expensive. As a result we end up with a lot of ace stuff! In DBP the North Vietnamese (PAVN) have a similar counter range to WW2 Russians, with access to some captured or donated American equipment. This ranges from M2 Mortars and Recoilless Rifles through to two types of Bazookas. For some support weapons and concealment counters you will need Axis Minor counters, most players will already have these, apologies for those who do not. The Vietnamese are Stealthy, can use Human Waves, and receive very gentle Commissars. For certain rules they are treated as Japanese, allowing them to create DC Heroes, benefitting from inflicting a +2 search DRM in certain terrain on their opponents. 10% HIP benefit for daylight scenarios, 25% at Night, and free Tunnel with every Pillbox benefit. The bad news is limited to an inability to deploy or recombine, and a restriction on multi-hex firegroups, specifically they cannot form them! The rules are consistent with accounts of the PAVN in action.

French troops turn up in British colours! A bold decision that improves the broken side morale of French troops. New counters are provided for French paratroopers, leaders, several AFVs, and some support weapons. The French paratroopers are very tough. ELR of 5, underscored morale, 6-4-8s with higher broken side morale. A good selection of SMC give distinctive Leadership to “British” counters. Helping the French are T’ia Irregulars, good guerrilla fighters, who proved weak in a stand up fight.

The rules book gives a good account of the siege of Dien Bien Phu, equipment descriptions, and rules for a Campaign Game using the large historical map. As the map represents part of the entire base the French do receive some choice of reinforcements. Looks like fun, and will appeal to players who excel at planning.

Moving on to the fifteen scenarios, these range from small scale actions to massive monster games on the main map. PTO rules are in play, with SSRs affecting terrain in some cases. Before play it really pays dividends to brush up on Chapter G, and the rules for Concealed and HIP h units, searching and fortifications. Some scenarios employ Night rules so a brush up on those is a fair idea. As always read the Chapter H notes for any AFVs or Guns!

DBP1 Bruno’s Flak Attack

This is a combined arms French attack, with paratroopers, armour, artillery and air support, against a portion of a dug in PAVN Flak battery. The French force is very strong, this is partially offset by the strong Vietnamese position and HIP status.

PTO is in effect, Brush replaces woods and Bamboo, with the other terrain present being Kunai, Huts and Irrigated rice paddies. The latter resemble gentle marshland surrounded by paddy banks that act as hedges. The Chapter G rules give good coverage, and are a bit easier to understand when you have a defined paddy type. Shamefully I have yet to use a paddy bank counter, and generally avoid the bits they surround. It is crucial to note entrenched infantry treat hedges as hedges under G6.4, this has a significant effect on play.

Have a good look at the rules for Air support, Napalm, and Creeping barrage particularly if you are the French.

DBP1 PAVN Set Up

If an Oerlikon or DSHK 38/46 Flak gun survives you win, you do not even need to have another unit in play. Very simple victory conditions, but a tough fight to achieve them. Another way to win eliminate the entire French OB; erm moving on!

French forces are very strong. Elite paratroopers with ELR of 5, underscored morale and a broken side morale of nine, they outnumber you roughly two to one. Support weapon allocation is about equal, with a slight edge in your favour if you factor in the flak guns. Leadership is about even. Stacking the odds against you, Air Support, 105mm OBA and three light tanks, each with a 75mm Gun.

Your own troops are tough; Elite, stealthy with an ELR of four. Further you can human wave, exchange two Leaders for commissars, and have the benefit of twelve trenches. Flak Guns can be emplaced and of course hidden in concealment terrain. Up to 10% of your force, well in this case one squad, can set up hidden in concealment terrain. The rest of your infantry can be concealed, Trenches can be hidden in Kunai.

Terrain is mostly favourable. It is unlikely you will need to trudge through a rice paddy, your opponent must either go through or round one. Irrigated paddies slow movement to a crawl. It takes 3 MF to move into an irrigated hex, with a +1 for crossing a paddy bank. Moving on top of the banks is quicker with less cover. Tanks risk bog on entry/exit for no real advantage. Banks provide a +1 DRM against fire, and restrict the line of sight of entrenched troops in a similar way to a hedge. Expect tank movement to be either north of or between the two paddies. By guessing how the Chaffees will move West after passing the Paddy you can make reasonable guesses as to Bazooka placement. Up front in a hut or a trench if you are aggressive, further back if you are more cautious. In most games you will have the choice of long range shots, offset against the loss of concealment. Even when you do manage a hit game mechanics drop to kill numbers down considerably to reflect the historical loss rate of Chaffees. A BAZ 45 has a to kill of two for a frontal shot, the 1950 Super Bazooka a rather better six. Side or rear shots get you into higher numbers. Even with low to kill and to hit numbers some French players will not want risk a tank, destruction is unlikely but deliberate immobilisation is a real threat. Aiming to kill all three tanks would be ambitious. A more realistic plan is to deter deep penetration or rapid forwards movement by armour. I would be happy to stop the tanks driving through the huts searching for me by causing PTCs.

The huts do provide concealment and light cover. Given the expectation of 105mm OBA, making a stand in the village is hazardous. It is almost certain the barrage will hit the eastern edge of the village then move west. Attacks on the 16FP table can be resisted if you are entrenched. The real risk is concealment loss either through MCs or PTCs caused by collapsing huts. There is a slight risk of blaze followed by spreading flames. Despite these harsh observations there are some benefits in setting up in the village. Most are to do with interdicting French entry or delaying subsequent movement. Also worth considering you can emplace guns in hut hexes, or use trenches there either as a feeble anti tank obstacle or to have a small presence up front to slow or kill the French. As PAVN you can set up 10% of your force, one squad, hidden! This is not an especially good idea in brush, the only reason for doing it in a hut would be to give a better line of sight into the rice paddy. Although this is an option it might not be a really good idea.

View From
Some terrain is confusing. Orchard hexes appear on the map, presumably they are not in play, further a swamp hex might also be open ground. This is a point to clarify before play starts. I suspect orchard and swamp are open ground. This means less cover to complicate French entry and more chance of searching for your last unit a bit easier. The swamp would be missed as it restricted tank movement.

Summing up terrain helps by restricting French movement options, providing concealment terrain to allow you to set up hidden or concealed, and plenty of potential locations for your units to make search difficult.

Your set up options are diverse. The best set up anticipates French plans and counters them. An absurd example of this would be a lone gun hidden in an area you know will bypassed by the French, later causing carnage or staying put to satisfy the victory conditions. Planning is complicated by OBA and air support, both of which are variable in effect. OBA punishes concentrated defence, and provides some cover by a +1 DRM for lines of sight through FFE. Without artillery you can move more freely and arrange a number of 16 or 20 IFT attacks. Air support is very variable, most welcome if a mistaken air attack happens, less so if it starts a fire in the middle of your chosen Kunai patch.

If boresighting was in effect a serious attempt to kill or hurt the French as they enter play would have an excellent chance of working. Without boresighting it is difficult to see a forwards defence doing massive damage on turn one. I am not sure an aggressive defence is the way to win. There area a lot of factors to consider. First the benefit of trenches, good leadership and high morale/ELR give your small force resilience. With reasonable luck you should stand up to quite heavy French attacks whilst inflicting damage. Against this you have to consider bad luck. A single broken squad weakens your force, break two or three in one turn and French chances of Victory will grow. Rate of Fire is another variable. Without an enemy thought out forwards French entry can be hazardous. With average luck a viable proportion of the French forces will survive, to move against your newly revealed positions. Firing the flak guns would reveal their positions exposing them to IFT, OBA, Napalm, tank gun fire for the best part of seven or eight turns. Despite my reservations it could work, amazing luck would help, French troops moving in stacks would help even more!

If you see an aggressive defence as the way to go, set up in platoons with good lines of sight to the Eastern edge. This doesn’t mean a neat line of Trenches on row H, instead aim for carefully stited spots with good lines of fire to the French entry areas or spots they will move through. The guns can join you in the front line or start further West.

With the certainty of a serious attack developing another option is to remain concealed as long as possible. With the Guns Hidden there are a lot of places to hide - something like 55, hut, Kunai or Brush hexes, and even the dried out pond for 56. Probably locations further West are more practical than those in the Village, certainly the best place to hide is anywhere the French do not look! Brush and huts are easier to search, with hidden units being revealed by Infantry moving through them. Kunai must be searched or troops therein revealed by fire. OBA, Air support, and IFT attacks are unavoidable, concealed troops in trenches can soak up a lot of fire, high morale and Leadership will help survive as well. There is a high chance of hurting the French more than you are hurt. Hiding huts and Kunai may show up quickly, but the French will move away. A few failed sniper attacks might discourage masses of low odds IFT attacks by the French, chance of this is slightly below 2% or 1/54 (always seems higher on the receiving end).

If hiding is favoured plan you still have a lot of decisions to make. To arrive trench complex or twelve separate outposts are poor choices. Three or four small defensive groups has a better chance of a win. At least one will avoid being hit by OBA/ Air support, tensely arriving awaiting paratroops and tanks.

It is a good help to think of set up in terms of groups of units. With six squads and three guns thinking in terms of full strength platoons is not very helpful. One idea is to plan in terms of individual guns and three two squad units, then plan defence in terms of six areas of resistance. Generally the guns should be in the back field and support available, rotate two rows e.g. row L. All three guns on row L is playable if you aim to open fire early in the game. If you plan to win by hiding one or two guns further West staying silent till later in the game has a good chance. The pairs of squads or weak platoons start two or three hexes in front. Tailor dispositions to terrain. If really stuck maybe one platoon in the middle flanked by another on either side. Give each platoon a LMG, and a bazooka, give two a Mortar the other a MMG, add a Leader for a very basic set up. That is good enough to play a credible game. If you really want to win a bit more work is necessary. Make decisions about the location of support weapons, hide a squad in a clever ambush position and link your dispositions by the spare trenches. Avoid a linear defence, it begs to be hit by a creeping barrage, go for a staggered defence as far as possible. A deeper level of planning gives thought to rout paths, and how the defence will hold together if your one or two guns disabled. Leadership sounds very simple, trust me it isn’t. Even an expert player will work hard to pull this off. Weakier players like myself will struggle, but I play this game because I enjoy it not because I’m good at it!

Before play starts, give thought to exchanging two Leaders for commissars. This is an option to consider in every scenario. PAVN commissars are kindly souls who use sarcasm rather than bullets, there are no deadly penalties for failing to rally. A slight downer is commissars quality, basic morale is an excellent nine or ten, unfortunately half of your commissars will be penalised by a +1 Leadership modifier. My own choice is invariably to exchange the maximum number of Leaders for commissars. Give thought to spotted fire for the mortars. Assigning support weapons to Leaders. Setting up a Leader with a gun crew. As PAVN you cannot form multi location firegroups, French troops in Kunai are similarly restricted. Try to avoid the barrage impact area, it is likely to start on the F hexrow and move forwards through part of the village. Despite this an entrenched unit forward of your main position is helpful. A difficult decision as the post is isolated but commit to your choice once you have decided.

During play, be alert. Look out for fleeting shots at stacks of units. Seek to inflict search casualties, withdraw concealed units, blaze away with any that are exposed. One way to look at your squad is as mines. Any hex adjacent can inflict casualties on searching units, moving onto the hex Kops for a TPF attack including any supporting MGs. Try to avoid or survive the OBA. Hope for two red cards or a series of failed contact rolls. Good luck with the Hell diver, Napalm is awesome. Aside from damage at ground zero, fire will spread to adjacent hexes an excellent way to flush out your troops. After one bomb run and a quick 16 IFT strafe the plane disappears, a mistaken air attack is possible, very helpful if it happens.

Expect a very difficult game. Keep good records of your hidden troops dispositions, and remember where they are. Do not give up early in the game, do not give up part way through the game or even on turn eight just one gun in play earns you a win, anything other than the last gun is unimportant, you don’t even need a crew for it!

DBP1 French Entry And Attack

To win seek out and Destroy the PAVN Flak guns. OK you can also win by capturing them. If you destroy the guns your unit will then become disabled. To achieve this you must co-ordinate a fast combined arms attack against a small but tenacious defender.

Enemy forces have been described above at length! With PAVN forces setting up first you will gain some information from looking at concealed stacks of defending units. Admittedly this will not tell you where the guns are but should give a few ideas as to the best approach to the Village and almost as important a reasonable spot to start aim creeping barrage. With three hidden guns and a hidden squad plus SMC and Support weapons it is still possible to identify potential gaps in the defence. An obvious weakness would be a line of concealed units on a single hexrow that simply begs for an artillery attack. Do not expect this too often , and keep in view the defenders could be entrenched which offers some protection against OBA.

A Creeping Barrage can vary considerably in destructiveness. The rules are similar to the regular OBA section, with a few twists. In this scenario a barrage has potential to do a lot of damage, though more often it will help by discovering some concealed or hidden units, destroying huts and worrying your opponent. Barrage will always arrives, a black card coincides with your attack, an initial red draw starts the artillery preparation early. Premature arrival might help by sweeping forwards enemy positions with fire before you arrive , the downsides are it puts your plans a bit out of schedule and might be past the enemies’ front line when you arrive. On balance a timeous arrival is better, an early arrival makes you attack a little bit more difficult but doesn’t mean you’ve lost! Planning when to lift the barrage is hard to judge exactly. Keeping the FFE ahead of your troops is important, to assist entry, next use the module as OBA to hit concentrations of enemy troops. My best guess is to convert on turn three or four. I could easily be wrong and creaping across the board to lift on turn seven or eight be a better tactic.

Having planned your artillery support...
a flick through, with gusts and a mild breeze flame and blaze can spread even in Kunai. generally this will be helpful cutting down areas to search, forcing defenders to relocate and providing smoke to cover movement. A possible problem is the creation of a small area ringed by blaze counters that cannot be searched and may contain an enemy Flak unit. Your only option would be air support and OBA. The chances of this happening are slight. Kindling is an option strikes me as a daft idea, others will warm to the idea, might even be a few PAVN adherents to it. Main argument against is you have a lot of work to do and an attempt at kindling ties up a unit for at least a turn.

It is almost worth writing “Find the guns!” on a piece of paper and looking at it occasionally. If you lose concentration you can be drawn into a series of protracted firefights with dug in PAVN troops backed up by commissars. It is important you locate and destroy Islands of resistance, more important you slip round their flanks pushing West to find the Guns. Use spare MF to search, before moving in the advance phase if you can. Occasionally you will be hit by search casualties, losing a squad but finding gun or the sole PAVN hidden squad (plus any SW and SMC(s)), a reasonable exchange of information for a half squad.

As long as you keep sight of the objective and push hard you can reasonably expect to win. The PAVN is tough, well dug in and hidden or concealed somewhere in a large area but you are conducting a strong combined arms attack with better troops.

**DBP1 Conclusions**

Expect play as either side to be nerve wracking. Without hidden guns a French victory would be almost guaranteed. The need to locate and destroy the guns makes for a tense game. The PAVN player will be aware the last gun is close to the searching French, who in turn will be trying to guess where it is and how to destroy it in the time available.

**DBP2 French Set Up**

Your mission is a bit difficult, to prevent the destruction of both Pillboxes or to control one of them at the game end. To win you must plan your defence, counter the PAVN’s initial attack and use your reinforcements to gain control of one or more pillboxes.

Enemy troops are a mixed bag. Ranging from elite sappers down to second line squads. ELR of three will result in some replacements but you should half expect enemy Leaders including Commissars to round up any strays and point them in your direction. It’s an obvious statement but in the opening two turns you are outnumbered roughly four to one, not nice. Enemy support weapons are numerous, including light, heavy and medium machine guns, Bazookas, DCs, Bangalore and even a mortar. Adding strength to the attack is 100mm OBA with an off-board observer, two pre-registered hexes, and plentiful ammunition. SSR apply to the OBA further increasing the probability of its arrival.

There is a remote possibility of enemy OBA landing in E3 and achieving this objective with a critical hit on both pillboxes. The chance of this happening in a single turn will be less than 1 in 1296; the odds of losing one pillbox say 1 in 18. On the course of play it would be reasonable to expect one critical hit, two is pretty unlikely. I do not expect many players will simply bang away at the Pillboxes throughout the game but keep this in mind as a possibility; unfortunately there is no real defence against this except luck!

