

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

Britain's Premier ASL Journal

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IN THIS ISSUE

HEROES 2009 - all the *ASL* action and results from Blackpool

BLOWTORCH AND CORKSCREW - assaulting caves

ENDSTATION BUDAPEST - scenario analysis

CRUSADER LADDER - updated

STEEL INFERNO - after action report

ACTION PACK 5 & TURNING THE TIDE - reviewed

IN THIS ISSUE

PREP FIRE	2
INCOMING	3
A BLAST AT BLACKPOOL	4
THE GUN-PIT'S HEROES 2009	6
THE CRUSADERS OPEN	
ASL TOURNAMENT LADDER	10
BLOWTORCH AND CORKSCREW	12
TURNING THE TIDE AND ACTION PACK 5	17
STEEL INFERNO	18
ENDSTATION BUDAPEST	20
IS-2 TANKS AND ASSAULT GUNS	22
“THIS IS THE CALL TO ARMS!”	26
ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL	27

COVER: Troops shelter from fire while regrouping on Sword Beach during the D-Day landings 65 years ago.

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*, a bit later than planned, but hopefully the extra pages will make up for that! The main reason for the delay is that I started working in our village shop after *HEROES* and work 6 days a week, so I tend to be a “lazy hippy” (© 2009 Craig Benn :-)) when I finish every day! But at least it's allowed me to get another bike :-)) The next issue should be on time though as I already have it pretty much laid out, apart from a few pictures to go with the articles.

As you will see elsewhere in this issue *DOUBLE 1* is not taking place this year. This is mainly due to the credit crunch, as organiser Brendan Clark has to pay out for the venue in advance and he was concerned that not enough *ASL*ers would turn up to cover his costs. Hopefully *DOUBLE 1* will be back next year though.

‘Til next issue, roll Low and Prosper.



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 77 should be out at the beginning of September 2009.

VFTT costs £2.00 per issue (overseas £4.00), with a year's subscription costing £5.00 (overseas £10.00). Payment should be in pounds sterling, with cheques made out to PETE PHILLIPPS. Readers are reminded to check their address label to see when their subscription ends. You can also download *VFTT* free from the *VFTT* web site.

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

MMP TO FINISH FINNISH

With *Action Pack 5 – East Front* and *Turning The Tide* both released, work continues on the Finnish module *Hakkaa Paaille*, which is now entering it's final blind play-testing period. If you would like to help, contact Perry Cocke at perrycocke@comcast.net. MMP would like to release the module this year, so the more help they get the more likely this is to happen.

Until then, reprints of *ASL Journal 2*, *Beyond Valor*, the *ASLRB* and *ASL Starter Kit* are due by the end of the summer. MMP are also hopeful of getting of *ASL Journal 8* later this year.

Away from *ASL*, the long awaited *Panzerblitz* update has finally been released, with the first module, *Panzerblitz: Hill of Death* now shipping.

CDs of back issues of *Operations* magazine in PDF format are now available for \$35.00 each (including shipping from the editor Bruce Monnin. Send payment to Bruce Monnin, 177 South Lincoln Street, Minster, OH 45865-1240. You can also pay by PayPal to BDMONNIN@NKTTELCO.NET. Check out <http://www.nktelco.net/bdmonnin/pdf.html> for more details.

RETRO CH FIGHT IVAN'S WAR

Out now from Critical Hit is *Ivan's*

War, a \$17.95 pack containing 10 new scenarios played on the included *Deluxe ASL sized Stalin's Fury* map. Also out are *CH Retro 3* and *CH Retro 4*. Both are 48 page reprints of issues 3 and 4 of *Critical Hit* magazine, with updated content and scenarios, and are priced at \$15.95.

4 FROM THE BUNKER

Work has started on issue 29 of *Dispatches From The Bunker*, which will contain four scenarios. 'Sole Success' sees the Japanese and Filipino troops clash in Luzon in December 1941, while 'Out of the Shadows' is set in August 1944 and sees the rear guard of the 11 Panzer Division clash with the American 3rd Infantry Division. The second scenario in the Brickworks series, 'Shifting Bricks', sees the British 78th Division trying to hold the Brickworks against infantry from the German 16th Panzer Division, backed with panzer and Stuka support. Finally, 'Speed, Shock and Surprise' is the first scenario in a series focusing on Operation Rosselsprung, the German airborne assault against Tito's Partisan forces. In this scenario SS Fallschirmjaeger Battalion 500 drop into action against the Partisans, who have armoured support from four captured Italian L3-35(i) tanks. It is due to ship in September.

