

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

Britain's Premier ASL Journal

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INTO THE RUBBLE - reviewed and analysed

3rd RTR IN THE RAIN - scenario analysis from a newcomer perspective

THE BITTER END - scenario analysis

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COVER: British troops liberating a Dutch village in 1944.

THE ASL MAILING LIST

The *ASL* Mailing List is devoted to discussion of *Advanced Squad Leader*, and is run by Paul Ferraro via a listserv program at the University of Pittsburgh. To subscribe go to:
<http://lists.aslml.net/listinfo.cgi/aslml-aslml.net>.

EMOTICONS

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

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

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

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PREP FIRE

Hello and welcome to the latest issue of *VFTT*, somewhat bigger than normal since a few of you sent me in some stuff to print this time round! I could have saved it for the next issue, but I already have a few items lined up for that one, so consider this a bonus :-). Maybe if I start getting this much every couple of months again I can go back to the bi-monthly schedule of old.....

See a few of you at DOUBLE 1 next month – and if I can do a 1200 mile round trip taking 15 hours to get there and 32 hours to get back then the rest of you have no excuse not to be there!! ‘Til then, roll Low and Prosper.

Pete Phillippis

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

Issue 74 should be out at the beginning of September 2008.

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Back issue are now out of print but can be downloaded for free from:

<http://www.vftt.co.uk/vfttpdf.htm>

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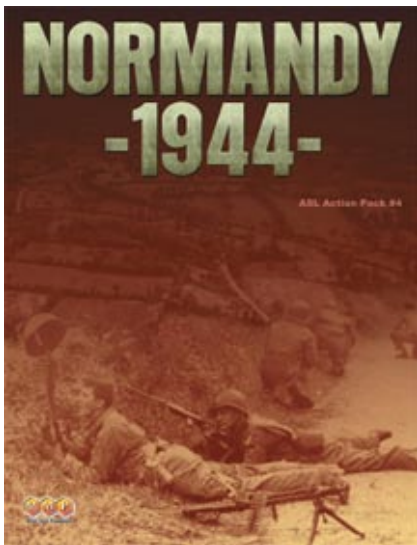


INCOMING

BOCAGE HOLDS UP MMP

A new Action Pack, this one covering actions in the Normandy bocage, is due from MMP soon. Retailing for \$30.00 it will contain three new mapboards, a dozen scenarios, and replacement pages for B9 and B10 with revised rules on Wall Advantage and Bocage containing clarifications and examples. A full preview by designer Ian Daglish can be found elsewhere in this issue.

Although they have hit their pre-order numbers there is no indication as to when the *Doomed Battalions* reprint, the *Blood Reef Tarawa Gamers Guide*, or the *ASL Map Bundle (Starter Kit style)* will be printed. A limited print run of the hard to find *ASL Journal 2*, containing the Kakazu Ridge historical map, countersheets and Chapter Z rules pages (but not the Chapter K which is in the 2nd edition *ASLRB*) is also being produced.



HOB DROP IN TO CRETE

Heat of Battle's new module *Kreta - Operation Merkur* covers the German airborne invasion of Crete in May 1941. Designed by Shaun Carter, Andrew Hershey, Derek Ward, Michael-Hastrup-Leth, and Magnus Hindsberger, it featured a 56"x40" historical map of the Maleme battle area (drawn by Tom Repetti), 120 counters, 17 scenarios (7 on the historical map and 10 on geomorphic maps). Priced \$65 including shipping and handling (\$72 for non-US orders), it can be ordered using PayPal from www.heatofbattle.com, or by mail from Steve Dethlefsen, 525 Golf Lane, Lake Forest, IL, 60045-2114.

CRITICAL HIT IN KOREA

Escape from Chosin: Toktong Pass 1950 is a new module from Critical Hit which deals with the Toktong Pass battles from the Korean War. Inside the \$69.95 module are two countersheets representing all the SMC, MMC counters, AFVs and guns needed to play the 16 scenarios in the module, a large historical game map on heavyweight stock, new rules and a Platoon Leader CG.

Two forth-coming modules depict actions involving Germany's allies against the Russians. *Spanish Fury—Hell On The Eastern Front* focuses on the Spanish 250th 'Blau' Division, while the Soviet actions against the Italian CSIR around Moscow at the end of 1941 are the focus of *Red Christmas—The Csir And The Moscow Counter-Offensive*. *Spanish Fury—Hell On The Eastern Front* contains two new maps, including a long, unique riverside of the Volkhov River, with two villages, Russa and Sitno, and a set of new MMC counters depicting the 250th 'Blau' Division, complete with accurate shoulder patch emblems, are included, along with Sturmboot, Wagon and guns. *Red Christmas—The Csir And The Moscow Counter-Offensive December 22-30, 1941* contains two new historical maps depicting the villages of Orlovo Ivanovka and Novo Orlovka, situated directly in the path of Stalin's Moscow counter-offensive. The counters depict Eastern Front Italian soldiers and Alpinin MMC and SMC, as well as the Italian SW needed for use in the enclosed scenarios. In addition there are 5/8" counters for AFVs and aircraft, some never provided in the system, such as the Soviet I-16 fighter-bomber. Both include eight new scenarios and should be available in May for \$39.95, although they are currently available on the Critical Hit website at www.criticalhit.com for \$24.95.

BUNKER IN STALINGRAD

To celebrate the release of *Valor of the Guards*, the latest issue of *Dispatches From The Bunker* takes a look at the monster scenario 'The First Bid', while Carl Nogueira focuses on the urban battlefield in Stalingrad with elements of *RB* and *VoTG* being examine in an ongoing series of tips.

Also inside are there new scenarios. 'Commandos Hold Fast' sees British Commandos holding an Italian Olive Groves from an assault by Panzer Grenadiers from the 16th Panzer Division, while 'Murphy Go Help the British', which is also set in Italy,



UK RETAILER STOCKISTS OF THIRD PARTY PRODUCTS

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

LEISURE GAMES, 100 Ballards Lane, Finchley, London, N3 2DN. Telephone (020) 8346 2327, e-mail them at shop@leisuregames.com, or go to www.leisuregames.com.

SECOND CHANCE GAMES, 182 Borough Road, Seacombe, The Wirral, L44 6NJ. Telephone (0151) 638 3535, e-mail them at sales@secondchancegames.com, or go to www.secondchancegames.com.

PLAN 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen, AB25 1NE. Telephone (01224) 624 467 or e-mail them at plan9@ifb.co.uk.

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

has the Americans attempting to wrestle the heights of boards 9 and 15 from the Herman Goering Division. The third scenario, 'Shock at Kamenewo' is an Eastern Front action featuring Russian infantry and armour (the latter setting up HIP) bursting out of the woods to break through the defending 4th Panzer Division.

Four issue subscriptions are available for \$15.00 (\$18.00 outside the USA). Issue one is available free with a subscription or an SAE, while other back issues are \$4.00 (\$4.50 outside the USA) or \$60.00 (\$65.00 outside the USA) for a complete set of issues 1-26. A complete set of issues 1-2 and a subscription for issues 26-29 is available for \$65.00 (\$70.00 outside the USA). Cheques should be made payable to Vic Provost and sent to *Dispatches from the Bunker*, P.O. Box 1025, Hinsdale MA 01235, or you can pay by PayPal to PinkFloydFan1954@aol.com. You can email them at aslunker@aol.com.

Ω

HEROES FROM SCOTLAND

Martin Vicca

The HEROES tournament this year came in crashingly early on the 7-10 March. Hardly had Christmas been put to bed then I was into my preparation for the visit. When you are married with children and wish to remain that way, extensive preparation needs to be done to ensure a successful trip. To this end I started mooted the possibility of a weekend away in July 2004 and by February 2008 this had crystallised into fact in my wife's "mind". Copious quantities of flowers and Chocolates helped. At times it felt like I was doing more for economies of Belgium and Kenya than the Marshall plan and the World Bank combined.

After this first and greatest hurdle had been cleared, my attention turned to the minor preparation for the trip. There would be three of us travelling down from Aberdeen and common sense told us that we'd have to use my car. Steve's was being claimed by his wife and Tony's is more of a roller skate than a real car. You can barely get the rulebook into a Caterham, let alone a full set of *ASL* and 3 blokes! A quick call to Direct Line ensures both Tony and Steve were covered to drive. When travelling 335 miles it's wise to share the driving.

After some discussion (not too much) we decided to take "the set". Although I am from an immigrant family (it's only my Grandfather who was born here) we all subscribe to the typical Aberdeen mantra look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves. As such we only have one set between the three of us. I am slowly building my own

set and hoped to add to it this weekend. Along with a few changes of clothes (one small bag each) went a bottle of Malt whiskey and a thermos filled with pure espresso coffee. Think a duo decuple espresso.

One final item was the production of this years t-shirt. I did these for the first time we went down some 4 years ago and they have fallen into a pattern with an *ASL* related shirt followed by a slogan followed by a semi-naked woman one. After my initial suggestion of a Panther and half naked girl with the legend "Tanks For The Mammaries" got dice thrown at me, I went with a simple hero counter. My good lady wife plays around with Paint Shop Pro so I was very pleased with the result. With these made up we were ready to rock.

THURSDAY

I actually felt pretty grotty the day we were supposed to leave so I let Tony start driving while Steve sat up front and I lounged in the back like Lord Muck. It really is the only way to travel. I'd not been driven so far since I was 16 and this time I had the back to myself (apart from a couple of coats and bags), no brothers or sisters - coming from a family of 5 this was a great luxury.

The journey down was smooth and pleasant and we finally arrived about 7.30 finding the hotel had not moved position and for once we were able to park in front of the hotel. Although we were certain the hotel was the right one when we went in I was not so sure. The chap behind the desk greeted us with a strange accent and a smile! What was this new thing they

had introduced? Could it be the hotel was being run by someone who actually knew what he was doing?

One comfort was gained by seeing the old reprobates in the bar. A good turnout for the Thursday evening with about 15 folk there already. At this time another thing happened which caused me to question whether I was in the right place, the beer was good. What had happened?

The rest of the evening was spent chatting to the guys and meeting new folk who I'd met on the forums but not in person. Chief amongst them was Dave Ramsay who because of his avatar I always think of as "Tractor Boy" poor chap.

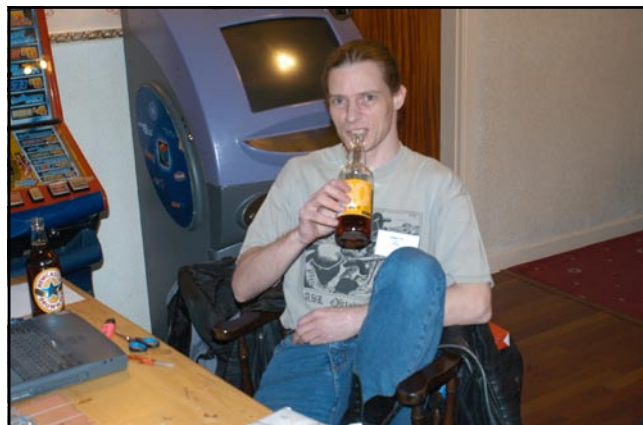
I didn't play anything that night but watched a couple of games and tried to make sense of the Tank Hunter Hero rules for a couple of folk. I failed to understand the difference between a DC Hero (only capable of creation in the owners MPH) and a THH creatable when the player can conduct CC Reaction Fire (i.e. during the opponent's MPH as well) The rules are not very clear since they talk about a negative modifier when the creating unit has a DC even though there are few circumstances that they can actually use that modifier. Typical *ASL*!

FRIDAY

Friday dawned bright and not too fuzzy which considering I had drunk more beer last night than I had in the previous two months, was quite an achievement. After a pleasant breakfast, I wandered over



From left to right, Steve Cook, Tony Gibson and Martin Vicca display their HEROES 2008 t-shirt designs.



The tournament organiser relaxes with a beer - note the reinforcement set-up by the computer :-)



to see Pete and discovered I'd been drawn against Ian Daglish for the first round. Since he was only just arriving I let him know that there was no hurry and waited for him to get organised prior to set-up.

The first round was an Italian themed one with the options of 'PbP22 Morire in Bellezza', 'AP19 Winter of Discontent' or 'AP18 Village Of The Damned'. I had played the first and third so was keen to play the second one since I prefer to play scenarios I have never tried. Luckily Ian was content to play that as well and off we went.

Ian is a delightful chap to play with a ready wit and a great deal of gossip about what is happening in the hobby. He does have a tendency to name drop ("I was chatting to Perry last week") but why the heck not? His hints about the *Normandy Action Pack* and the re-write of the bocage rules have fairly got me salivating over the new products in line. I also purchased his most recent book *Over the Battlefield: Epsom* and can heartily recommend it. It sheds new light on a battle which I'd always assumed was another Monty failure but in fact achieved some strategic success.

With Ian handily despatched my attention turned to the second round game. This round featured the "Men In Black" and all scenarios were SS ones. Being the afternoon/evening game the choice was of some fairly meaty scenarios. My opponent for this one was Tom Jackson, a Kiwi who is currently residing in London for his sins - either that or he did something terrible in a past life. A pleasant chap with a good line in patter. We opted to play 'Send in the Sand Rabbits' since I did not like the look of '5 Pound Prize' or the other option. Tom did not care which side he played so after dicing for it I was left with the Germans.

It's an interesting scenario this one since it is really two games in one. The SS enter against a thin (very thin) screening force of Russians and gain VPs for infantry beyond row T. Then on turn 3 a large Russian force enters which gains casualty VPs and exit VPs. Thus the Germans need to brush aside the screening force causing enough damage to force the Russians to give battle. This I achieved by didn't of rushing the defenders in a much more aggressive manner than Tom is used to.

It's something I have become aware

Continued on page 6, column 1

HEROES VIA LEICESTER

Wednesday and Thursday

Got an e-mail from the Hippy, saying that he'll be in Leicester Wednesday Night. Me being the kind person that I am, drove to Leicester (*Paul was driving up from Somerset that evening, so he only had to make a slight detour in exchange for some beer and a free bed for the night :-)* - Pete), and, staying the night, drove him to Blackpool, via a cup of tea at another friend's house (*it was her birthday, and Coalville is on the A50 up to Stoke where you join the M6 for the north west :-)* - Pete). This is why the 'Recce Party' was a bit late getting there. On arriving in Blackpool, we diverted to Staples to get some stuff.

Got to the hotel at about 14.45hrs (2.45pm, to you lot), and some of the early arrivers were actually pushing cardboard. This writer had a better idea, get nearly organised, then get some BEER!!! That's the proper way to go at an *ASL* tournament in England, point made!

Friday

Brekkie at 08.45hrs (08.30 - 09.30hrs).

The players are then paired against each other for the main event (a top seed against a bottom seed). A few of us decide to do some playtesting for Shaun Carter, for the forth-coming module *For Your Tomorrow* (known from now on as *FYT*), and I was to play long time foe, Ian Pollard. The scenario chosen was *FYT* 'G6 Jeep Jeep', with me as the Sons of Nippon. I shall not give away the scenario details, that's for you to find out when you buy it (when it comes out from Heat of Battle).

As we were setting up, Brian Hooper loses his tournament game, in turn 1, as most of his Germans were unbattle worthy, so he surrendered. Back to our game.

Turn 1. And my heroes come on, with the plan of attack (it might even work!). One Plat heads east to try and provide flank defence for my main force. They are attacked by the Brit 3in Mtr, and even find his BS hex, but no casualties. The rest of my force makes it's way to the road, to prevent a simple Brit drive-off. Brit PFP, and I receive some casualties from his rifle fire, a sqd is flipped, the Mtr doing nothing but make noise. Brits load up, and drive down the road, unloading outside of my LOS. No shots, damn. We question Shaun about buildings (the HSR in conflict with *FYT* SSR), and so continue with my greatest attribute, of annoying someone, but that is why he is here!

Turn 2. No Prep for me, but Banzai!! My 348 Banzai towards his Mtr, moves one hex, and is a Brkn 1/2 sqd. This also happens to my 448, both rolled 12 on M/Cs. Note to ones self: don't roll 12s. My mtr-carrying 1/2 sqd goes and gets himself killed for the Emperor. I line up along the road, ready for a possible speed-off-the-board by the Brits. It does not happen. A concealed 448 of mine ambushes a 457/LMG, and does the decent thing, kills them! RPh, and flank Plat's Ldr does sterling work at rallying those two brkn guys, the second one goes Berserk! Ian decides to do some shooting, and hits the trees (16 + 2, DR 11 = 13, No Effect). Total effect of the Brit PFP is that one of my 448s and two of his 457s lose concealment. Highlight of the turn, and game, for me, is that a 448 shoots at a retreating truck

3 hexes away, and kills it, not that common, as not many scenarios that I have played have had trucks. The residual pins a 1/2 sqd that unloads in that hex, not a bad result. DFP, and I shoot at a stack, the result is a brkn sqd, a pinned sqd and a heroic Ldr, not a bad, but not a good, result for me.

Turn 3. My plan might just work. Sniper is his usual for me, asleep! and in PFP, I break a 247. My Berserk guys make it to the enemy Mtr. In the DFP, Ian keeps hitting trees. AP, and BANZAI. In we go, first to die is the Mtr crew, followed by a joint killing, 448 and 457, in HtH. Concealed 238 and 457/LMG fight it out, both dying. Concealed 448/LMG reduce the Pinned 457 to a Pinned 247. At this point, Ian surrenders, and so my plan did work, which surprises me.

We both agree that the Brits need a bit of help, so suggest to Shaun to reduce the CVP by 2. Overall, it is an interesting scenario that can go either way with decent (even semi-decent) play.

Food required by your hero, so that is what I get, and a beer.

Saying of the Day:- Neil Brunger was eating his Sticky Toffee Pudding, and Brian Hooper called it 'Tarmac', this produced a round of laughter from the rest of us, and Neil will not be allowed to forget it!

No more games played tonight, as I have a drink. The Scottish guys have their T-shirts, this year showing a hero counter with their name on it, on the front, and the wounded hero counter on the back.

Beer drinking and food was the order for the rest of the day, with the Hippy coming back from the Tash (*the local rock club - Pete*) at about 03.30hrs, but do not worry, I was prepared for that, no sleep lost!

Saturday

Brekkie at the same time.

This playtest scenario from Shaun was *FYT* 'G2 Gun Control'. I played the Gurkhas, whilst Ian Pollard played the Japs. We both have plans, but, which one will work out right, that is the question?

Turn 1. Ian's first Lt Mtr has no WP, as does his 2nd, but that one has some smoke, but the last round. His off-board gun has only one round of WP, I blame Jap HQ for poor supply. The 228/HMG+448/LMG/9-1 combo shoot at the 648 in HOB1 Y10, which breaks. The HMG fires again, 3MC which I pass, we both roll Snipers, mine is his usual self, asleep, while Ian's breaks a 338. His MMG breaks after pinning my 9-2. There's a lot firing, and one unit moves, with me breaking a LMG. HtH a Jap 238 against 8-1/648/LMG, and they all go to their respective heavens. My PFP, and my Mtr does good with the WP, three placed, but no more WP. No movement, but my sniper is finally awake, and kills a Jap 8-0. My Gun crew decide to break.

Turn 2. Ian breaks a Lt Mtr trying for smoke. My Gun crew dies, shot by his off board Gun. A 448/LMG assaults, and is flipped to a 348, then in DFP, is hit by 12-0 shot, and is now a 238/LMG. Another 238 goes into HtH with my 9-2/648, and dies. Another HtH CC sees a 648 and a 238 kill each other. A DMed 648 rallies, one of not many tries by me during the game. I waste snakes on a smoke DR. A 9-2/648 get a 12-

I shot, and roll a NMC, Ian rolls a Boxcars, what a result, but forgot who against! A 338 re-crews my Gun. My 9-2/648 get Encircled. The new Gun crew HOB, and get a Hero, not often happens for a Gun crew!

We now stop, so me and Pete can go to the Pub to watch the Man U v Portsmouth match. This results in Man U being knocked out of the FA Cup. :-)

We work out that Ian set the Jap Gun on the wrong board edge, but never mind. All part of the fun.

Turn 3. Ian breaks his MMG again. Then a 238 that Banzai goes and dies. A 448 that Assault Moves becomes a 238. My Gun shoots at a 448, which desolves into a broken 237. A 238 advances into W7 against a 648/LMG, and dies in HtH (Kukris are very useful for that :-)). Two of his 448s are reduced to 348s in the PFPh. The only thing of note in the DFPh, is that my brkn 648 is DMed. CCPh, and 648 HtH pinned 238, and kill it. 648/LMG HtH his 348/LMG, and kill them. Not bad for me. That changes the game for me, I have a chance to win!

Turn 4. And Ian's shooting is shit in the PFPh. Banzai 8-0/238, the 238 breaks, but the 8-0 continues into W8, where he is wounded. Looks like the attack is going in now. The wounded 8-0 dies in CC, but does the nasty on my 648, by reducing him to a 338. His 228 MMG crew, which charges up, kills my 228 Mtr crew. My new gun crew manage to kill the above mentioned 228 on IF (wrong tournament, old chap!).

Turn 5. His off board Gun shoots at my Gun, snakes, improbable hit, straight hit, No Effect. His dice continue to roll low, getting another hit, but to no avail. HtH CC, and I reduce a 448 to a 238. My rallies keep missing by one, how unusual!!! Final CC, and Ian needs a 10 or less, rolls a 12, phew and another win for your hero. This was Ian's third 12 in as many CC rolls, but, hey, I'll take any win!! :-)

Yep, I am 2-0 in games played, which is unusual for me.

Watched the Barnsley vs. Chelsea match, and am glad to report that Chelsea are not in the FA Cup.:-) just like Man Utd (before Pete gets his jib at me, yes, I Know that Man Utd knocked Arsenal out).

Again, just the one game for your hero, but I continue with the most important thing, BEER DRINKING!

Sunday

Brekkie at the usual time, then those players in the tournament play their last game.

Prizes:- First - Tim Bunce - Two figurine statue. (What are they called???)

Second - Martin Vicca - One figurine statue.

Last Place - Ray 'Loser' Porter - £25 voucher from Second Chance Games (I wonder who got the best prize out of those three?)

Snakes - Micheal Davies - £2

Boxcars - Craig Benn - £12

It is said, by quite a few here, that Ray is after my title, bring on the competition is what I say! The more of us at the proper end of the ladder, the bottom rungs, the more it shows that this game is being played as it should be, for FUN.

After Pete gave out the prizes, he mentioned that Trev would be here, but there was a death of someone close to him, my belated sympathies go out to the friends and family. As Pete was trying to explain (with a frog in his throat), the reason for Trev not being here, I said 'It's only a game', which in my view is so very correct.