Your own troops are rather good. Elite squads who are also Fanatic, led by fanatic leaders including a 10-2, backed up by an 8-1. Support weapons are reasonable, including a mortar able to fire illuminating rounds and a fair selection of machine guns. Wire, trenches, pillboxes and anti personnel mines also help. On turn four you will receive reinforcements; more on these later.

The limited NVR of two hexes is a problem making covering the Wire more difficult. On the up side mud slows PAVN movement.... unfortunately it affects French troops and tanks later on! NVR does tend to decrease after combat and command control. In most games playing the defender is “easier”, with a lot of work planning the set up followed by less choices once the shooting starts.

Aside from reading the Night rules, players need to revise Mud, mines, OBA, and to read the new rules for Bangalore Torpedoes. Very briefly, bangalore can be used in the Prep Fire Phase or Advancing Fire Phase to clear wire and/or known minefields. They attack with a -3 DRM and clear wire or create a path through AP mines with a KIA result. Special rule DBP6 is pretty clear.

**DBP2 Where The Buffalo Roam**

Of the fifteen scenarios in the **DBP** pack five feature Night rules. Given the PAVN is attacking a trench network in very open terrain it makes sense that a number of attacks are made under cover of darkness. Despite this historical fact, a number of players will not be enthusiastic about playing some or even all of the night games. I’d recommend playing at least one or two. All five have been well designed, with interesting features and give insights in to the difficulties the French faced.

Night rules do add some complexity to the game. Possibly the Attacker gains most from the cloak of darkness, as the Defender generally has less fun because of the restrictions on movement and command control. Playing the defender is ‘easier’, with a lot of work planning the set up followed by less choices once the shooting starts.

To an extent your defence is predetermined by the terrain and SSR. One MMC and the HMG must set up in a pillbox. All other units must start in Trenches or the other pillbox. This calls for some tough choices. First decide if you will defend
both pillboxes from the outset. Next how you will organise your other troops. A wide range of choices from two squads, MGs and both Leaders in the pillboxes down to just a half squad can work. Personally I’d probably just put a half squad in one with the HMG leaving the other either empty or manned by the reserve LMG. If the other side were weakening your defences elsewhere. The rest of your troops need to screen the pillboxes from direct Infantry attack. A very simple plan would start six or seven squads in adjacent trench hexes on the I hexrow. A MMG and Leader at each end, LMGs slightly off centre and the mortar a bit further back. More cunning plans will have some gaps in the front line one of which will be covered by a hidden squad and LMG or MG. If you are less keen on winning go for a pair of adjacent stacks three squads high next to a gap in the wire. There might be a good case for some units further west ready to neutralise a PAVN encircling movement.

Next consider where to gap your own wire to allow reinforcements to enter. Too far East and the area may be covered by PAVN troops or fire, further West increases the distance you will need to travel. Engineers can gap the pillboxes for you to move through. Keep a careful note of the hexes selected, be prepared to gap wire and mines with tanks if you really, really have to.

You can set up to 25% of your OB hidden. Although you are still limited to Trench/Pillbox hexes this can help. You can cover a gap in the wire in greater strength than your opponent thinks, or keep him guessing about the Pillboxes contents, even keep a minute reserve ready to bite at a critical moment. A rule I often forget is the tail end of E1.2, which allows for SMG and SW to start HIP. This should complicate opponents counting counters as their view will be restricted to six identical stacks. The illusion should not last for long, any confusion or worry caused is helpful.

A well planned set up helps, more important is how you control enemy attacks. The game plan is pretty simple. Try to prevent the enemy from reinforcing or in the assault. Shoot good fire against Bangalore, MGs or DCs or those attempting clearance attempts. There’s not much you can do about OBA created gaps or by shellholes placed under SSR2, other than try to cover them with fire. Expect to win most firefight but avoid close combat by falling back. If the enemy gaps the wire and overpowers the defence it will be very hard for you to win. If you can delay the attack and hit it with arriving units just before your initial forces collapse you can win.

Starshells and illuminating rounds are useful. Potentially every SMC and MMC can place them subject to a brief availability check and accuracy DR in the case of Starshells, or To Hit roll for IR. The Chapter E rules are very clear and easier to understand when you are actually using them. I think you should try to place Illumination early in the game, then shoot at your targets. Catch troops moving in the open. Fall back towards the Pillboxes, or out of the way along a trench then return to harry the PAVN. Until the reinforcements arrive this is a scary fight. Obviously you could do with more squads, more leaders, more support weapons. Console yourself with the morale of the troops you have, the strength of your position, the prospect of reinforcement, and the slow progress the PAVN make through Mud.

DBP2 PAVN Attack

Destroying or capturing both Pillboxes earns you a win. As noted above this can be done with your artillery assets, you need to be very lucky and its not an exciting way to win. Rather better would be a well planned determined thrust into the Heart of the French position, screened by a covering force, followed by a stiff fight and eventual victory.

If you opt for a win using your artillery assets, pre-register E3 and roll snakes eyes to destroy each bunker some time during the game. Against a French set up that’s two squads, two MGs and the Leaders in the Pillboxes this really is a reasonable opening! Against a weaker allocation of forces (say just a half squad and HMG) this really could be a mistake. It is also a reasonable strategy on turn seven or eight if you see no other way to win.

Plans B, C, D etc are a deal more difficult and complex. Broadly speaking your options are a charge at the French, a slow steady push up to and through the wire followed by a charge or push, or wiping out the French on board forces using artillery and firepower before taking the Bunkers. In all cases you can also decide to ignore or oppose French reinforcements.

Within each of these basic plans there is room for variation with some similarities. Key to victory is limiting the opportunities for the French to place a starshell under rule E1.92. Until you fire at the French, place a Starshell/IR, resolve a FFE, move within an illuminated hex or are within NVR the Frenchies cannot roll for Starshell. Assuming you attempt this you might get right up to the wire and set off your Bangolores before the French realise an attack is coming. You can choose not to do this by using your OBA from turn one onwards, engaging in a firefight. A difficult choice. Very briefly the chances of winning a firefight are remote, you are facing fanatic Infantry in Trenches with longer range, support weapons and decent leadership firing from open terrain in poor fire grouping. A push to the wire under cover of darkness has better prospects.

Begin by placing shellholes under SSR2. Choose between guaranteed gaps in the wire, weakening the French trench network, or a bit of both. Gaps in the wire are a fair idea, but they will still need expanding with Bangolores or DC. Destroyed trenches make approaching wire hexes easier but offer no guarantees of a gap. On balance a gap in the wire is more use than a disrupted French position but follow your gut feeling on this choice it really is pretty crucial. Next, an almost no brainer, exchange some Leaders for the heavy crunch. You will need the them rolling at Night. DM can take a while, ignoring DM really speeds up the process. Next pre-register selected hexes. Maybe D2, E3 or a couple of key spots in front of your main line of attack.

As you enter the artillery can range on the French trenches aiming to open fire when the bảngolores are set to keep the French heads down, pin a few or even break a squad. This can just about be done ready for turn two if you use Leaders to move the sappers forwards, turn three if you are more sedate. On turns three or four there is an almighty bang as some wire hexes are cleared, FFE lands, MGs and mortars open up, some DC heroes head for the wire, followed by wave upon wave of charging PAVN seeking to engage your troops in close combat.

After a quiet opening, turns two or three will be very noisy. A vicious fight will continue into turns four or five. Try to slip some troops past the main line of resistance towards the Bunkers to determine what faces you. Next fend off the French reinforcements whilst controlling and subsequently destroying the bunkers.

A significant part of your remaining forces should go for the bunkers. Six squads or two leaders with any remaining DCs is about right. Expect losses. Try to reduce these by keeping out of the line of fire and a resolute charge. If the HMG rolls rate or just lucky and low you will need to throw more troops at the position. Seek out close combat then wear the defender down. Always occupy the Pillboxes or attempt blowing them up with your remaining DC.

Whilst this frantic attack is developing the remainder of your forces is tasked with delaying the progress of the French reinforcements. All remaining bazookas should form part of this screen. Along with HMG/MMGs teamed up with the mortar firing illuminating rounds. Mostly position yourself in trenches, with some troops up front to impose further delay. All remaining OBA missions should attempt interdiction.

The tanks represent a real threat. Some help comes from the Bazookas, mechanical reliability and the chance of Bog in mud. Crossing Trenches or even wire carries a risk of bog, ideally leading to immobilisation, always causing some delay. OBA, or any remaining DCs can be used, if not allocated to another task. The guns are likely to be busy elsewhere, the DCs used to gap the wire and the Starshells/Pillboxes. Close Combat is an option a bit desperate but risking a squad for a tank is a fair trade.

As soon as you identify the French pre-designated gaps in the wire, cover them with fire as best you can. Given more time the French reinforcements would be able to develop a more leisurely attack and shoot you to bits. Aim to win by preventing the French attack retaking the last pillbox.

On the last game turn a 2nd line squad in a pillbox can survive to engage in Close Combat keeping you in the game even if every other sector is collapsing.

A few quick thoughts. Draw fire with your weaker units specifically rifle squads, conserving the SMG squads for close combat. The fanatic French are hard to kill by fire combat, slightly easier to take on in close combat or melee. The Sapper squads cannot recombine, using them to reinforce or mortars will not work. A few tanks to do this. Weigh up the risk of moving through a minefield/wire vs. residual fire. Go for open ground for choice take a gamble if you expect a big gain. Lastly accept high losses. You are charging across open ground in the early part of the game, against a trench system fronted by wire, veil of darkness helps, as does OBA, but losses...
will be high. Anything under eight squads on the approach, a further eight in close combat still leaves a further sixteen squads and a proportion of Leaders to face the French counter attack.

Also worth mentioning some dead ducks of ideas. I’ve not mentioned human wave. The wire and mud make this difficult but if you pull off, it is a good use for some of the sapper squads, or any other half squads you pick up. If an opportunity arises go for it. Not sure if its a game winning tactic though? A flanking attack moving further West to avoid the Pillboxes covered arcs and hit a weaker part of the French line, loses valuable time. It would be a goer without the mud but movement is painfully slow in this one. Besides once the shooting starts expect to see Starshells and suffer long range attacks from the outflanked French.

The French troops are very tough, well led and well equipped. They represent a significant threat, almost as dangerous any form of illumination. Starshell and illumination rounds will transform Night into day and make a cunning charge with the prospect of a concealed advance a hazardous run through open ground. Factor illumination into your plans and be prepared for turns when it has little effect or alternatively when everywhere you want to move is lit up.

Quite a lot of choices to make. You start with careful planning of the approach to the wire, a flurry of activity to breach it. A mad turn or two of charge and close combat, then defence against a French counter attack. Win or lose really good fun you might even forget you are playing a night scenario.

DBP2 French Relief troops

On turn four you receive either reinforcements or a counter attacking force depending on how successful your defence has been. With luck the PAVN will be struggling across the wire, in less ideal circumstances the Foreign Legion will be fighting hard to hand or already eliminated. In all cases you need to move quickly across board D1 and reach the Pillboxes.

Enemy forces can vary immensely from a small screen screen of three or four squads up to a company strength supported by a number of MGs depending on the PAVN’s assessment of the threat you pose. Very rarely will more than a company oppose you, less likely is a free run to the runway reduces the risk of bog and hastens movement. Operating crew exposed adds a MG to your firepower, a trade against the risk of SAN and Infantry fire.

For all units have a basic idea of the route you will take. Passing through the wire at the pre-existing gaps or newly created ones, using tanks to create new trailheads if you have to. Stick to the plan if you can, to exploit an opportunity or to recover from a near disaster.

If you push hard, fight hard and concentrate your troops will reach the Trenches. Once there movement becomes easier. Exploit trenches for the cover they provide and their assistance when moving. Engage in fire combat to weaken the PAVN, whilst pushing towards the Pillboxes.

Towards the game end both sides will still have a mass of units on the board. Your intention is to have more close to the Pillboxes. If you hold one or both on turn Seven then fend off the last PAVN attack relax you win!

DBP2 Conclusion

The chance of a “lucky” PAVN win by destroying both pillboxes using OBA is remote. It can happen, I’d be embarrassed to win that way particularly against a better player or thinking about it someone new to the game. More often this will be a much tougher fight.

The burden of clever play falls mostly on the PAVN who must organise his forces to gap the wire, overwhelm the defence, fend off the reinforcements and destroy or control the bunkers. The French have a slightly easier job and leading the Para Company should be fun.

I’m not a great fan of Night scenarios, this is definitely worth a look if you are, both sides Infantry OBs are impressive with added spice OBA, Armour and even Bangalores’. I’d ask anyone not too keen on night scenarios to watch some other players enjoying a game sometime. Before too long you will be thinking about Starshell placement, NVR, Freedom of movement and how you could do a better job than one or both of the players are doing. If I’m wrong you’ve lost half an hour, but it could add another dimension to an excellent hobby.
the option to create four strong defensive outposts. Up to two squad equivalents can set up hidden with the RCL and crew counting as a squad. Note the RCL cannot fire from within a Trench or when emplaced, cannot boresight and is not granted HIP except by virtue of the PAVN HIP bonus. The placement and location of the trench must be the Trench Networks. The practice of naming trenches makes a lot of sense, dating back to the first world war or earlier. In later paragraphs networks will be referred to by the first letter given in their set up instructions. Some brush and a lot of shellholes are present providing limited cover. There is a small depression in and around D1C3 that will not have a great effect on play, and a small three hex orchard around D3F3. Mud rules are in effect which slows movement and creates the possibility of vehicular bog. It is raining, heavily, effecting fire with a LV hindrance. So how to start. The set up restriction of only six squads South of row T really hurts. Starting twelve squads in the W3/U3 trenches would be a better start. An early decision must be what force to allocate to each of the forward trenches. There really isn’t a glib answer to this. Both the French or the French might concentrate against one and capture it. A weak garrison is not much use, I think you need to start about three squads and a Leader in both the U3 and W2 networks. Maybe three squads at the apex (pointy bit) of each triangular position with a leader or commissar at its base. Add a Bazooka for Anti tank protection and an LMG or two to beef up raw firepower. There are many alternatives. A four two split could work, substituting a MMG for a LMG, sticking in a Mortar, even not using your Leaders in forwards positions. Daft ideas include putting an RCL in a Trench, where it is well protected but cannot fire, neglecting to provide anti tank defence and abandoning the forward trenches seeking to prevent their occupation by strong defensive fire. Deciding which squads to use up front is tricky. Opinions differ, I would not use second line squad equivalents; I am using three 1st line SMG and Rifle squads. The SMG squads have better close range firepower, and can be more effective in close combat. Rifle squads have a small range advantage. I’d listen to an argument for SMG squads myself, most likely using three 1st line SMG and Rifle squads. The SMG squads have a better close range firepower, and can be more effective in close combat. Rifle squads have a small range advantage. I’d listen to an argument for choosing 2nd line SMG squads over rifle squads, but would be less receptive to using 2nd line rifle squads as front line defenders. Personal choice plays a big part in your ultimate decision. Next decide what you will do with the rest of your OB. Certainly part of your OB will provide fire support from the Trench networks in I6 and Q1. There might be a case for attempting to reinforce the forward Trenches by setting up nearby then moving into them. This is very risky. The cover approaching the forward areas is limited to shellholes and some brush with the odd slope hexside, and the rain LV hindrance. If the French shoot up your troops in the open then exploit with their armour you could lose a chunk of your force. Routinely referred to as rain crawl or LV hindrance not a LOS hindrance, with low crawl it will take to long to route to cover and rally. The benefits are a stronger garrison and some psychological benefits if the French didn’t foresee the tactic. Risking a large proportion of your troops is reckless but two or three squads might be a decent gamble. There is a shellhole in D3/T3 that provides good cover for one squad. Another couple could hide behind brush and hope for the best.

The DSHK 38/46 is a Gun and can set up emplaced outside a trench still benefiting from a +2 TEM. This allows set up closer to the forward Trenches than is possible in the other Trench networks. The only bad news for the DSHK is the need for a crew to man it, and the lowered ROF when using IFE rather that to hit procedures. Starting hidden, and emplaced in a brush hex say D30S strikes me as jolly clever. As soon as you fire the French will know where you are. Before you do that small doubt as to your location complicates his set up slightly and will occupy his thoughts when planning turn one. When to open fire is a judgement call, whether to start on turn one or wait till the French leave the trenches.