Four issue subscriptions (starting with issue 28) are available for \$15.00

(\$18.00 outside the USA). Issues 1 to 10 are now out of print but PDF versions are available for free from www.aslbunker.com. Other back issues are \$4.00 (\$4.50 outside the USA) or \$40.00 (\$50.00 outside the USA) for a complete set of issues 11-28. A complete set of issues 11-27 and a subscription for issues 28-31 is available for \$50.00 (\$60.00 outside the USA). Cheques should be made payable to Vic Provost and sent to *Dispatches from the Bunker*, P.O. Box 2024, Hinsdale MA 01235, or you can pay by PayPal to PinkFloydFan1954@aol.com. You can email them at aslbunker@aol.com.

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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.

BATTLEQUEST GAMES, 29 Victory Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 2JF. Telephone 01403 242003 or go to <http://www.battlequestgames.com/>.

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

Check out the review of both new MMP packs on page 17

A BLAST AT BLACKPOOL

Marc Hanna

For those of you who don't recognise the name, Marc Hanna was the editor and publisher of At The Point, one of the earliest ASL 'zines. Along with Rout Report, it was one of the inspirations for VFTT, so it was a pleasure for me to meet Marc at HEROES this year – Pete.

Well, here I am, in jolly old England, having arrived from a 10-month stint in Istanbul, Turkey and a good 5-6 year stint off of *ASL*, period. Other than an odd solitaire session, and vicariously reading some online journals and websites – particularly *View From The Trenches* – my exposure to *ASL* had been sub-minimal during that period. I arrived back in England in late February (my lady lives here in Eastbourne), and recalled some cobwebby notion that there was an *ASL* tournament soon here in England. I checked the *VFTT* website and lo! I found out that HEROES would be in Blackpool in a couple of weeks. I promptly signed up.

Getting to Blackpool via train was a bit of an adventure because one of the main lines to Manchester was closed due to fire. We packed like sardines onto a single coach bringing thus to the final leg of the journey and I cursed myself for bringing my out of date *ASL* set that I had dragged with me from California (where I started *At The Point*), to North Carolina (where I ended it), over to Salt Lake City, Utah, back to Cali, then up to Alaska, over to Florida and finally to England. Yes, yes, I had been hauling my *ASL* set with me for those 6 years of adventuring and roaming

and barely cracking the rulebook. Some things are hard to give up – some things aren't worth giving up!

So I stumble out of the final taxi onto the pleasant but March-chilly streets of Blackpool and find my way to the hotel lobby. There, I am greeted with a familiar site – players clustered over tables, hunched in chairs, cracking open rule books... and less familiarly a nice pub bar serving decent and inexpensive food and beer. Most of the players had a pint in their grip as they shuffled through the rules, pushed counters, and rolled dice. Yet, the scene was not at all rowdy, nor rang of the usual clamor that I recall at American *ASL* tournaments. There was a friendly, relaxed atmosphere with these gentlemen (as usual, no ladies except the barmaids here) and I gathered that many of them knew each other well. I hoped I could fit in as an American here as one of the 'blokes.'

I immediately met Ray Porter who was quite kind to set me up with some grub and a nice pint of Stella (later Pete and Paul would introduce me – or at least encourage me – to the pleasures of Newcastle Brown Ale). Ray and I hooked up for a quick match, which I discovered would be potentially ranked using the UK Open Tournament Ladder! As a newcomer I would be ranked at 3000. After some discussion Ray and I agreed to a ranked match. We played 'J63 Silesian Interlude', a scenario I was completely unfamiliar with (as I was with all the tournament scenarios – so many new ones had been

developed in the last 6 years).

I was curious how I would play, but I needn't have feared much, because once you play enough *ASL* the methodology never leaves you when it comes to basic infantry tactics (later on, Craig Benn reintroduced me to the 'sleaze' – his word – of using OT American HTs in VBM to freeze poor German 4-3-6's in stone buildings. Thanks Craig, I needed that wake up call....). Anyway, groggy as I was, I don't recall much of J63 other than I think I diced Ray pretty severely and chalked up a pre-tourney win. I retired to my room (very nice – sea view – heater did not work, shower did work well!) and had a nice sleep.