No competitive games played by your hero, but I was happy just drinking and talking, and have helped Ian Daghish with a scenario of his, about, guess what?, Normandy. Now that's a surprise! Yes, I can even annoy him as well.:-)

After most of the attendees had left, Ian Pollard, Nigel Blair, the Hippy and me went to the pub for our after tourney meal. Quote from the waitress to Ian and me 'Glad to see you two are real men' as we had eaten our big meal. Nigel and the hippy couldn't eat theirs! Pete has to leave to catch the train, and as we three that are left cross the bridge, we do not give him any grief, yea right!

We three leave Monday morning, and can announce that next year's event is same place, 12 - 14 March, so get it organised with the other half, and work, to be there!



The main prize.

of during my visits to HEROES, some play one way some another. It is interesting to see how different styles conflict. Back home we are generally trying to finish a scenario before 12 pm having started at 8.30pm at the earliest. This leads to a very aggressive style of play which seems to suit the modern scenario. When we encounter a player who is used to a more measured approach they do tend to crumble. When we encounter a player who is extremely careful in their approach and exploits mistakes then we tend to crumble.

Since this game finished about 5pm I suddenly noticed I had not eaten at all that day. Woops! Concentrating very hard does that to you but the flip side is you cannot hold your beer! Food was arranged and again, strangely it was a lot better than ever before. What was happening? Had we really gone to Blackpool, a place where even the salads are deep fried?

The evening was spent chatting and taking part in a poker game where I had great fun pretending not to know how to play. When it came down to myself and Nigel for the money I thought maybe it would be a good idea not to win since then my play would seem like a stratagem rather than the piece of fun it was meant to be. Thankfully the decision was taken out of my hands when my ace ten hit a pair of aces and Nigel calmly called me since his pair of 8s had hit their trip. We spent the rest of the night chatting and enjoying some decent company and whiskey. The owner popped down and we learnt of his background and from that realised that the reason for the improvement was he knew what he was doing running a hotel.

SATURDAY

Saturday was a cold and blustery day. I went for a walk along the seafront



"G6?" "Miss." Shaun Carter (left) and Paul Case play Computer Battleships, tho Shaun claims he was working on Kohima and Paul says he was writing for VFIT - a likely story :-)





The runner-up prize.

to clear my head and to get the gen on my next opponent whom Steve had played in the last round. Mark, according to Steve, was a newish player who was very aggressive in the attack and not adverse to taking a few risks to achieve what he wanted. Of course Steve had only lost since the dice had been against him, not due to any mistakes or better play by his opponent, perish the thought :-). This round was a Japanese one and I'd not played any of the scenarios so was quite happy to go with Mark's choice of 'Victoria Cross'. Given what I'd learned from Steve I was happy that Mark chose to play the Japs in defence. It was only the second or third PTO scenario Mark had played and it showed. His defence was static and I was able to pluck it out piecemeal.

Folk often get blinded by the -1 HTH modifier that the Japanese have and forget about the ability to step reduce



"I'm sure those updated bocage rules are here somewhere." Ian Daghish (left) in action against Chris Walton.

and just fire normally. Admittedly I set up turn 1 reinforcements on board but we noticed this very early and I offered to restart, pulling the ACs back but Mark chose to let things stand as at that point he'd immobilised one of the cars. It was a decision he came to regret as the other then wandered straight up to a kill stack and absorbed their fire. In the end I don't think it mattered much to the game. I'd have risked the fire without the cars cover to get forwards and there was plenty of time left (3 turns) by the time I'd broken or killed all the Japanese.

It was now that I realised how tired I was. It is easy to forget how much playing this daft game can take out of you especially if you "forget" to eat properly.

Saturday afternoon saw the appearance of Andy and Second Chance Games. He had a fair variety of stuff available, both official and TPP. I picked up the new Heat of Battle module *Operation Merkur*, a nice looking pack with several cracking scenarios. The map looks cool if a little large for a single sheet. The counters I'm not so keen on but that's more due to them being shiny and different to normal ones. I had hoped to get *For King And Country* but the only one he



From left to right, Shaun Carter, Malcolm Hatfield and Paul Kettlewell at the bar.

had was priced at £105 which I felt was excessive so I'll wait for the reprint.

My next opponent was Craig Benn in 'Assaulting Tes'. This unfortunately clashed with the Scotland-England rugby match so although I got to see the Ireland-Wales one I missed the important clash.

'Assaulting Tes' is a real Personal Morale Check scenario if you are the German attackers. You have a plethora of armoured units which support your infantry but the Russian defenders have some good anti-armour defences including large calibre OBA. If you can get into the village with your infantry then you will win but you will shed several AFV's on the way. Luckily I grokked this early on and kept pushing in with the infantry. By the end I had a 2:1 superiority in infantry in the village and Craig conceded when he lost his OBA and with it any realistic chance of pushing me out.

This let me on 4-0 and a realistic shot at the title. I'd never been there before so it was new territory for me. When Tim beat Dominic in his game it meant I had to win tomorrow to take first place. My only concern was this: I avow that I play this game for fun and although I like to win, would my good humour and bonhomie



"Poker? I didn't touch her."



Tim Bunce (left) and Martin Vicca contest the final.



From left to right, Ray Porter receives the prize for worst player, while Michael Davies is paid £2 for rolling snakes the most in a game. Finally, Tim Bunce is presented with the HEROES 2008 Champion prize.

survive a match where the winner takes all? Could I cope with a game where both players are desperate to win and using every trick in the book to do so?

SUNDAY

In the end I need not have worried: Tim is a gem of a guy to play. The game was 'Lousy Crossroads' and it swung back

and forth like an indecisive bisexual at an orgy. First I had it won then he snatched it back then it was all mine but then soon he placed his hands on the prize and finally I just fell short. A fantastic game which saw ridiculous luck on both sides. Mistakes were made. Leeway was given. Forgot to rally... go ahead now. Tim pointed out stuff I'd missed and I returned the favour. If all games could be played like that one I'd

be very happy indeed. In the end he just edged me out for the win. A very worthy winner.

All in all a great weekend. The hotel was excellent (mine host even gave us all a drink at the end of the weekend), some great company and I cannot wait for March to roll around next year.

Ω

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Here are the individual win/loss records for the tournament

POS.	PLAYER	P	W	L	RND	CRUS
1	Tim Bunce	5	5	0	0	3102.0
2	Martin Vicca	5	4	1	5	3061.3
3	Gerard Burton	5	4	1	3	3036.3
4	Sam Prior	5	4	1	2	2977.5
5	Craig Benn	5	3	2	4	2981.7
6	Mark Blackmore	5	3	2	3	2995.0
7	Dominic McGrath	5	3	2	2	2828.3
8	Steve Cook	5	3	2	2	2795.0
9	David Ramsey	5	3	2	1	3003.3
10	Michael Davies	5	3	2	1	2966.7
11	Tony Gibson	5	3	2	1	2830.0
12	Brian Hooper	5	3	2	1	2750.0
13	Andrew Whinnett	5	2	3	3	3230.0
14	James Neary	5	2	3	2	2900.0
15	Tom Jackson	5	2	3	2	2580.0
16	John O'Reilly	5	2	3	1	2977.5
17	Nigel Blair	5	2	3	1	2737.5
18	Ian Daglish	5	2	3	1	2690.0
19	Neil Brunger	5	2	3	1	2405.0
20	Miles Wichahn	5	1	4	2	2885.0
21	Andy McMaster	5	1	4	1	2375.0
22	Chris Walton	5	1	4	1	2375.0
23	Paul Legg	5	1	4	1	2375.0
24	Ray Porter	5	0	5	1	No Wins

RND is the round in which the player first lost – if players have the same W-L result, the one losing in the later round places higher.

The Crus column is the average Crusader Ladder rating of the opponents beaten.

PLAYER RESULTS

Here are the individual win/loss records.

PLAYER	P	W	L
Martin Barker	2	1	1
Craig Benn	9	7	2
Matt Blackman	2	1	1
Mark Blackmore	9	4	5
Nigel Blair	8	4	4
Neil Brunger	6	2	4
Tim Bunce	5	5	0
Gerard Burton	6	5	1
Steve Cook	5	3	2
Ian Daglish	5	2	3
Michael Davies	5	3	2
Tony Gibson	5	3	2
Malcolm Hatfield	1	1	0
Brian Hooper	8	5	3
Tom Jackson	5	2	3
Paul Kettlewell	1	0	1
Paul Legg	5	1	4
Dominic McGrath	5	3	2
Andy McMaster	6	2	4
James Neary	5	2	3
John O'Reilly	5	2	3
Pete Phillipps	3	1	2
Ian Pollard	1	0	1
Ray Porter	8	0	8
Sam Prior	6	4	2
David Ramsey	5	3	2
Martin Vicca	5	4	1
Chris Walton	5	1	4
Andrew Whinnett	6	3	3
Miles Wichahn	5	1	4

THE SCENARIOS

Here is the table of Scenario Win/Loss records:

SCENARIO	ALLIED	AXIS
A74 Valhalla Bound	0	4
AP18 Village Of The Damned	0	3
AP19 Winter of their Discontent	3	2
ESG27 Typhoon's Vortex	1	0
FF8 Send in the Sand Rabbits	3	1
FRF19 About His Shadowy Sides	0	1
HP2 Lousy Crossroads	4	6
ITR-1 Debacle At Sung Kiang	0	1
J111 Prussia In Flames	2	1
J43 3rd RTR in the Rain	0	1
J94 Kempf at Melikhovo	1	0
PBP22 Morire in Belleza	1	1
PBP3 Children of the Kunaii	0	3
RP8 Victoria Cross	1	3
SP115 The Five Pound Prize	5	3
SP125 Nunshigum	0	1
SP134 Barracuda!	1	0
SP149 Labarthe's Charade	0	1
SP51 Stryker's Charge	1	3
SP57 Big Toul Pocket	1	1
SP6 Udarnik Bridgehead	2	2
SP89 Assaulting Tes	3	3
TT6 Fruit and Nuts	3	3
TOTALS	76	32
		44



DOUBLE ONE

LONDON 2008



Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 June

ASL players of all standards are invited to attend Double One, London's ASL tournament. Players are matched with others of similar ratings for three rounds of competitive play. There will be two rounds on Saturday and one on Sunday. In each round, players pick one scenario from a choice of three carefully selected scenarios. Each round is expected to have one scenario from the Western Front, one from the Eastern Front and one from the Pacific Theatre, so tournament entrants will need to be familiar with chapters A to D and chapter G of the ASL rule book. For those not interested in competitive play, or not able to make it for the whole weekend, there'll be scope for friendly play.

Venue

Double One 2008 will be held in the Lecture Centre, Brunel University, London, UB8 3PH. On-site facilities include single ensuite and standard bedrooms, free car parking on registration, mini market, cash points, a self-service cafeteria, licensed bars and a gym.

Registration

To register for a place in the tournament, email your contact details (including vehicle details if you need a free parking space) to brendan@doubleone-online.net. If you book your registration before **Friday 9th May**, it will cost £10. If you book your registration after that date, it will cost £15.

Accommodation

If you're going to need accommodation, you'll need to book your bedroom at Brunel before **Friday 9th May** otherwise you'll have to book accommodation off-site. There are some hotels about a mile away in Uxbridge but your accommodation costs will be higher off-site and you'll need to make your own arrangements.

Bedroom rates include breakfast and are £35.25 inc VAT for a standard bedroom and £44.65 inc VAT for an ensuite bedroom. To book a bedroom at Brunel University for Double One 2008, send your contact details before Friday 9th May to brendan@doubleone-online.net.

If you want to know more about Double One 2008: www.doubleone-online.net

Rank	Player	Played	W—D—L	Points
219=	Wayne Bamber	55	24-0-33	2725
219=	Hamish Hughson	4	0-0-4	2725
221=	Steve Cocks	4	0-0-4	2720
221=	Marc Horton	6	1-0-5	2720
223	Paul Legg	110	44-2-64	2705
224	Justin Key	49	19-1-28	2700
225	Simon Hoare	4	0-0-4	2690
226	Jeff Howarden	7	2-0-5	2685
227=	Andy Mcmaster	29	10-0-19	2680
227=	Christain Speis	5	1-0-4	2680
229	James Crosfield	15	6-0-9	2670
230	Pedro Barradas	7	1-0-6	2655
231	Nigel Ashcroft	52	19-1-32	2635
232	Adrian Catchpole	11	2-0-9	2625
233	Adrian Maddocks	12	3-0-9	2620
234	Arthur Garlick	21	2-5-14	2615
235	Bryan Brinkman	9	1-0-8	2610
236	Roger Cook	29	9-2-18	2590
237	John Fletcher	6	0-0-6	2585
238	Chris Netherton	30	10-2-18	2560
239	Mike Stanbridge	47	13-1-33	2555
240=	Ian Pollard	104	39-1-64	2545
240=	Michael Rhodes	43	10-0-33	2545
242	Robert Seeney	5	0-0-5	2510
243	Nick Carter	11	2-0-9	2475
244	John Kennedy	24	5-0-19	2415
245	Chris Ager	26	7-0-19	2400
246	Paul Case	116	30-3-83	2380
247	Chris Walton	30	7-0-23	2370
248	Nick Ranson	20	3-1-16	2360
249	Jackie Eves	36	10-0-26	2305
250	Ray Porter	20	1-0-19	2165

WW2 German Tanks For Sale In Bulgaria

The following report was found on the BBC website in March. There appears to be no true to the rumour that Shaun Carter was seen boarding a flight to Bulgaria after HEROES 2008 :-)

Nazi tanks that have lain neglected in Bulgarian fields for decades are to be put up for auction - and one can be yours for as little as £77,000 (€100,000).

The Second World War relics have provided a rudimentary first line of defence against a Nato invasion of the former Eastern Bloc country since the 1950s.

Dug into the ground along the Turkish border, the Panzer tanks, Jagdpanzer tank destroyers and Sturmgeschuetz assault guns have been largely forgotten since the end of the Cold War.

But after audacious thieves made away with one of rarest pieces last year, the Bulgarian government decided to launch a recovery programme to save the remaining machines.



Many of the tanks have already been stripped bare by looters, but 22 tanks and guns are to be put up for sale, the Bulgarian defence ministry has announced.

The €100,000 tag is just a starting price, according to Trud, the Bulgarian newspaper. It reports that the best preserved pieces will be offered to museums first before going on general sale.

Around 200 tanks and heavy artillery pieces were given by the Nazis to the Bulgarian regime during the Second World War. After Bulgaria changed sides in 1944 the guns were turned back on the Nazis, helping chase the Germans out of southeastern Europe.

After the war most of the Nazi tanks in Bulgaria were smelted down, but around 40 were buried along the border with Turkey.

In December 2007, Bulgarian authorities arrested two German nationals and a Bulgarian army officer who allegedly stole one of the tanks and attempted to steal a second near the town of Jambul.

Collectors were apparently willing to pay millions of euros for the stolen tank, which was reportedly a personal present from Adolf Hitler to the former Bulgarian queen.

Most of the other pieces that have been dug up are thought to be less valuable, having suffered at the hands of looters.



London's Advanced Squad Leaders (LASL) welcomes ASL/ASLSK players and potential players. If you're passing through or staying over in London, you're welcome to come along and take part. There's no fee for taking part or spectating.

We usually meet on the second Saturday each month from 11am and play until the games are finished!

LASL's venue is located near Chancery Lane tube station (central line) in central London. It's quiet and has ample space for 16 players.

If you want to come along send your name and contact details to brendan@doubleone-online.net at least 48 hours beforehand. Precise venue details will be sent to you.



Brendan Clark

Pre-ordered in October 2006 and received in March 2008. But the postal sorting office clerk got my *Valor of the Guards* before me, just so they could slap the Chancellor of the Exchequer's £15.00 charge onto my bill, as a small but valuable contribution to his overdraft for my bank. So was the total bill of £52.77 a price worth paying?

As usual, the standard of presentation and materials of this, the seventh historical *ASL* module, are what we've come to expect from the publishers, MMP. It portrays the brutal urban struggle for central Stalingrad, where the German 6th Army and the Soviet 62nd Army fought for months from house-to-house and room-to-room, before the battle culminated in defeat for the German Army in January of 1943.

So what's in this module? You get two 22"x32" map sheets showing central Stalingrad and its residential districts and the western bank of the Volga, five counter-sheets, two Chapter Dividers with useful campaign game holding boxes, and *ASL* rules chapter V, which covers some new units, new terrain and the campaign games.

There are four campaign games. 'CG I Central Railway Station' runs from 15 to 22 September 1942 and covers the bloody battle for Stalingrad's main railway station, which changed hands between the German attackers and Russian defenders three to four times, and nearby buildings. 'CG II Drive to the Volga', from 14 to 22 September, concentrates on the 6th Army's thrust to the river bank to reach the critical main ferry landings to interdict Russian reinforcements and supplies. 'CG III Battle Along the Riverbank', from 23 to 27 September 1942, is the titanic struggle

for the main ferry landings, which the Germans had captured while hemming the 13th Guards Division into footholds along the banks of the Volga. Finally, CG IV rolls CG II and III into one massive contest, from 14 to 27 September 1942.

And scenarios? Well you're spoilt for choice. You get 17 of 'em:

- VotG1- The First Bid - 19 turns
- VotG2- Russe! Drown in the Wolga! - 6 turns
- VotG3- Khopka's Crossing - 5.5 turns
- VotG4- The Last Fifteen - 6 turns
- VotG5- The Specialists' House - Part 1 is 5 turns; Part 2 is 5 turns
- VotG6- Enter Dragan - 7 turns
- VotG7- Storming the Station - 7 turns
- VotG8- Hammer and Nail - 5 turns
- VotG9- Eviction Notice - 4.5 turns
- VotG10- The Darkest Day - 6.5 turns
- VotG11- A Dangerous Possibility - 4.5 turns
- VotG12- Siberian Shockwave - 8.5 turns
- VotG13- Escape from Komsomol Park - 5.5 turns
- VotG14- Pavlov's House - 5.5 turns
- VotG15- Perfected in Battle - 6 turns
- VotG16- Under Murderous Fire - 6 turns
- VotG17- On The Verge of Extinction - 6.5 turns

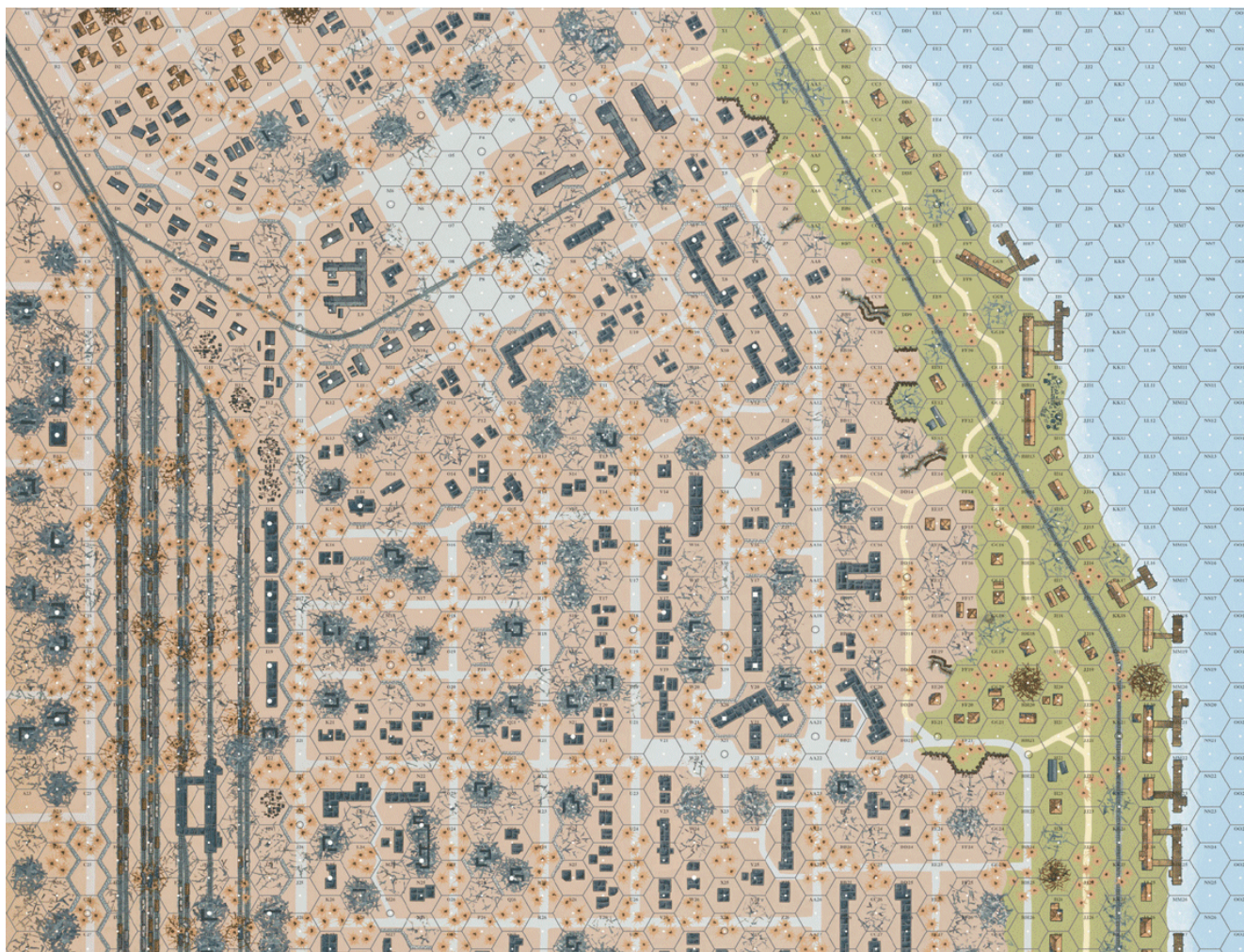
The scenarios range from a 4.5 turn scenario - 'A Dangerous Possibility' - with ten German squads defending against 16 Russian squads to the monster 19 turn scenario - 'The First Bid' - with 99 Russian squads and 13 KV1s and T34s defending against a German force of 81 squads and 15 StuGs. Two other scenarios are:

VOTG2: 'Russe! Drown in the Wolga!' This features 13 German squads and three half-squads defending with an HMG and two MMGs against 10 Russian squads and 5 half-squads with MMGs, LMGs, demo-charges and a 76mm infantry gun. In this one the Germans have penetrated to near the Volga's western bank and are able to lay down interdicting machine gun fire on Russian reinforcements as they are being ferried across the river.