Siting the RCL is difficult. It cannot be fired from a Trench or if emplaced leaving us with a shellhole, brush or behind a slope as set up options. The 75mm gun can fire HEAT, with a TK of 13, effective against a Chaffee. Choose a spot that appeals, if really stuck my own choice would be Shellhole D3R6 which is protected by brush and heavy rain from French fire, at the expense of some harder to hit rolls for its own fire. As always use your own ideas if they are as good or better!

Which still leaves us with a sizeable force. The Mortars can start in trenches firing long range, speculative shots, expecting at least one critical hit some time during the game. The MMGs, can be grouped for effect against troops in Trenches or kept separate to contest French movement. It is unlikely a serious French effort would be made against the I6 network. The rules do not prohibit a French tank crew dismounting to claim a network, three second line squads or even just two are a reasonable insurance policy.

Network Q1 deserves a larger garrison. Troops there might be able to advance to W2 to assist the defence and even counterattack against BB7 if the French are making for the Eastern flank to take U3. Although you are on the defensive stay alert for small counter attacks. A single squad could run from W2 into the BB7 trench for a sneaky win.

A few loose ends. I can’t see a use for the HIP entitlement of the PAVN in this scenario. Starting the DSHK in Brush makes sense, maybe the RCL belongs in brush hex D3L3? high rollers (or should that be low rollers) might want to mass their forces ready to reinforce the forward trenches on turn one. Stay alert for opportunities. A human wave late in the game could be a winner, earlier on a way to cross ground in a hurry.

Set up is important. During play concentrate on gauging the French players intentions and thwarting them. To win you must reduce the French force or cause him to be just one turn to late capturing the last Trench hex. Expect a well focused attack against just one trench network be slightly pleased if he splits his attack and goes for two. Above all enjoy the game, in real life when it gets dark you would be back in place to reclaim any temporary losses!

**DBP3 French set up and attack**

At the game start you control three Trench networks. If you can hold onto these and gain just one more you win. The dispositions of enemy forces do have an influence on how you can achieve this. The most accessible Networks are W2 and U3. A determined PAVN opponent could fill one or the other trenches with six squads and a horde of support weapons, and cover the easiest approach routes with fire to make them almost impossible to take. The trick would be to go for the other position! It is worth remembering the PAVN actually outnumber French troops, are well led and have a very fair selection of potent support weapons. The enemy does have weaknesses. set up limitations prevent massing of troops in the forwards defences. Weapons are all B11 or X11, troops quality and ELR are poor, range firepower and fire discipline are even worse.

Although a PAVN point defence could be encountered it can be overcome, not easily but by applying the principals of attack outlined below. An easier defence to overwhelm, is when your opponent abandons the forwards networks seeking to dominate the approaches to them with fire. This should fail, even if you just advance a few half squads in the advance phase, gain the trenches then hold on against any counter attack. More realistically, you will find you can enter the forward networks defended, some units positioned to reinforce them and others placed in reserve or ready to fire in support from a distance. Some enemy units can set up hidden, most of the PAVN will be in plain view. Before committing to a plan of attack have a good look at the PAVN set up. Look on this as analysis of earlier reconnaissance of the PAVN positions. Identify a weakness then focus your attack to exploit this.

You are looking for either an undefended or inadequately defended set of Trenches. I’ll give you a clue it will either be the network in U3 or the one in W2. Begin by planning movement from your starting positions to the target trench. Look for shellholes to provide cover, and brush to hinder enemy fire as you approach the Trench. U3 is only three hexes from DD8, even with mud in effect you can cover the distance in one or two turns, four if you restrict yourself to shellholes. If the forward networks defended, some units positioned to reinforce them and others placed in reserve or ready to fire in support from a distance. Some enemy units can set up hidden, most of the PAVN will be in plain view. Before committing to a plan of attack have a good look at the PAVN set up. Look on this as analysis of earlier reconnaissance of the PAVN positions. Identify a weakness then focus your attack to exploit this.

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Infantry in the open or in light cover, broken units or at worst any troops in trenches. With a ROF of three in a seven turn game expect at least one critical hit. With Mud in effect you cannot expect to do too much damage. At times it will cross your mind that the 2-4-7 half squads crews would have been better front helping the main infantry attack. In truth they probably would not make that much difference and should do more good providing long range fire support. If you are not convinced ditch the mortars and prove me wrong!

The MMGs are important units. Teamed up with the 9-2 Leader and a couple of squads they can project 12-16 IFT attacks into U3 or W2 and 8 IFT attacks out to 12 hexes, beyond that a 4 IFT attack at -2 or thereabouts is pretty good. For a Death Star stack to work you need to pick a spot that it is difficult for the PAVN to hit with return fire, particularly RCL shots, and DSHK fire. Splitting the MMGs spreads the risk, and generates credible fire attacks from two positions. Using the 8-1 to direct the second MMGs fire could work. A difficult choice as he might be needed for the main assault.

Going over the top on turn one might be a bit premature. I’d suggest organising your troops into platoons with the assaulting platoons in the Trench network closest to their target. Fire support elements are placed to direct fire onto known or suspected enemy positions with the tanks two or three hexes from the Bazookas. Open up with lots of prep fire. Go for any troops in the open trying to reach the forwards trenches then shoot up supporting MGs’ Mortars, weapon crews, and finally the occupants of the target trench. On turn one any lucky kills or casualty reductions are welcome. Break results particularly with ELR reduction are helpful. In subsequent turns gain acquisition, keep units under DM, seeking to wear down the enemy. Bring on the reinforcements through the DDB network either to consolidate your own positions and/or to free up troops to attack the enemy.

Before long the PAVN will start to wither. This will be dramatic if you kill or wound enemy Leaders less so if your fire is poorly directed, enemy forces are well handled or you are dug by less than average luck. By turn four you should be in a position to launch an attack. Even if you are not ready at least some troops need to go over the top this turn to try. Against a fragmented force normal movement or armoured assault is practical. Faced with a strong defence advancing in the assault phase might be as much as you can do. Even a single squad will provide a distraction for the enemy and start him worrying about the next player turn.

In subsequent turns push forwards a bit more if faced with horrendous firepower, drive hard if the enemy are caving in. It can help to test the water with a half squad, gauge the strength of enemy fire then build up the pressure when it is weak, slow down the attack if hit by accurate and sustained fire. This is very difficult to do, some people are at their best at probing a defence the rest of us make mistakes and miss opportunities. Less than perfect play will still earn you Victory.

Once in the Trench, a turn or two are needed to occupy the whole network, killing, capturing or clearing away any defenders. At this point or perhaps a turn before the PAVN player will aim to contest control of your target, fire will switch from your supporting positions to the newly acquired trenches. A massive attack will follow. A human wave is difficult to stop if you are mixed up in melee, a bit easier if you are well established. Bring the armour forwards. Aside from the physical effect of its fire, the presence of armour will discourage a reckless attack, slow down a more methodical one and complicate enemy rout possibilities.

As the PAVN attack this create an opportunity for your fire support units to move forwards. In some games the other forward network can be vulnerable, if you can charge with a superiority of two or three squads to one without being hit by covering fire this is very tempting. More often it is better to reinforce the main effort.

Watch out for creating an opportunity for the PAVN. For example a drive into U3 could leave D8X, AA6 or even AA6 at risk of attack. All a bit obvious and fairly easy to judge during play. The tanks can help at this stage if they are still around and retain mobility. Even if immobilised they should be able to throw firepower into the balance.

On turns six or seven Down and Dirty will be interesting. In some games a clear winner will have emerged. Otherwise a desperate positional scramble will result. One common criticism of ASL is the last turn rush for a key location in positional scenarios. Having played some Regimental Histories I think the last turn scramble captures some of the confusion of the closing stages of a firefight. Exciting when you win, totally unrealistic when you lose!

A few lose ends. When to use close combat requires careful judgement. Generally fire combat is better for you, but not in every case. Trust your judgement in borderline cases. Make use of captured weapons, particularly MGs’. Do not go for more Trenches than you need, overextending yourself is likely to result in defeat. Vitally important to accept a Trench network must be free of good order PAVN MMC to be controlled, a single Conscript half team runs in on turn seven will rob you of victory. If the rain stops use smoke, including WP. No rain makes crossing open ground more dangerous, increases the effectiveness of IFT attacks, and improves to hit numbers. Whilst you are moving, rain helps more than it hinders, once you have captured an enemy trench network it would be nice if the rain stopped to make a PAVN rush much harder.

In brief, identify the enemy’s weakest Trench network, occupy it, then hold it against any and all counterattacks. Turn seven will be a bloody fight, the Legionnaires’ should remember the Algerians’ should fight harder to prove Colonel Lalande wrong!

**DBP3 Conclusion**

This is really good fun. An exciting trench fight, effected by the presence of Armour but not entirely dominated by the Chaffees. Both sides have a variety of set up options and there is scope for careful planning and some repositioning of forces during play. Luck will play a part, if there is any justice miserible luck whilst moving a tank will be offset by PAVN support weapons breakdown and more frequent sniper attacks. I am hopeful of Critical Hit developing a Great War ASL module with similarly interesting scenarios.

I can’t see an easy way to win this one for either side, even against a poor set up this will always be a stiff fight for both sides.

**DBP 4 Escape from Huguet**

A trench fight with a difference. Mist covers the playing area reducing the effectiveness of most IFT attacks. The French need to leave one Trench network in a hurry, break through or over PAVN lines and gain the safety of another trench network.

Before play, it's a good idea to read through the Scenario special rules a couple of times and set up the trench networks and overlay on the Map.

A rather obvious statement, for which I apologise. It is critical both players appreciate the effect of mist on IFT attacks, mud on movement, and the principals of fire lanes. Of these fire lanes are the most important for the PAVN, and to a lesser extent the French. It is also worth having an understanding of the terrain, paying particular attention to the depression, brush, slopes, Hills and that the H1 and H2 Trench networks do not connect.

The SSr are generally very well explained. The H6 garrison gain a +1 DRM against IFT attacks by virtue of improvised flak jackets made from sandbags, which will help them a great deal. Other rules cover Mist, restrictions on the French troops starting on D1 who must remain in Trenches, French OBAs and a Morale check for the PAVN before play starts to simulate surprise.

The pregame morale check will not be to everyone’s liking. There is a slim chance of huge gaps appearing in the PAVN’s defences and an easy French win. In fact this is horrendously unlikely. The PAVN are elite troops with a basic morale of 8. To fail an unmodified morale check they need to roll 9 or more. This should happen on ten rolls out of thirty six say 27 or 28% of the time on average. A casualty reduction result will happen once in 36 rolls, similarly a HOB result has the same chance something in the region of 3%? A pin occurs five times in thirty six rolls say 13%. No ELR reduction results are possible. Most HOB results will be favourable for the PAVN, maybe battle hardening or a Berserk squad. Applying these Statistics to the fifteen PAVN squads you could expect three or four broken squads, with an even chance of a casualty reduced or HOB effected unit. There will be extremes ranging for no adverse effects for the PAVN all the way through to fifteen casualty reduced broken half squads. If the results are extreme either too good or bad I’d suggest restarting the game. I’m
sure this view could cause some arguments! Finally do not be put off by SSR 2 it helps add spice to the game and doesn’t unbalance play.

**DBP4 PAVN set up**

This is pretty scary, rather than a last stand the French have opted for a breakout, catching you by surprise. To you must either kill a lot of H6 troops or at least stop them moving into the French trenches on D1 or off the Southern edge of that board in strength.

At the game start the French have eleven elite fanatic squads, three fanatic Leaders, a fanatic Hero and a few MGs on D2 poised to break out of the trench lines. Specifically eighty-squads, two leaders, an MMG and LMG support them from the South with long range fire, and a safe haven if they break through your lines. Expect some irritation from a hostile 80mm Module which probably will not hurt you in a trench but is very nasty if it catches you in the open.

Your own troops are not a bad lot. Fifteen Elite squads, with a high ELR of four, three Leaders, one of which you can exchange for a commissar, two 60mm Mortars, a HMG, MMG and two LMG. All start in trenches. Due to the sudden French breakout, your troops must take a normal morale check before play starts. Your guys are pretty solid, most will pass the test, maybe three or four squads will break, one or two other pins. Be proud if your lads prove solid, do not think you have lost if six or even seven squads unexpectedly break.

Terrain and environmental conditions do work against you a bit. The ground is pretty open which helps as you gain clear fields of fire with few hindrances. Your own troops start in Trenches and can even remain there. The French must move the H6 garrison South to win. mud hinders their movement giving you more time to shoot at them. The worst effect of mud for you is a reduction in the effectiveness of your Mortars. Mists is a very mixed blessing. On the plus side it protects you from the French relief force whose fire will be almost ineffectual, barring some pretty low DR.

It is also useful if the H6 garrison plan to prep fire and shoot you up for a couple of turns before heading South. The major inconvenience is when the French move South you start racking up positive TEM for hindrances. In truth there is not much you can do about the environmental conditions other than try to tune them to your advantage. Keep in view the Airfield is a runway, allowing faster movement in exchange for a -1 TEM if the French use it to head South. Also worth noting the trenches in H1 and H2 do not connect. This is ruddy inconvenient, making lateral movement from East to West or vice versa more difficult.

So what’s the plan. One idea is killing seventeen of more VPs of units from the H6 Garrison for a win. Difficult to do, although just about possible if you get lucky. The best ways to kill French troops are to catch them in the open moving in front of your units and shoot them, fight them if they stand hand or prevent broken units routing. Going all out for this from turn one would argue for substantial firegroups and attempted double break results. It could work but I’m pessimistic given the plentiful cover, Mist and high morale of the H6 troops. It could work and the set up is similar if you go for a more defensive strategy as outlined below. Key differences would be going for double break results and massing more units in firegroups. The best arguments against this plan are the creation of one or more gaps in your defence by concentrating units in larger firegroups, the very high morale of French troops, and the TEM they receive for improvised flak jackets.

The overall aim of plan B is to accept killing more than half of the H6 garrison is both difficult and unlikely. Instead aiming to kill some, break other and always seeking to delay French progress. There is a real difference between these two plans, but do not feel committed to one from turn one through to turn six. A few lucky shots in the opening turns may prompt a change of tack, as could a string of pin results.

So far no dispositions have been suggested. To begin with your choices are limited to trench boxes, and shellholes that formerly were Trenches. Begin by considering exchanging a commissar for a leader. Not an easy choice as you swap an 8-1 Leader for a 10-0, or 10+1 Commissar. I’d always go for a Commissar, although would respect anyone’s choice of retaining the leader and an reasonably covering group, chosen of course would in itself lead to ultimate victory or defeat! Next split your troops into three big “platoons” of three four or five squads and a Leader with an optional weapons platoon of Mortars and MGs. In my opinion the support weapons belong with the platoons rather than grouped in a separate area.

A slight problem is the actual composition of platoons; is it best to form a SMG unit, or split the squads into mixed formations. A mixed organisation appeals, again there is plenty of room for variation.

Start one squad on astern flank, another in the west, and the third in the middle. Now this might come across as fairly lame advice. Accept my apologies as it is pretty bad. Alternatives could include a more central set up, or conversely cover both flanks and leave the centre relatively open. Anything is valid so long as it is an organised defence ready to keep ahead of French thrusts and not simply a loose skirmish line of units.

There are arguments for leaving the eastern flank fairly open as the French would need to make a time consuming detour to move there then run down the runway. By running along the trenches you should be able to catch them as they start running south and the mist clears?

Site your mortars in the Trenches from H2-N3 to take advantage of their range limitations. The MGs should be sited to provide interlocking field of fire. Fire lanes really are lethal especially in LV conditions such as Mist. There are many good spots, some very good. Make your own choices, but if stuck G2, K2 and B2 are my favourites. Add a Leader to prevent covering and to exploit any Leadership modifier. Teamuping Mr 9-1, a squad and the HMG has to be a good idea.

Set up is only the start of things. Before play starts you need to survive the SSR2 morale checks in reasonable strength. It may create a few gaps; look on these as particularly effective Prep Fire attacks or the result of a gentle bombardment. Plan any routes, and mentally reorganise your defence to cover any gaps broken units create.

French dispositions to an extent plans should be revealed on turn one. If the French make a dash try to shoot them up, survive advancing fire then win any melees or close combats that develop. In subsequent turns move troops in front of French probes. Use trenches for this, moving when you desperately need to cover a lot of ground, Advance Phase movement for firing units or formations teams. This is not too bad if some or all of the SS become more complicated when being shot at or shelled.