Up in the nick of time for a HUGE English breakfast. For my American friends, this kind of breakfast has eggs, baked beans, fried mushrooms, a roasted tomato, and this kind of English bacon that reminds me of Canadian bacon (they call our good old regular American bacon 'streaky' bacon and generally thumb their noses at it). Also, we had toast, butter, jam, cereals and juices – all included in the thrifty room price. I have to say the tradition of HEROES has weathered a lot of new owners of the hotel and Pete has managed to maintain a great value for gamers who attend these festivities...

After this rollicking feast, I play my first tournament scenario with Sam Prior, one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet. He



Neil "I'm a Russian tank commander" Brunger takes break from ASL.



"Are you sure these dice aren't loaded?"





Marc Hanna (left) finds himself on the road to hell against Sam Prior.



Ian Pollard (left) and Nigel Blair Clash at Stoumont.

smiles and apologizes while his defenses whip your boys bloody, let me tell you. We played 'SP154 On The Road to Hell', and I was the attacking Americans trying to crack his tough German defenses.

I should make mention here that nobody uses the IIFT in England. Strictly IFT action, and it's not even discussed as an option prior to start. I don't know what the norm is now in the USA but as I recall many of us favored the IIFT at the time.

Back to the action – As the American, my attack was too complex. I tried to sweep on the left flank through the orchards and ran into a screening force that kept my 747s at bay. When my armor arrived, I tried to zip it across his PGPZ V's field of fire to the right flank. BLAM! Then, I tried to sweep the remaining 2 back. BLAM! I couldn't take out the TD in time to win the scenario (in fact I don't recall taking out the TD). 0-1. My first play on the field of battle was a bitter defeat, but thankfully Sam was such a good sport he took the edge off. His superior play combined with my poor attack strategy resulted in a loss.

Off to round 2. This time, we played 'SP144 One More Day of Freedom' vs. Chris Walton. This time I was again on the attack as the Japanese. I tend to favor choosing the attacker in a scenario if at all possible because I think my style of play is better suited to this. The ebb and flow of battled turned my way this time as it seems I could not fail in my attacks or maneuvers and the victory locations fell easily into my hands, forcing Chris to counter-attack. This did not work out favorably for him, because Chris managed to roll 17 boxcars in this 7-turn scenario (as compared to my 6-7 eyes). I think he won a prize for the most boxcars in fact for this stellar effort. At the end of this evening scenario I bought him what seemed to be the traditional consolation prize for the loser

– a pint of deliciously cold beer. 1-1.

Next morning – again a gigantic English breakfast, on top of the delicious pub food from the previous lunches and dinners, I could see I would be walking out of Blackpool in less than fighting trim! We stumbled our way with full stomachs to the gaming tables, where I was to meet Paul Legg in 'FrF9 The Abbeville Bridgehead'. Here I was to learn something about how well these English players know their rules. I think I challenged Paul twice about rules and he was correct each time. That's what you get for being a 6-year slacker and not keeping up with MMP updates! But the point is these guys on this side of the pond know their rules, and know them well, and makes for smooth and enjoyable game play, enhanced by the occasional beer or two.

In any event, I chose the attacking French. My initial assault when well but I had a set back when I decided my squads guarding prisoners could take out a Gun at close range. The Gun would not allow itself to be taken (ever – I think it finally broke down after causing much mayhem). Fortunately, my tanks were invincible. But we were running out of time. It came down to us having to play a final partial turn to avoid adjudication and my troops came out on top, seizing the victory building and holding it against counter-attack. Truly, however, this one could have gone either way, and Paul is a formidable opponent, tenacious, and does not falter with the foibles of the game. This seemed to be a characteristic of my British opponents at this tournament. No wonder Bob McNamara awarded the British squads the 'no cowering' capability. 2-1.

Next match, I managed to play my scenario of choice and side of my choice

– the SS in 'Red Valentines'. I think this combination gave me a bit of a morale edge over Gerard Burton, who is a true gentleman with a great sense of dry British humor. I was running hot and I think my ability peaked in this game as a slipped into the combined arms assault like a comfortable old uniform. Sometimes you know you are in the zone and I felt it that evening and was able to pull off a victory although Gerard remained undaunted until it was clear victory was out of reach. Undefeated for the day, I headed into the final round on Sunday at 3-1 and a shot at third place.