VotG17: 'On The Verge of Extinction' has 39 German squads, a 10-3 leader, support weapons and guns, in a bitter fight to the end against 39 Russian squads, support weapons and six tanks, one equipped with a flamethrower.

Prompted by a long-standing *VASL* opponent 'across the pond', I've already bucked my trend of placing my newly acquired modules on the shelf and started the first scenario, 'The First Bid'. This scenario is just a bit on the large side, with 19 turns, the whole map, 180 squads and nearly 30 tanks and assault guns. But I like feasting on big scenarios, instead of snack bars - those 5 turn scenarios don't satisfy my appetite. More about 'The First Bid' in future editions of this journal, which will be featuring the action as it unfolds in stages.

For an *ASL* player who is about to venture into Stalingrad, at first sight the maps presents an image of one shapeless mass of rubble. Encompassing a large area, the maps extend from the north of the '9th January Square' to the south of the 'Square of Fallen Heroes' and from the west of the Stalingrad-1 Rail Station to the banks of the Volga and the critical ferry landings in the east. The hand-painted artwork depicts many broken and ruined urban features. Much of the map is dominated by wrecked



buildings, rubble, debris and roads intermittently punctuated by shell-holes. When you start to plan an axis of attack and consider the different routes your tanks might take you soon realise how many obstacles lay in their way, especially in the western map zones where rubble is liberally strewn around.

Unlike ‘*Red Barricades*’, there are no massive factory buildings. This is the residential district of central Stalingrad. You’ll see railway lines stretching down from the north on the western side of the map, a railway station, railway carriages in sidings, some wrecked. There are a few small factory buildings, and lumberyards and wooden workshops to the north. Elsewhere there is the occasional boulevard, and a few squares. Even fountains and a theatre. Cellars and sewers lay below buildings, with sewers providing an alternative network most readily available to the Russian defenders. Russian MMC may use sewer movement if accompanied by a leader or hero. German MMC have to be accompanied by a leader who has passed a 4TC. The Russian defenders are

also bolstered by ‘fanatic strongpoints’: historical strongpoints, specific buildings activated during campaign games; battalion strongpoints purchased during the reinforcement phase of a campaign game; and NKVD strongpoints, designated under scenario SSR.

There are gutted buildings, roofless structures that provide platforms for mortars to bring down their bombs from the uppermost floor locations. And there are partially collapsed buildings, with sections of their walls still standing. These are new terrain features even for veterans of ‘*Red Barricades*’. An added detail are the names, street names, like ‘Leninskaya’ and ‘Kievskaya’, and names for squares and buildings too, such as the aptly named ‘Square of the Fallen Heroes’, the obligatory ‘Red Square’, the ‘Rail Station’ and the ‘Nail Factory’ where the fighting raged bitterly.

This level of granularity, or detail, continues on into some units. You’ll find German assault engineers with a demo charge depiction in the top left of their

counter, which also shows their smoke exponent of 5. Russian assault engineers share the same demo charge depiction but with a smoke exponent of 2. Both units are classed as Elite and have their CCV increased by +1. 6-2-8 NKVD units make an appearance, classed as 2nd Line troops, they have an underscored morale and an ELR of 5, and these boys have a broken morale of 9 when they’re in a squad. They receive a -1 DRM for Heat of Battle and when a field promotion occurs they’ll create a Commissar. As a German player you’ll come to dread them, and you’ll be watching out for the red hammer and sickle on the top right hand corner of their counter. While the Germans come equipped in the larger scenarios and in the campaign games with demo charges, flamethrowers and Stuka dive-bombers.

So, going back to my original question, was *VOTG* worth the wait and the bill? For me it was. They say “the proof is in the pudding”, and it tastes good!

THE BITTER END

Michael Davies

This scenario comes from *Recon By Fire 2*, it's one of ten scenarios tucked between articles on breaching operations, very aggressive use of halftracks and more. It caught my eye as it features a full on retreat by elements of a German SS Division short of ammunition, petrol and feeling fragile (ELR 2), hotly pursued by an awesome force of Soviet armour, including lots fearsome JS II and III tanks, and tank riders.

GERMAN SET-UP

The Tactical Objective is very simple, you win by exiting more AFVs off 40Q1 than the Russians. You start the game with 15 tanks and tank destroyers, the Red Army fields 36. Clearly you not only need to exit units, you also need to slow down, stop and/or destroy Soviet armour to win. That said one of your tanks or tank destroyers off board is enough to win provided no Soviet armoured units exit.

You do get some help from the terrain, scenario length, and the strength of your own forces, most of your grief will come from the Red Army, fuel shortage and to a lesser extent ammunition shortage.

The 36 Russians AFVs are a mix of heavy tanks, medium tanks and assault guns. Heavies are six IS-2, six IS-2m and three IS-3 tanks. All have 11 factor side armour, huge 122L guns, and reasonable co-axial machine gun armour. Hull and turret armour varies, improving with each IS mark. For the IS-3 frontal hull and turret armour is 26 factors, resistant to every weapon you possess. The main weaknesses of the IS series are low ammunition stowage and rate of fire, albeit in this scenario you also suffer from low ammo, and to be honest do you need rate of fire for a 122L gun! Soviet medium tanks are six T-34 M43 and six T-34/85, which have better mobility and MG armament, enjoy rate of fire, have access to APCR ammunition, and in the case of T-34/85 are allowed a single use smoke discharger shot. Their armour is nowhere near as strong as the IS tanks, only proof against small arms and resistant to 75L rounds, your other weapons will penetrate easily with a realistic chance of a burning wreck and automatically dead crew/passengers. The high speed and sheer number of T-34 makes them a credible threat to your

troops. The remaining enemy armour is assault guns, five SU-85 and four SU-152. Both began life as tank destroyers, the SU-152 as a measure against the early Tiger and Panther tanks, the SU-85 as a design to get the 85mm gun into an armoured vehicle. With the development of the IS series and T-34/85, both types are starting to show their weaknesses. In mobile actions the lack of a turret makes advancing fire shots less likely to hit, both lack machine gun armament, and have limited ammunition. On the plus side they are mobile, the 152mm Gun is deadly against infantry and buildings, and causes shell holes. When it exits do note the Russians must have a functioning Gun to claim their exit value, whereas yours can limp off with a disabled Gun and Recall marker.

As well as lots of armour the enemy bring an awful lot of infantry and support weapons, ten 3-2-8 half squads, another ten 2-4-8 half squads, three light machine guns, two demolition charges and three leaders, a 9-2 and two 8-1. All must enter as Riders, up to 14PP per vehicle allows two half squads, one or two support weapons and a leader. Some attackers will take good care of their infantry, others will be less kind, firing main armament, and changing turret covered arc without regard to the Riders comfort or safety! The Russian infantry are not especially effective against armour, although they can engage in close combat or make attacks using demolition charges. More likely they will be used to counter infantry units,

to protect vehicles from panzerfaust or panzerschrecks, and anti-tank magnetic mines. Some infantry will be killed when you burn tanks, others from bailing out, others will go down under a hail of small arms fire or in close combat. You can't ignore the enemy infantry, generally though you should concentrate more on the armour.

Pay particular attention to the entry conditions for the Russians. They must enter over three turns bringing on at least nine AFVs per turn. So a maximum of eighteen vehicles can enter on turn one. The infantry must enter as riders, on top of at least ten vehicles.

A few quick notes about the enemy. As Guards they gain a +1 for special ammo roles, just APCR for some units and HE for the SU-85. Enemy ELR is 4, increasing enemy resilience. SAN is four, high enough to generate some sniper attacks over the game. Put human wave to the back of your mind it is really unlikely to happen.

To recap, the enemy forces are armour heavy, with some really strong armoured units, very effective anti-armour and anti-personnel weapons, and good mobility.

Historical Special Rule 2 makes a big difference to your force's strength. Firstly you suffer from ammunition shortage (A19.131). The rules are pretty clear, the main effects are the risk of unit replacement during fire combat, negation of Fire Lanes, and an increased breakdown chance for Guns and machine guns. Replacement will take a 5-4-8/6-5-8 squad down to a 4-4-7, with a loss of firepower, morale and perhaps range, not welcome news when the fire attack that triggered the event was probably unsuccessful! Keep in view SMC are not subject to Ammunition Shortage penalty, nor are panzerschrecks, demolition charges, captured equipment or panzerfausts.

AFV and anti-tank guns also suffer. Depletion numbers are reduced by one, negating the Elite SS increase. All your guns are normally B12, with A19.131 in effect they have a circled B of 11 which gives them the same potential for breakdown as IS series tanks in the Soviet OB.

KPG13 Fuel Shortage rules also apply. After entry you must check for fuel shortage each time you try to change

THE BITTER END
RBF-16 *Recon By Fire 2* (Design: Russo Haggard)

Historical Special Rules:
Units do not pay a minimum of 1 MP in a road, even if they are not in a road. Units do not pay a minimum of 1 MP in a road, even if they are not in a road. Units do not pay a minimum of 1 MP in a road, even if they are not in a road.

Unit	ELR	SAN
Elements of the 2nd SS Panzerdivision (The "Ariete")	2	11
Elements of the 2nd SS Motorized Infantry	2	11
Elements of the 2nd SS Panzerdivision (The "Ariete")	3	11
Elements of the 2nd SS Motorized Infantry	3	11
Elements of the 2nd SS Panzerdivision (The "Ariete")	4	11
Elements of the 2nd SS Motorized Infantry	4	11
Elements of the 2nd SS Panzerdivision (The "Ariete")	5	11
Elements of the 2nd SS Motorized Infantry	5	11
Elements of the 2nd SS Panzerdivision (The "Ariete")	6	11
Elements of the 2nd SS Motorized Infantry	6	11
Elements of the 2nd SS Panzerdivision (The "Ariete")	7	11
Elements of the 2nd SS Motorized Infantry	7	11



Vehicular Covered Arc or attempt to start in the Movement Phase. On a natural 12 DR you immediately stop and place an Out Of Gas counter. The AFV can no longer move, it can't change VCA and even turreted vehicles are subject to a +1 DRM penalty to change TCA! Mostly this is bad news, it really hurts tank destroyers as they cannot change their Covered Arc, and Soviet troops will tend to avoid moving into a fixed Covered Arc. For any vehicle moving towards the board edge the journey ends, with the hull rear pointing towards the approaching Russians. At best it will happen when you are in a position you intended the unit to be. Don't forget the gas DR takes place before stall checks, and doesn't count as movement so doesn't trigger defensive fire.

Despite fuel and ammunition shortages you still have a credible force, on board you start with six and a half 5-4-8 squads, a 9-2, and 8-0 leader with a medium machine gun, light machine gun, two panzerschrecks and a pair of Pak 43 (88LL) Guns – all have the option of Hidden Initial Placement East of the canal on board 40/43.

Arriving on turn one on the east edge are another four squads, LMG, panzerschreck, demolition charge and fifteen AFVs with three Armour Leaders.

The armour is pretty good, there are some restrictions on entry and leader placement but two 10-2 and a 9-2 Leader are welcome additions to your strength. You get five Panthers, five Panzer IVJ, two JgdPz IV/70, and five JgdPz V (JadgPanthers).

In general everything armoured can be killed by Soviet 122L guns, is resistant to 85L rounds, and can often survive 76L hits. The 152 gun is just a bit deadlier than an 85L gun.

Your own guns can expect to kill T-34s or assault guns, but will have to get a favourable armour facing to destroy an IS tank of any mark. That said there is no reason why you shouldn't try for Deliberate Immobilisation, flanking or rear target aspect shots. Perhaps the only real problem is the frontal armour of an IS III, both the turret and hull are 26 Armour factors, highly resistant to the 27 to kill of your 88LL guns.

The last bad news from HSR 2 is to prohibit bore sighting. OK this is only an issue for the Pak 43 and on board MMG so don't over emote about this.

Beside guns you have panzerschreck and lots of panzerfausts. Two per squad gives you twenty PF each with three hex range. Now that's a lot, however two

problems spring to mind. Firstly if you hit the 26 factor armour of a IS2/3 tank your basic To Kill is 31, so you need a five or less to kill. Second and more serious not every PF shot will kill a tank, and there are thirty six Russian tanks in play. Few Russians will want you to enjoy twenty PF shots even against their thickest armour.

The panzerschreck has a basic To Kill of 26, superb against medium tanks, with a certainty of at least one shot and a max range of four hexes. Expect to enjoy using them.

Worth mentioning your ELR is low, just two. Expect to see some 4-4-7 squads or half squads, and if you see any conscripts you are either unlucky or have been fighting hard.

Remember infantry can do serious damage to armour in close combat, try for ATMM when faced with combat against armour, it's a sweet way to take out an IS tank. Russian assault guns are slightly more vulnerable as they have no MG armament.

With a SAN of four and many Soviet weapons blazing away expect some sniper attacks, killing, wounding or pinning infantry will frustrate your opponent, any exposed crew should be prime targets though particularly anything close to the bridge.

In summary you have a pretty strong force, a lot of decent Infantry, plenty of tanks some of them very powerful. Its weaknesses are simply numbers, and to an extent quality compared to the really heavy enemy armour and both ammunition and fuel shortages. Still if you had a full load of fuel and ammunition plus slightly greater numbers you'd stand and fight rather than run away!

Almost certainly terrain is the most important consideration in planning your game. To win at you need to exit more AFVs off the west edge at Q1 than the Soviets are able to. The canal on board 40 can only be crossed by armour at the bridge. Depending on where you enter, whether you stop, which vehicle you are driving it will take at least two or more likely three player turns to drive off. It's your choice whether to leave this till turn five or even turn six. You also need to take into account the possibility of low fuel or stalling for some of your vehicles. I'd suggest sending two or three to almost guarantee one makes it.

One idea I've been kicking around is trying to destroy the bridge. There are two ways that can do the job. The least

likely is for the Red Army to do the job with a 152mm round, needs a hit on the Infantry target type and a subsequent roll of snakes! Could be accidental when shooting at one of your infantry units, or a deliberate Russian idea to trap you on the wrong side of the River. I guess there is a remote chance you'd capture a SU-152 and deliberately target the bridge.

A better idea tries to use the demolition charge in your initial forces. Send the DC to the Q2/Q3 bridge, dismount, pass the US check, move away then pass a NTC to detonate. With a run of good luck, you can reach the bridge in two player turns, dismount on the third, set the charge on the fourth, move away on the fifth and detonate it in any subsequent Fire Phase. Expect no help from the Russians, and for perverse luck to intervene. A stalled or Out Of Gas roll spoils the fun, as does gacked US rolls, or an effects roll of >9. You can improve the odds by using a squad in preference to a half squad, and adding your 8-1 Leader to modify the US roll. Russian counter measures mostly involve attacks on the DC setting unit. IFT and ordnance attacks can be screened to an extent by other defensive units, a greater threat is the Red army sniper who can relocate to the bridge and complicate movement to the bridge, charge setting and detonation.

By all means try to blow the bridge if the idea appeals, enjoy it if the plan works, accept that some luck is needed to make it appear effortless!

Luck will not be a factor if you can't delay the advance of Russian armour. You start the game with an on-board screening force and can add some of the retreating units to this.

Your initial forces are limited to boards 43/40 east of the canal. You start these units hidden in concealment terrain, moving them forward onto board 19 sacrifices some uncertainty about your troop's location. It might be better to either set up hidden defensive positions on the Western side of the woods that are formed at the junction of boards 19 and 43.

There are a lot of gaps in the woods, It's debatable that you have enough force to cover all of them. You really need to settle down with the map, plan where your tanks will move, specifically which gaps they will move through then set up to cover these. For example if you drive on through the south edge of board 43 the Woods in 43FF2 could hide a squad or half squad that contests movement through all Locations within three hexes. At the northern edge the 43C3 woods does

a similar job. Either position could merit a panzerschreck particularly if a large concentration of your armour is moving that way. For the middle of board 43 there are plenty of woods, orchard and brush hexes that could hide a tank killer team.

Keep in view the best positions will also be obvious to the Russians and rather than the side or rear of a tank you may be looking at an angry Soviet half squad or busily dodging MG rounds, expect this to happen and be pleased enemy forces have been delayed to stop and shoot or to drop off infantry. Further west other ambush positions abound. Even buildings are a possibility. As armour approaches give some thought to eating back blast, can be worth it for a good shot at a tank. Upper level building Locations make back blast for PF and PsK weapons, access each fire opportunity on its own merits.

For your armour it makes sense to gain concealment or cover when you can. Driving into woods without a road is a desperate way to risk bog, similarly the +3 TEM for a stone building is not so clever if you are positioned in the cellar. Behind walls gives hull down status, total protection against hull hits. Hedges too are good. The board 40 hills are suitable for Gun positions, maybe it's a bit fanciful to consider hull down positions there, the Reds are too close and the MP needed too great.

Give thought to how you position the guns. Are they to slow down or kill tanks, or to defend the bridge perhaps? The 88LL Guns are good at long distance shots, from the flanks they force the Russians to either detach units to deal with them or suffer a series of increasingly accurate shots to the sides of advancing armour.

Although there are no wrecks on board at the game start there soon will be plenty, and a proportion of them burning. Regardless of nationality, wrecks slow armour movement. There is a +1 for each wreck in the hex and another +1 for Smoke. Wreck movement penalties are doubled on a bridge. Try to pick your shots so each destroyed enemy vehicle slows the advance. Destroying tanks on the bridge is really clever; fill 40D1,Q2,Q3 and Q4 with enough destroyed armour and the Reds will struggle to find enough movement points to exit the map! I'd not be inclined to abandon and destroy my own vehicles on bridge hexes just to slow movement but if the guns gone and you run out of petrol it's sensible.

To recap study the terrain to plan your movement across the map to the bridge and off board. Pick good spots for hidden units that support your movement

plans, and to delay or destroy Russian units. Give thought to trying to drop the bridge using your demolition charge.

The game length does make your game harder. Imagine the game ended on your turn three you could aim to win by driving as many AFVs' as you could off the board at 40Q1. To lose you'd need to be phenomenally lucky falling prey to long range shooting from your pursuers or fuel shortage and some stalled Panthers. Make the game a turn longer and the importance of slowing the enemy armour grows, becoming more challenging with each added turn.

With a full seven player turns, the good news is you have enough time to get some units off board, it also gives the enemy some flexibility in planning their pursuit.

We've already looked at some ideas on how to screen the woods between boards 19 and 43. You really do need to decide before the scenario starts roughly how you plan to conduct a withdrawal hotly pursued by a very fast, very strong Soviet force.

Your options include a linear defence of board 19, something similar on board 43, a hedgehog in front of the board 40 bridge, or a series of small defensive positions screening your retreating forces. In each case there is plenty of scope to add some of your retreating armour to the defence, either until it dies, or runs out ammunition or departs to defend elsewhere or drive off board.

Let's start with defence on board 19. The idea is to drive on set up a defensive screen then butcher the enemy as they drive on board. The Panther commanded by Barkman (HSR 3), forms part of the defence hopefully falling down a shell hole on board 19, or driving off board 19 and returning! On board units would move forward to positions on board 19, with the sole exception of the guns.

Ideally your 15 AFVs and ten and a half squads would face at most eighteen Soviet vehicles shoot some of them up in the Defensive Fire Phase, and kill some more in the following Prep Fire Phase losing very little in return.

It's a nice idea which can work if the enemy lead with their weaker armoured units and drive merrily into panzerfaust/panzerschreck. If the enemy instead start with their heaviest tanks beyond the effective range of your anti-tank rockets you can quickly lose tanks in the enemies up coming Defensive Fire Phase.

If a linear defence appeals perhaps

it's better to form it on board 43. You can be spread thinly across the whole board or a smaller area screening gaps in the woods from which the fastest pursuers will emerge. This defence will do well against a hasty Russian assault that seeks a confrontation on turn one. Hidden infantry are more likely to get some PF shots at favourable target facings and short ranges. Initial Soviet enthusiasm may diminish after a couple of burning wrecks or destroyed vehicles. You can add to the destruction with your armour and of course the PaK 43 guns.

Try to retain rate, risk the odd Intensive Fire shot from your armour as a Recalled unit still counts for exit purposes. Don't forget HSR2 that gives German Armour Leaders a higher repair roll. Which reminds me, if Barkman didn't make it across board 19 he's sort of doomed! Do what damage you can with him, including making use of his machine gun and perhaps even the tanks Nahverteidigungswaffe. If he survives great, the longer he is in action the better, and any damage he does to the enemy in terms of destruction or delay is welcome.

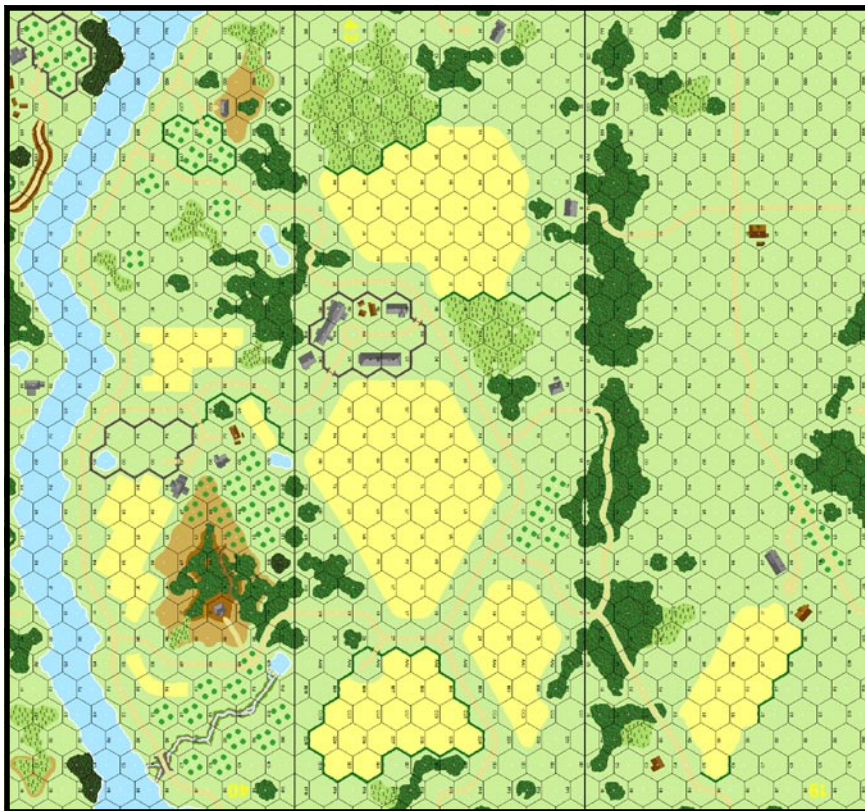
A third defensive idea is to form a hedgehog around the bridge. Your initial forces can start on the eastern bank, and some might even want to move onto the western bank or the bridge itself. Entering units need a little luck to pass their fuel and stall rolls, but you should end up with most of your troops on or around the bridge. Barkman again needs to be lucky to join you, if he does great, if not use him to delay the enemy as best he can.