In subsequent turns as you lose units and French penetration becomes a more serious threat keep your chin up. Win some small firefights, keep rallying units and moving in front just to the sides of French probes. As time runs out French options diminish. At some stage in the game the distance between the southern edge and current positions will become too great, a turn later reaching the southern trenches becomes hard, then later still impossible. Calculating movement opportunities for the French is tedious but necessary. Particularly late in the game you need to concentrate you fire against units in danger of moving south off the board or into Trenches instead of killing or breaking squads that cannot possibly move off the board.

French probes are a bit vague. Primarily because the French can choose where to attack, also they can choose to attack in one big block or split across your front. You have little influence on this but must exploit any weakness or miscalculation in the French plans.

In planning your own set up it can help to look from the French side of the board. If you can see gaps so will the enemy. There is scope for considerable creativity and guile. Set traps, tempting an attack in an area of apparent weakness, lure the French onto the runway then mow them down with MG fire if you can predict the weather, kill, break or pin the French leaders to slow movement, there can be a number of sub plots to your basic defensive plan.

If you predict the direction and strength of French intentions you have a good chance of a win. Some French troops will escape but not all, some will be poised to escape on turn seven or eight, but that is too late. This is much worse. Be gracious in victory, show respect for an opponent who earns ten or eleven VPs which would earn a win if the balance conditions were in place. Remember to blame any defeat on the abysmal luck you suffered due to SSR2.

A nagging doubt persists about a quick run south to the French Trenches with some of the PAVN force on turn one. Although not too keen on the idea myself it might just work as a surprise tactic. Hopefully you could gain the trenches as the mist clears, wipe out the relief force, before catching the H6 garrison in the open under the sights of your own and any captured MGs. Not a strategy for the faint hearted but worth a try if you are convinced the mist will clear, French OBA will not arrive and your middle name is Lucky.

**THE TRENCHES**

**DBP4 French Escape or attack?**

In most games of ASL one player is the defender the other the attacker. Escape from Huguette 6 is a bit different. One way to view the scenario is as a French attack driving South to the relief force then either exiting or occupying the “safe” trenches. Another approach is to psyche yourself up a bit and view the scenario as an...
The relief force has a role to play in this. They could occupy a chain of trenches between the H6 garrison and safety. Fifteen Elite squads, three Leaders and seven support weapons dug in is a strong force. In a protracted firefight they would regularly lose against just the H6 defenders, particularly as the game is preceded by a compulsory morale check. Unfortunately you will not have time or the environmental conditions to shoot the PAVN to bits. Further you need to leave your trenches and move South opposed by PAVN fire and their physical presence. After PAVN set up look closely at their dispositions we will look at terrain later but you are looking for gaps in the Defence. On occasions very obvious gaps you can exploit will be present, particularly if the PAVN player has started with units closely grouped in killer swarms three squads high in the most obvious spot for your attack. More often you will encounter either a linear defence or a spread of platoon sized units across the front. Other possibilities are a strong centre with a lighter screen on the flanks or the complete opposite, strong flanks and a weak centre. Pay particular attention to the location of leaders, and SW. Of particular importance the location of the MMG and HMG’s. At this stage you should be looking for fundamental weaknesses in set up, or at least a favourable spot to attack.

Terrain helps your decision. With Mud in effect movement is slowed to three hexes per turn for a lone squad not using CX. The most direct route to the Southern edge will take four or even five turns. One idea is a wide movement down the Eastern Flank using the Airfield to rapidly move South. If PAVN set up is very weak on the Eastern flank this could be a goer. The presence of a MG backed up with three or four squads make this less attractive. The real danger is PAVN reinforcement. Think about sectors catching your troops in the open running down the Runway as the mist lifts. Keep this idea alive but consider other options. There are other spots that might offer greater chance of success. In the West there is a sizeable depression behind the front lines that offers the best protection in the game against hostile fire, yet it is out of line of sight. South of the depression is a stand of Brush and some shellholes all providing cover to get to the safety of the trenches. Again this is not ideal if a large proportion of unbroken PAVN are covering the sector. In the Centre a double line of trenches looks less promising than either flank maybe it’s a good spot if lightly defended.

Summing up an attack down either flank or the Centre is doomed if faced by an unbroken strong force. Equally an undefended or lightly defended sector offers some real hope of success. Making the best use of your own troops to break through enemy fire, yep it is out of line of sight. South of the depression is a stand of Brush and some shellholes all providing cover to get to the safety of the trenches. Again this is not ideal if a large proportion of unbroken PAVN are covering the sector. In the Centre a double line of trenches looks less promising than either flank maybe it’s a good spot if lightly defended.

If the PAVN can fire furiously from the safety of the Trench network it cannot jump out to close with the enemy. The H6 Garrison really must make a move early in the game. Early on you should identify the sector you will attack or escape through, revise your plans slightly if the PAVN suffer terribly from SSR 2 morale checks, before climbing out of the trenches on turn one. Under cover of Mist, with sand bag flank jackets (+1 TEM) and a basic morale of nine due to basic morale and fanatic status it is very tempting to charge. Attempt this with some units, go for assault movement with others. Walking into a firelane is bad news try to avoid this by skirting around them or keeping the small hill on D1 between you and Charlie. If the Mist starts to clear on turn one staying in the trenches just isn’t an option. There is a strong case for some of the H6 troops using prep fire to soften up the Defenders, with differing opinions as to the size of this force. About 25-30% seems right making use of the MMG’s and wounded Hero. Make sure you fire in the advancing fore phase, before advancing going for Close combat if the opportunity arises. I think the spearhead of your attack should be the 6-4-8 squads, they have better raw firepower in the advancing fire phase, and are awesome in close combat.

On turn two. You should be feeling more confident whilst the PAVN begins to sweat. If the Mist starts to clear on turn one staying in the trenches just isn’t an option. There is a strong case for some of the H6 troops using prep fire to soften up the Defenders, with differing opinions as to the size of this force. About 25-30% seems right making use of the MMG’s and wounded Hero. Make sure you fire in the advancing fore phase, before advancing going for Close combat if the opportunity arises. I think the spearhead of your attack should be the 6-4-8 squads, they have better raw firepower in the advancing fire phase, and are awesome in close combat.

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defend the Hill. Dense Jungle, double crests, French assault engineers and the appearance of the T'ai Irregulars make this an interesting Fight.

For French players there is the added attraction of Lt. Colonel Pierre Charles Langlais, a 45 year old Breton who broke his leg on landing. Scaring away bloke from the few photos of him I’ve seen.

Looking long and hard at the map will help both players. Less than half of board 39 is in play, rows R to EE. The entire Central hill is covered by trees, as open ground, brush, and Orchard hexes. As the Hill becomes Dense Jungle the T’ai Irregulars are present which may be significant when planning PAVN set up. Key features include the Path from R8 to U4, and the outpost at V7 and W8. It is also worth noting only 20 level four hexes are available for PAVN set up, complicated by Dense Jungle limiting penalty free stacking to two squads or equivalents per hex. As Dense Jungle is inherent terrain lines of sight are very restricted, most fire combat will take place at one hex range.

The French player benefits more from very close scrutiny of the map. Most of the PAVN moves will be down hill costing less MF than ascent. Uplift movement requires 4 MF into Dense Jungle 4 MF, across a double crest this rises to 8MF! SSR 5 helps advances up a single slope but does not help when double crests are crossed. Key spots for French study are the Path connecting R8 and S7 for a quick route onto the Hill, Hexes U7 and W7 if you fancy a fight to control the spur from V7 to W8, and the hexes around BB5 the Northern end of the Central hill level four area if manoeuvre against a flank appeals.

If you have two copies of board 39 use one to help calculate movement costs. The artwork on the Hill is good, unfortunately with a liberal one to help calculate movement costs. The artwork makes a deal of sense.

This is a very difficult scenario with a liberal covering of counters it is difficult to check elevation without moving stacks.

**DBP5 French set up**

This is a very difficult scenario with considerable scope for making snap decisions during play. A bit of pre planning and assessment of the PAVN’s strengths and weaknesses does help but the mission objective is to gain more VP’s than you lose. Points are awarded for MVP, and control of Sangars. You effectively lose VP’s when the enemy gains control of foxholes. The fortification control is interesting. Sangars are worth more than foxholes, giving you a very slight edge before the game even starts. Look very closely at the set up conditions, Sangars are limited to level one or two hexes, which cannot be adjacent. This spreads them out nicely. Foxholes are also limited to non adjacent placement on level one or two hexes but you can bunch them together more easily due to the geography of your set up area. This makes defence slightly easier. Trust me this is easier to see if you start placing counters on board. The Viets end up with a spaced line from say R1 to AA3, compared with your choice of either a cluster around CC8 or a line of your own.

Sangars are available for PAVN set up, complicated by Dense Jungle limiting penalty free stacking to two squads or equivalents per hex. As Dense Jungle is inherent terrain lines of sight are very restricted, most fire combat will take place at one hex range.

**DBP5 PAVN set up**

To win you need to amass more VP for fortification control and MVP than the French do. There is a chance you might equal the French total in which case you have earned a legitimate draw, not something you see very often in ASL.

Enemy forces range from T’ai Irregulars through to seasoned French Paratroopers, Legionaires with FT and DC, and some Moroccans who are decent enough troops. In terms of raw firepower the French have a big advantage, the T’ai are conscripts so cower more than regular troops, but even they have firepower equal to the majority of your own forces. Enemy morale is better than your own, as is support weapon allocation when you take account of breakdown numbers is slightly superior. Engaging in a protracted firefight probably isn’t the way to win, unless you are very lucky.

**The Trenches**
If fire combat might not lead to a win, the alternative is close combat. The good news is you are Stealthy that gives you a better chance of an ambush. In Dense Jungle normal French troops will struggle to ambush you due to the stealthy modifier and a +1 for advancing in Jungle. On the offensive this turns the Jungle DRM against each other out. An exception to this rule is the T’ai who are also Stealthy. Unfortunately whilst you have some advantages in close combat there are some problems. Top of the list is basic strength. Your troops are 5-3-7’s and 3-4-7’s taking on 6-4-8, 4-5-7, 2-4-8 and 3-3-6’s. For the best results you need to seek to fight the enemy on equal or superior terms, say SMG squad Vs Moroccans or T’ai, or two Rifle squads against a lone Moroccan or Legioneinnaire Half squad. Against the Paras, well, it’s best to avoid them unless they are pinned, counter exhausted, you have the advantage of concealment or most of these circumstances apply.

Summing up both fire combat and close combat are not ideal. To win you need to use a very carefully organised combination of both. Some help comes from the French set up. Ideally a dispersed set up across the entire board would allow you to defend in some sectors by concealment and skulking, whilst concentrating for a win in other sectors. More likely the French will have massed in one or two areas for an attack. By carefully studying board 39 we should be able to find spots were the PAVN can fight at a slight advantage. A good example of what we need is hex U7. If occupied you could start the attack with a fire attack from U6 followed by further fire attacks or close combat initiated by units in T6 and V6. It may even be possible to assault move safely to V6 to capture retreating units. If this attack works skulking in other areas could consolidate a slight gain. If the French are not present in this hex look at W7, Z7, even BB7 for a similar opportunity.

French set up can frustrate your plans, your opening volley might fall on stack of dummies, or your hit on a building and building combat requires some very swift reaction to disappointment and a plan B. Keep in view the French too will have a plan. This could be a drive onto level four hexes or a movement round the Northern flank. The flank attack can be slowed by concealed units, or opposed in strength. It really isn’t possible to stop a determined attack gaining at least a foothold on the hill summit. One idea makes use of the 12.7mm MG, and its ROF of two to oppose a French assault. Probably not a good idea to put this in the front line as its loss could give the French some easy points. If you see the HMG as not very effective placing it way back in R3 ensures only a deep penetration by the French will get anywhere near it. An added advantage your opponent will be wondering where the HMG is, perhaps moving cautiously until he finds it.

If a gap or weakness appears in the French line a flanking attack could lead to captured units or even foxholes. Certainly worth a try if you are opposed by only a small stack of concealed units. Even more doable if you have found most of the dummy counters or stacks and can identify roughly what opposes you. If all this seems like hard work and you like a gamble a charge on turn one has potential.

This could be preceded by prefire, an attack in the advance phase by concealed units or a mix of both. A nice simple attack if you are in a hurry. Against a dispursed force there is a very real chance of success. It will not work too well if the enemy opens up with effective fire in the defensive fire phase or is strong in the areas you attack.

In addition to setting up the HMG emplaced and/or hidden you can use HIP for 10% of your force FRU. Up to three squads is a reasonable force. These units can be used to screen defensive areas, to hide reserve units behind your front line or set cunning traps. Most traps require French troops to be moving or on the summit, but if this becomes unlikely there is no harm in exchanging hidden status for concealment and moving forwards.

During set up it is important to plan rout paths that take account of Dense Jungle stacking limitations. By exchanging one or two leaders for commissars you can plan to return broken units to the battle as soon as possible. I’d be inclined to take two commissars, other players might opt for one or none. Really this is down to personal choice and should reflect your own style of play rather than my own preferences.

At some stage expect reinforcements. These can range from two to three squads with or without a leader, not a bad little force that may scare the French away from the Southern edge of the board. If this catches a partially completed enemy attack in the flank tremendous. Almost as good drawing enemy troops to oppose it, or gaining a fox hole or two. Chances are you will get something early in the game. If you are unlucky you might roll high till turns five or six. It doesn’t mean you have lost the game, particularly if fear of the threat has done some work. I might be missing something, how does the dismantled MMG assemble in time to make a difference? In brief roll low.

In some respects the terrain should feature in your plans. Being uphill in dense Jungle makes you hard to shift. Dense Jungle negates your mobility by inability to see multi location fire groups and gives some discouragement to French close combat attacks.

This is a tough fight, which is difficult to win. Due to your up hill position and first move, plus the advantage of setting up second you do enjoy more initiative than the French. A win would be nice but settle for a close game and a lot of fun if you are dogged by unfriendly dice or exceedingly good French play.

DBP5 Conclusion

Another scary scenario. Both sides have strong forces, the French have the edge in firepower, the PAVN in close combat if you allow for stealth and the high ground. Not for the faint hearted, this really will provide a test of players knowledge of the rules, ability to plan and to make snap decisions. A variety of stratagems can be adopted by both sides ranging from blood curdling charges, intense fire fights, through to manoeuvre to gain the foxholes or Sangars.

Only slight disappointment is the terrain, or rather the limited lines of sight, which prevents a human wave attack by the PAVN.

DBP6 Route 41

This is a nicely designed scenario, a classic ambush which starts well for the PAVN then gets harder as the French recover. Both sides get some pretty serious OBA, plenty of support weapons and enough troops. One slight snag is terrain, Palm trees and buildings are treated as open ground, walls and hedges are ignored. Most players will cope with this easily, a few will be discouraged. It is practical to cover buildings on board 16 with open ground overlays, you only need three, and if needs be place overlays over some of the other buildings as well. I find it helps to think of the non existent walls and hedges as being very low, too low to influence play.

Before play starts, before you even open the bidding for a favoured side have a long hard look at the map paying particular attention to lines of sight, ranges and set up areas. Also refresh your knowledge of the rules for OBA, particularly Pres registered hexes.

DBP6 French set up

For the first couple of turns you face some very rough treatment, to win you must preserve some of your forces to the game end. The only criteria for Victory is your own casualty cap. Consequently enemy casualties are not important beyond the fact the more you kill the less PAVN there are to attack you. Prisoners are also rather important, a captured Para trooper squad earns the PAVN four VPs’, a captured 10-2 Leader a whopping six. So the mission is to avoid being killed or captured in great numbers. Fortunately the casualty cap is very high, twenty eight points or thirty two if you have boggled the balance. Your entire at start order of Battle totals twenty eight CVP. Whilst you can expect a kicking on turns one and two, if even a small part of your initial force survives you can win.