But it was not to be. Feeling overconfident and wanting to 'bulk up' my stats, I looked for Craig Benn who had the highest ranking on the ladder of the remaining 3-1 players. Well, Craig wasn't in the mood for that, and he craftily chose a scenario with which he had some familiarity (not that this would be unfair as the tournament choices for each round were well announced ahead of time by Pete. And, if there were going to be a scenario to be familiar with, it would be best in the critical last round when places are at stake. Furthermore, having attacked all weekend, I unwisely shrugged off choosing a particular side, and Craig went for the Americans in 'SP43 Deadeye Smoyer'. That put me as the defending Germans with a mediocre force susceptible to all sorts of nasty American tricks. And Craig used them all – Smoke, smoke mortars, VBM halftracks freezing squads in buildings, rampaging Sherman jumbo's sneaking up behind me. Craig seemed to know with dead certainty where I had hidden my super-important Panther and it was all over quickly as he took it out with a bounding fire hit in a gun duel over the top of the wall! Ouch! Remind me to stick with the attacker.... anyway,

nice job by Craig, who clearly is one of the UK grognards already even though he has played less time than some others, as far as I know. Final record: 3-2 – not bad for being rusty (that’s my excuse anyway).

And that was it. I was one of the few to stick around another night, but there was no more *ASL*. Pete and Paul took me along with Nigel Blair for a nice steak dinner at a local pub, as if I hadn’t had enough food and beer already. I met a lot of nice folks at this tournament, including Ian Daghlish, who was legendary to me decades ago when I did *At The Point*. Many folks remembered my tiny effort long long ago that might have started a trend in *ASL* way back when. I was grateful to meet them all, and I met many others that I haven’t mentioned by name here, but all deserve it even so.

I hope more of my American brethren can make it over to England for this excellent tournament. There is another tournament coming up in Bournemouth in October, closer to the south coast of England. With any good luck I will have a chance to see these fine gamers again.

THE GUN-PIT’S HEROES 2009

Paul Case

Thursday

After collecting Pete from Mala’s in Leicester, the Gun-Pit drove up to Blackpool, arriving at about 1420hrs (twenty past two for you lot). First on the agenda, beer (naturally!!!!!!). After about an hour, we checked-in.

The itinerary for the weekend is as follows:

- 1) BEER.
- 2) Annoy Neil ‘Roland Rat’ Brunger about Russia.
- 3) Get at least one game of *ASL*, and possibly win it (winning might be a bit much though!!).
- 4) Annoy Shaun Carter about Kohima, which I can do quite happily.

As per usual, there were people playing this stupid game when we arrived, WHY???? Beer is more important. As time went on, more cardboard pushers turned up. Yours truly got his table sorted, so as to be able to write this crap. Yep, your favourite journalist is back.

And for anyone that says Blackpool is too far away, Marc Hanna came all the way from Yankee Land to play in the tourney (*actually he only came from Sussex, being as he’s an American living here now – Pete*), and he blamed me for getting him hooked on Newcastle Brown Ale, guilty as charged.

Neil Brunger, the one that went to Russia, bought some DVDs, and I, with a few other normal guys, watched one of them, a Finnish film called ‘Tali

Ihanala 1944’. Finns verses Russians in the Continuation War. Then it was a refill, food and beer. Got to bed at about 2.30 in the morning, and with breakfast at 8.30 – 9.30, there was not a lot of sleep.

Friday

After brekkie, it was time to sort out who was playing who. Being as your hero was not in the tourney, I ended up as standby guy, and played Dave ‘Schofie’ Schofield at ‘SP154 On The Road To Hell’, and lost. No surprises there, then!!

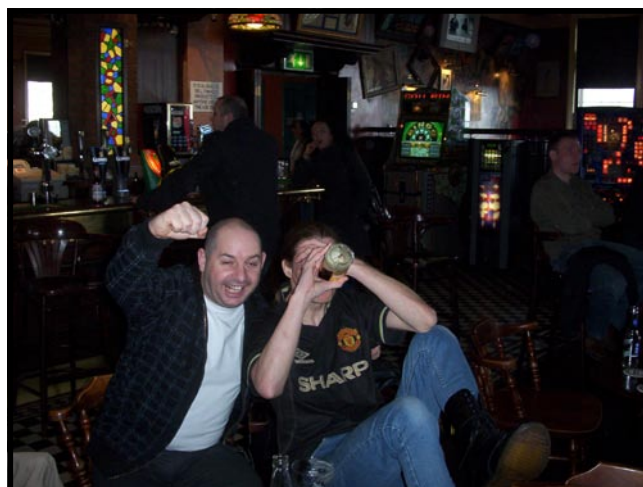
Apparently, my set up was quite decent, shame about the standard of my play. It all went south when yours truly rolled boxcars to malfunction the JagdPanther’s main gun. That was after a surprise move that had Dave shocked, the JagdPanther motion attempt, and used it to turn and fire at a Sherman, naturally it missed. Fired again, and malf’d the gun. Typical of the game for me. Dave rolled for smoke, and got a snakes, and he said he should of gone for WP, I’m glad he didn’t!