The hedgehog will work if the enemy lead with their fastest units and slowly add more tanks and infantry to the fight. You will withdraw any Recalled units and hopefully do enough damage to slow or prevent enemy movement of board.

By allowing the enemy to pass relatively unscathed across boards 19 and much of board 43, you can come a cropper if the enemy engage from 6-12 hexes range immune from infantry weapons using numbers and advantages from armament and armour to destroy your forces.

You can discourage this leisurely reduction of your forces by setting the demolition charge and blowing the bridge, expect a rabid Russian response if you try this!

My own preference is a revised hedgehog. Instead of a single point defence you set up small defensive positions to contest the enemy advance across the



board. Each position should vary in size from a single Gun, half squad or single armoured unit up to an infantry platoon with a couple of armoured units. These should not be isolated positions though and the fire from one should be able to cover at least one or two others.

The best locations for these defensive islands are in front of or slightly to the flank of likely enemy movement. It's absolutely certain some Soviet units will need to cross the bridge to exit, part of your defence can exploit this knowledge. An obvious but good spot for an AT gun is the small patch brush and orchard at 40V4/W4/W5, an emplaced gun is guaranteed some chances later in the game. Infantry can line the walled paddock around 40P4/P5/P6 for short range panzerfaust shots. Beyond that there are plenty of woods, brush and orchard hexes on boards 40/43 with useful lines of sight to the bridge or the far bank. Unfortunately you need to balance the need to oppose movement across board 43 with the appealing idea of a killing zone around the bridge.

Maybe the way to go is to lightly defend the bridge by using a JdgPanther to transport a squad, demolition charge and 8-1 leader onto the bridge. The infantry climb off the tank to try to set the charge and blow the bridge, the JdgPanther either rides off the board or drives to 40O1 to cover the bridge with gun and MG fire, only leaving by reverse movement

when it's armament is kaput or it faces overwhelming odds. Remember it has a smoke discharger and try not to stall or run out of ammunition. If you can set the charge it makes sense to deploy. A half squad goes to join the fray, the leader and rest of the squad take cover in 40R1 fuses at the ready. Here is where you can lose the game. If no German vehicles have exited you can spectacularly blow the bridge to see the JdgPanther fail to exit, either by running out of fuel, repeated stalling or enemy action. Avoid this by exiting an AFV before you drop the bridge.

On board 43 there are plenty of potential sites for defending forces. The large farm or small village around 43N6, offers stone walls for hull down status, tank resistant building for Infantry and upper levels for MG nests. 43O7 level one is an obvious spot for an MMG covering an awful lot of board 43. The PaK 43 can start behind walls or hedges. Their TEM comes from emplacement so the lower protection of a hedge isn't a problem. For Infantry well woods offer superb defence against armour. An approaching tank will give you an opportunity for rocket attacks then have to risk bog to attack you using overrun.

Expect the enemy to attack intelligently. They will try not to engage you with inferior numbers, will strive to

counter tank hunter teams with their own Infantry and oppose your individual tank units with better armoured units.

Some of this can't be avoided, try to reduce the sting by using your armour's machine gun armament against infantry, even low odds attacks to retain DM, try for Deliberate Immobilisation occasionally, and use hidden units to frustrate enemy plans to overcome you by superior numbers or armour.

Range is your friend. You use Black To Hit numbers, have Armour Leaders and expect to get the first shots in any engagement, with Acquisition to hit chances rise and you will generally come out on top in a long range armour duel.

Don't be afraid to withdraw individual units. Of course a Recalled unit should exit, so should a Panzer IV relocate when being stalked by several IS tanks. Falling back in the general direction of the bridge should lead to more opportunities to fight later.

Also useful is Smoke. Infantry Smoke, ordnance or from smoke dischargers has uses. It can cover a retreat, reduce the effectiveness of enemy fire and even slow movement. You can try the latter on turn one as you enter firing off smoke dischargers if you calculate you have movement to spare. It's a classy tactic that can make your opponent think you are a better player than you are!

Whichever set up you decide on using always allow some scope for moving defensive units about. Given the sheer size of the enemy force a small section of your line can be targeted and obliterated work out if you need to withdraw or reinforce the threatened sector.

In time any defence will crumble. Things will get destroyed or killed, Guns break down, vehicles run out of gas and you might even run out of panzerfaust shots. If the defence fails with the Red Army a distance from the bridge your rear guard has won the game for you.

Expect a stiff fight. If you are feeling dramatic pick out 36 blaze counters for Soviet burning wrecks. Don't get hung up on the low ammunition, fuel or stall rules, your AFV numbers reflect the difficulty these present. If you limit movement and avoid excessive shooting these will not be a massive problem.

Above all have fun. Blowing the bridge can win for you later in the game, but a lot can go wrong. Failing US or NTC rolls is frustrating at the time, hilarious after the game. If the bridge remains intact

expect a lot of destroyed armour and dead infantry.

RUSSIAN SET-UP

Your mission is difficult, either prevent any enemy armoured units exiting or match the number of units that do with exiting units of your own. Destroying all the enemy armour is an immediate win for you, as is exiting fifteen tanks, assault guns, and/or tank destroyers unless you start capturing each others vehicles!

The most important terrain in play is the Q2/Q3 bridge, if this can be destroyed before you cross, and the enemy has exited any AFVs this can lead to an early loss. More on this later, at this stage it's enough to appreciate you will have to work hard to prevent the bridge being destroyed.

Over your first three player turns you receive a massive armoured force carrying about a company's worth of elite infantry plus support weapons. The armour is a mix of assault guns, medium and heavy tanks. The heavy tanks are superb, three IS-3, six IS-2 and six IS-2m, very mobile heavily armoured units. Their 122L gun has a basic To Kill of 25 near certain death to Panzer IV tank and assault guns and likely to penetrate any Panther or JagdPanther even against their thickest armour. The IS series armour is very resistant to German weapons; barring a Critical Hit, the 75L guns can barely penetrate the IS-2 front hull. Longer 75LL are more effective against the IS-2, and the turret front of an IS-2m, an 88LL can just about cause Shock or Immobilisation on a very low effects roll, even against the IS-3. Even panzerfaust anti-tank rockets will find the armour of an IS-3 challenging, a panzerschreck needs a critical to do damage. IS-2m thickest armour is resistant to panzerfaust, but an IS-2 is vulnerable even from the front. Given enough shots even the weaker German weapons will damage or destroy your IS tanks. Perhaps more of a problem is your limited ammunition stowage, all three IS variants have a circled B11. Sometimes this doesn't matter, but here where you are likely to be trying for a lot of shots, well you can expect to have some armour Recalled for ammunition depletion. You need to roll some pretty grim dice for this to seriously deplete your force but don't look on this as a challenge.

Your medium tanks are six T-34 M43, and six T-34/85. Both types are fast moving reasonably protected units with good machine gun armament. Both the 76L and 85L guns are very effective against infantry, neither is particularly

deadly against thick frontal tank armour even when using APCR. Although Panthers and tank destroyers can't be engaged frontally your medium tanks weapons will prove effective against any armoured units flanks or rear facing, and can hope to destroy a Panzer IV from any aspect. Expect plenty of opportunities for flanking or rear shots against armour that has run out of gas. Don't dismiss the idea of Deliberate Immobilisation at short ranges, an immobilised unit cannot exit, and is vulnerable to attack by other units later in the game if you want to destroy it totally.



Panthers under fire while advancing.

Your assault guns are really tank destroyers. The SU-152 was designed to combat the Tiger I, which it fought at Kursk, also fighting Panthers and Elefants, it generally needed several shots to achieve destruction but at the time was the best the Red Army had! By 1945 the SU-152 was being replaced by the ISU-122 and ISU-152, assault guns based on the IS tanks, but it's still a useful bit of kit. Armour and mobility are comparable to your medium tanks, the gun is a threat to all the enemy armour, a devastating weapon against Infantry or buildings and if you're not careful can destroy the bridge you need to cross to win the scenario. I guess this gives you a surprise winning tactic, hit an enemy infantry unit on the bridge, roll and destroy it before the Germans armour can cross it and you've a win! Worst thing about the SU-152, low ammunition, B10, low enough to make you think before each shot.

The SU-85 was a successful attempt to quickly put an 85mm Gun into an armoured vehicle. Its main fault is it is not a T34/85, so it lacks a turret and MG armament. On the plus side it does have smoke (s8), a good chance of APCR (A8), and even limited HE (HE8). Its two main weaknesses are relatively weak armour and a lack of a turret, which can be a real pain in mobile actions.

Riding on the back of some of your armour is a company of infantry. A 9-2 leader, two 8-1 leaders, twenty half squads, three LMGs and two demolition

charges is extremely useful. The infantry is a mix of 2-4-8 and 3-2-8 half squads. In most circumstances the 3-2-8 units are better, particularly short range fire or close combat. The 2-4-8 have a range advantage perhaps of most use in interdicting rout. All of this force is expendable. You only want to see them at the game end if they have killed every German unit they encountered. Much of the time they are useful against enemy infantry, remember they can also take on enemy armour either in close combat or using demolition charges, from the rear you can take out a Panzer IV with a LMG, which is almost guaranteed to cause a hissy fit. Worth mentioning your ELR is four, much higher than the SS, making your squads more valuable as they are less likely to suffer replacement.

Last unit to mention is your sniper. A SAN of four gives a 1/6 chance of activation each time a German To Hit roll, Morale Check, Task Check or entrenching roll takes place. Task Checks include rolls for deployment, setting the German demolition charge and immobilisation rolls. In a seven turn game with so many units involved a reasonable number of activation is expected. Enjoy all your sniper shots. Even pinning a half squad will be useful as it restricts its movement and affects panzerfaust capability, taking out leaders or tanks is generally useful but keep in view a Recalled enemy tank will try to exit and does count for the game's Tactical Objective.

To recap you command an awful lot of really hard Infantry and armour, nearly all of which is expendable. Expect to lose some units to enemy action and some to malfunctioned armament in proportion to the shots you take, as long as you are picking off enemy armour and working your way onto and over the bridge that should be OK!

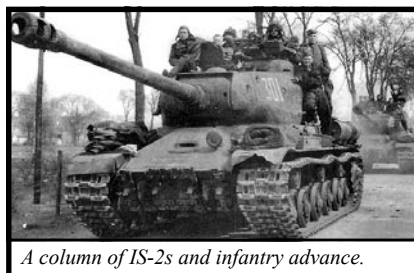
We've already looked at the enemy force composition and its effectiveness against your armour. You can watch the enemy forces enter on turn one and make notes on where units position and conceal themselves. So you'll know for definite where four squads, one leader, their support weapons and the Germans fifteen armoured vehicles are positioned. The rest of the enemy force is going to be a bit of a mystery, six and a half concealed squads, a couple of leaders and a mix of support weapons including two panzerschrecks and two PaK 43 88LL guns could be almost anywhere on board 43, and anywhere east of the canal on board 40. Keep in view the squads can deploy so you could be playing

hide and seek with thirteen separate half squad positions each capable of firing panzerfausts or allocated panzerschrecks. Part of the scenario is neutralising this force without losing twenty tanks to panzerfaust shots and more to guns, anti tank magnetic mines or other weapons.

Don't overrate this threat though or you'll cower on board 19 in fear of losing armour. Firstly all the German armour and the anti-tank guns suffer from low ammunition. This gives them a circled B of 11, once under a Low Ammo counter a DR of 10 results in weapons malfunction whilst an 11 or 12 disables the weapon, that's a one in six chance. For the armour there is the added problem of fuel shortage, which has to be rolled for each time the vehicle plans to move in the movement phase or changes vehicular covered arc. Obviously an out of gas tank isn't going anywhere. Turreted tanks can still command a lot of territory, but in some circumstances can be by passed or attacked from the side or rear to increase To Kill probability for a hull hit. Panzerjager units have their covered arc fixed making them very vulnerable to being bypassed or to units driving behind them for some leisurely target practise. You've no control over when an enemy unit runs out of gas or ammo or breaks its gun, nervous opponents will fret about this, you should enjoy it when it happens and realistically expect it over the course of the game. Keep in view malfunctioned weapons can be repaired and crews themselves are capable of taking an active part in the fight replacing lost crews, picking up abandoned weapons or trying for panzerfausts. Also of note enemy armour can still exit without a functioning main armament and still count for victory purposes.

The enemy infantry is a significant threat to armour at short range, ideally you want to be at four hexes against a panzerfaust capable unit, five hexes from a panzerschreck. The SS will have different ideas and will want to find you at one hex range stationary with the rear of your vehicle filling their weapons sights. If you are under rocket attack you want to be moving and at a distance from the firing unit. In these circumstances a hit isn't that likely. OK a PF can reach out to three hexes, but if you are moving, a normal size target and the firer is not leader assisted the chance of a hit is exactly the same as the enemy rolling for casualty reduction. Each rocket counts. At most the Germans can make twenty PF attacks, you have thirty six tanks, so even if every attack is successful you would have sixteen tanks

left. It's worth keeping track of every rocket launched by the enemy, each one that misses is good news.



A column of IS-2s and infantry advance.

Tucked away in the German OB is one particularly worrying support weapon, a demolition charge. If you are lucky the enemy will want to use this against a tank, if your opponent is a bit more switched on though he may have the idea of using a set demolition charge to drop the bridge with you on the wrong side of it. The perfect plan for the enemy is to send a squad or half squad plus leader to the bridge, dismount, set the charge move off and detonate the charge to drop the bridge. If this happens with one enemy tank or tank hunter driven off the bridge before any Russian units exit you've lost comrade. Fortunately a lot can go wrong. Firstly the transporting vehicle can run out of gas, forcing the Riders to dismount and board another vehicle in the next player turn. To set the charge needs a Task Check based on the unit's US number, modified by any leadership. At best the enemy can dedicate a squad and the 9-2 leader to this needing a 5 or less to complete the Task Check, even then it's not certain and a failed Task Check leaves the unit on the bridge for another two turns! Once set the SS must retire to a safe distance and pass a modified normal Task Check to detonate the charge in any friendly Fire Phase starting with the first Defensive Fire Phase after moving off the bridge. Any failed NTC delay detonation. When the charge does go off any DR of 9 or less drops the bridge with low rolls taking both spans at which point it's game over. It's noticeable even without you doing anything the destruction of the bridge is not certain, it's sensible to try and make it even less certain.

As the destruction of the bridge effectively ends the game you should make a sustained effort to prevent or delay the event. You can start by placing your sniper counter on the bridge and directing every attack against any units trying to set a charge. You should also try to have units firing at units on the bridge as soon as possible, even MG fire from a

tank at long range present some danger to a unit setting a charge as it must use Hazardous Movement. The threat doesn't completely go until the DC is destroyed or possessed by your units, or you've exited more armour than the enemy can, even so a broken or pinned squad can't set the charge or move away from it.

Worth mentioning the enemy force has a low ELR rating just two, as SS elite squads degrade rapidly to second line and ultimately conscript squads. As squads are replaced they become less capable in almost every combat function.

To recap, the enemy has a small number of capable armoured units, backed by hidden or concealed infantry using anti tank rockets and hidden guns. It helps that the enemy are short of fuel and ammunition and PF shots are limited to a maximum of 20 shots. The most threatening unit is the demolition charge that can end the game prematurely by dropping the bridge.

Undoubtedly the most important terrain feature is the bridge at 40Q2/Q3 it's the only way across the canal and if the Germans either destroy it the game might not go the full seven turns!

That said other terrain is important. Chances are Barkman will drive into a shell hole and you will need to either bypass this position or attack it. How you do this depends on where he is and it's not really practical to cover every possibility. Ideally you'll catch him in a woods road hex with limited line of sight, drive nearby with a tank drop off some infantry and destroy a Panther by close combat or demolition charge placement. If in more open terrain, draw fire with a target out of his TCA, then work around and behind him to drop off infantry and try for an Advancing Fire Phase shot. Another tactic is to use an IS-3, from seven hexes range it can be hit but is unlikely to be destroyed or immobilised, shoot slowly, and expect to destroy the target when you hit it, limited ammunition would not help, but an armour leader really would if you gain the balance.

It's a personal choice how you deal with Barkman, and it might even be he has already made if across board 19 if his luck has held. The rest of your force needs to move quickly over board 19, and onto board 43. This is subject to where enemy forces are placed. If they are defending board 19, then you have the option of massing to attack them, or using terrain to screen your movement past them. Massing to attack has an appeal in that you are able to outnumber and to an extent out-gun the smaller and weaker enemy force,

dramatically so if you can concentrate against just part of it. Alternatively moving past the enemy using the hedges and buildings on board 19 plus Smoke from smoke dischargers, burning wrecks or just wrecks has some appeal. Even if you lose some units you will force the enemy to move and every time he moves he risks running out of gas, totally preventing further movement or exit, if the unit is unable to see any more of yours for the rest of the game it is effectively out of the game. Don't forget changing VCA also calls for a low fuel roll.

If entry to board 19 is scarcely opposed you can drive quickly to the woods on the edges of board 19/43. There are plenty of gaps between these. You'll know where some of the enemy units are as they will be concealed, but still obviously armour or infantry. Again you've the choice of engaging or bypassing these units. Sadly the location of the hidden units is a bit harder to determine. I've played opponents who have a real knack of identifying concealed units, some of it's a gift, some of it experience and the rest the application of cold logic. With hidden units there are a few players who can make pretty good guesses to where units might be. If you imagine every wood, brush, building, hedge or wall conceals an enemy you'll find this scenario very difficult. It's better to assess the strength of the threat.

For a hidden unit to be dangerous it must be in range, have a line of sight and a realistic chance of a hit. So a hidden infantry unit needs to be at three or four hexes range with a line of sight depending on whether it has a panzerschreck or panzerfaust; the Pak 43, has longer range, generally better To Hit numbers, with a weaker punch and once you know where it is can often be neutralised by line of sight. Remember if you are moving you are harder to hit, if there are hindrances between you and the enemy that also helps. You can reduce the risk by actively searching for enemy anti-tank units. The horde of infantry you arrive with will love moving through woods flushing out hidden units, killing them, holding them in close combat or melee or using up their fire opportunities. You can spray likely cover with machine gun fire to reveal enemy units just knowing where they are helps so low odds attacks will be adequate, later you can hit them with something more substantial to kill or break them.

Expect to blunder into some ambushes there's just too much terrain to search and your opponent will have played *ASL* before and can be relied on to spring

some surprises. If you lose a tank hope it's an expendable one and that it creates a smoke screen to cover the rest of your troops.

Make use of the terrain yourself, using walls and hedges for cover makes a lot of sense. If you can protect your units by line of sight obstacles the enemy is forced to move either to exit or to engage you. This involves a risk of stalling or low fuel for tracked units, reveals hidden units and generally frustrates the plans of the defender.

The dominant terrain features on boards 40/43 are the large farm and two wooded hills. They provide good lines of sight particularly for the German machine guns or armoured units, additionally armoured units can try for hull down status in these locations. The farm gives good cover for infantry, the farm walls can grant hull down status and are quick positions for the fleeing Germans to occupy. It's generally a bad idea to fire an anti-tank rocket indoors, but a determined enemy half squad or SMC may try it against a nearby tank, generally if you are hit, the firing unit will have suffered a back blast attack, it's funnier though to be missed and see them break or die. There is no requirement to control the farm, either hill or indeed any terrain on the map, to win you need to stop the enemy driving off in force and get at least as many tanks off board as he does.

As long as the enemy are not able to destroy the bridge the chances are this scenario will go the whole seven turns. You need to pace your attack to gain ground, whilst keeping your casualties fairly low, and doing some damage to the enemy. There is an exception though. Specifically you need to expend some effort to prevent the enemy dropping the bridge with a set demolition charge. Ideally the SS will see the weapon as an aid to tank destruction and give you a more leisurely schedule to attack. If you see an armoured vehicle with riders heading for the bridge on or after turn one and you suspect or know they have a demolition charge at least part of your force needs to prevent or delay the bridges destruction.

As an absolute minimum start your sniper on the bridge or move him there if the threat materialises later in the game. Get a tank as close to the bridge as you can or at least in line of sight to attack the Infantry. A basic T-34 M43 is a good unit for this. It's not powerful enough to wrangle with Panthers or tank hunters, but is fast (16MP), has a decent gun and good MG armament, send several and expect

some interference from the enemy. The best route to take has to be influenced by know enemy units, and concealed ones, and should consider possible locations for hidden one. Obviously if you run into a lot of hidden units you'll risk losing tanks but that should be acceptable. Going down the centre of the board is a gamble, although the open ground is safe from infantry anti-tank fire. Maybe one T-34 should risk this.

The flanks are slightly more attractive. Hedges, woods and buildings can screen you from known units, but there are some risks to deal with. Going through woods is very risky, and there are other complications at the northern and southern board edges. In the north, well try going 43A1 to A3, bypass the B3 building then keep driving and hope for the best. Against a panzerfaust armour facing isn't an issue, you just need not to be hit, so keep moving, minimise the time you are in the line of sight of as many positions as possible and be lucky. Expect some defensive fire, ideally you want failed panzerfaust checks and To Hit rolls that just don't! If hit, well there is always a one in thirty six chance of a dud. Sounds bleak, well admittedly it is. To get past a defensive position quickly you need to be lucky or expend units. The first tank to try it probably will not make it, the second, can skirt round revealed units, perhaps discover more, the third tank though has a much better chance of getting through.

In the south, there is a hedged enclosure around CC7 that has some potential. Defenders can be hidden in the woods or behind the hedges themselves, again three tanks might be needed to guarantee one getting through.

If you attempt this on both flanks there is an expected loss or at least three or four of your T-34 M43 tanks, at least as many hidden defenders will be revealed and there no penalty for overrunning any of these you can, machine gunning them or dropping any infantry nearby to chase them. If you get a unit in line of sight of the bridge it's worth it to prevent a set demolition charge. Meanwhile your heavy tanks kill armour.