Your initial forces are impressive. Ten squads, four Leaders and a sprinkling of support weapons. The paratroopers are superb, expect their broken side morale of nine to keep them in the game longer than you might at first expect. French Artillery has long been impressive, perhaps going back to the days of Joan of Arc. If you can call down 105mm OBA on troops in woods even harassing fire will cause some casualties or at least provide a hindrance to IFT attacks. Giving the radio to Mr 10-2 is an idea, another Leader might do an equally good job though? It is possible PAVN attacks will prevent any fire missions ever being resolved. The mortar just needs assembling then it can start to hit any troops in Jungle with lots of small attacks helped by airbursts. Pay
careful attention to SSR 3, it keeps your troops in the game and will greatly frustrate enemy units rushing out to take prisoners.

Set up is limited to the twelve contiguous road hexes between 16N4 and 16Y4. Setting up a squad or half squad per hex is a very reasonable idea. Stack two or three of these units in Jungle or even on level one Hill hexes as these still provide a +1 Tem against your fire. On both boards some units may be positioned to oppose or delay the arrival of reinforcements. On board sixteen most ground level locations have their LOS hindered by Kunai. At Level 1 hexes S8, R8 and Q9 are tempting. for the Mortars and MMGs. A ground level H10 is a fair spot for the Artillery observer. On board seventeen a proportion of enemy units might plan to charge through the Kunai to capture some of your troops. Regardless of set up, you can expect lots and lots of enemy attacks in the opening turns. I’d be surprised if hordes of enemy units remained concealed or hidden and frankly would rather they did!

When your reinforcements arrive some of your at start forces will be already dead, other will be rallying a few will be fighting and trying to move away from OBA or enemy infantry concentrations. Keep in view the reinforcements will also count as CVP. Plan your entry carefully. Run if you have a clear way onto the board be a bit crafty if you are walking into a Mortar and MMG ambush. Remember you have smoke and can enter concealed if you assault move or enter in the advance phase. Probably you will need to use the arriving troops to cover the withdrawal of broken squads. If you can help prisoners escape it will frustrate your opponent and keeps you in the game.

Keep a close eye on the clock. Turns one through to three will pass very quickly and be fairly uneventful. The remaining turns should be less hectic but may feature relentless mortar attacks and the unwelcome attentions of enemy Infantry. After fighting a way out of the initial trap you must survive to the game end, in quite a long scenario.

In summary, there are hordes of PAVN Infantry, really nasty OBA, and difficult starting position to contend with. I think it is worth playing the French for precisely those reasons.

DBP6 PAVN Set up and Ambush

Earning twenty eight or more CVP by the game end earns you a win. If you wipe the floor with the French and destroy 28 CVP earlier in the game it is well worth claiming a Victory? The casualty cap is rather high. Earning all the points through unit elimination will require the destruction of the entire 1st Company. If French balance is in effect you will also need to kill another four CVP.

Killing the entire force will not be easy. Some of your fire attacks will be KIA or K results which will generally earn one or more VP’s. More often an attack will result in a morale check which eight morale Parachutists are apt to pass. A double break will casually reduce a squad, or eliminate a half squad, but this is hard to achieve against troops with a broken side morale of nine. SSR3 doesn’t help as broken French units can low crawl away from adjacent units towards other PAVN troops.

To increase your chance of a win tow basic tactics will help. The first is to take prisoners whenever possible. This earns double CVP at the game end. Prisoners can be escorted off a friendly board edge, in this scenario I would guess any edge other than the South is friendly but discuss this one with the French before play starts. If you declare no quarter early in the game, Route 41 becomes a lot harder.

The second key rule is encirclement. If you subject the enemy to consecutive attacks within inherent range from opposite directions an encirclement counter is placed on all units in the location. Several benefits accrue, French return fire is less effective, effective morale drops and, if you managing SSR3 correctly, can stack up encircled units to surrender. Another benefit is the doubling of movement cost for units exiting an encircled location. Section A7,7 of the ASLIRB is worth studying before play! In practice aiming for encirclement is easy if you organise your fire attacks. Begin by firing from one board then fire another unit from the other. If your first fire attack results in a kill a follow up attack might not be needed, anything less and a subsequent encircling attack moves you one small step closer to Victory.

The Paras are a tough bunch, all are Elite, with an ELR of five and adequate support weapons. At start you outnumber the French by two to one, this soon drops as another eight Para squads enter the fray as early as turn two. T win you must carefully pick your targets. I believe the most dangerous French man is the chap with the radio. Given time he will call down 105mm OBA using a draw pile of nine black and two red cards. You can hope for red cards, and failed contact rolls, but there is a case for trying to kill or break the guy. Most opponents will use Mt 7-0 as the observer, some will use 8-1, a very few Mr 10-2. Next on the most dangerous list is the 10-2, assuming he is not operating the radio. After him all other Leaders are dangerous, followed in descending order by any squads with MG’s, the mortar and crew, squads, and finally half squads.

In the first couple of turns you need only worry about the !1 st Company. Later French reinforcements will be an issue of which more later.

Your own troops should be pretty pleased with themselves, they outnumber the French by two to one, have the advantage of a better position and shooting first. You start with a fair selection of support weapons, reasonable Leadership and the very important 81mm Mortar module. The most important man on board two is the Artillery observer. Decide where he will start the game and how he will be used in the first couple of turns. Pick a spot for the Pre registered hex. To do this you need to make some assumptions about French set up. Although restricted to the road, French troops can stack up to three squads in a single hex with all the Leaders. It would be nice to preregister a hex occupied by three squads with another six in the adjacent locations, rarely will you be that lucky. Options include a central spot like T4 or further South say Y4. Any spot is a gamble, be pleased if it was a good choice don’t despair of it wasn’t too clever. Make sure the observer has a line of sight to the chosen spot. SSR2 allows for HIP. Due to line of sight obstacles there are not too many clever spots for the observer. Jungle hexes R8, S9, T9, X8 and Y9 are all worth a look. If you can accept setting up a three to one open and four to one half to hidden status have a look at level three hex O6. This has the best line of sight available for in terms of vulnerability to enemy fire. Trust your own judgement in choosing a spot that fits in with your plans. If the enemy avoids your pre registered hex and you are also unlucky remember you can relocate to a better spot. On turn one you would
like to see French troops standing around your preregistered hex. This allows for placement of a spotting round and immediately converting to a FFE 1. If accurate you start hitting the enemy with 16 IFT attacks at zero TEM. Given French set up along the road as many as three hexes could be effective. If you have an option, attack firstly the four IFT column, over a bigger area. What to use is a judgement call. If you are inaccurate and very unlucky instead of flattening French troops you will be hammering open ground or Kunai. This should not happen too often, correct the Artillery in subsequent turns.

The rest of your troops on both boards two and sixteen have a number of options. The extreme choices are to aim to destroy the French through long range firepower or seek to overwhelm or capture them in close combat. Massing your troops for a human wave on turn one is pretty silly. So too is over reliance on raw fire power to hit the French. Admittedly even the most bizarre stratagems can work in ASL given the right opponent or a string of lucky die rolls but usually there are alternatives.

Personally I would use some troops as a fire base and others as an assault force. Mortars or MMG crews are the teeth of the firebase. Against direct fire light Jungle provides equal protection compared to Infantry height advantage. Against OBAs or Mortars height advantage has an edge, trading concealment for protection. On board two any of the locations given for the observer are valid. On level one hill look at O9, P8 and Q7, a bit restricted but not too shabby. Fortunately you can decide which spots to use after the French have set up! The assault force can start in the same hexes. Generally locations closer to board sixteen are good. Open ground is not out of the question, remember you move first and shoot first and the Frenchies are also in the open.

On board 39 line of sight is hindered at ground level by a huge swath of Kunai that gives the French the same protection as wooden or stone buildings (+2 or +3). At level one there are some reasonable spots for a MMG or Mortar in hexes S8, R8, and Q9 are fair. At ground level light Jungle in I10 is an interesting spot for a MMG team. A firelane here would greatly complicate movement across the Y hexrow on board sixteen. This is an important row for troops moving North or South. There might be a case for using an MMG or mortar on board 39 to slow the movement of French reinforcements. Tricky choice as the more units used for this the less are available for hitting the onboard troops in the first two turns.

With Mr. 70 tied up with the radio, you are a wee bit short on Leadership. Exchanging one or two Leaders for commissars can improve your ability to rally troops. On board thirty nine you can hold your force together reasonably well and even attack in more than one place. On board two effectively there is only one leader available and you must choose whether to have him stay in a fire support role or move forwards with any assault troops.

After a fusillade of shots on turn one assess the damage you have caused in the prep fire phase. With accurate artillery, and some better than average rolls the French might be weakened. If most units are broken a charge to exploit this can work. If you have done less damage a more cautious approach can be better. In all cases try to keep the French from the Southern edge.

I’ve not said too much about concealment. In addition to the observer, up to two squads can start hidden in concealment terrain. There might be a case for using this allocation to hide some troops to oppose the rapid movement of Reinforcements. Other ideas include cunning traps for the opponent, erm I’m not too sure what these might be though. Possibly the Jungle in 39110 is suitable for both purposes, it can oppose movement on the Y hexrow and might spring a surprise on a routing unit. If you do not need to conceal units make a few dummy stacks to draw sniper fire, particularly around the observers location. Try not to conceal just for the sake of it if you plan to move and/or shoot on turn one. Similarly conceal units that are out of the French line of sight.

A few loose ends. Go for close combat when you can. Nearly always take prisoners. Half expect the French to use inherent smoke, pass morale checks you would not believe and give effective return fire when you least expect or appreciate it! If your MGs’ or Mortars break join the fight in the middle your own CVPs are unimportant. In similar vein you can lose your entire force, some of it can be captured and still win if you hit the French CVP Cap. I’d be disappointed to come close to victory, and still lose with an intact PAVN OB, its not unlucky I’d have done something wrong!

Finally keep an eye on the clock. Have fun for the first two turns, start to feel the pressure as the relief force arrives and chips away for the rest of the game. The first turn should always be fun, afterwards the game gets harder but remains enjoyable.

DBP7 Conclusion

I do like Route 41 as an ambush scenario. It is hard for the PAVN to win unless they move forwards and attack at short range or in close combat. The French are very resistant to all forms of attack and have to be as they start in difficult circumstances.

For the French in particular there is scope for very rapid thought and action in response to the effectiveness of PAVN attacks. This also applies to an extent for the PAVN who must exploit any good fortune to build a win.

Possibly this is more fun for the PAVN than the French, although I think it is fairly balanced and might even favour the Paras.

DBP7 Castor’s Opening Act

Rather like the look of this one. The French must push through the PAVN lines to catch the HQ of the 148th Regiment to the South before it can escape. Before play chapter H is worth reading, also gen up on Recoilless Rifles. A long hard look at the map in conjunction with the SSR will pay dividends. Grain and orchard are open ground, the only terrain in play is limited to Huts, Brush and hex upon hex of open ground.

DBP7 PAVN Set up options

One way of looking at the Victory conditions is territorial simply to limit the exit of French forces to eight EVP. Alternatively by reducing the French force to seven VP or less you will win as long as your opponent doesn’t benefit from leader creation or a Battle hardened Leader. Limiting French exit is more realistic than a win by massive attrition but keep the idea in view in case you quickly gain the upper hand in a firefight and can capitalise on it by using your reserves.

Set up options take account of these two ways to win. If your aim is to reduce the French by firepower you need to prepare a killing ground, draw him into it then kill as many troops as you can. If you favour this approach setting up on or close to row F to hit the French on turn one offers the best chance of success. I’d agree a set up further South could do the same to a rash French advance but it would give your opponent more opportunities to rout, and present him with the opportunity to spoil your fun with smoke and speculative fire. On turn one the French can move on in the advance phase but more often will present targets moving in the open covered by patchy smoke.

Several problems complicate this strategy. Top of the list must be raw firepower, closely followed by range, troop quality, leadership and terrain. Your own forces have a raw firepower including MGs’ of 60, backed up by a mortar and 57mm Recoilless Rifle. Unfortunately four squads are 5-3-7s and eight are 3-4-7s which can reduce your firepower by a whole 12 FP factors, down to 48 Factors. Bring range into the equation and firepower drops again. Take into account hindrances from Brush and any French smoke and humanitarian campaigns. A long hard look at the map in conjunction with the SSR reading, also gen up on Recoilless Rifles. A long hard look at the map in conjunction with the SSR will pay dividends. Grain and orchard are open ground, the only terrain in play is limited to Huts, Brush and hex upon hex of open ground.

Potential you could kill or break a lot of French in the opening turn and do more damage in your prep fire phase. By all means try an aggressive opening if you feel lucky, but consider other options before you do this! Plan B is an extremely defensive set up, far to the South, concealed in Brush. The plan is to complicate French entry. Your own forces are not drawn into a firefight early in the game, whilst your Mortars and MMG/HMG can deter rapid French
movement. With proportionately much smaller forces this would be an excellent plan. One difficulty you hit is a limited range of locations to hide, with the distinctive possibility of French troops taking the huts and commencing a brief firefight to shoot a whole in your defences. Routting present movement and your firepower which will only partially be offset by exchanging a leader for a Commissar. A slight variation on this defence uses hidden units and perhaps a few concealed units mixed with dummies to discourage rapid French movement by starting in the Village. Against very cautious opposition this highly defensive set up will work very well, certainly worth considering if your opponent lacks dash. Against stronger opponents there is an alternative.

The basic idea is to form the defence around two small defensive Islands with some associated outposts or sub units. Another Leader would be very helpful allowing a third Island to be formed. Begin by forming two platoons of three squads, a Leader, HMG or LMG, and position them in the Village. Decide on rifle or SMG squad once you have loosely fixed the units location to take account of the range you will be firing at. Tend towards having two squads forwards, one back with the leader and MG so you can try to rally broken troops, optionally you can add an LMG or another squad to these platoons. The remaining five or six squads need to be used creatively. Lots of ideas are practical. A mortar and crew in the back field ready to offer fire support and create a tactical problem for the French. A hidden unit concealed in a startling location. Intelligent use of concealment counters to create dummies or beef up small stacks. Even a couple of squads up front seeking to scare the French on turn one. The Gun can be tricky. Firing it sends a jet of flame out of the back. Alone a brush is an obvious but effective spot for the gun. There are plenty to choose from P1, N0, even N4 look good, many others are decent enough.

Leaders are against present movement French movement with firepower. Long range MG fire, RCL and Mortar shots are worth taking, the risk from return fire is minimal. Although this exposes your units to fire this is an acceptable risk to slow French movement. In subsequent turns give ground slowly. Be a bit stubborn if you are presented with a chance to prevent the rout of some French units, being careful not to be drawn into firefights you will lose. Think carefully before you reveal any hidden units be very please if you inflict search casualties.

Keep skulking or moving units back gradually always seeking further delay. With a reasonable set up, fair run of the dice and some quick thinking during play you should pull off a win or come very close to it. If you can keep track of French units exited this will help anticipate your advance and inflict casualties or thirdly a Commissar. A slight variation on this defence are platoons and assign them an approximate route over the board you reduce the burden of planning the activities of all your units every turn. Most important the location and activities of Leaders. With very low TEM any Leader with a Negative modifier in a small firegroup can destroy enemy units. For example a six IFT attack directed by Le 9-2 causes a kill on a four or less which is six times more effective than an unmodified attack. A casualty reduced result is also more likely occurring on a five or six. Anything less than a nine causes a morale weakness or work towards your ultimate plan for Victory.

Despite all the bad news there is a very good chance of a French win. Consider the basic advantages of庙 the Infantry involved, PAVN SMG squads are worth 12 points. Rifle squads 10 for a PAVN total of 128 points, against twelve Para Squads at 16 points each for 192 points. A good chance of a French win. They will seek to inflict casualties or delay, conduct a stubborn defence hit you with a few surprises during play. A deep defence concentrates most of the enemy troops near the exit area. Some forces will oppose your entry and subsequent movement with a larger portion retaining concealment of hidden status until you are nearly ready to exit. If you are excessively cautious or deceived by dummy counters or small screening forces a win become very difficult. Ideally you need to anticipate this strategy and move further and faster across the board. Once you have determined the PAVN strategy occupy the Village, set up your Mortars and MG and shoot a hole to exit through. Routing enemy units will struggle, pick up a few prisoners on your way out. Your chances of a win against this defence are much better than average, don’t blow it by being excessively cautious.