When my Marder came on, it was killed before doing anything. And my grunts were dying like flies for failure to rout, even though Dave killed the first guys to surrender, thereby giving me the right to Low Crawl in the open. And to compound the issue for me, I managed to misread the VCs. But I would have lost anyway, crap player that I am. With 3 turns still to go, I surrendered; having only 2 MMCs left, one of them was broken. And in the wrong area.

Ω



Clash of the Designers. Ian Daghlish (left) and Shaun Carter battle it out in the tournament.



As the final whistle blows, Liverpool fan Ray Porter (left) celebrates while your editor tries to drown his sorrows. “We lost the battle, but won the war” :-)

My record against Dave is, played two, lost two. But he is one of the best in the country, so no disgrace there then. I have even played the legendary Toby Pilling, and yes, I lost to him as well.

First beer was at about 1.00ish, along with some beer-soaking food, (got to fill up with food, the beer wants a friend in my stomach!).

Pete played a newbie, Ian Parkes, and lost, hehehehehe!

My next game was against Dave Blackwood, at 'SP153 The Wrong Side Of Victory'. I was the Brits (Kings African Rifles, to be exact!). This was also as the tourney stand-in, a role I seem to be good at this year. Being as Dave had not played the Japs before, I allowed him too, so that he could see how they play. I shall admit, Dave was diced in this one a bit, with me rolling 7snakes. As per usual, rules were (re)discovered.

Dave learnt that it is not wise to go into CC when CX, even as the Japs. That was how I killed a lot of his squads. He was not helped by the fact that for a Random Selection roll, he rolled snakes. I, of course, did not mind. The game ended with Dave rolling the aforementioned RS roll. That left him with nowhere near enough VPs to beat me, as I had 30 odd

able to get into the victory area, and the Gun-Pit winning.

Highlight of the game for me, was my 'Great Dice Rolling'. One of my guys FPF shot at one of his, and rolled snakes. Being as the roll was also a morale check against yours truly, the squad promptly went Berserk, and died next turn.

I shall say sorry for the lack of game descriptions so far, but I am seeing if not taking notes will speed up the game, result being, it doesn't!

On the next table, Nigel Blair and Ian Pollard were fighting in Stoumont, with Nigel complaining about Ian's vehicle-destroying dice. Peiper would not be impressed with Mr Blair's attempt at capturing the town so far.

Saturday

Breakfast was earlier today, 8.00 – 9.00, the same for tomorrow.

What with the hippy waking me up at about 3.00, having cramp in the leg and continually waking up through the night, I didn't get a lot of sleep. So, after brekkie, I went for a walk to 1) clear my head, 2) wake me up and 3) get some cash from the cash point. Thought about walking along the beach, but decided against that, due to there being a stream at the bottom of the

steps.

Had a look at *AP 5 East Front* that Nigel Blair had, and decided to buy it from Andy Ashton, Second Chance Games, when he gets here. With the Eastern front being my favourite theatre, it was kind of a foregone conclusion.

No games for me this morning, as with the walk and going to the pub to watch the Man U v. Liverpool game, it would not be fair to my opponent. It at least gives me time to write some more crap for you lot.

After watching Man U get beaten by Liverpool 1 – 4 at Old Trafford, the footie watchers got back to the hotel from 'The Star', and Pete and I watched the Arsenal v. Blackburn game, and Arsenal won 4 – 0, and that takes us 4th in the Premiership, above Aston Villa, who play Spurs tomorrow. Come on you Spurs! Yes, an Arsenal fan supporting Spurs, once in a lifetime that does happen.

Not bothering to play a game of *ASL*, I got the websites from Neil Brunger, of his photos from Russia. I shall be comparing them to what I see when I go there in June. And yes Hippy, a report will follow.