Exactly how you attack will depend on personal preference and of course how the enemy set up. So you can choose between a concentrated assault down one flank, a direct push down the middle of the board or a broad sweep across a large area. All these ideas have some merits, success will depend on how the enemy has prepared for your plans, how you execute them and of course luck. Roll a lot of high numbers and you'll break Guns, miss easy

targets and fail to penetrate what you do hit, with so much armour and Infantry you can accommodate some unlucky rolls so don't lose heart if this starts to happen. Enemy defensive plans matter, you've the choice between aim directly for defensive concentrations or bypassing them to hope for immobilisation losses due to low fuel. You can reduce the risk of ambush by panzerfausts or panzerschrecks with suppressive machine gun fire, aggressive Infantry movement and the odd bit of HE from main armament! It can help to look on your own half squads as expendable, use them to draw fire, engage enemy Infantry and armour in close combat, and not be too disappointed if they end up back in the box or broken early on. You just might get a chance to pull off a human wave attack, aside from being tactically useful in that it allows you to try and cover ground quickly it can look pretty clever.

The real fun comes from the big tanks, enjoy using these accept some will run out of ammunition, and be pleased it when they deflect large calibre shells from Panthers and even JagdPanthers'.

Conclusion

My own choice would be the Red Army, mainly to use the heavy armour and tank marines, to win requires a careful mix of haste with part of your force, and a more cautious use of the rest to engage and destroy enemy units that stand and fight.

As the Germans the scenario is more exciting. Every time you move or fire there's a risk of bad luck reducing your mobility or combat effectiveness. If you are inclined to feel diced after your first box cars roll this is one to avoid! The scenario designers have factored a certain amount of expected "bad luck" into your force composition, without a fuel and ammunition shortage you would command a smaller force or be up against a much bigger Soviet combat team. The use of the demolition charge is an important part of your game. My own view is heading straight for the bridge and trying to drop it is worthwhile, though I could be wrong and you might prefer to fight with the AFV, and squad or half squad needed to attempt this.

Both sides can expect to destroy a lot of armour. Combat between infantry is an important part of the game. The Russians need to find and neutralise panzerfaust teams, the Germans to destroy or threaten armour to slow and reduce the enemy force.

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ACHTUNG SCHWEINEHUND

Trev Edwards

I got to hear about this little gem from an unusual source. Out of the blue I got an email one day from Derek Tocher recommending it to small number of old timers on the UK *ASL* circuit. Next time I ordered a package of goodies from amazon, this was inside.

The cover tells you what you are in for. Its set up to mimic a *Commando War Stories* comic, even down to the dagger on the back cover. The author Harry Pearson is a wargamer of the miniature soldier variety. He hardly mentions board wargames (*EX: Colditz*) and never mentions *ASL* at all (*Up Front* gets a mention though). However he tells a humorously slanted story which will resonate with most of the British readers of *VFTT* because, like us, he remembers what boys did in the 70's. Aside from *Colditz*, there were Airfix kits and boxes of soldiers, Action Man, comics chock-full of war stories, Clarks Commando shoes, Sven Hassell novels and a black and white British made war film on telly every Sunday afternoon.

The book is partly autobiography-Pearson describes the near inevitable path to wargaming he seems to have led - and partly the history of wargaming as a hobby including the famous people who have played. Also referenced are the scale and quality of the armies the rich and powerful were able to buy and how the commercial figure makers came into existence. He also has a heartfelt rant against the fantasy side of the hobby. He hates them orcs! Finally

he has a snide jab at re-enactors (he's right... what a bunch of losers!) Despite having neither experience or knowledge here I was entertained enough.

But, as one might expect, the true joy is his descriptions of the people he has met in his gaming life. It's here where there's resonance with the modern *ASL* hobby. You can read that as 'It takes all sorts,' from the avid, recluse collector who hardly plays to the mad-for-it players. The never ending quest for more and better armies reminds me of myself as I bought everything available for *ASL* a decade ago. But these people seem more voracious in their appetite for lead than myself for cardboard. Overall the 'toy soldier' brigade is as full of characters as is the *ASL* world.

The only downside of the book is that all too rare are descriptions of the actual exploits of gamers and the games they play. But otherwise I'd rate this as a very entertaining read.

There is one thing that I took from this book which made me really glad I bought it. If you'll permit me the indulgence, dear reader, it is this: Near the end of the book Pearson expresses something which is alien to me as an *ASL* player. He says that the actual gaming experience has never lived up to the promise it offered. Most miniature wargames he describes as 'grim attritional affairs' where there exists little scope for strokes of strategy, or - by implication-

Continued on page 34, column 1

OPERATION EXODUS

Chris Netherton

This is an AAR for a game of 'SP61 Operation Exodus' that I played at the first DOUBLE ONE tournament in London in 2006. It sat around on my hard drive for a few months after that due to football and sunshine induced memory loss! With DOUBLE ONE 2008 coming up I thought it would be an ideal time to finish it off.

Played Operation Exodus as the attacking Commando's versus Chris Ager's defending Germans. This has four and a half 6-4-8s attacking five 4-4-7s, both sides get two leaders each. The commando's get two airborne mortars and three demo charges along with a hero who gets a handsome -3 DRM when he fires a LMG all by himself. The German's get two medium machine guns and a 9-1. The bridges over the board 23 canal don't exist and one of the German MMGs has to set up on this part of the map, to make up for this it is manned by a 2-2-8. To win the commando's have to clear a clutch of buildings in the centre of board 23 and to get there they have to cross half of board 44.

Chris set up with a screen of units on the board 44 wood line defending the open ground I had to cross to get at him. Most of the territory I had to cover was open ground except on the British right where there was a thin line of trees that would let me get a bit closer. I plump for the obvious crossing. The plan is to use one mortar to place some smoke to reduce the effectiveness of cross fire from German units on my left and to cover a direct assault on the right. I aim to place the hero and his LMG on the left hand side of my assault to deter any German attempt to laterally reinforce his defence in the section of the map where I plan to attack.

Turn one goes pretty well. I only get one Smoke round down but this is enough to deter Chris from firing, he elects to keep concealment and keep me guessing. I manage to get units right round to 44O1 and got a HS up to the 44M3 building which turned out to contain a HS and a squad. I rode my luck here as none of my units broke in the MPH or DFPh. My advancing fire broke the squad in 44M3 and we realised in the rout phase that grain was out of season so he had to surrender. I elected not to advance my HS into CC in 44M3 as he was now a guard in addition to being CX so I left the German HS to sweat it out for another turn. I brought a couple of units adjacent in the APh, moved my flanking units one hex closer to their goal and shifted the mortars as well. I put the LMG and hero in a position to interdict any attempts (however unlikely) to reinforce 44M3. In German turn 1 the HS failed to shift any of the commando's facing him and broke in DF. Elsewhere the Germans shuttled back from the British right and moved towards the buildings on board 23. One mistake I made here was not leaving my guards adjacent to 44M3 as it meant another

unit had to accept the prisoners.

In turn 2 I continued my left hook and managed to brave the DF flung at me and by the end of the MPH had one unit adjacent to the first victory building hex in 23J8. This contained a German squad and LMG. The commando LMG and hero was again on over watch duty and had his sights set on interdicting German movement across the road to the victory area from the south western corner of board 23. This area of the board was dominated by a large multi-storey wooden building (23E9-F9) that contained the German MMG and a leader. I was feeling reasonably happy as I felt I could prevent Chris from reinforcing the victory hexes, things were looking ok! I suffered a Pin result that prevented me from diving into CC and my AF did not have much effect so I was faced with a 12 FP flat attack in the up coming German Prep fire phase. Fortunately I managed to survive it! Little was I to know that this was the last phase that my 8 morale troops would be passing their checks! In DF I get a chance to hammer the German squad with a 20 up 2 fire group with both British leaders. I roll a six and another six. The Hero tries to make amends and fires 2 up 1 and I roll a six and then another six. Both LMGs broken!



Turn 3. I fail to repair any of my broken SW and Prep succeeds in breaking the mortar that still had smoke. I try and dislodge the Germans in 23J8 as well, but this gets nowhere. I shuffle a few more troops forward, trying to AM into the open ground and soak up some fire. After German defensive fire and turn 3 prep most of the commando's are sulking in either the woods on the border of board 44 and board 23, or in the terraced housing in 23K7, L7 and M8. The lone stalwart is of course Corporal Hunter who is the only British unit to get to the centre of board 23. He awaits his fate in 23I9. In German turn 3 Chris fails to shift him and in DF he gets to show his mettle as he catches a squad trying to bypass. Unfortunately his LMG has long gone, but I roll low enough for a morale check and it's Chris' turn to roll boxcars. One

conscript HS is the result!

Turn 4. I get some of my units rallied and then break them again in the movement phase as Chris keeps up the pressure with his MMGs. However, I do manage to dash a HS (still carrying his broken, smokeless mortar) into 23i9. I actually manage to survive the DF and pile in for a ruck. We're both deadly in close combat and the end result is an empty building. In the RPh of German turn 4 I get HOB rallying my units and generate another hero. Chris tries to reinforce the victory buildings from 23E9 with his MMG and squad, but they end up pinned in the road. The 7-0 does get across and the last turn of the game gives us both a chance of victory!

Turn 5. The only German's left in the centre of board 23 are all in 23H7. Chris has his 7-0 in the ground floor and a 9-1, LMG and squad upstairs. Virtually all of my units are 6MF or more away. I'm not going to be able to get to 23H7, overrun the 7-0 and whack the units upstairs in CC with the last throw of the game... However, one thing that I haven't tried yet, well three things actually, are the demo charges. Rumour has it that these can rubble buildings....

Unfortunately one is lying in the middle of a road junction. Anywho, my MMCs pass their charges to their SMCs and I prepare myself for a mad dash. Dodging the bullets my 9-1 delivers his present to the grateful German 7-0. I get a couple of units up close and personal, but one breaks in the 9-1's hex. The hero then charges up, casually throwing his DC into the mix before moving behind the German's into 23H6. My sniper gets activated which would have been a cruel way to end the game, but the MMG squad that got pinned in the road take it!

By the end of the MPH we have to remove a lot of residual firepower counters; however there are two ominous ticking sounds emanating from the ground floor of 23H7. What's more I have a string of units around the hex which will give me an encircling shot after the DCs go off. Boooooom!! 2KIA. I need a subsequent dr of 1 to bring the whole lot down. I roll.... a 2! Damn! Second one goes off, but to no avail. My firegroup totals up to a 12 FP attack and encircles the Germans. I score a 1MC, but Chris pulls it off with style. The 9-1 makes it and the squad rolls just enough to stay in good order. The German's have it! A very enjoyable scenario, the first two turns went all my way, then Chris took over for the next two before the final showdown.

Anyway, a belated thanks to Brendan for organising the tournament.

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INTO THE RUBBLE

Michael Davies

The *Into the Rubble* pack produced by Bounding Fire offers the chance to enjoy scenarios covering fighting in cities and railroad yards. The pack includes two geomorphic boards, a large overlay, debris overlays, and a decent sized factory overlay that could fit on most boards.

The new boards and overlays are excellent. Both maps feature urban terrain with rail roads passing through it. Board BFP A, looks like a decent sized railway station complete with marshalling yards, storage tanks, and water tower. Board BFP B is similar but less built up. The large overlay is half board size, represents a heavily bombed or shelled town, complete with shell craters, rubble, and debris, it's big enough to be used on it's own for a small action. My own personal favourite component is the 4x6 rectangular factory overlay. Also included a sheet of Debris overlays, nice touch is they are not identical.

The pack includes a one page *ASLRB* chapter B supplement, covering railroads, storage tanks, towers, Railroad Station/Factories, Debris, specific rules for the overlays and maps, one section deals with the treatment of walls next to Embankments.

For some the scenarios will be part of the attraction of the pack. The eight scenarios are all big to large, with in excess of a dozen squads per side. Some include armour, and even air support. Most will take in excess of four hours to

play, some approaching six or seven. I'll describe the scenarios below.

IRT1 DEBACLE AT SUNG KIANG

WW2 started in China before Europe. The Chinese are defending against a similar sized but more powerful attacking force. Victory is decided by building control.

CHINESE SET UP

As the Chinese you get a large infantry force of sixteen squads, with reasonable leadership and a mix of support

weapons. Six machine guns plus an anti-tank rifle gives you decent firepower, and some capability against the small armoured cars with 0 factor armour your opponent fields. Also useful two 76mm guns and a pair of double turreted armoured cars (well trucks really). The guns can be effective against armour or infantry targets, and can start the game hidden. The armoured cars are about as combat effective as the Japanese ones, but that doesn't commit you to driving towards your armoured opposition for a machine gun duel, the armour is more useful providing cover for Infantry movement, controlling open ground, drawing enemy fire and perhaps the odd overrun or VBM sleaze at some key point in the game. Special rules prohibit bore sighting. You do get to fortify four building locations, and have the option of declaring hand to hand. With four fortification counters you can set up some surprises for the Japanese. It's pretty funny to block a banzai charge that way, though using the TEM earlier in the game will spoil that surprise. Don't forget to record dare death squads, and the inherent Smoke component of Elite squads. Accepted it's a 1 so a low roll is needed but it can arrive just when you need it. Scenarios like this should end with next to nothing of your force still on the board, sometimes hinging on close combat in the 11th building. Don't underestimate the strength of the Japanese force, although comparable in size it is of high quality and well led with a good mix of support weapons.

JAPANESE SET UP

Attacking as the Japanese in urban fights is extremely good fun. Here you have a large force that has a good mix of machine guns, plus three mortars, a flame thrower and two demolition charges, plus three very lightly armoured cars. Most of the Infantry are first line, in most respects better than elite Japanese squads. The mortars aren't expected to do much damage with high explosive, much more useful throwing smoke or WP. You don't get any dedicated anti tank weapons, but as the armour of the Chinese Type-22 trucks is so thin, MG fire, or HE from the mortars could take them out. Using a demolition charge or flame thrower against them would work if they are being a nuisance. With Japanese squads there's a temptation to banzai or seek out close combat opportunities because of the favourable DRM for combat. Sometimes infiltration is more effective, specifically pushing past broken squads to prevent their retreat, or setting up to encircle squads is at times a better option. This works well with the Japanese as a full strength squad can break twice to still leave an unbroken half squad in place. Another top tip is to use wounded leaders to initiate banzai charges then fall behind as the troops surge forward.

The key to this scenario is pace, the Japanese need to trade some casualties to gain buildings quickly, the Chinese to lose ground slowly whilst keeping enough troops to slow Japanese progress.

control of the town's railway station and factory.

NATIONALIST SET UP

The Nationalist force is outnumbered nearly two to one, but has a decent selection of support weapons, adequate leadership and some fortifications. Key units are the HMG and MMG, plus each of the four leaders on board. It makes sense to strongly defend the railway station building M7 (which is a factory), with a decent sized force. Also important building P2, and the woods on the flank of the station. Using the upper levels of P2 negates the hindrance grain gives to ground level fire, slows the attack on M7 and makes the approach to U2 harder. It probably isn't a good idea to hold M7 at all costs, in the same way as leaving as soon as the first hex falls. A foxhole in P6 allows units to rout without interdiction.

Part of your defensive strategy is to delay the Republican's attack and capture of the two victory buildings. In U2 make sure you have a unit on each level of the stairwell in U1, and if you've any spare units perhaps level 2 of V1, accepted if the Reds control the ground floor your troops are encircled, this is largely offset by the delay gaining each level and taking out your last unit. The fight for M7 isn't over as soon as the first hex is occupied by the enemy. Units in factory hexes fired on from adjacent units in the same building will get a +1 TEM modifier not the +3 for a stone building. The solid black bars within the factory prevent movement and block fire channelling enemy movement and adding a turn or two to the time taken to capture the entire building if you exploit them.

Don't give P2 up without a fight; at the same time don't put more than three squads and a leader plus an MG in there. Expect a close game, which you should win if the Republican's seeks to keep casualties low by doing much of the work by firepower.

enemy again. This should keep your six leaders busy.

Your attack needs to be planned based on enemy set up. Obviously you need to take the M7 railway station (Factory), and the U2 multi level stone building. You will also need to move past or through the wooden building on P2, unless you go around it. The woods to the south and west of M7 give you leverage against that building. Woods and grain cover the approach to P2. Make your mind up early on if you are going to attack one or both on turn one. At a later stage you may be able to direct forces towards U2 whilst M7 is still under attack. It's a judgement call you'll have to make at the time, balance the forces needed to take each building, based on the known strength of each garrison. I'd guess four or five squads, and a leader is needed, perhaps an LMG if you have one.

Both sides can expect a tough fight, which can very easily come down to close combat in the last Republican turn. Neither side should be overly concerned by casualties as long as they control buildings.

ITR2 FACTORY OF FLIX

The action takes place on one of the packs new boards BFP B, with Spanish Nationalists and Republicans fighting for

ITR3 TOUGH AS NAILS

This is a huge and complex scenario set in Stalingrad. The maps are altered by SSR to include rubble, shellholes and some of the new debris counters. Victory is decided by control of BFP AQ3 and 51U3 at game end. Although the Russians get the final game turn in some games it will not need to be played, if they control a building.

RUSSIAN SET UP

The Russian OB includes swarms of

REPUBLICAN SET UP

The big Republican advantage is numbers, 24 squads vs. 16, leadership is pretty similar, and you've a slight disadvantage in support weapons. A problem though is troop quality. The Nationalist squads are mostly Elite, failing ELR drops them to a 3-4-6, and a further drop makes them 3-3-6 Conscripts, after that they disrupt. Your own troops are disrupted as soon as they fail ELR. This has implications for rallying, making your troops harder to round up and point at the



infantry, plenty of support weapons, guns, a mortar, road blocks, mines, anti-tank projectors, sewer movement, booby traps, HIP, concealment, hand to hand capability, and even some assault engineers for taking on vehicles, and some reinforcements.

Every single item is needed to make this go the distance. I think you need to defend both victory buildings and to position some forces to delay German movement towards 51U2.

It really is down to personal choice how much you allocate to the defence of each sector. Try to use a combination of anti-tank weapons and obstacles to restrict the choices for the numerous enemy vehicles. Disperse and be lucky against enemy air support and artillery and seek to whittle down the enemy infantry force by fire combat or in melee. A really useful asset is your sniper. A SAN of 5 gives a 1/9 chance of triggering activation. If this reduces the number of attacks the enemy makes excellent, it may also discourage stacking.

Stay focused on the mission, killing Krauts is fun, but building control is what it's all about. You'll likely win if the enemy infantry force is slowed or reduced in strength so that it is unable to take the last hex in 51U2, if the German can make good use of his armour, air support, artillery, and other weapons whilst still driving forward the game gets harder. Don't forget the option to take a commissar, and possible use of human wave, sometimes they are useful particularly with conscripts in the OB.

GERMAN SET UP

The German OB is impressive. Lots of vehicles, including a captured T34, and flame throwing KV8! Others toys are air support, 80mm mortar OBA, plenty of machine guns, flamethrowers, demolition charges, very good leadership and a lot of infantry. The slight weakness is in numbers, just 32 squads, against 26 Soviets. The quality edge is with you, sheer numbers though count when close combat is in play.

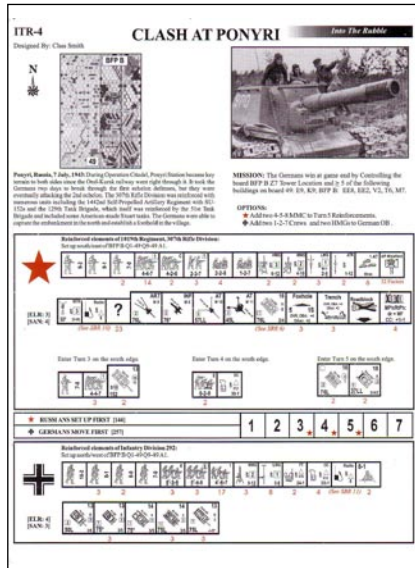
Ideally you want to see a defence that concentrates solely on defending 51U2, or better yet, BFP AQ3, then flatten it with OBA, air attack, tank gun fire and massed MG fire. More likely the Guards will be defending both buildings and the easiest approaches to them. Your attack will have distinct phases, an attack on Q3, an approach towards U2, and the assault on U2. Expect some casualties, some from hidden guns, infantry fire and in close combat. Even though the distances you need to cover are small the enemy is well

prepared, and likely to be cunning, greatly slowing forward movement.

Don't worry about losing tanks, at times the cover the wreck and smoke from a burning wreck can be more useful than a small calibre gun steadily missing concealed or skulking targets. It's nice when the OBA is effective, with the enemy in high TEM terrain don't expect a lot unless presented with a massed target. Try to expect all the demolition charges and flame weapons. In every building you attack take the stair wells first (sorry to repeat this but it's crucial). With No Quarter in effect there's a danger of a hidden unit claiming control of a building, or sneaking in from a sewer Location to reclaim if you don't leave a garrison. On turn 7 cover the sewer exits in the victory buildings.

I think this is a tough scenario for both sides, perhaps more so for the Germans who need to co-ordinate armour, air, infantry, engineers, and OBA against a dug-in and determined enemy. The Soviets are winning on turn one, but need to stay focused to earn a win.

Playing time for this is likely to exceed four hours, with set up for both sides taking a while. Play another scenario in the pack if you are pushed for time, zero in on this though if you love Eastern front city fights.



ITR4 CLASH AT PONYRI

Another big Eastern front scenario, part of the Kursk campaign. To win the Germans need to gain control of a tower and five of seven key buildings. The tower is critical for observation as it is the only level two terrain on the map, all of the other buildings are single story and

wooden.

RUSSIAN SET UP

Russian initial forces are a fair selection of infantry and support weapons, plus a lot of fortifications and some guns. There is also a dug in T-34 that can or perhaps should start the game HIP in concealment terrain. You get 70mm OBA, with plentiful ammunition and an automatic black card draw for the first fire mission; try to be lucky with the radio. Special rules allow trenches to connect to adjacent buildings.

Key to defence is deciding which three buildings you are going to hold on grimly to. Or if you want make sure the tower never falls. Defending the tower for a full seven turns is difficult. Do think you should defend it, and perhaps even use it as a weapons platform. Picking three buildings to defend requires thought, EE8/EE2 are good initial choices, then it's a case of estimating how much strength the Germans can mass against the other objectives. Defending the building doesn't just mean massing troops inside it and waiting to be attacked. You need positions in front to slow enemy approach, and a mobile reserve to oppose the enemy attack.

You've a lot of infantry; the Germans do bring a lot of armour to the battle which will be used to scare your men out of buildings and to kill some using MG, or main armament.

Stay focused on the mission, holding six or seven buildings is not going to happen, controlling one solidly, and contesting control of another two is more likely. In between have fun with your hidden guns, armoured units, and solid reinforcements that are a threat to the Southern flank of the German attack.