A layered defence that seeks to contest your movement and/or inflict casualties is more than a threat. Rapid movement will be encouraged by fire, a cautious build up by a slow PAVN withdrawal. Although difficult to beat there are tactics that will work. Manoeuvre against any weakness in the defence, use WP from the Mortars to reveal units or even break them follow this up with fire attacks or aggressive moves if you are screened by smoke. Sounds easy, well it can be sometimes, other times it will all go horribly wrong, running out of WP, a series of painful SAN attacks and tenacious defenders being encouraged to rejoin the fight by a commissar. A creative attack taking advantage of small opportunities as they arise requires concentration. If you organise your forces as platoons and assign them an approximate route over the board you reduce the burden of planning the activities of all your units every turn. Most important the location and activities of Leaders. With very low TEM any Leader with a Negative modifier in a small firegroup can destroy enemy units. For example a six IFT attack directed by Le 9-2 causes a kill on a four or less which is six times more effective than an unmodified attack. A casualty reduced result is also more likely occurring on a five or six. Anything less than a nine causes a morale check or better. All very obvious but worth emphasising in an unusual scenario were the strongest defensive terrain is a flimsy hut! Add an LMG to the party and you become slightly more lethal. Provided you work hard to win fireworks and keep moving forwards you can reasonably expect both a tough fight and a rather satisfying win.

A less effective defence, a “Stonewall”, might be more commonly seen particularly if your opponents are aggressive. The PAVN might go for a quick win, opposing your entry onto the board with his entire strength. In a just world this should work, unfortunately in stacks running through open ground you will be subject to numerous fire attacks from a defensive set up on the Northern edges of the Village. Hidden and concealed units make it hard to realise this is the enemy’s plan, look hard for smoke clues. There isn’t a real way of knowing where the hidden stacks are, they could be tucked

**DBP7 French entry and Attack**

This is a tricky scenario to win, play starts moving onto the board in the face of a well armed enemy resolved to prevent you exiting eight or more EVP. At game start you have a total of thirty one EVP you can just about afford to lose eight squads and three Leaders and still win as long as the rest of your troops exit on time.

**Enemy forces are numerous, with plenty of support weapons including a 57mm Recoilless Gun and a Mortar. Troop quality is lower, with an ELR of three there is a chance of second line squads or conscripts appearing. PAVN Leadership is a bit sparse a 9-1 Leader and an 8-0 or more likely a commissar. enemy firepower is limited, a bit more scary a SAN of five, a lot more scary two squads and their accompanying leaders or support weapons can set up hidden. Due to some hidden status the approximate positions of some enemy units can only be guessed at.**

**Your own troops are simply outstanding, three Leaders, one of them a 9-2, twelve Paratrooper squads, and a sprinkling of support weapons, including a pair of mortars complete with WP 8 (4 for elite troops).**

**Three factors make this scenario a challenge, enemy troops, terrain and time. In my opinion the most hostile is the terrain. There is very little cover available for your troops and just about enough to hide the enemy. The highest TEM in play is for huts! Scattered brush prove some cover and hindrances to fire. Along the North edge where you enter two brush hexes afford cover, a problem if enemy troops oppose your entry. Time is also a consideration. Without much dead ground or cover you will be tempted to limit movement. To cover sixteen hexes in six turns will require more than assault moves and advance phase movement. Enemy forces will be totally opposed to the idea of a French win. They will seek to inflict casualties or delay, conduct a stubborn defence hit you with a few surprises during play.**

**Against stronger opponents there is an alternative.**

Routing present movement French movement with firepower. Long range MG fire, RCL and Mortar shots are worth taking, the risk from return fire is minimal. Although this exposes your units to fire this is an acceptable risk to slow French movement. In subsequent turns give ground slowly. Be a bit stubborn if you are presented with a chance to prevent the rout of some French units, being careful not to be drawn into firefights you will lose. Think carefully before you reveal any hidden units be very please if you inflict search casualties.

Keep skulking or moving units back gradually always seeking further delay. With a reasonable set up, fair run of the dice and some quick thinking during play you should pull off a win or come very close to it. If you can keep track of French units exited this will help anticipate your advance and inflict casualties or thirdly a Commissar. A slight variation on this defence are platoons and assign them an approximate route over the board you reduce the burden of planning the activities of all your units every turn. Most important the location and activities of Leaders. With very low TEM any Leader with a Negative modifier in a small firegroup can destroy enemy units. For example a six IFT attack directed by Le 9-2 causes a kill on a four or less which is six times more effective than an unmodified attack. A casualty reduced result is also more likely occurring on a five or six. Anything less than a nine causes a morale weakness or work towards your ultimate plan for Victory.

Despite all the bad news there is a very good chance of a French win. Consider the basic advantages of庙 the Infantry involved, PAVN SMG squads are worth 12 points. Rifle squads 10 for a PAVN total of 128 points, against twelve Para Squads at 16 points each for 192 points. A reasonable argument for playing the French, even allowing for Support weapons, concealment and hidden status.

One of the fundamental principals of war is to gain the initiative. When attacking a defensive position that should not mean a detailed plan of attack that does not vary in relation to enemy dispositions. As the opening act you will have to make a judgement of how the PAVN is prepared, then make plans to exploit any weaknesses or work towards your ultimate plan for Victory. The enemy has three basic strategies. A deep defence aiming to allow you some freedom of movement and save your troops which might break, pin or divert an enemy unit. Fight hard the fate of your friends in head quarters is at stake.
away in a distant corner, right in the middle of a defensive position or even under a dummy stack or in the same hex as a real unit. Impossible to tell on turn one. The concealment counters can be used to create dummies, pad out other stacks. At most three enemy “units” can be created, use these small pieces of information to try and gauge the strength of the enemy in the Village. With practice you can make fair guesses of the location of Leaders, particular types of support weapon and even the recoilless rifle. Sometimes you will be wrong or perhaps badly wrong but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try! Be careful not to use wishful thinking, placing enemy units were you want them then being indignant when your opponent hasn’t fallen in with your ideas. Avoid spending too long doing this, add to your estimates of enemy dispositions as units are revealed.

Having guessed enemy plans and some dispositions organise platoons ready to attack. The only terrain on the board edge is brush in A4 and A7. If you enter units on these two hexes using assault movement you may get a chance to place smoke and retain concealment. If you draw fire it might spare other troops moving in the open, unless your opponent retains ROF. If smoke is place the next unit can enter benefiting from the cover it provides placing smoke to cover the next unit to enter. A lot can go wrong, ROF, low rolls, failed morale checks and elimination for failure to rout. Expect some losses. Up to four squads is possible but still leaves you a respectable force. Limit your movement keeping out of normal range when possible. In the advancing fire phase shoot back, settle for breaking units is you can, enjoy any more serious casualties. Priority targets should be Leaders, support weapons crews and stacks of units in that order. Somewhere on the list fire attacks to give units a valid rout path. There is a plan B, entry in the advance phase. Definitely a sensible option for your Leaders. Has some merit in so far as you are spared enemy defensive fire, some units will gain concealment and your return fire in the first volley of a firefight will be stronger. Definitely an option. Less aggressive but still viable, it might unnerv or annoy an aggressive opponent....which is not a problem! Once you are on the board, win the subsequent firefight then dash off the board. It is very tempting to stay and kill Vietnamese if you are winning, do not lose sight of the Victory conditions. In all cases. Do not be scared of close combat. Trading squad for squad makes sense if you have numerical superiority, maybe avoid it if you have had bad luck and losses early in the game. Don’t dig foxhole, avoid kindling unless you really have to. Make use of cover. Search for enemy units. Stay focused on the Victory conditions. Roll low and retain ROF.

Whichever defensive set up the PAVN are using expect an interesting fight. Things will look bleak to start with, and can appear to get worse on turn one. As play progresses the effectiveness of French firepower and resilience of elite troops with an ELR of 5 and underscored morale will start to earn you a win. With only two leaders, lower morale and an ELR of 3, the PAVN force should melt away.

**DBP7 Conclusion**

Expect the French to exit at least some units after a stiff firefight. Some of the excitement will come in the closing turns as the French plan their exit, and the PAVN scratch a force together to prevent it. The opening turn can be hectic or a test of French nerve depending on PAVN set up. Given you could play this one in an hour easily, playing both sides is an option or even a quick replay if you think your opponent was just plain lucky! I liked the narrative on this one. Existing units are not moving off the edge of the world but attacking a Headquarters, capturing maps, destroying radios, shooting a few REMF and reducing the combat effectiveness of the 148th Regiment.

Which covers the first half of the Dien Bien Phu pack. I’ll try and write up the other scenarios for the next issue.

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**DEBRIEFINGS**

This following Q&A and errata has been posted the Internet ASL Mailing List by various publishers in recent months.

**ASL Journal 4**

JMG Bloody Omaha. In MSR 6.31, replace the three instances of “pilbox” (but not “pillboxes”) with “French”.

**The Fine Art of Bushwacking** On page 12 in the 3rd column about half way down it says: “You will be able to roll for Ambush without taking a PAATC (assuming it’s an AFV)” even though you’re lost concealment!” This statement is only true if other Infantry actually Advances into CC. The editors are sorry if this has confused anyone.

**Fanatic Pack 2**

FE 17 Philippine Scouts at Mabatang delete one Japanese crew.

**New German SW Info And A Startling Conclusion!**

Rusty Witek

Experts on WWII infantry weapons have long been impressed with the battlefield performance of German machine guns. Although the German infantry soldier was usually saddled with an obsolete rifle, the superb MG-42 gave the Wehrmacht formidable firepower and unprecedented tactical flexibility.

Recent research by noted small-arms expert Gus Klim in his magisterial magnum opus Small Arms of the Wehrmacht, 1937-1945: Apotheosis and Transcendence reveals a hitherto unknown aspect of the MG-42’s performance – in early 1943, German designers converted all their machine guns to “never” guns. As suggested by the name, “never guns” NEVER run out of ammunition, making squad resupply a thing of the past. In the annals of modern warfare “never guns” previously had been used only by small children playing army men and cowboys and Indians, in order to redress the problem of some kids having revolvers and therefore running out of ammo after six “bangs.” Transferring this concept to modern armies was typical of the brilliance of Teutonic weapons designers.

In fact, the accumulated weight of evidence now requires a radical revision of many historians’ views on the war. According to most experts in ordnance and tank design, the conclusion is obvious: Germany won World War II.

“Just look at the facts,” says Jurgen Fliedermaus, author of Turns Out There Weren’ t So Many Russians After All (1999), “the Tiger and Panther tanks (especially when retrofitted with the super-secret “Zip-a-Gun” turret traverse) were unsurpassed in power, armour, and sheer coolness. Kids today are still building plastic models of the ME-262, and if any of those big stupid Shermans or Stalin tanks would get close to a German infantry squad, Pow! a panzerfaust right in the kisser! And don’t even get me started about the flak 88s. “

Historians now conjecture that German armed forces were victorious around December, 1944. “It must have happened,” says Klim. “Add up the MG-42, the fast turrets on those groovy or Stalin tanks would get close to a German infantry squad, Pow! a panzerfaust right in the kisser! And don’t even get me started about the flak 88s.”

Even after almost 60 years, the ramifications of the German victory in WWII are expected to be wide-ranging, including massive linguistic changes in Central and Eastern Europe and a radical revision of the situation in the Middle East. Fortunately, changes to the Advanced Squad Leader wargame system are expected to be minimal.
The week before and including INTENSIVE FIRE 2002 was like Christmas come early for an ASL nut like me. A friend returned from ASLOOK with an armful of new ASL stuff — although in the present climate “ASL Compatible” is probably the better description of these, Schwerpunkt 8, Onslaught to Orsha from HOB, several scenario packs from the Winnipeg ASL club and something from a newcomer, the Fanatic Pack. Since then we’ve had the new ASL Journal and the second Historical Study Operation Veritable, both from MMP.

**SCHWERPUNKT 8**

The first I opened was of course the new Schwerpunkt. Anyone who has read my earlier reviews of the Schwerpunkt series will be aware that I hold these in the highest regard. I’m sure that there will be no surprises from our friends who will attend the seventh annual BERSERK! tournament in March this year when they see the scenarios we’ve set, because, as ever there will be a fair number of these scenarios included. As in the previous issues, Schwerpunkt is a magazine style publication with at least one article included, this time a look at the make up of the Russians in ASL. It has been along time since the first examination of the Soviet OB was written in the first ASL Annual and Brook White goes into considerable detail in his discussion of how the reality of the Soviet forces in WWII should be translated in ASL terms. As occurs in many such articles, Brook recommends that certain SSRs be applied to more accurately reflect certain aspects, such as the poor training and experience of crews, leader ratios and so on. Whether any scenario designers will be persuaded we will have to wait and see.

The scenarios – as always twelve of them – seem to be a good batch. I have been fortunate to have played most of them by now. The only one I have found so far to favour one side (admittedly after only one playing) is ‘SP91 Show A Little Guts’, where I found the palm trees that the Japanese attackers approach through gave them so much cover that the US firepower had little effect in the game I played. The other PTO affair is ‘SP95 Burn Gurkha Burn’ which is a really well paced scenario. A small force of really good quality Japanese engineers are assaulting and trying to clear three hills of Gurkhas (also very good quality troops) with a sizeable flanking attack from a reduced strength first line company. The Gurkhas get reinforcements including a 9-2 and the fight for the last hill is a tight, tense way to end the scenario. I really like this one and think it is a classic.

I played ‘SP89 Assaulting Tes’ against a weaker opponent (yes Ben it is possible) at IF this last year and I think it has the makings of a classic also. See my write up of that tourney for a description of this gem, which I hope to play again soon. By now I have played and won SP96 Husum Hotfoot both ways, as the SS and the Brits, so I’m bound to find that balanced (I love Wasps!). ‘SP87 Fangs of the Tiger’ is a lot of fun. Halldown positions for T-34s trying to stop Tigers moving down a one-road axis to exit or destroy all the enemy armour on the road. Very enjoyable. ‘SP85 The McCown Encounter’ sees a scratch force of Americans trying to stop a company of SS, all of whom are in halftracks, from exiting off the far side of a full board (or scoring kills on M10 TD). It is tough for the SS because there are inherent pinch points and mines, as well as the US personnel and vehicles to deal with. Just a touch too big for BERSERK! we felt. ‘SP94 Out of Order’ is set during the same operation as the HOB scenario ‘FF14 Operation Rosseelsprong’ and is a fight over a large building held by Yugoslavian partisans. Beset on all sides by SS paratroopers and a platoon of Bosnians they are in for a surprise because the Germans have special ammo which can fire up through floorboards to higher floors, even if there is no stairwell! This really needs you to set up extra boards or other representations of the building so that you can see what is going on (at Berserk! we are providing copies of the building so the players may use them to represent the higher floors – an idea we nicked form the Kinetic Energy boys). I have also recently played “Seelow Seesaw” which is like a later war version of “Hill 621.” A horde of Russians charge across board 44 at their enemy supported by some impressive heavy metal of the Red variety. However, the Germans get a 128L AT gun which they can place atop the board 9 hill. This is a death ray and I seemed not to miss at all when playing Ben at it. Given the height advantage the German’s enjoy and the LOS available to their numerous MG’s the SMOKE from the ISU 122’s is going to be the difference between a win and a loss for Ivan here. The other scenarios I am yet to play, but they all look very promising, except perhaps for an all armour affair with IS2s slogging it out with King tigers – looks like the player with the most turret hits will win that, making it appear that the dice will determine the winner more than skill alone perhaps.

I know some players who may bemoan the fact that the scenarios are light on chrome or anything particularly memorable. That is, there is no night, exotic terrain, desert or anything more spectacular by way of weather than a little wind, twilight, mist, LV and snow to be found here. Vanilla is the usual descriptor used in a derogatory tone. Well, I like flavoured ice cream, but what I really enjoy is a really well made Vanilla. In ASL terms, I am perfectly happy running a small to moderate sized combined arms affair in NW Europe as long as the scenario is otherwise sound. Throw in a couple of PTO scenarios (as here) and I’m well happy. My one note of concern would be the prevalence of the SS in this pack: Aside from the two PTO scenarios, six of the remaining 10 scenarios depict the SS in some situation or other. The allure of the SS never seems to fade in ASL terms. That being said, you’ll be hard pressed to find a better value for money product that this latest issue. It gets my endorsement.
forefront, loading his SMLE like he means it and looking into the distance is the best rendition of a soldier we’ve seen on an ASL product since George Parrish died some years ago.