Reading out the footie results, some of the players were not happy, but I was not one of them.

There were a few meals that were

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Here are the individual win/loss records for the tournament

POS.	PLAYER	P	W	L	RND	CRUS
1	Dominic McGrath	5	5	0	0	3039.0
2	Craig Benn	5	4	1	0	2982.5
3	Mark Blackmore	5	4	1	0	2928.8
4	Trevor Edwards	5	4	1	0	2823.8
5	Bill Sherliker	5	3	2	0	3403.3
6	Martin Vicca	5	3	2	0	3221.7
7	Michael Davies	5	3	2	0	3025.0
8	William Binns	5	3	2	0	3025.0
9	Neil Brunger	5	3	2	0	2965.0
10	Shaun Carter	5	3	2	0	2931.7
11	Tony Gibson	5	3	2	0	2871.7
12	Marc Hanna	5	3	2	0	2803.3
13	David Ramsey	5	2	3	0	3207.5
14	Ian Daghish	5	2	3	0	3010.0
15	Steve Cook	5	2	3	0	2997.5
16	Sam Prior	5	2	3	0	2937.5
17	Paul Legg	5	2	3	0	2552.5
18	Brian Hooper	5	2	3	0	2552.5
19	David Blackwood	5	2	3	0	2535.0
20	Ray Porter	5	1	4	0	3000.0
21	Gerard Burton	5	1	4	0	2875.0
22	Paul Jones	5	1	4	0	2600.0
23	Dave Schofield	4	2	2	0	2700.0
24	Chris Walton	4	1	3	0	3000.0
25	Paul Case	2	1	1	0	3000.0

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	0	2
Craig Benn	8	6	2
William Binns	6	3	3
Mark Blackmore	8	6	2
David Blackwood	7	4	3
Neil Brunger	5	3	2
Gerard Burton	5	1	4
Shaun Carter	8	3	5
Paul Case	2	1	1
Steve Cook	5	2	3
Ian Daghish	5	2	3
Andrew Dando	4	4	0
Michael Davies	5	3	2
Trevor Edwards	5	4	1
Tony Gibson	6	4	2
Marc Hanna	6	4	2
Malcolm Hatfield	1	1	0
Brian Hooper	8	3	5
Paul Jones	6	1	5
Paul Kettlewell	1	0	1
Paul Legg	5	2	3
Damien Maher	4	0	4
Martin Mayers	4	0	4
Dominic McGrath	5	5	0
Ian Parkes	4	1	3
Pete Phillipps	2	0	2
Ray Porter	7	2	5
Sam Prior	5	2	3
David Ramsey	7	3	4
Dave Schofield	4	2	2
Ulric Schwela	3	3	0
Bill Sherliker	5	3	2
Martin Vicca	6	4	2
Chris Walton	4	1	3

THE SCENARIOS

Here is the table of Scenario Win/Loss records:

SCENARIO	ALLIED	AXIS
A79 Mike Red	0	1
ABTF4 First Threat	1	2
AP40 The Head Of The Mace	1	0
AP44 The Burial Mound	1	0
CH51 The Sonnenburg Hotel	3	2
FrF23 Elephants Unleashed	1	3
FrF8 Second Thoughts	3	1
FrF9 The Abbeville Bridgehead	3	3
G30 Morgan's Stand	1	0
G35 Going To Church	0	1
G6 Rocket's Red Glare	1	0
J110 Prelude To Spring	5	1
J63 Silesian Interlude	0	1
J69 The Army at the Edge of the World	2	1
J94 Kempf at Melikhovo	1	0
OA16 Surrender Or Die	2	2
PP6 Hurdling Under a Leaden Sky	1	0
SAM1 Poles Apart	0	1
SP140 Red Valentines	0	1
SP144 One More Day Of Freedom	0	3
SP146 Terrify And Destroy	0	1
SP149 Labarthe's Charade	3	0
SP153 The Wrong Side Of Victory	4	3
SP154 On The Road To Hell	4	3
SP155 Casualties Cooks And Corpsemen	0	1
SP18 An Arm and a Leg	0	1
SP43 Deadeye Smoyer	4	4
T4 (ClassicASL) Shklov's Labors Lost	1	0
TAC31 Par Saint Georges!	2	2
U24 Traverser Right...Fire!	0	1
TOTALS	83	44
		39





Dominic McGrath poses with the Tournament Champion prize, while Mark Blackmore (centre) holds the runner-up prize. Bottom placed Damien Maher (right) holds aloft his prize, a pack of Airfix British paras and a pack of German infantry - if you can't play ASL, play toy soldiers instead :-)

nearly not delivered, so I shall say to Pauline that she should take surnames for the meals, not just first names. It might make it easier, darling!