GERMAN SET UP

You've a respectable high quality infantry force with masses of support weapons and plenty of armoured support, plus OBA. Given more time victory would be almost certain. To win needs firm pressure against the enemy defences with one or possible two spearheads. Massed infantry firepower will strip concealment and destroy enemy troops. Armour is important, moving into position threatening MG and gun fire to drive then enemy back or stop him shooting and losing concealment. Enemy guns and the dug in tank are a threat, reduce this by the use of smoke, and fire from safer fire position when you can. Once you have found a gun don't dance around in front of it!

80mm OBA against wooden

buildings can mean a lot of 16+2 attacks, ignores concealment or hidden status and could amount to several fire missions. Direct it against either a key location or an area full of enemy troops. Smoke is an option. Fire from inside a single smoke hex is at +4, or +3 for dispersed smoke, making the Location very vulnerable to demolition charge, flamethrower and infantry closing for close combat.

My big worry is the steady stream of Soviet reinforcements arriving on the south edge. The infantry could reinforce a defended building or counter attack against one you have already attacked. The ISU-152 are just plain scary, thick armour, big gun and two of them. With limited ammunition they might not be around for long, whilst present they are a solid threat to infantry or armour.

To win you need to take, consolidate and move quickly to the next objective. Use the armour against infantry early in the game, use lots of smoke, have fun with the DC and flame throwers. Being lucky with the OBA helps, but the game isn't over because you've drawn two red cards or roll box cars. Make use of mopping up, and think very carefully before you declare No Quarter.

Again you are looking at a game taking several hours with a lot of movement and repositioning to counter enemy action. Expect very tense action, high casualties, with a close finish. A final surge for control of the tower could prove interesting.

with a strong German infantry force up against a large American force. It's well known the Germans applied lessons learned on the Eastern front to fighting in the west, the Americans too had learned a lot from operational studies of Eastern front and Pacific warfare.

GERMAN SET UP

Much of the defence will be conducted by your infantry. The bulk of them are 4-4-7 squads, with some first line and Elite squads and a few conscripts. You can deploy two half squad equivalents, either to add to the fog of war or better use support weapons. To beef up your firepower there are nine MG in your OB, two of them heavy, three mediums and the rest lights. As well as two panzerschrecks, you potentially have 28 panzerfaust shots. Leadership is pretty good, low modifiers but can't complain at six leaders. You start with a 20L and a Quad 20L anti aircraft gun that can be nasty against Infantry or exposed crews.

The defence needs to hold on to one of six buildings, G2 and G9 being furthest from the American set up area. The defence can just concentrate on one building, but it is probably better to construct a defensive line across the board that gradually falls back on G2 or G9. Staying in one spot for too long risks destruction by infantry firepower, particularly machine guns, or AFV weapons, unless OBA, flame weapons or demolition charges are used against you.

The big threat from the Americans is firepower. Each squad attacks on the 6 IFT columns, which also gives an edge on close combat. Trading squads in stubborn combat will not work as the US has more squads with an edge in melee combat.

You can fortify eight buildings. Lots of ways to use this, perhaps turning one building into a fortress, or the odd stairwell or surprise location. The TEM is useful, so too is the difficulty of enemy units entering a fortified building. The stairwell in G2 is begging for it.

Perhaps less useful sewer movement, it's a way of reclaiming an unoccupied building with a half squad, which could win the game on turn eight!

On turn six you get a small reinforcing group of two squads, an LMG, leader and a pair of Hetzers. Not sure the anti tank capability is needed, but the armour can be useful killing infantry, or complicating movement.

If you split your forces across the board and try to conduct a defence in depth chances are you will lose. You need a thinner screen up front, backed up by

several small defensive positions that can move to reinforce other areas or to avoid an overwhelming attack.

Make good use of the concealment in your force, complicate enemy choices by deploying two squads and the positioning of leaders and support weapons.

Kill tanks when you can, Sherman's are big targets for rockets, the enemy tank destroyers are vulnerable to small arms. Kill the radio operator if you can, otherwise concentrate on the infantry, you are unlikely to kill them all, each squad down makes attacking and finding garrisons for buildings more difficult.

You will not stop the American attack for long, delay it enough at each bound forwards and you will win.

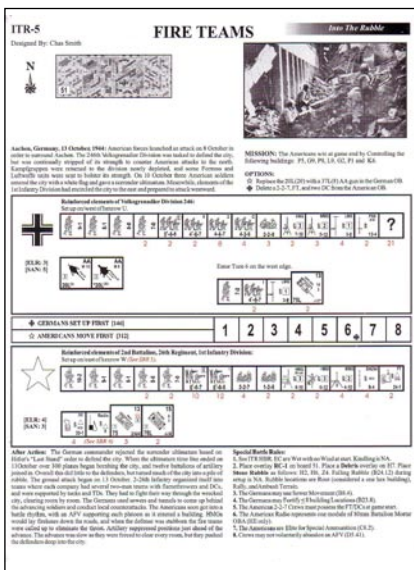
AMERICAN SET UP

Guess your main strengths are the huge infantry force, plus its support weapons. Then there's OBA, several sources of smoke, leadership and armoured units. Ideally you'd like to destroy a mass of enemy infantry in the Defensive Fire Phase then move forward to another line of resistance, set up MGs, and repeat the exercise. Your opponent will have other ideas; expect to be faced with a concealed and skulking defensive which will oppose rapid movement by fire.

Over eight turns you need to covers about sixteen hexes, plus a bit more for any lateral movement to reposition units. On average any squad should move at least two hexes per friendly player turn. That could just be advance and assault movement, or alternating bounds of Prep Fire followed by advance and regular movement in a subsequent turn. Think carefully before you Prep Fire any units, think in the start of every Advance Phase before you push an infantry unit forward. At times you will see a covered approach that allows forward movement. You can move using Armoured Assault or the cover from smoke, there's plenty from guns, smoke dischargers, infantry or even OBA, the odd burning wreck perhaps.

The difficult thing with the OBA is finding a spot with good LOS. Building W5 looks good, perhaps starting in W4. Choosing between IFT and Smoke is a tough choice, would favour an attack in most cases.

With flame throwers and demolition charges, Smoke can be useful creating an opportunity to get close to use them. How many FT bursts you get is a matter of luck, perversely when you are getting low rolls with a better chance of doing damage the FT stays on board. Bazookas are useful



ITR5 FIRE TEAMS

This fight takes place in Germany



against troops in buildings and hit the whole Location. Teaming up the 10-2 Leader in your OB with a couple of .50 MG can be deadly.

With so many concealment counters in the German OB, and a mix of troop types, it's worth keeping tabs on what's revealed and or eliminated. Some players are adverse to this, and accept it slows the game down a bit but it can be useful.

Three Sherman and two tank destroyers are useful, the MG armament alone is worth having, plus Smoke potential and the main armament.

Armoured Assault is worth considering, maybe riders if there's a sudden gap in the enemy line. Don't get too close to enemy infantry, unless they are broken or perhaps pinned, at 3-6 hexes range an acquired target is hit on a six or seven depending on whether you are Crew Exposed or not. This is more often a threat to encourage troops to move.

To win you need to conduct a combined arms attack that puts pressure on the Germans to fall back or lose a unit, and gains ground with every Infantry unit every player turn.

three panzerschrecks, two 75L guns, thirty panzerfausts, and three Jagdpanzer IV/70, plus massed for fortifications, HIP, lots of concealment, SAN 5, Hand to Hand capability, sewer movement by SSR, and decent Leadership. There's a rule that triggers German ammunition shortage after twelve SAN checks, and another giving your Jagdpanzers red movement numbers.

Your objective is to hold on to either 20O5 or 20C8, both decent sized factories. C8 has an accessible rooftop that is suitable for panzerschreck teams, as well as making gaining control harder.

You can choose between defending both buildings, or just one. As you set up first there is scope for using concealment counters and hidden status to mass in one building leaving the other almost empty. Both buildings have their advantages, O5 is difficult for the enemy armour to approach, but gives better cover for enemy infantry, plus it's big. C8 has a roof, is harder for the infantry to attack, but gives better and longer lines of sight for enemy armour.

My own preference is to defend both factories, with five or six squads each, the rest of the infantry is position to slow early Russian movement. The anti-tank guns, and Panzerschrecks are most use around C8 the armour, is more use in or around O5. Be creative with the fortifications. Anything you position should be covered by some anti-personnel and anti-tank fire. A nice trick is to position anti-tank mines on WIRE hexes, and hope to draw enemy vehicles on to it.

During play it may become obvious the Soviets are massing against one building. This might create an opportunity to fall back to the other building. Perversely you actually want the enemy to mass too much force in one sector as really you don't mind losing a building as long as you still hold part of one at the game end.

You win by a carefully planned defence that restricts the movement choices of enemy armour, makes enemy infantry cautious and occasionally inflicts serious loss on them. As the game progresses you need to balance aggression with cunning and some caution to conserve at least some of your force to control at least a single hex in a victory building at the game end.

Win or lose, expect a tremendous fight. SS do not die easily, their high broken side morale gets them back into action quickly.

RUSSIAN SET UP

You command an enormous force of 35 squads, 22 support weapons, eight

AFVs, nine leaders, well ten if you count the Armour Leader and a field gun. An overwhelming superiority in armour, and nearly two to one in infantry.

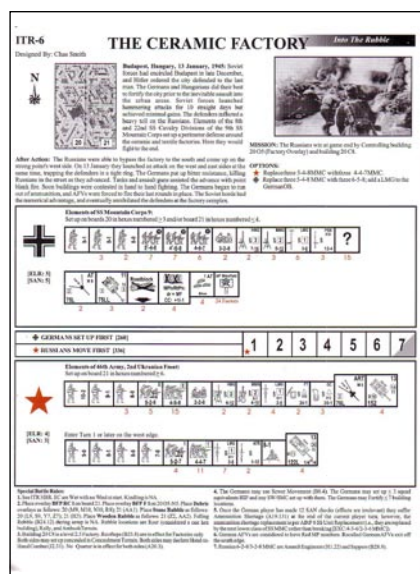
The mission is to gain control of both the O5 and C8 factories then prevent the Germans regaining control. Building O5 is rectangular, covers 21 hexes, with some black bars that prohibit movement, unless you create a breach with a spare AFV or demolition charge. You have to occupy every hex as search is not possible due to No Quarter being in effect, and you don't want to lose because of one hidden unit. Be a bit wary of the sewer entrance in O6, it offers a route in for the Third Reich. C8 is much smaller with two sewers and a level two roof. To gain Control you need to clear the defenders from the roof as well, so you need to gain access to one of the three stairwells within the building.

Attacking choices range from assaulting both factories from the outset to attacking one then the other. My preference would be to start attacking both from turn one, allocating about a third of your on-board force and a similar proportion of the reinforcements to attacking each factory, with the rest positioned to attack either. A kill stack of MGs teamed with the 10-1 Leader in an upper level Location can help strip concealment ready for ISA152s' to black away. Hits can be devastating, but even persuading German troops to withdraw is a result.

Expect some traps. An unprotected area may contain mines, or be covered by a hidden unit. Don't risk a huge stack, but do explore with an expendable squad, lucky vehicle crew from a destroyed tank (*spoken like a true Russian commander :-)* – Pete) or spare Hero. Losing a unit is never good, but you've plenty of troops and need to know where the mines and hidden units are. That said don't explore areas you have no real interest in. Make use of search to strip concealment and reveal hidden units, the rules are very clear and the only risk of casualties slight.

Keep in view you've some Sappers/ Assault engineer units, that gives you a chance of infantry Smoke, a real treat for the Soviets. Sapper abilities you probably won't use, perhaps attacking a tank might be worthwhile though.

Key to victory is being busy. The distances you need to cover are small. On the way you need to kill some enemy units, find others, search for hidden units, win melee, rally broken troops and pick a way through enemy fortification. Casualties don't really matter, you can afford to exchange squads in close combat,



ITR6 THE CERAMIC FACTORY

German Set up

There are two ways to look at the central position you occupy. One school of thought is you are surrounded, the other is you occupy a central position. Either way it's the case that the game would play much differently if the Soviet force was attacking from just one direction.

You start with a strong German force of 20 squads, eleven machine guns,

and your amour is also expendable.

The turn 2 reinforcements can all run onboard in turn one. You might want to keep some back as a mobile reserve to reinforce the fight for either factory later on or just to frustrate your opponent a little.

Much of the fun will come from the Russian armour. Late in the war the Red Army had moved from using an infantry mass to combat teams of infantry and armour with support weapons with the aim of reducing casualties. The ISU-152s are superb against troops in buildings, and scare enemy troops. The IS-2ms have a smaller gun (122mm) offset by slightly more ammunition. Either can cause rubble, with luck to fall on another German position.

Expect a stiff fight for both sides. The Russian has a lot to do, and can expect to lose troops to speed up movement and reconnaissance. The German has an elite force that will win if it can outwit or sufficiently slow the Red Army.

setting up all your force in the railway station (Q3), is not a brilliant idea. It gives the Romanians too much freedom of movement and you'll find yourself being targeted with massed fire attacks from turns two or three onwards. It's better to put some troops in front of your main defence to slow down movement. You've plenty of concealment counters so some of the speed bump can be entirely dummy units. Crucially you want to reduce the use of roads by the Romanians. One idea is to position rubble to do this, but they are more useful increasing the size of the objective building.

The hidden Bofors can be used from a woods hex to interdict moving troops on board one or set up closer to Q3, say in the brush nearby, I like the look of BB7, it exploits the weapons range, and might catch some troops in the open later in the game. If in doubt close to the railway station is safe.

The turn 4 reinforcements are solid defensive units, place them on the flanks for the building or in positions to target a specific location. Once a hex is acquired, and enemy infantry moving in will be nervous.

The move across board 1 has to be opposed, it's a judgement call how much of your force you use to slow the enemy down. Any delay gained reduces the time for the Romanians to get a toe hold in Q3 and to try and push you out.

If you can slow enemy movement, and make the fight for the Railway terminal drag on you have a good chance of winning.

ROMANIAN SET UP

The mission is to gain control of BFP AQ3, the railway station. You outnumber the enemy roughly two to one, have good leadership, plus a decent support weapon allocation including three demolition charges and a flame thrower. You also get an ex-Russian 45L gun that can be used against infantry or armour.

Five of your squads are assault engineers, capable against armour, with improved Smoke exponents. In melee they give you a slight edge against Hungarians.

To win you need to get across board 1 and start gaining ground in Q3. How you do this is influenced by Hungarian set up or should at least factor it into your deployment.

Some casualties are expected just getting to the railway station, perhaps three or more squads than the enemy defending the sector. That still leaves enough to engage Q3.

The quickest way to clear the

building is to assault from several different directions and drive through the place. Slower to start in the middle and work out, slowest of all start at eastern or western end of the building and work through it.

Use the demolition charges as you go along, roll as low as you can on the flame thrower attacks, use smoke, exploit any captured equipment and drag that 45mm gun somewhere useful before melting the barrel.

In close combat the Hungarians higher morale is negated, trading squad for squad will quickly empty Q3. If you are worried about the enemy armour don't forget you have some panzerfaust capability and the chance of anti-tank magnetic mines.

Although both sides have a lot of troops, they are all focused on the control of Q3 and its immediate surroundings. Could be played to completion in under three hours. Part of the attraction for me is the little 45mm gun, the Soviets often used these in urban battles, its rate of fire means lots of shots, acquisition and some damage.

ITR7 REBOUNDED SPIRIT HUNGARIAN SET UP

You begin the game outnumbered nearly two to one, 13 squads vs. 24, and similar proportions for support weapons. An SSR gives troops Fanatic status in Building Q3 or adjacent rubble hexes. That makes your squads 4-4-8s, much more powerful units and conveniently located in the missions objective building. You also start with a Bofor's anti-aircraft gun, and have the promise of two Zyrinyi assault guns, that bring 105mm guns.

Despite the Fanaticism bonus

ITR8 BEYOND THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE GERMAN SET UP

To win you need to control either BFP AQ3 or one of the six multi hex stone buildings on or south of row S.

You get to choose some of your forces, specifically a machine gun group, and a mixed gun and panzerschreck group. I'd go for W2, and MG2 to get the HMG, an extra squad and a couple of panzerschreck. Either way you'll end

up with about 15/16 squads, nine LMG, between one and three panzerschreck, and three or four Guns.

The defence needs to contest a strip of buildings along the eastern edge of BFP A, leading to Q3, and the U9 factory. There's plenty of brush around to emplace a gun, or you might favour using a sangar.

With careful play you could fall back from one position to the next along the eastern board edge (of BFP A), unless a savvy Russian leapfrogs past you, then make a stand in Q3. There are simply too many Russians for a protracted fight to hold a building. One or two turns is about the most you can expect, as Gun and MG fire is followed by a swarm of Russian infantry, a volley of fire, and a fierce hand to hand combat.

In fire combat you are handicapped by low troop quality. An ELR of 2 is embarrassing, conscripts disrupt on an unmodified DR or 9 or more, and your other infantry isn't massively better.

Be a bit scared by the Soviet armour. Used well it can add firepower to the enemy attacks, bypass and threaten to encircle your units. Within three hexes you can try to fire panzerfausts at them, or use panzerschreck for the job if you picked group W2.

Fighting hard for Q3 makes sense if it delays an attack on U9. You want the Red Army to run out of time going for the last hex in the last building.

As with most defensive actions you are going to lose a lot of troops and in this scenario several buildings. Don't despair, the trick is to hold on to just one building that is all you need for a win.

RUSSIAN SET UP

Your infantry force is impressive, 20.5 squads, plenty of leaders, support weapons and some pretty decent armour. The infantry is mostly elite, and includes five 6-2-8 Assault engineers, with an inherent Smoke exponent. The majority of your squads are elite, in fact the quality of your forces is generally higher than the Germans. Aside from higher morale your ELR is 4 vs. 2. Chances are some of your fire combat attacks will cause a quality drop, enemy conscript squads are particularly vulnerable to this. Worth considering if a unit disrupts you can move through the hex they are the sole occupants of. Most of your support weapons are light machine guns, with an HMG, two MMG, an anti-tank rifle and two demolition charges.

The heavy and medium machine guns could be grouped, and directed by an 8-1 or 9-1 leader to give fire support

to your attacks. Chances are they will not be able to engage targets all the time, but sometimes their movement towards a fire position will be enough to make the enemy fall back.

Recommend using the demolition charges on the first reasonable target you get. Taking out a squad or two early in the game is useful, will get you into a building quicker and puts pressure on your opponent.

For armour support you get two ISU-122, two T-34/85, and an OT-34/85 flame thrower variant. All five are useful, they give you additional firepower, protection for Armoured Assault, some smoke making capability, and mobility. They face a lot of panzerfausts, and at least one 88L Gun, and panzerschreck. The best defence against anti-tank rockets is line of sight, but to destroy enemy forces you need to be able to fire at the enemy. Range, movement and supporting infantry will help reduce the threat. 88L guns have longer range, can start the game hidden and will destroy any AFV on a decent DR. It helps that they are not mobile. Be a bit careful with the armour, try to keep it from getting bunched up in the sights of one gun, and when the guns position is known try to avoid it.

How you set up and attack will take account of enemy dispositions, but broadly speaking you need to control the buildings on the Eastern edge of BFP A, and the factory U9. Targeting AA2 early in the game makes sense, from there you can move north to the other buildings, and north-west to the factory. Going up board 45 to outflank the buildings is helpful to complicate routs or withdrawals.

The push north can be pretty simple. Take one building then push into the next, all the way into Q3 for a ferocious struggle. Usual rules apply, take the stairwells, mop up, and garrison captured buildings. Think very carefully before you declare No Quarter early in the game, it stops you using Mopping Up and makes the defenders more tenacious.

Taking the factory will be easy if it's not defended. If there is a decent garrison of infantry and weapons covering the approached it gets harder. You can solve the problem by starting the attack as early as you can and accepting casualties.

A lot depends on enemy set up. The proportion of resources used to defend each building obviously influences the effort you need to expend to take it. The worst scenario is a defence that delays your movement towards U9. Make use of your mobility, if there are no concealed units about a drive up board 45 with a rider

gets you behind enemy lines, risking only hidden unit attacks.

Expect a tough fight. Part of it is a relatively slow slugfest to drive from one building to another, also a more rapid run across board BFP A to get into the Factory. The two ways to lose are run out of troops or run out of time, don't do either!

CONCLUSION

A lot of us bought the pack from Andy Ashton's Second Chance Games at HEROES 2008. My own view is that it's good value. The two railroad maps are nicely done, very reminiscent of aerial photographs and model railway set ups. The debris overlays are a good idea, and you get enough to lose or gift a few. The big factory needs to go into the main game system, perhaps with a larger scale blow up. Then there are the eight scenarios. Most of them will take an afternoon/evening to play. Treat yourself if you haven't already!

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THE BITTER END

Continued from page 21

If the canal bridge is destroyed, well it's game over. The Soviet player in particular must understand that. Conversely if the demolition charge malfunctions or the Germans are delayed by vehicular breakdown, destruction or abysmal dice, the balance does move towards the Red Army and their monster tanks.

It's good to see the SS retreating, sometimes it's forgotten that the "Master Race" was chased all the way from the suburbs of Moscow to the Elbe, and thrashed at intervals along the way.

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VASLEAGUE

An Interview with organiser Enrico Catanzaro

Paolo Cariolato

VASLeague is an individual ASL tourney played mainly via internet. Now in its second year, it has 101 players shared among 5 leagues (TOP League, and four minor leagues). More details can be found at <http://www.games-quad.com/forums/showthread.php?t=71040>
– Pete

VASLeague is one of the most attended VASL tournament ever, Enrico Catanzaro (known as ecz) is the Organizer, the Boss, the Big Cheese. I had the bright idea to ask him some question about himself and his “creature”.

PAOLO

Hello, Enrico would you tell us something about you?

ECZ

I'm 40, married, father of one little boy! I've always be involved in serious wargaming (*SL, CoI, A3R*) and discovered *ASL* in 1990; since then as gaming-time was getting less and less *ASL* gradually becomes my main wargaming interest. I live in Sicily, not exactly an *ASLers'* paradise. To put it plainly I've got just two regular FtF opponents (fortunately very good ones), so in order to play some serious match I need to attend some major tournament OR play VASL.

PAOLO

How did you know about VASL and what's your grade of involvement?

ECZ

I'm a very active “internet Player” out of necessity. In last years I have abandoned other wargames (*Paths of glory, Third Reich, Empires in Arms*) to play VASL 100%. Today my only wargame is (V)ASL. I'm playing VASL since 2003. In last 3 years I have played more games than in the 12 years before!

PAOLO

What about VASLeague?

ECZ

I had the idea to create a VASL tournament according my personal preferences, taking all of the good ideas I have appreciated in other tournaments and putting them together in the VASLeague.

PAOLO

Which are the main features of your VASLeague?