48 Pages with only two ads for upcoming attractions – unless you include the page with the tournament listings and the appetizer for Operation Veritable (a sneak peek at the Sturmtiger from OVHS). This follows the formula of recent years. The cover gives away the hint that Carriers are the flavour of the month (year). No less than six of the 12 scenarios contain carriers of one type or another. Ian Daglish’s opening article is heavy on the history side and isn’t quite as essential a read as the really excellent breakdown of the bocage he gave us last year. It does make fascinating reading however because the way ASL has us use carriers doesn’t sit well with the reality. Ian has provided some of the scenarios as well and we liked one of them, “Unlucky Thirteenth,” so much it found it’s way into this years BERSERK! tournament. Shaun Carter and Charles Markuss write about the India PatternCarrier (not a true carrier in ASL terms) and again there’s an illustrative scenario (which I have only played very ineptly as the British myself, sad to say).

Laurent Closier has written a piece on an aspect of the war, or rather an arena, which was a closed book to me: the fighting for SE Asia and there are three of his scenarios set there. Japs vs the French will be a bit of a change. An excellent analysis of how light mortars work has made me regard, having played a scenario on that northern portion of the map I found that both my opponent and myself were never confused about levels.

The combatants on the scenarios and CG set on the map are amongst the best each side had to offer: Canadians against a previously unloved German Panzergrenadier division and the Panzer Lehr. It is the latter who make up most of the German counters provided in OVHS. In order to distinguish these from other Wermacht units they have red ID numbers. At first I just thought this a weak excuse for selling us more Panther counters, but there is a perfectly valid reason for supplying these counters in this form. The Lehr units will always be withdrawn after a CG scenario because they were only to be used in attacks, not in defence. The counters do look rather smart, the red-on-blue is striking, although I note that we have some already familiar names on the SMCs (when are we going to see a 10-3 Von Edwards counter I wonder). The in-crowd of MMP and co. get their names on the counters again. The star of the piece is the new Sturmtiger counter, the first time the beast has appeared except in a Kinetic Energy rare vehicles pack now long out of print. It has a 380ml MA, can not use Bounding Fire and can only fire once every other player turn.

The British get a load of extra Ram Kangaroos, some Shermans, Wasp carriers, SMCSs and AT Guns plus an extra set of “normal” 458 squads (ie not the airborne types from PB). Oh and we get lots of PIA Ts. All are welcome additions to my counter mix. As ever, the publishers are trying to supply enough kit that the prospective buyer will not have to own more than the core modules to pick this historical study up and play it, which is fine except that you also need a lot of the geomorphic boards not contained within Jinks and BV to play some of the scenarios not set on the Riley’s Road map itself.

You get a total of 16 scenarios, five of which are played on the HASL map, the rest on geomorphic boards, including DASL boards. One is played on an ocean overlay with building and sand dune overlays representing the flooded town of Niel. As in Operation Watchtower, there is one scenario we have seen before, ‘Tussle at Thomasot’, which is reprinted here in a revised format. There is a real mixture from night, to amphibious assaults in DUKWs. I
have only had time to play two scenarios so far, but both were really good. ‘Bewildered and Belligerent’ sees British units set up in a partially rubbled city board. The Germans can enter from any side and their VC are to exit off the opposite side. This really has a lot of replay value as the way the Tommies react to the line of attack will make all the difference. They only have one 6pdr and it could find itself out of position. The other I have played is ‘The Good Shepherd’ which is a DASL affair involving an attack by a company of Canadian infantry supported by three Shermans with shellholes and there are gullies, but there is little really defensible terrain present. I note the presence of slopes and some unique combination hexes (shell-hole-orchards and grass-road). The playing area is split right down the middle by a railroad.

The counter sheet is pretty impressive. The AFVs and aircraft are all in colour, although to be honest the plans of all the T-34s look the same pretty much (ie the turrets on 76L and 85L seem the same). You get a collection of what I can only describe as “Red Funnies,” which include variants on the Flamethrower T-34s including better armour than the ones in BV and also T-34/85s and KV-1s with FT SA. Another welcome addition to the Soviet OB are various different types of T-34 and KV-1 mine rolling tanks, all of which will feature heavily in the CG because the Germans laid vast quantities of mines in this area. There are included also a lot of lend lease vehicle to supplement the Shermans already in the battlefield. The battlefield is dotted with shellholes and there are gullies, but there is little really defensible terrain present. I note the presence of slopes and some unique combination hexes (shell-hole-orchards and grass-road). The playing area is split right down the middle by a railroad.

The product comes in a cover which doubles as a CG force organiser and contains a full colour chapter divider (the map side is monochrome to aid copying), something neither OHVS or OWHS from MMP had. The fact that it doesn’t come in a box is also worthy of praise because the outer packaging isn’t going to end up in a bin once the other components are stored.

The map is really big for one sheet and has oversized hexes (always welcome in my book). I can’t say I’m wild about the flicks of dark green in the pale OG hexes but I don’t think it will detract from play. The playing area is 52 x 30 hexes and represents a plateau with some higher terrain along one flank. The battlefield is dotted with shellholes and there are gullies, but there is little really defensible terrain present. I note the presence of slopes and some unique combination hexes (shell-hole-orchards and grass-road). The playing area is split right down the middle by a railroad.

The next section is a Chapter H style presentation giving you the gen on all the different ground vehicles in the game, again in full colour and with well illustrated examples of the use of mine roller tanks against combinations of mines and wire as well as against just mines. The you get two SAGL missions (still mean little to me) and then you get into an annotated “Map Study” in which the strategic picture is laid out along the same lines as we have seen in the MMP studies with the scenarios mentioned as you go along. There then follows a discussion of the forces involved, again illustrated, this time with photos and computer graphics. And then you get a rundown of the OBs involved in Bagration. Whew!

And then there are the scenarios. 22 of them divided into two groups. OB 1-14 are the Operation Bagration set which are all set on geomorphic maps. Each scenario card has the familiar (by now) HOB layout with the vertical turn record track and I am pleased to say that the board layouts still contain a rendering of the terrain (the boards themselves), making the card easier to read without getting the boards out. Print quality is excellent. OTO 1 – 8 are all set on the big map and represent the Onslaught to Orsha aspect. Once again the terrain in play is reproduced in miniature.

Bearing in mind that I have not yet had time to sit and play any of this yet, having been busy getting BESERK! ready this winter and acknowledging that the only real proof of any pudding is in the eating as ever, I can say that this must be the single most impressive “third party” product I have ever seen. It loses no ground at all to the MMP HASL modules we have seen recently in all but one respect, that of price. If you aren’t keen on Eastern Front battles, you aren’t going to think that the £50.00 price tag will be worth it. But it really looks like you’re going to be missing out.

This summer is going to be a great one for the ASL player with all the excellent new material to play. I have several other products on my desk which I haven’t the time or space to review this time, which is a shame. I’ll do my best to have something ready for Pete’s next edition.
Here are some designer notes on each of the scenarios from Fanatic Pack 1. Try to give you an insight into the mind of the madman that is me. Hope you enjoy.

**FE 1 A Victory for Early Polish Armor**

This scenario resulted from a reading of an article in the TANKS online magazine located on the TANKS website. It features an action between the Polish Army and the invading Russians. The article was fairly detailed with regards to the action and included a map of the battle. I like esoteric subjects and early war stuff so this was a natural fit. On top of that the scenario features the FT-17 a vehicle that doesn’t often get much use.

I tried to keep the units fairly simple. Instead of designing a whole new system/counter set for one scenario I decided to use the existing counter mix. The relative strengths feel right given the situation so that works for me. Removing the special Russian Characteristics of Human Waves and Commissars seemed logical and worked from a design standpoint. Having the Russian tidal wave across the boards would certainly effect balance in this scenario. The article I read indicated that the MG’s had been removed from the tankettes, thus the SSR on CMG. The +1 for the PAATC should represent both the hesitancy and unfamiliarity of the soldiers with tanks and prevent the tanks from being swamped too quickly in the village.

The scenario should play out fairly historical. The Poles were able to push into the town with their armor, the infantry may find it harder to get in. The Poles should be somewhat secure in the town before the reinforcements come on which historically resulted in the tanks being pushed out of the town.

The design of the scenario was fairly straight forward except the board layout. The action occurred across gently rolling hills into a small village. Although the boards as represented to sort of provide this feel it is not the perfect fit. I just don’t get the feel of gently rolling farmland from any of the boards and IMO board 46 just doesn’t cut in it seems too contrived, but since board 10 gets so much use and 46 was fairly new when I started the design I went with it.

**FE 2 Dans La Bataille, Pour La Patrie**

This scenario arose from reading an article on a Modeling website. The action details a part of DeGaulle’s counterattack that although was very promising did not have the punch to slow down the Germans. This scenario features a large French tank force trying to force their way through a small at start German force reinforced at mid game by a substantial German armored force. The action described in the article had the French armored force pushing up several roads into the HQ of the German 1st Panzer Regiment.

The article provided me with a fairly accurate OOB for the French vehicles and I researched a number of sources to find out typical armor that would have been in the area. I think this resulted in a nice action that is relatively rare in ASL an early war armor/infantry battle.

This one will be tough on the Germans. Not only do they have to prevent the French from exiting they have to protect their fairly vulnerable armor from becoming easy CVP. The German will have to strive to fight like their real world counterparts, outmaneuver the French with their great MP and get in close rear and side shots, blow smoke and hide. The lumbering French monsters will fall, slow and steady and if you can pick off a tank a platoon will slow down considerably. Use your infantry to target the French motorcyclists, hope they dismount as this will slow them down too. Try to get long range early shots on the riders to break them early and get some bailing out MC’s. Protect the at start tanks from early kills, use them against the infantry and to lay smoke infront of the heavy tanks to allow your stronger armed and armored tanks to rush in for a kill or two.

The French should just push, get forward, don’t worry about getting CVP they will come naturally, keep together and keep the exit in mind. The scenario is a lot shorter than you think.

I found this one to be deceptively tough for the French. They appear to be able to walk across the board and initially I had a VP requirement of around 75 but I consistently found the French moved way to slow, especially with tanks failing nonplatoon movement DR as these become a factor. The German must be cautious but will be able to, if he uses his assets properly to slow down the French.

**FE 3 The Border Forts**

This scenario arose from an article in World War II magazine that described the troubles Italy had in November 1940. Desert has been an area of ASL that has beccome somewhat neglected in recent years and I fear with the lack of availability of the desert boards etc, will continue to be. This action...
occurred in East Africa and features some early war armor, which is always a favorite of mine. Throw in both sides getting Aerial Support and WAY COOL!

The design of this one came relatively quickly. The Italians were defending a fort. Well how does one best represent that? I think the trenches and wire nicely present an obstacle to the British similar to a fort. The British “broke” into the fort so that is represented by them getting through the fortifications. Earlier I had the British entering offboard but too much time was spent traversing the board, which is boring and resulted in a few picked off British tanks, thus I decided to start em right close to the fort.

The Italian units are fairly typical rear area defenders, not the best Italian available but the 7 morale should allow them to stand up a bit to incoming firepower, the 2 ELR seems about right. The AT Guns seem appropriate and since this is East Africa I went with the ancient 70* INF Gun. Remember you don’t gain acquisition with that bad boy.

The British get a decent group of infantry. I had considered using 447’s but I thought with the relatively low ELR too many 436’s would come into play thereby really slowing down the attack. Given the need for some strength in fighting into the fort I went with the greater range. There is a big difference between the non-covering 457 and the cowering 447. The tanks are a fairly typical group of early war desert vehicles. I intentionally limited the number of Lt MTRs. I wanted to prevent a board covered with smoke blinding the Italians. That will have to be done with a liberal and intelligent use of vehicle dust.

The source for this scenario described the Germans as a Kampfgruppe and IIRC included some engineers. The presence of the engineers may have resulted from the description of the Germans destroying the pillboxes.

This scenario has been on the back of my computer for 4 or 5 years now and I am glad I was able to get it into print. Again this scenario really has an enjoyable level of tension in it. The Gerries are under a limited amount of time to cross the board. They will be getting hit by long range fire from nasty popguns. Hope for a tank to come in view of your 251/10 or ATR for some CVP.

FE 5 Beyond the Call of Duty

This scenario went through the most revisions of any in the pack, several years ago I came across a brief description in a book (the name escapes me at the moment) which I THINK was the American Army study of the German Baltic campaign by an Author named Blue, I could be wrong on that one. The reason it went through so many changes is that on the face of it a bunch of green Allied Minor squads shouldn’t be able to stand up against 1st line German squads with Assault Engineers but I found that consistently the Germans were getting beaten around quite a bit, the reason primarily was the unique combination of fortifications, MG’s, guns and concealment. The Germans had a tough time of balancing aggressiveness with caution and the result is a fairly tense scenario.

Originally this scenario had a couple of hill boards on the southern side but I removed them as it took the tanks too long to get into the action. I think boards 11 and 18 nicely represent the hilly terrain in the area of the battle. The OOB’s were based on my assumptions for the border guard and for a front line Kampfgruppe in early 41. I think green troops represent fairly accurate the quality of the troops in Yugoslavia at the time, even a 2 ELR seems generous but I didn’t want the squads disrupting too readily. A few cheesy guns rounds out the units. The book said the pillboxes were poorly constructed as were the AT ditches therefore the reduced Pillbox TEM and my decision to give the HT the ability to cross the trenches.

This scenario has been on the back of my computer for 4 or 5 years now and I am glad I was able to get it into print. Again this scenario really has an enjoyable level of tension in it. The Gerries are under a limited amount of time to cross the board. They will be getting hit by long range fire from nasty popguns. Hope for a tank to come in view of your 251/10 or ATR for some CVP.
scenarios. Some of its companions include Fort Kassala and Race for Freedom published by Critical Hit, both of which are cavalry scenarios. This is another one I am glad was able to see print, although this one was a lot easier to develop the FE5. This came from a Cavalry of World War 2 book which had a page or so on this battle. It generously gave both sides OOB so that made it a lot easier. I went with elite squads for the Russians as I think the Mongolians were better troops and that cavalry are typically higher caliber soldiers. That with the limited range of firepower that is think is appropriate for mounted soldiers made this a good fit especially with the design consideration that I wanted to limit the Russians ability to fire from afar. The four tanks seem appropriate for reconnaissance units at the time so thus the Russian OOB.

I chose a number of appropriate guns for the time frame for the German OOB. The supporting infantry was developed as a balancing force and changed somewhat during Playtest as I got a feel for how brittle each force was. The OBA was added to give the Germans some much needed killing power but as it is OBA it is fickle and its loss won’t necessarily spell doom for the Germans.

One thing about the mist, the description of the action mentioned the mist in the area so it was included it also helped from a design standpoint in that it helps the Russians close.

One aside is on the armored cars used by the Dutch, they had two other armored vehicles on Java that were more prevalent then the MH-III. The Overalwagen which is an armored truck and the excellent Alviss-Strassler Armored Car, both of these vehicles I hope will make it into the vehicle counter mix some day.

A simple meeting engagement on the excellent board 47. Smallish in size I hope this is a good tourney scenario. Don’t just look at the OOB and give the scenario to the Japs, yes they are powerful but they lack AT weapons and the 8 FP on the Dutch AC is pretty devastating, try to get the Dutch ATR to a position to get a side shot. If the Jap player is worrying about the ATR he isn’t attacking your infantry. A lucky break with a toss of the DC on the bridge could win it for you. That was the goal of the Dutch (to destroy the bridge) thus the sudden death VC.

The primary source for this was the Netherlands East Indies website, which is an excellent resource for this area of World War 2.

FE 8 Soebang Serenade
A redux of an Annual scenario (Defeat in Java I believe) where I utilize more appropriate units. I borrowed a couple of the boards from that scenario IIRC and added the airfield board as the action covered an assault on the airfield.

Unfortunately we don’t have the Overalwagens to use which were actually there but this was the only major armored engagement of the Java campaign so I put in all of the Dutch toys available. The information I had indicated there was a force of 100 Japanese in the town including a couple of Guns so that part of the order of battle was clear. The Japanese had secured the airfield then moved into the town so a significant portion of their force was still at the airfield. The Dutch attacked the town in a series of assaults and in one had reached all the way to the airfield before being pushed back. Late arriving Jap armor aided in the defense. The Japanese were initially surprised by the Dutch attack therefore the Turn 1 Pinning. The VC reflect the Dutch attempt to capture the town.