ECZ

I would like note that VASLeague is not “mine”. It belongs to the VASL community and I hope that someone else will relieve me as TD in case I had to quit. The League requires very few efforts from the TD. The main idea beyond VASLeague is getting the *crème* of VASL

players ‘round the world to play together and finding out which one of them is the best VASL player of all. I devised a mechanism of “minor leagues” where the other VASL player can play in order to get the right to play in the Major League and where Major League players are demoted

PAOLO

Sound like a football League to me.

ECZ

Absolutely, that's the model I had in mind: a top league with all the best internet players, but also minor leagues with much more people willing to gain the promotion and the right to play with best players.

At season-end worst players of the Major League are demoted to Minor Leagues, giving room for the top spots of the Minors. Very simple.

PAOLO

Very interesting. How many players signed for VASLeague this year?

ECZ

In our first year (2007) and we had 82 players between Top League (20 players) and three minor leagues (22, 20, 20 player). Today, in 2008 season, the number is 101!! One of these minor leagues is “All European”. We thought there are no reason getting people battling with time zone issues. All European players share the same minor league. Of course in Top VASLeague players from the entire world compete with each other.

PAOLO

How did you pick up players for the Top VASLeague?

ECZ

I put messages in all main ASL forum and sites.

PAOLO

There is no mention of any scenario's list in tournament rules. How is it possible?

ECZ

Well, I think this is the main strength of the VASLeague and the reason why everyone can join it and also have a chance to win!

I have adopted the same rule used in the CyberASL tournament that is the most important (and still more attended) VASL tournament today. The players are free to choose any scenario they like, balance included. Nobody better the players themselves can choose the best scenario to play in their own tournament. They can choose any scenario according their personal taste, rules knowledge, time at disposal; and so on... the TD intervenes only if players cannot reach an agreement (almost impossible). Besides also a

less experienced player can have a chance to win against a grognard playing a very simple infantry scenario. This is a welcomed side effect of this rule.

PAOLO

Other rules you feel like to mention?

ECZ

Yes, VASLeague is a tournament played “live” by default. PBeM is allowed and welcomed, of course, but only if both players agree! I feel is a good thing giving a chance to players who likes the idea of an internet tourney but dislikes the PBeM.

We have also a strict two -months per round schedule which allow to held the whole tournament in 10 months. Five games in ten months is a good pace; this is fine in my opinion because if the tournament last too long people tend to lose interest...

PAOLO

And what happens if there is no result in the two-month deadline?

ECZ

This is not an issue... Players send the VASL file to the judges who assign a victory or a draw studying the position. But Players are encouraged to find by themselves an agreement. The file should be sent to judges only if no agreement is possible. We have two judges able to give a verdict in less than 24 hours. BTW this is the same solution adopted in the CyberASL tourney and the best possible, I think.

PAOLO

I have the distinct impression your VASLeague is a sort of chimera

ECZ

Yes, that's right! VASLeague takes something from different experiences (the free scenario choice, the two months-per round time limit, the Swiss style format) and spice them up with new ideas (the promotion-relegation mechanism, and the “playing live” default). I hope the mix will work and will taste good to the players. My aim is a Top VASLeague with all best VASL players gathered into it. That should take a couple of years.

PAOLO

Did you learn something in your first year? Will you change something in the near future or do you feel VASLeague stands good as it's now?

ECZ

Yes, I plan some minor changes; it had a huge success, and I think it needs to up move to “32 players” Top league as soon as possible (in 2009, changing the promotion-relegation

Continued on page 37, column 1





A PREVIEW

Ian Daghish

(Ian is grateful to MMP for authorizing this preview of the forthcoming ASL AP#4.)

It all began with boards. Back in 2003, the existing ASL boards did a good job of replicating the open spaces and rolling hills of Normandy. What we lacked were patchwork, dense, hedgerow-lined small orchards; country dirt roads flanked by parallel hedgerows; the sunken lanes that constricted armoured advances to single-vehicle fronts. ASL claustrophobia!

This was the start point for a Normandy Action Pack. Three boards: crude pencil and paint designs on which Don Petros and MMP wrought their magic. Two of these boards evolved: one into 54, a web of lanes and woodland paths woven between enclosed fields and orchards; another into 55, a hamlet around a bridge, nestling amid rolling orchards, approached by hedgerow-lined sunken crossroads. A third board since set aside included a 'hull-down' Normandy village with only its church tower visible from the surrounding plateau. In its place we have board 53: a substantial small town of sturdy, stone buildings, sitting on a road junction and surrounded by Normandy apple orchards. Note that these three boards are not copies of actual terrain (although that little village on board 55 seems so familiar!). Instead,

they are a distillation of typical Normandy features.

One other point. I am not a mathematician, but I count that any half-board can be butted against any other half-board three ways (or five if you accept some half-woods hexes). Why not make the potential variety of the two Normandy maps even greater by enabling them to adjoin along the Q hexrow? MMP bought the idea, so the new bocage boards 54 and 55 can be butted together along their fold (with apologies to those who store their new-style boards flat).

THE SCENARIOS

By Christmas 2003 we had the Normandy boards, and the first scenarios were ready for the UK team to put through playtest prior to submission to MMP. The Normandy campaign offers a wealth of different situations, and as the pack evolved Chas Argent, Ken Dunn, Pete Shelling, and Brian Youse all contributed further submissions to yield a rich variety of scenarios from which the final dozen could be selected. (Chas's enthusiasm also led him to take on the onerous task of supervising the final stages of development of the scenario pack, including some new approaches to historical accuracy, of which

more later!)

Blessed as we now are with so many scenarios to choose from, players may look for a fresh approach, a novel 'twist'. In the final set selected for AP#4, we have several examples.

AP 29 RAFF'S DILEMMA (Ken Dunn & Brian Youse)

6 June: Americans probing from Utah beachhead towards Ste-Mère-Eglise try to break through a battalion of Georgians on the ridge of Hill 20.

AP 30 NOT APT TO DRAG FEET (Ken Dunn & Brian Youse)

7 June: Loosely coordinated American armour and infantry encounter mixed German forces north of Ste-Mère-Eglise.

AP 31 FIRST CRISTOT (Ian Daghish)

11 June: A small tactical study of the British forces facing the *Hitlerjugend* division and struggling with lack of coordination between disjointed infantry and armour.

AP 32 SECOND CRACK AT CAUMONT (Chas Argent)

13 June: Medium-size scenario with





Americans trying to push Germans out of a small town (the new board 53).

AP 33 SECOND CRISTOT
(Ian Daghli)

16 June: Another attempt against the same enemy and over the same ground as AP31, this time with somewhat better coordination of artillery, infantry, and armour.

AP 34 BOCAGE BLOCKAGE
(Ian Daghli)

17 June: A medium-small tactical study of the various options open to American infantry trying to solve the unexpected problems posed by the dense bocage country. Uses both new bocage boards, designed to abut along the 'Q' hexrow.

AP 35 A LESSON FOR LEHR
(Ian Daghli)

11 July: Can a powerful *Panzer-Lehr* force break through unprepared defenders before American armoured reinforcements arrive?

AP 36 TAKE A BATH
(Ian Daghli)

31 July: An American armoured column hurrying through dense country runs the

gauntlet of hidden German defenders.

AP 37 APPLES TO APPLES
(Pete Shelling)

4 August: American tanks and armoured infantry run into veteran panzermen in *Panther* tanks.

AP 38 INFILTRATORS
(Ian Daghli)

4 August: Players select from a menu of mixed reconnaissance forces as a British supply column tries to make its way through the mayhem of no man's land.

AP 39 OLD HICKORY
(Pete Shelling)

7 August: Americans defending Mortain against a night attack by *Das Reich*.

AP 40 THE HEAD OF THE MACE
(Ian Daghli)

20 August: (A personal favourite.) Not small but short and sharp: 4.5 turns of concentrated action. Exhausted Poles besieged on Mont Ormel, duelling at close range on an open hilltop with scratch units of desperate Germans.

A last point on the scenarios. German terminology on *ASL* scenario cards has become a bit of a joke over the years (how many variations of *Fallschirmjäger* can you count?). In this set, MMP agreed to have all the scenarios checked for a standard form of German unit designations. Maybe not yet perfect *Deutsch*, but at least internally consistent. Thanks, MMP.

THE RULES

Last and by no means least, playtesting the Normandy scenarios revealed what so many of us suspected for a long time. Even with the 2nd edition rewrite of 2000, extensive clarification in 2001 with *ASL Journal Issue 3*, plus subsequent published errata, the rules on bocage were still not clear enough.

Do adjacent personnel entrenched on opposite sides of bocage have LOS to each other? Does a unit that tries and fails to leave its hex lose its Wall Advantage? What happens to a unit setting up Concealed (or using HIP) behind bocage if an enemy then sets up with LOS that does not pass through



the bocage hexside(s)? A panel of *ASL* rules experts advised MMP on these and other questions, considering and in some cases reversing earlier interpretations. It became clear that not only clarifications of B9 would be necessary but whole new paragraphs and Examples to address some concerns. So, make room in your *ASLRB* folder for an extra Chapter B page, as you will receive with AP#4 new pages B9A & B and B10A & B.

IT'S A WRAP!

That's not all, folks.

As a final bonus, MMP agreed to include on the inner wrapper of this Action Pack a reading list of select (English-language) reference books covering various aspects of the Normandy campaign.

ASL AP#4 went live on the MMP pre-order site as I write this, and at the time of writing was already well on the way to the required number of orders. We should hope to see it very soon. Not long to wait, when you consider the time and the painstaking care that have gone into its preparation.

<http://www.multimanpublishing.com/preorder/viewGame.php?id=57>

Ω

STOP PRESS! AP#4 passed its pre-order target within 48 hours so should be with us soon

Errata Printed in AP4

A7.308: lines 15-16, delete "[EXC: if HD the vehicle is unaffected by an Immobilization result]".

B6.3: lines 3-4, disregard the B6.3 errata from the Journal 7 Debriefing; instead, after "regardless of LOF" replace "is" with "and Residual FP attacks are". [If correcting the Journal 7 errata instead of disregarding it, delete the phrase "with a TEM of -1 which is cumulative with other TEM (e.g., AFV/Wreck) and FFMO/FFNAM". We apologize for any inconvenience.]

Chapter B Terrain Chart: in row "6. Bridge" in the "TEM" column replace "LOS" with "FFMO"; in the "Notes" column replace "IF" with "FFMO if".

C3.33: line 11, replace "all vulnerable units/PRC hit by WP must take an A24.31 NMC" with "see A24.31 for a hit by WP or if in a Location where WP is placed".

C3.331 EX: at the end add "See also B9.521 second EX for WP placement."

D4.2: lines 3-4, replace "Direct or Small Arms/non-ordnance [EXC: DC, C7.346] fire" with "Direct Fire ordnance".

D4.21: lines 1-2, add "ordnance" after "Direct Fire".

Taken from the MMP website at www.multimanpublishing.com.
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Scenario Designer's Handbook
by Michael A. Dorosh, CD

Scenario Designer's Handbook is intended as a reference for those interested in designing historical scenarios for the *Advanced Squad Leader* game system. This book features over 200 pages in full colour with a variety of information to help in force and terrain selection; chapters on all the components of the scenario and how to craft them; information on publishing your scenario, including how to create your own logo and layout; tips on how to research your scenario, including a listing of all the major official histories; and several detailed walkthroughs of the design process, highlighting various subjects of interest such as SSRs, VCs, SAN and playtesting.

The goal of **Scenario Designer's Handbook** is to complement the existing literature on scenario design and provide the reader not only with hard data on terrain, historical references, and force compositions, but to provide an insight into how vast the conflict really was and inspire further research into the more obscure units and campaigns of the war.

The Author – Michael A. Dorosh, CD, has had articles published in both *ASL Annual* and *View From the Trenches*. Outside of *ASL*, he has completed five books on military history; *Canuck* (1996), *Dressed to Kill* (2001) and *An Officer and a Gentleman* (2008) deal with the subject of Canadian Army uniforms in the Second World War; he also published two unit histories under his own canadiansoldiers.com imprint in 2007, *Yorkton's Gunners* and *Gallant Calgarians*. **Scenario Designer's Handbook** will be the first CSC title intended for a wide audience. [Canadiansoldiers.com](http://canadiansoldiers.com) was begun in 1998 and continues to provide information on the Canadian Army in the 20th Century to a world-wide audience.

Scenario Designer's Handbook

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THE SOLDIER BEAR



At the end of January, I read the following story on the BBC web site at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/south_of_scotland/7208505.stm, and thought some of you might be interested in it.

A campaign has been launched to build a permanent memorial to a bear which spent much of its life in Scotland - after fighting in World War II. The bear - named Voytek - was adopted in the Middle East by Polish troops in 1943, becoming much more than a mascot. The large animal even helped their armed forces to carry ammunition at the Battle of Monte Cassino.

Voytek - known as the Soldier Bear - later lived near Hutton in the Borders and ended his days at Edinburgh Zoo.

He was found wandering in the hills of Iran by Polish soldiers in 1943. They adopted him and as he grew he was trained to carry heavy mortar rounds.

When Polish forces were deployed to Europe the only way to take the bear with them was to "enlist" him. So he was given a name, rank and number and took part in the Italian campaign. He saw action at Monte Cassino before being billeted - along with about 3,000 other Polish troops - at the army camp in the Scottish Borders.

The soldiers who were stationed with him say that he was easy to get along with.

"He was just like a dog - nobody was scared of him," said Polish veteran Augustyn Karolewski, who still lives near the site of the

camp. "He liked a cigarette, he liked a bottle of beer - he drank a bottle of beer like any man."

When the troops were demobilised, Voytek spent his last days at Edinburgh Zoo.

Mr Karolewski went back to see him on a couple of occasions and found he still responded to the Polish language. "I went to Edinburgh Zoo once or twice when Voytek was there," he said. "And as soon as I mentioned his name he would sit on his backside and shake his head wanting a cigarette. It wasn't easy to throw a cigarette to him - all the attempts I made until he eventually got one."

Voytek was a major attraction at the zoo until his death in 1963.

Eyemouth High School teacher Garry Paulin is now writing a new book, telling the bear's remarkable story.

Local campaigner Aileen Orr would like to see a memorial created at Holyrood to the bear she says was part of both the community and the area's history. She first heard about Voytek as a child from her grandfather, who served with the King's Own Scottish Borderers. "I thought he had made it up to be quite honest but it was only when I got married and came here that I knew in fact he was here, Voytek was here," she said. "When I heard from the community that so few people knew about him I began to actually research the facts. "It is just amazing, the story is totally amazing."



ACHTUNG SCHWEINEHUND

Continued from page 21

tactical nuance. It seems to me therefore that this is a world away from *ASL* where, for me at least, dull and unremarkable games are in the vast minority.

We do experience our wargaming in a different plane than the toy soldier brigade. These days I spend time at an actual wargames club in Liverpool. Our *ASL* board layouts seem like postage stamps on the waist-high gaming tables. I'll cast a curious glance across the miniatures games set up around us. 'Hundred Years War' one of the players will grunt briefly to anyone pausing to have a look. I'll admire the exquisite detail of the soldiers, sometimes hundreds of figures in an area no bigger than the size of your bathroom carpet. But then I'll notice the measuring tapes, the frankly dull and uninspiring terrain, the pamphlet of rules and the ceaseless roll of a single die. And I'll back away. Not for me.

On the downside, I've never once had to research the exact cut of my US Marine's uniform or the precise tone of sand-yellow my PzIVF2 should have at my action at El-Alamein, and in this regard at least our hobby may be the poorer. For people with that bent there lies the path of the scenario designer (and where would we be without them?). But I know when I've set my forces up *inside* buildings, woods and trenches, and I reach over and pick up the dice... I'm in for some fun.

So what I can impart from this one passage in Harry Pearson's excellent book is a reinforcement of the validity of our brand of the hobby. Whether you're taking your initial steps in your first Starter Kit scenario (hello and welcome to our world), or whether you're desperately fending off an NKVD night counterattack in the ruins of central Stalingrad, you're probably having a great time.

It's available for £5.99 (plus postage) from Amazon - if you click on the link on the *VFTT* web site Pete earns beer money (sorry, commission) on the purchase.

3rd RTR in the Rain

A Newcomer's Scenario Analysis

Matt Blackman

When I first started trying to play *ASL* a few years back one of the biggest challenges was finding interesting scenarios which didn't use obscure boards or require learning – and then teaching my opponent – 125 pages of new rules (let's try this night river crossing against undead Germans holed up in caves with OBA and captured molotov throwers). Okay, we'd shot each other from stone buildings in The Guards Counterattack until someone remembered the human wave rules. He'd walked a 10-2 and three squads up a hill straight into an 8-2 shot and watched them all die in Gavin Take. I'd forgotten to go BU and been hosed by the Germans in The Puma Prowls. Now what? We wanted to get our infantry and vehicles shot up at the same time, that's what!

This cracking scenario from *ASL Journal 3* allowed us to do just that as the Brits sally out to attempt to hold the advancing Germans outside Calais in 1940. Both sides get a nice combined arms force, but early war tanks, driving rain and low TK numbers keep the armour battle nice and tense. What's more, the combination of board and SSRs make it very rule-friendly for the relative newcomer.

THE TERRAIN

Board 17 – no hills for multi-level LOS conundrums, no fiddly bocage. It's May so grain is ploughed field, with increased movement costs but no hindrance DRM. By SSR all hedges are walls and all buildings are wooden. There's a 2-hex woods overlay for a bit more cover. And it's raining heavily, so smoke is out and everyone is hit by a Mist Hindrance of +1 (at 6 hexes or less) and +2 at greater ranges. There's a small village (eight buildings) in the middle of the board – the Brits want six of those buildings in six turns.

THE DEFENDERS:

THE GERMANS

Faced with a swift sortie by the Brits the Germans are initially holding the village with a recon force. But a decent one. Five 468s are ably led by a 9-1 and 8-0, although thankfully for the Brits the support weapons only run to two LMGs and an ATR. Unfortunately for the Brits, there's also a 37L anti-tank gun in there somewhere – and a PzIIVD and two PzIIIFs speeding to join the battle.

THE TRENCHES

THE ATTACKERS: THE BRITISH

Nine squads of 1st line infantry have two LMGs, their own ATR and even a 51mm mortar to play with. Led by a 9-1, 8-1 and 7-0 they set up on-board. Rolling up behind them are a couple of A13 MkIIs, a pair of A9s and a light MkVIc. By SSR the British tanks enter having used half their movement, so with German Panzers rolling in from the opposite side of the board the race is on to find some decent positions with which to dominate the village.

3rd RTR IN THE RAIN

ASL SCENARIO 143

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

BALANCE:

TURNTURN RECORD CHART:

1	2	3	4	5	6	END
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SPECIAL RULES:

1. The rain, which is heavy at night, is a hindrance to movement.
2. The maximum number of units that can be in the village at any one time is 10.
3. The maximum number of units that can be in the trench at any one time is 10.
4. The A13 MkII has a 6FP CMG (only the Machine Gun is visible).

THE ARMOUR BATTLE

Let's have a look at the hardware, starting with the British.

The A13s are the most rugged tanks in the Brit's armoury. Protected by a mighty 3 AFs to the front and 2 to the sides and rear (3 on the turret) they have the best chance of surviving an incoming shell.

They can dish it out, too. The 40L gun has a ROF of 2 and offers a basic TK of 10, giving final TKs against the German armour in the 6 to 8 range. Good, but by no means a sure thing. There's also a very nifty 6FP CMG to help out the infantry.

For manoeuvrability the 16MF beats the German tanks, but the big red numbers mean reliability is an issue. And, frankly, you can forget crew survival.

The A9s also sport the 40L with ROF 2 but the 1 AF front and rear is less comforting, given basic German TK numbers

of 9 to 10. MFs of 14 place them on an equal footing with the enemy, but again the red numbers add that uneasy feeling it could all go badly wrong at a crucial time.

Lots of MGs on these as well – two(!) BMGs of 4FP each (check the vehicle notes carefully for covered arcs) and a 6FP CMG can give enemy squads plenty to think about.

Finally, there's the dinky little MKVIc. The TK of 5 isn't going to worry a BU German tank crew but the IFE of 6 and 4FP CMG will if they show their heads. AFs of 1 offer little in the way of survivability in a tank battle. But with 18MF it might be possible to keep him out of harms way until the dust has settled on the tank duel.

Over on the German side, we have the PzIIVD. AFs of 3 and 2 (3 on turret) give it a fighting chance of surviving a hit. Its 75* has a basic TK of 10 – which will whack the A13s pretty hard (TKs of 7/8) and give a 9TK on the rest. But the ROF (1) isn't great, and the AP depletion number of 7 is just plain wrong. Once this guy runs out of AP rounds its HE attacks against enemy armour have a TK of 7. That might still trouble the lightly armoured Brits but the A13s will suddenly fancy their chances head-to-head.

The BMG (3FP) and CMG (5FP) are, well, like a mobile LMG and MMG combined.

The PzIIIFs also have decent armour (3 circled, 3 boxed) and the 37L (with a ROF of 2) has a basic TK of 9, giving a good chance of taking out the lighter British tanks, and a nailbiting die-roll against the A13s. However, the gun breaks down on an 11, so maybe those low-odds shots will have to be put on hold. A CMG with 8FP is the German infantry's best friend.

Playing the odds is especially important for the Germans since they can sometimes choose between shooting at A13s and A9s - which have the same gun (and are therefore equally threatening) but where the former has 2 more AFs. You have a 30 per cent better chance of rolling a 7 (to take out the A9) than a 5 (vs the A13). Given their numerical inferiority, the Germans really, really want to even that up by taking out the lighter British tanks as soon as possible and cutting the number or shots coming their way.

For the Brits it doesn't matter as much – they don't get to choose their TK numbers, they just want a chance to nail any tank with any shot on any facing. If they can bag the first kill and get a 2-1 superiority (not including the MKVI) they can really start to

squeeze the Germans.

With the rain, and tanks BU because of the enemy MGs, the to-hit rolls will be pretty low, which combined with less than stellar chances to make the TK rolls is going to make the armour battle nicely unpredictable.

GERMAN SET-UP

Advantages: Morale, HIP ATG, Time

Look at those British tanks. There's 50FP right there (not including HE) which is more than their entire infantry force can muster. The German's really don't want that lot parked outside.

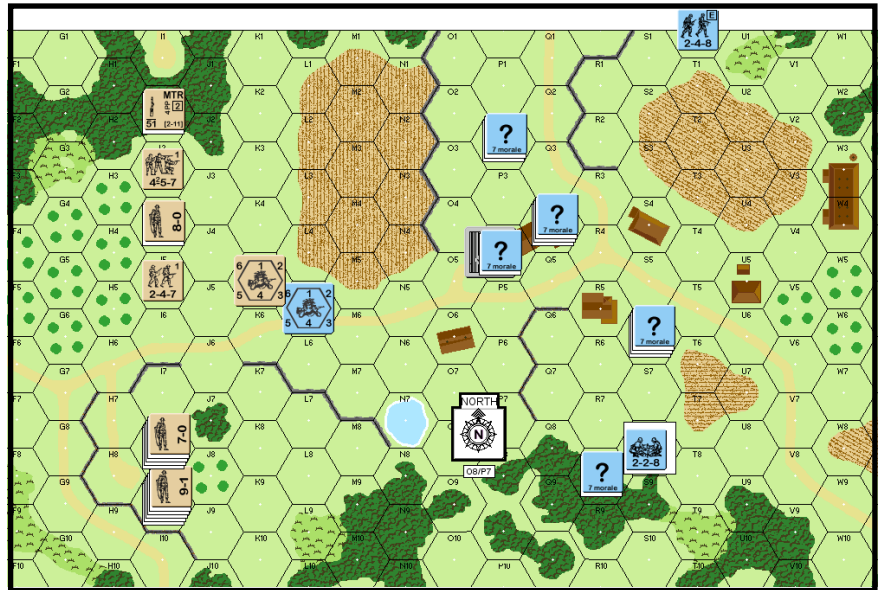
Yes, they have Panzers on their way, but they also have a trusty 37L anti-tank gun. Doorknocker it ain't – here in 1940 this thing is the business with its TK of 9 and 3 ROF. This thing has to go somewhere where it's going to get a chance to play a part in the game – preferably in concealment terrain or emplaced out of any likely LOS from the Brits so it can stay HIP as long as possible.

O9 is just too far forward. In the dream scenario, the British tanks would come drifting lazily across all that open ground and get drilled by a barrage of shells. Back in the real world, the Germans can expect at least a platoon of British infantry to be storming through those woods from the off, meaning a gun there would probably get taken out before it fired a shot.

The Brits are coming for the closest buildings – O6, P2, P4, R5, S4 and S6 will win them the game – so the Germans have to make a stand in the middle of the board. Buildings S4 and S6 look like they have the best chance of staying in German hands, so the gun wants to go somewhere nearby to help out in the later stages if the Brits break through and are swarming the village.

The orchards around V5 offer the terrain but the lines of sight are cluttered. A gun there might not get a shot off all game. However S8 looks promising, with clear shots on P5-6, Q5-7, R6-7 and a tight LOS through to R3 if a British tank comes round from that side. S8 it is, while hopefully the fear of the gun in O9 or N8 will keep the Brits honest until the Panzers get forward.

Now the infantry. As the Brits are going to start on-board there's no automatic concealment, although there are five ? counters available. The MGs on the British tanks suggest being cautious about offering them early turn targets to warm up on. Similarly, the German's don't want to give that British mortar an obvious target from turn one and let it accumulate acquisition counters. They want to conserve their forces until the Panzers can provide support. In addition, the lure of setting up forward and hoping to catch careless infantry in the open



is a no-go because of the rain – there's no FFMO here and the FFNAM is offset by the +1 or +2 hindrance. Germany's finest are going to have to let the Brits come to them and hope their superior morale takes the day.

So here's a sample set-up based on that philosophy:

P2: 468/atr/?
P4 (level1): 248/?
Q4: 9-1/468/lmg/?
R8: 468?
S6: 8-0/468/lmg/?
(HIP) S8: 37L/228 – facing R6
T0: 248

The P4 half-squad is hoping to survive long enough to strip concealment from any advancing Brits with a leader nearby and easy rout paths if it all goes wrong. Everything else is tucked well away for the opening turn. The HS in T0 wants to grow concealment and then move down into S4.

The LMG and leader in Q4 are there to help contest the woods around N8 and O9 if the Brits come that way, or the O1 to O4 wall if there's action there. The squad in P2 with the ATR is tasked with guarding the wall from O1 to O4 and possibly moving out behind the wall to take a shot at anything with IAF.

Meanwhile the squads in S6 and R8 are there to defend the woods around P8 and Q8 if the Brits make it that far, and keep infantry away from the ATG.

The hope is to speed in with the tanks for the best defensive HD positions and aim to keep the enemy at bay as long as possible with the MA and quality CMGs. Q6 and Q7 are obvious choices for one PzIIIF and especially the IVD, since it can hammer infantry with 12FP HE shots from that mean 75* once the AP runs out. O2/3 might be a good spot for the other PzIIIF if the Germans can get to the wall first, otherwise R2 looks a likely option to contest that side of the board.

THE BRITISH APPROACH

Advantages: Numbers, Armour superiority, Weather

Although it looks like a leveller, the rain definitely helps the Brits given the amount of open ground there is in front of the village. The British have to move, but don't get to suffer the FFMO penalties – which saves them messing around trying to find smoke shells or inching forward using armoured assault or assault movement.

They have enough FP on their tanks to keep German heads down (the A9s can put a 12 +3 into a wooden building at six hexes) and there really isn't enough in the German locker to build a convincing kill-stack anyway – the Brit's aren't facing a German MMG, LMG 9-2 combo. Furthermore the victory buildings are only 10-12 hexes away.

So, stuff the open ground – let's make a run for it and see if we can't get into them early. Here's a sample set-up for the British, assuming they've just looked at the board with the German's set up as above:

I2: 247/51mm mortar
I3: 457
I4: 457/8-0/
I5: 247
I8: 3*457/lmg/7-0
I9: 3*457/lmg/atr/9-1

It's not a subtle plan, but hell the Brits are going to try to make use of that rain to push the infantry forward quickly and scout out potential hidey-holes for that nasty gun before the tanks start getting frisky.

The HS with the mortar wants concealment and then is aiming for J1, which offers a nice LOS down on Q6 and Q7. Okay, its only 2FP on a hit – or a chance of

shocking or immobilising a tank on a 3 and killing on a 2 – but with 2 ROF maybe it can fluke a crit and cause problems for anything, or anyone, hiding behind that wall.

The rest of the platoon are racing across to M2-4 aiming to advance up next to the wall. They'll check out N0 for the ATG ASAP and then look to start beating up whoever's in P2.

The platoon in I8 wants to spread out along the K7-L7-M8 wall to threaten the centre then push into O6 the moment that looks feasible, or filter round through the woods, depending on how the Germans play it. The leader can hang back in J7 as a safe rallying spot if need be.

Finally the platoon in I9 wants to charge through the woods from M9 through to P8-9 to make sure there's no 37mm surprises down that way and then aim for Q8 and R8 where they can get at any defenders behind the Q7 wall and maybe look for a deliberate immobilisation with the ATR against any lurking panzers.

With the tanks on half-move and the possibility of an ATG out there, all the armour will be hanging back under the cover of the orchards until the infantry have scouted the approach.

Beyond that, it's anyone's guess.

FINAL WORDS

I mentioned at the start this was a good learning scenario for combined arms but I remember being quite daunted at first by the idea of both players having tanks and infantry, especially since I was having to slowly teach my opponent the rules over the course of a number of games.

What we did was start by playing 'J59 Friday the 13th', also in *ASL Journal 3*. Same board, same idea but with Russians holding the village against a German assault. In this one the Germans get three mean assault guns while the Russians are reliant upon a solitary ATG to hold them off. It was a good warm up to get us using Chapters C and D alongside the infantry rules, and went to the wire both times.

We played 3rd RTR twice as well – once as the Germans and once as the Brits – and loved it, with see-saw tank battles and lots of options for both sides. So I hope this has provided some incentive to give it a go. As I said at the start, I'm no kind of *ASL* expert – I wouldn't know where to start with a half-track or OBA – so I accept no responsibility if this analysis costs you a severe drubbing when you play the scenario. Cheers!

VASLEAGUE

Continued from page 30

rules in 2008 just to allow this). 32 players is the maximum number possible of players that can play in a 5-rounds Swiss format style tournament barring the possibility of sharing the top spot.

Besides the Minor Leagues could be reduced to two (from three) or they could be more to fit various World's Time Zones if there are enough takers. One of these will include all the European players. I think that eight relegations each year from the Top league are a fair choice. This high number forces many persons to play to avoid the relegation until the last round and, at the same time, allows a meaningful yearly turnover with fresh players coming from the minor leagues adding interest also elsewhere beyond the TOP league.

PAOLO

What about prizes?

ECZ

Eh good question... the prizes... I think the best prize is playing ASL with kind, competent and relaxed players from all the world... anyway the Italian ASL group offers for 2007 good prizes for the winners of each league: for the winner of the Top VASLeague a box of "Valour of the Guards". For the minor leagues the prizes are the incoming AP #3 "Few Returned" and the Game Designers' guide By Mark Pitcavage.

I hope in future years MMP and some TPP will step up with some prize of their own.

In 2007 the winners were:

TOP VASLeague: Andrea Pagni, Italy.

European VASLeague: Fabio Mazzucchelli, Italy.

Warman VASLeague: Eric H Givler, US

Minor VASLeague III: Jim Taylor, US

PAOLO

Nice... When is possible sign up for VASLeague 2009? (VASLeague 2008 is underway)

ECZ

Subscriptions will start from 1st November and end 30th December 2008. All league-players will keep their standing results, freshmen will be assigned to a minor league according their time zone and the overall number of players. Stay tuned!

PAOLO

Enough with VASL Legue. Let's talk a bit about you. When did you start playing *ASL*?

ECZ

As many *ASL*ers I was a *SL/CoI* player. I made the change a bit later than average. Not before early '90.

PAOLO

what nationality do you enjoy playing most?

ECZ

All nationalities are good! Being a true *ASL* berserker/fan for me it's a matter of

scenario, not of nationality

PAOLO

Describe your favourite kind of scenario

ECZ

See above... all kind of scenarios are good. Of course some just suck, but all situations can possibly present interesting features. The only ones that I positively don't want to play are "all armor scenarios". I would play Battletech, instead!

PAOLO

Any title?

ECZ

Too many! Hill 621 has a lot of good things and is a super kind of classic, I'm going to play it anytime. But really there are too many wonderful scenarios. It would be much easier to name the few I disliked.

PAOLO

Future projects besides VASLeague?

ECZ

I'm one of the organizers of the main Italian FtF event, It-ASL-IA 2008, it will be held in Verona in September 2008. Our aim is to improve participation in this tournament year after year. In 2006 we were 16 in 2007 we were 20, hope to see at least 24 players in 2008.

PAOLO

Wwhat was your most enjoable moment in a tournament? The worst? The funniest?

ECZ

I think my most enjoable moment was when, back in 1998, I won my first tournament, and more exactly when I understood my final opponent could not avoid the defeat.

The worst was during my last Scandinavian Open Tournament, in February 2007. My opponent in round 4 made a sleazy trick exploiting a scenario's bug (quite legal, of course) avoiding battle and winning in turn 2 for resign. The Scenario was SP 133, Old Hicory's Path, a real dog. It can be easily won by the German defender limbering a gun, pushing it in deep woods and kindling the only access woods-road. No chance for the Americans to reach it. A pity. I was ubeaten until that fourth round.

The funniest moment was when, months ago, in a key attack phase against the last enemy squad I rolled four times in a row 6,6 malfunctioning in the process one FT, one MMG and one LMG. Both MG was chosen by random selection (BTW 6,6 of course). I think it is a small negative record. But who cares? Isn't ASL a dicey game?

PAOLO

Many Thanks to Enrico for this interview.

ECZ

You are welcome!

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ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL

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

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

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

JUNE DOUBLE ONE 2008

When: 21 – 22 June.

Where: The Lecture Centre, Brunel University, London, UB8 3PH. On-site facilities include en-suite and standard bedrooms, free car parking on application, mini market, cash points, a self-service cafeteria and licensed bars. Bedroom rates include breakfast and for 2008 will be £30 for a standard bedroom and £38 for an en-suite bedroom.

Fee: £10.00 prior to 9 May, £15.00 thereafter.

Format: A two day tournament with two rounds on Saturday and one on Sunday offering a choice of three scenarios. Friendly games will also be available.

Contact: Brendan Clark on 0770 8844 640 or by email at brendan@doubleone-online.net. Check out the web site at www.doubleone-online.net for the latest details.

SEPTEMBER ITALIA 2008

When: 5 – 7 September.

Where: Hotel Antares, Via Postumia, 88 - 37069 Villafranca di Verona, Italy. Telephone +39 045. 630.18.79 or visit www.hotelantares.com. Room are available from €40 per night.

Fee: €20.00.

Format: 5 round (two on Friday, two on Saturday, and one on Sunday) Swiss-style, with a choice of three scenarios in each round.

Notes: There will be a plaque for the winner. Players are also invited to attend the *ASL Italia* social dinner on the Saturday night.

Contact: Paolo Cariolato on +39 045 6104413 or by email at cariolato@asitalia.org. Check the web site at www.asitalia.org for the latest details.

OCTOBER ASLOK XXIII

When: 5 – 12 October.

Where: Holiday Inn Airport, 4181 W. 150th St., Cleveland, Ohio 44135, phone 216-252-7700, fax 216-252-3850 or visit www.holidayinn.com/cle-airport. Rooms are \$75.00 plus tax if reservations are made by 20 Sep - request "ASL Oktoberfest" to receive this discounted rate. Check the ASLOK web page for the hotel discount code to book on-line.

Fee: \$25.00 in advance, \$30.00 on the door.

Format: Same as always. Weekend tournament plus numerous mini-tournaments. There is also an informal USA vs. World Cup where everyone keeps track of their games and a plaque is presented to the winning side.

Notes: T-shirts are \$10.00 ea (XXL \$13.00, XXXL \$15.00, 4XL \$18.00)

Contact: Bret Hildebran, 17810 Geauga Lake Rd, Chagrin Falls, OH 44023-2208 or by email damavs@attel.net. Check out the web site at www.aslok.org for the latest details.

INTENSIVE FIRE 2008

When: 23 – 26 October.

Where: The Kiwi Hotel, West Hill Road, Bournemouth, England, BH2 5EG. Telephone (01202) 555 889 or fax (01202) 789 567 to arrange accommodation. Single rooms are £37.00 per night, double rooms £30.00 per night per person if booked prior to 1 October – thereafter normal rates apply. Remember to mention INTENSIVE FIRE when reserving to qualify for the special rates. You can also book online at www.kiwihotel.co.uk.

Fee: £10.00 if registering with the organisers prior to the event; £15.00 on the door (entry is free for those only able to attend for one day). In addition to a discount on the entry fee, 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 those who do not wish to take part in the tournament.

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

Contact: For more details or to register contact Pete Phillipps, 9 Pier Road, Kilchoan, Acharacle, Argyll, Scotland, PH36 4LJ. Phone (01972) 510 350 (evenings only) or email if@vfft.co.uk. For up to date information check out the UK ASL tournament web site at www.asltourneys.co.uk.

NOVEMBER Grenadier 08 (10th Anniversary)

When: 6 – 9 November.

Where: "Gästehaus Heimbach", Schulstraße 6, Hergarten. Hergarten is a little town in the German part of the Eifel. It is 10 Km to Zulpich and around 40 Km to Cologne. There is a railway station in Heimbach which is the neighbouring town and you can reach it from Cologne by train, which goes every hour. From Heimbach you need to take a taxi to Hergarten which is about 6 Kilometers. The location offers sleeping rooms nearly 60 persons, a huge kitchen (where our Marketenderin Andrea will continue her cooking business for us), a big playing area and an additional separate big room which we will use for eating. Rooms are mostly three and four bed rooms with shower (you will need to bring a sleeping bag or blanket and pillows). Bed and breakfast is €35 per night – single rooms are €6.50 extra.

Fee: €5 per day.

Format: The tournament will be again a Swiss style five Round tournament. We will offer again an event for players who don't want to participate in the tournament.

Contact: Christian Koppmeyer, Hagebuttenweg 9, 41564 Kaarst, Germany. You can email him at Christian.Koppmeyer@freenet.de. Check out the Grenadier web site at www.asl-grenadier.de at for up to date information.

2009 MARCH HEROES 2009

When: 12 – 14 March.

Where: Hotel Skye, 571-573 New South Promenade, Blackpool, England, FY4 1NG. Tel 01253 343220. Room rates are £25.00 for a shared room or £30.00 for a single room and include breakfast. Bar meals and good beer are also available at the hotel.

Fee: £10.00 if registering with the organisers prior to the event; £15.00 on the door (entry is free for those only able to attend for one day). In addition to a discount on the entry fee, players pre-registering will receive a tournament program in February.

Format: Five round tournament beginning Friday morning (arrangements will be made for those unable to arrive until Friday afternoon), with three scenarios to choose from in each round. Players will be expected to have 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 opportunities for new players to learn the game and friendly games available.

Contact: For more details or to register contact Pete Phillipps, 9 Pier Road, Kilchoan, Acharacle, Argyll, Scotland, PH36 4LJ. Phone (01972) 510 350 (evenings only) or email heroes@vfft.co.uk. For up to date information check out the UK ASL tournament web site at www.asltourneys.co.uk.

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Simon Taylor, 81 Valley Road, London, SW16 2XL (19/11/2007)
 Julian Blakeney-Edwards, 1 Elmbourne Road, London, SW17 8JS (21/10/1998)
 Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, 49 Edgcombe House, Whitlock Drive, Southfields, London, SW19 6SL (31/10/1999)
 Christopher Chen, Flat 11, 14 Sloane Gardens, London, SW1W 8DL (25/02/1999)
 Jonathan Pickles, 115 Wavertree Road, Streatham Hill, London, SW2 3SN (26/03/1999)
 David Tye, 35 Redburn Street, London, SW3 4DA
 Chris Courtier, 17b Hargwyne Street, London, SW9 9RQ (23/10/1998)
 John Sparks, 2 Standfast Place, Taunton, Somerset, TA2 8QG (01/10/2007)
 Paul Case, 4 Brymas House, Rockwell Green, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 9BZ (19/03/2005)
 Mike Batley, 2 The Gables, Argos Hill, East Sussex, TN6 3QJ (29/04/2001)
 Bill Eaton, Dart House, 20 Bridgetown, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5BA (13/04/2000)
 Ivor Gardiner, 19 Gibson Road, Ickenham, London, Middlesex, UB10 6EW (29/09/2007)
 Aarprn Patrick, 9 Arundel Gardens, London, W11 2LN (31/12/2004)
 Nick Quinn, 7 Woodgrange Avenue, Ealing, London, W5 3NY (04/03/2002)
 Dave Booth, 47 Dunnock Grove, Oakwood, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 6NW (07/10/1996)
 Robin Langston, 105 Little Bushey Lane, Bushey, Herts., WD2 (19/09/1996)
 Paul Ryde-Weller, 44 Farm Way, Watford, Herts., WD2 3SY
 Sandy Goh, 12 Morningson Road, Radlett, Herts., WD7 7BL (31/10/1996)
 Matt Blackman, 10 Alfred St, Wigan, Lancs., WN1 2HL (14/03/2008)
 Michael Murray, 34 Bell Road, Walsall, West Mids., WS5 3JW (30/03/1999)

Ian Price, 19 Upper Green, Yettenhall, Wolverhampton, W. Mids., WV6 8QN
 Michael Clark, Wold View, East Heslerton, Malton, N. Yorks, YO17 8RN (12/02/2002)
 David Murray, 29 Middle Street, Nafferton, Driffield, S. Yorks, YO25 4JS (20/07/2007)

Scotland

Steve Cook, 197 Lee Crescent, Aberdeen (28/01/2006)
 Martin Vicca, 37 Dean Gardens, Westhill, Aberdeen (19/03/2005)
 Steven Trease, 2 Charlestown Circle, Cove, Aberdeen, AB12 3EY (17/06/1999)
 Tony Gibson, 107 Queen's Drive, Hazelhead, Aberdeen, AB15 8BN (13/02/2004)
 Ian Percy, Clinterty Home Farm Cottage, Kingswell, Aberdeen, AB15 8RN (22/03/2006)
 Paul Saunders, 59 Grampian Gardens, Arbroath, Angus, DD1 4AQ (18/01/2005)
 Michael Green, 27 Rotchell Park, Dumfries, DG2 7RH (12/09/2002)
 Mark Chapman, Flat 7, 265 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh, EH11 1TX (01/12/2005)
 Garry Ferguson, 30E Forrester Park Avenue, Edinburgh, EH12 9AW (07/12/1998)
 Stewart Thain, 77 Birrell Gardens, Muriston, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 9LF (27/10/2006)
 Bill Finlayson, 19 Taymouth Road, Polmont, Falkirk, Stirlingshire, FK2 0PF (16/06/2001)
 Andrew Kassian, Flat 14/2, 20 Petershill Court, Glasgow, G21 4QA (01/01/1996)
 Ellis Simpson, 4 Langtree Avenue, Whitecraigs, Glasgow, G46 7LW (20/04/1999)
 Oliver Gray, 117 Upper Dalgairn, Cupar, Fife, KY15 4JQ (17/08/2000)
 Garry Marshall, 24 Allardice Crescent, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY2 5TY

(21/05/2001)
 Pete Phillipps, 9 Pier Road, Kilchoan, Argyll, PH36 4LJ (01/01/2007)
 Jonathan Swilliamson, Da Croft, Bridge End, Burra, Shetland Islands, ZE2 9LE (01/05/1998)

Wales

Paul Jones, 9 Cwm Nofydd, Rhiwbina, Cardiff, CF14 6JX (22/11/2002)
 Kev Sutton, 1 Gorphwysfa, Windsor Road, New Broughton, Wrexham, LL11 6SP (25/02/1999)
 C. Jones, Deer Park Lodge, Stepaside, Narbeth, Pembrokeshire, SA67 8JL
 Emyr Phillips, 2 Cysgod Y Bryn, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 4LR (27/08/2002)

If there are any mistakes, please let me know so I can correct them for the next edition. If you have Internet access you can also correct your details on the VFFT web site at www.vfft.co.uk/aslrs.asp - contact me if you need your user name and password to do so.

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INTENSIVE FIRE 2008

23 – 26 OCTOBER 2008



INTENSIVE FIRE is the UK's longest running tournament dedicated to the play of Advanced Squad Leader. 2008 sees us well into our second decade 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. There will also be a Training Camp for inexperienced players.

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 (£38 per night for a single room or £31 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.kiwihotel.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 £15, or just £10 if you register before 1st October. 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, 9 Pier Road, Kilchoan, Acharacle, Argyll, Scotland, PH36 4LJ. Telephone (01972) 510 350 (+44 1972 510 350 from outside the UK) or email if@vftt.co.uk.