A meaty PTO scenario with realistic potential for armor vs. armor action, I really like this one.

FE 9 Blackforce Counterattack
The Dutch weren’t the only force fighting on Java. I even have a scenario in
FE 10 An Abandoned Army

This is another one of those scenarios I am especially proud of. This one features a HIP Dutch force ambushing the Japanese. The twist is that like Urban Guerrillas (J1) the Japanese will be helped by randomly occurring partisan units popping out of the jungle and kunai. I admitted to stealing the idea but imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

The Dutch are described as an Abandoned Army so naturally are depicted with mostly Green Squads. A few 457s are added to give them some muscle. This is more for prevention of ELR failure disrupting them then for benefits of range as the action should mostly be at close range. The Japanese force was the second line division used to mop up North Sumatra so thus the 347’s.

Play won’t generate too much in the way of partisans but a HS or hero are likely to appear at the odd time to cut routs, ambush etc. The scenario looks tough on the Japanese but if he can get a squad or two with a leader through the defense and rush him off board he in almost halfway to the required VP and trust me there will be lots of dead soldiers in this one. Don’t forget Civilian Interrogation a suddenly revealed squad could mean the difference between life and death for the Japanese.

The OOB was worked out through Pting, I found the Japanese were able to break the Brits too much keeping em out of the victory area, so I both reduced the Jap to Brit ratio of forces and gave the Brits a couple of -1 ldrs to help with rallying. The British tanks are expendable (note the errata that dictates the tank FP is na for the Victory conditions) so they are used aggressively and tend to fall prey to the Japanese AT weapons. But again, just having a PTO armor action is cool unto itself.

Another smallish scenario designed for tourney use, I hope you enjoy.

FE 11 Italian Winter

This scenario arose from an action depicted in a book by Werner Regenberg regarding the use of armored vehicles in the German Security Forces. For those interested in arcane ASL and arcane vehicles this scenario offers a lot. First you have Italian Partisans, captured T-34 tanks in German service, German and Italian troops in action together and use of board 50. The OOB’s came together pretty easily for the Germans and the Italians, you have security troops and late war fascists so 447 and 347 were logical choices. The Germans get the use of some Engineers who were critical in the action depicted so thus the inclusion of the 838’s. I agonized over the inclusion of 1 or 2 T-34 tanks during design. Playtesting with one tank found it getting knocked out fairly early with the 81mm MTR or with a Deliberate Immobilization, so I opted to go for two. I will discuss this in more detail later. The Partisans are your typical mixed bag of 527’s and 337’s. I provided them with Italian equipment and Heavy MTR and a roadblock to slow down cross traffic between the hills.

I have heard a lot of controversy on this scenario. The Germans tend to take a beating early on coming onboard across open ground but have “easily” been able to capture the necessary hexes for victory. I think though that if the Partisan concentrates early on with taking out the Tanks and not the infantry he will benefit in the long run. He should target the T-34’s with the Heavy MTR and the 20L ATR and the DC if he gets a chance. The Heavy MTR will with a ROF of 3 get a few chances to shock, or immobilize which it can do on a TK of 4 or less. Difficult? Yes but odds are he should be able to nail at least one tank. The tanks will be slowed by the hill and the ground snow and the stream so you know where he is going. And the T-34’s do not have smoke to help the Attackers. Try HIP’ing a squad or leader with the DC and blasting a tank that tries to encircle. You have to be creative. If you are too intimidated by this tank vs man confrontation then give the Italians the balance. Molotov Capability will give the Partisans another weapon to fight the German tanks.

The biggest thing going for the Partisans is the early casualties the German will be taking, hit him and make him take MC’s crossing open ground. Do this with inherent FP and the MG’s leaving the Heavy MTR for the tanks. Use all your Partisan tricks to gain advantage in CC with stealth and attacking vs CX troops. The Attackers will be slowed by the snow and the hill. Although difficult try to keep as many good order squads in place near the peaks to hold off late game antics.

FE 12 Once More Into the Breach

This action was described in Antonio Munoz’s Forgotten Legions book. The Germans are on a rescue mission to help a beleaguered and surrounded garrison to get out of a trap. I like this one as it is a unique situation for ASL, a rescue operation and it is slightly different from the earlier ones in Fanatic Pack #1 as both sides find themselves cutoff. It ends up being who is trapping whom.

The German OOB came together quickly. These were late war SS units so the 658’s were used, assumptions for numbers of squads was made. The isolated group was sized to be both a threat but not too large as to dominate the Russians. That nasty 81mm MTR will have to be addressed by the Russian or he will be taking a hurting on that flank. The two armored vehicles were listed in the book so that was easy. A smattering of SW and typical leaders flesh out the German Order of Battle. The Terrain was established to give the Russian some decent de-
fensive terrain, allow them to move laterally under cover and slow down the reinforcements.

The Russian OOB was developed to balance off the German groups. It should be strong enough to hold off the reinforcements but not too strong as to be an immovable object. The Russian will have serious decisions to make as to how to allocate forces to each flank and is the true appeal of this scenario. How much can be used to hold the isolated force and still have enough to slow the reinforcements down?

I enjoy delaying scenarios for defenders where you try to make the attacker off base by one or two turns, enough for the victory. If the Russian can cause the Attacker to delay enough, Prep when he should move or give him a key break he should be able to win. 18 VP is a lot of units to get across the playing area, better than 50% of his force. If he loses the HT or the AA HT across the playing area, better than 50% of the German will have to allocate arriving T-34’s could easily be enough to slow off the German groups. It should be strong enough to hold off the reinforcements. The Russian will have serious decisions to make, but not too strong as to be an immovable object. The Russian will have serious decisions to make, but not too strong as to be an immovable object.
ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL

March
Bitter Ender 2003

When: 14 – 16 March
Where: Ramada Inn Hotel (Blue Ridge), 1320 Blue Ridge, Raleigh, NC 27607. Tel (919) 782-7252, fax (919) 843-4180, or email mw@blue ridge enterprises.com. All rooms are doubles and the hotel rate is $69.00 per night, which includes breakfast. The Ramada Inn will hold these rooms at this reduced price until March 2, 2000. To ensure you receive this reduced rate, mention “Bitter Ender” when you call to register.

Fee: $38.00 per player. Pre-registration is $40.00 on the door. Entry fee for a single day is $18.00.

Format: Five round Swiss format event. There will also be three mini-tournaments, two on Friday and one on Saturday. Gaming will officially begin at 9:00 hours on Friday, March 14th and end 16:00 hours on Sunday, March 16th.

Notes: The Gamer’s Armory (operated by Scott Blanton) will provide the prizes for first, second and third place finishes.

Contact: Chuck Payne, 107 White Sands Drive, Cary NC 27513. Tel (919) 467-4129 or email cpayne@blue ridge enterprises.com. You can also visit http://www.blue ridge enterprises.com for the latest details.

 Berserk 2003

When: 15 – 17 March
Where: Hotel Skye, South Promenade, Blackburn, England. Room rates are £20.00 per shared room or £26.50 for a single room and include breakfast. Bar meals and good beer are also available at the hotel.

Fee: £18.00

Format: Five round tournament beginning Friday afternoon (arrangements will be made for those unable to arrive until Friday night), with three or six scenarios to choose from in each round. Players will be expected to have a knowledge of the first half of the Chapter G rules to play in the tournament. CG and friendly games can also be found throughout the weekend. There will also be a special three round tournament for new players.

Contact: Steve Thomas, 19 Dwerton House, Samuel Street, Preston, Lancs., PR1 4YL, or email Trev Edwards at trevp@earthlink.net.

Southern Ontario ASL Tournament

When: 15 March
Where: Travecur Holiday, 2010 Lakeshore Road Burlington, Ontario, Canada. Tel (905) 661-0762.

Room rates are $109.00 per night (this could include 1 to 4 people) and include continental breakfast each morning. When calling the hotel ask for “GROUP BLOCK” or “SOUT” to get the special rates.

Fee: $30.00/CDN ($25.00 US) per person

Format: Five round, Swiss style tournament. Three rounds Saturday (starting at 8am) and two on Sunday (finishing at 5pm).

Contact: Nick or Lisa Hoekstra at (905) 319-8289 or by email at dlhoekstra@rogers.com or nickhoekstra@rogers.com.

Nor’Easter VII

When: 28 – 30 March
Where: Best Western Royal Plaza hotel, Marlborough, MA. Room rates are $99.00 a night for up to five people, $15 for a cot. Make sure you mention “Nor’Easter” to get this rate, and make sure you reserve at least 2 weeks before Nor’Easter – the earlier the better. The Best Western Royal Plaza phone number is 508-460-0700.

Fee: $20.00 pre-registered by Feb 21, $25 at the door

Format: Three round Fire Team tournament (two rounds on Saturday, one on Sunday). There will also be two mini-tournaments on Saturday.

Notes: First place gets a courtesy of Joe Leoce. Second and third place finishers receive plaques, and any other awards (finishing bag!) or there are plenty of local hotels ($350/100 per night) and hostels ($250/25 per night).

Contact: Steve Banham on 0409 775290 or steveb@cp.oup.com.

April

Rencontres 2003

When: 19 – 24 April
Where: Namur, Belgium.

Fee: €20.00 (+€5 for a single day).

Format: 4 round Swiss style, with 5 scenarios each round to choose from. The theme of the scenarios is “Faces The Blitz – Allied Airframe 1940-1945”. There will be one game on Saturday, two on Sunday and the final game on Monday.

Notes: Rencontres is part of the multi-game tournament DIPLOMAT 2003 held in the gaming club IN LUDO VERITAS.

Critical Hit will publish a special historical map for the event centered on the Glider assault against the Canal Albert’s bridge at Vroenhoven on May 10-11, 1940. The admission for the weekend includes copies of the scenarios and the historical map.

Contact: Bruno Bontemps or e-mail. Visit www.criticalhit.com or www.lib for more details.

Anzaccon

When: 25 – 27 April
Where: The Copeland Committee Room, Ashburnton Public Library, 154 High Street, Ashburnton Victoria. Melbways Market Centre and can be arranged for interstate or overseas teams. Please contact in for billeting arrangements.

Fee: To be announced

Format: Four playing sessions, two Friday (two medium to short length), one Saturday (all day), one Sunday (medium length). Two scenarios will be available at each round for selection by players with a theme based on “Old Favourites”.

Contact: Steve Banham on 0409 773290 or sbanham@interpost.com.au

May

2003 Montreal ASL Festival

When: 17 – 18 May
Where: Days Inn Montreal Metro Center, 1005 Grey Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3H 2K4. Phone 1-416-220-6066. Fax 514-381-7777. $20.00 (US) or $25.00 (Canadian). An excellent venue with five large rooms and a separate area for gaming. There is a special $99.00/100 per night rate available before April 9, mention Michelle Joden. Most rooms have 2 double beds. All rooms are air-conditioned and have color television. The hotel has a restaurant and is near a variety of restaurants, as well as shops and nightclubs. Indoor and outdoor parking available (charge applies for both).

Fee: $17.00 (US) or $25.00 (Canadian). Single day entry is half the full fee. Pre-registrants will receive tournament information and scenarios around mid-March.

Format: Five time-limited rounds of action starting on Saturday at 8.30 a.m. Each round will have a choice of three scenarios, with scenario substitution possible by mutual player consent and TD approval.

Contact: Bruno L’archeveque, Montreal ASL Festival, 2294 Fontune, Laval, Quebec, H7T 2S6. Email blachepve@yahoo.ca.

Logcon Swedish ASL Tournament

When: 20 May – 1 June
Where: Torsadorasolan, Skarpnäck, Stockholm, Sweden. There is room at the site to sleep (bring a sleeping bag!) or there are plenty of local hotels ($308/100 per night) and hostels ($258/25 per night).

Fee: €208/25 per night

Format: 5 round Swiss format with three scenarios (and ABS) to select in each round. Thursday is available for free gaming with the tournament starting late Friday morning.

Contact: Per Rognholt, c/o Sveds, Rotexagen 4, 74696 Sköldstorp, Sweden. Email him at rognholt@algonet.se. The latest information can be found on www.aal.gl/art-war/lc/logcon.html.

June

Austin ASL Team Tournament

When: 23 – 26 June
Where: La Quinta Inn Round Rock 2004 North I-35 Round Rock, Texas. Tel 512-255-6666. When reserving rooms mention you are with the Central Texas ASL Club and you will get a discounted rate of 565 $69 per day. Thursday is available for free gaming with the tournament starting late Friday morning.

Fee: $25.50 prior to 1 June, $35.50 thereafter

Format: The “Team” Tournament will be a five tournaments in one. The main tournament has two-person teams of all skill levels compete – teams will be randomly assigned at the beginning of the tournament. You must register by 1 June to be eligible. The tournament inside the tournament has players challenging for the coveted 1st-15th place, which goes to the individual who perseveres throughout the weekend and beats all comers. For those on a tight schedule there will be a Saturday only “Texas Heat” mini-Tournament starting at 9AM – entry for this is only $15/00.

Contact: Mike Senningen at mikes@intrinsity.com Check out the ASL Web site at http://www.augilfe.com/3x3/tournament.html for the latest details.

October

Intensive Fire 2003

When: 17 – 20 October
Where: The Kiri Hotel, West Hill Road, Bournemouth, England, BH2 5EG. Telephone (01202) 555 888 fax (01202) 789 867 to arrange accommodation.

Fee: £60.00. Players pre-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 all, who do not wish to take part in the tournament.

Notes: Prizes are awarded to winning players and the Championship winner, who is the player judged to have had the most successful tournament with all games played over the weekend being taken into consideration. For further details or to register contact Pete Phillips, 23 Jean Drive, Leicester, LE4 0GB. Phone (0116) 237 3508 (evenings only) or email pphil180@ecl.co.uk

November

Grenadier 03

When: 6 – 8 November
Where: Oberhettingen, a little town in the German part of the Ardennes. There is a railway station in the village and a train to Cologne every hour (travel time about 50 minutes). The location offers sleeping rooms for 45 persons, a huge kitchen (where our Marketenderin Andrea will continue her cooking business for us), a big village and a train to Cologne every hour (travel time about 50 minutes). The location offers sleeping rooms for 45 persons, a huge kitchen (where our Marketenderin Andrea will continue her cooking business for us), a big village and a train to Cologne.

Contact: Christian Koppmeyer, Hagebuttenweg 9, 41564 Kaarst, Germany. You can email him at Christian.Koppmeyer@freenet.de. Check out the Grenadier web site at http://www.asl.org.uk/tournaments/90943.html for up to date information.
INTENSIVE FIRE 2003
24 - 26 October 2003

INTENSIVE FIRE is the UK's longest running tournament dedicated to the play of Advanced Squad Leader. This year sees the 9th INTENSIVE FIRE and players of all standards are invited to attend.

FORMAT
The well-established Fire Team Tournament is the main event and offers the chance for competitive play on the Saturday and Sunday. In addition, the Friday mini-tourneys offer the chance for glory in more specialised fields of warfare. Likely topics for this year include Stalingrad street fighting, 'Fog of War' and, especially for the inexperienced player, the Training Camp.
For those not interested in tournament play, or not able to make it for the whole weekend, there is always room for pick-up games and friendly play.

VENUE
The Kiwi Hotel, centrally located in Bournemouth, offers both excellent gaming facilities and reduced accommodation rates (£31 per night for a single room or £26 for a double room). The hotel is within a short taxi-ride of Bournemouth rail station and ample parking is available. To book contact the hotel on (01202) 555 889 (+44 1202 555 889 from outside the UK). You can also book online at www.kiwhotel.co.uk.
For foreign visitors, lifts can often be pre-arranged to and from major airports. For those contemplating an extended stay, Bournemouth offers an excellent base for the military historian, being within easy reach of important military museums at Bovington Camp, Winchester, Portsmouth and Aldershot.

COST
Weekend registration for the tournament costs just £7. The tournament program listing the weekend's scenarios and events is available from late September to anyone registering in advance.

FURTHER DETAILS / REGISTRATION
Contact Pete Phillipps, 23 Jean Drive, Leicester, England, LE4 0GB. Telephone (0116) 233 5896 (+44 116 233 5896 from outside the UK) or email if@vftt.co.uk.