Sunday

First brekkie, and then check the web. Nothing to worry about on there, so I prepare for the footie this afternoon. Others play the last round, with Dominic McGrath and Mark Blackmore playing for the top slot. Damian Maher has, apparently already taken bottom slot. It had to happen sometime, Ray Porter winning a game.

Yours the fantastic does not play a game today, but I have enjoyed the weekend, which for me means that I have won!!!!

No footie until this afternoon, so chill-out time. Time to get the body recovered from alcohol abuse.

Prizes were as follows:-

- First place – Dominic McGrath :- 2 figurine vignette
- Second place – Mark Blackmore :- 1 figurine vignette
- Last place – Damian Maher :- 2x packs Airfix soldiers (British Paratroopers and German Infantry)
- Booby prize – Ray Porter :- a dice tower
- Snakes – Bill Sherliker :- snake-eyes t-shirt + £2.00
- Boxcars – Gerard Burton :- boxcars t-shirt + £12.00

Looks like Ray has got some competition for ladder holder person (Bottom rung specialist).

After the prizes, Ian Daghish presented Pete with a painting by Mike

Standbridge, who could not turn up this year.

Most people left, and Pete and I went to the 'Star' to watch the Villa – Spurs game, which ended Villa 1 – Spurs 2. Yes, Arsenal keep 4th place above Villa. Nigel Blair joined us after he and Ian Pollard packed up their Campaign Game, and Ian had gone home.

Up to the 'Burlington' for the after tourney meal, and I think they are getting bigger, I nearly didn't finish mine, but managed it somehow. Whilst there, we were joined by Marc Hanna, and after he had had his meal, we walked back to our hotel. Had another beer, and watched some

telly.

Monday

Got up and packed, ready for the journey home, via Leicester to drop Pete off near the station. Could not manage a full breakfast, so had a small one (that meal still filling me up!). Left the hotel at about 10.00, and dropped Pete off at 13.00, finally getting home at about 15.40.

Next year's event is already booked for the 11th – 14th March 2010, as is my room.

Ω



REAL Heroes. While returning home from Blackpool, I saw members of 9/12 Lancers parade through Leicester after returning from a tour of duty in Iraq - Pete



DOUBLE ONE Cancelled



NORTH WEST FEST

Sunday 14th June
11AM to 7PM

In memorium of DOUBLE ONE 2009 “the tournament that never was”, we are holding an ASL mini tournament in the Liverpool Wargames Association.

This will be an amateur affair with no organized accommodation or ladder points to be won.

Instead the victor will be entitled to a copy of Heat of Battle’s “Special Forces” pack that I will contribute.

The three scenarios are:

- 1) Duel at Reuler (SP3 from Schwerpunkt 1)
- 2) One Log Bridge (ASLUG12 available on the Internet)
- 3) North Bank (110 from For King and Country)

Tournament Rules are:

1. The player who wins the most games wins the prize.
2. In the event of a tie, the ladder ratings of the defeated opponents will decide the victor.
3. Slow play is penalized by the 7pm cutoff - if you arrive late, unprepared, and don’t finish three games by 7pm, then only the games you have completed count towards victory.
4. There is no seeding, or knockout system - play whoever is available.
5. The tournament director i.e me, will play if needed, or sit out - so anyone who arrives will get a game.

If you are not familiar with the venue, which is off Dale Street in Liverpool City Centre, and are interested in attending - please contact me at craig@cbenn.plus.com. Its about 10 minutes walk from Liverpool Lime Street.

The entry fee for non-members will be £3 for the day.

Please bring the necessary counters, maps and overlays - and to save time prepare setups for each of the scenarios. (We do have some spares, but it will help if you do)

Expected attendees to date are Craig Benn, Mark Blackmore, Trev Edwards, Bill Sherliker, Ray Porter, Damien Maher, Paul Jones and Pete Phillipps.

Rank	Player	Played	W—D—L	Points
150=	Paulo Ferreira	9	4—0—5	2940
150=	Wayne Kelly	11	4—1—6	2940
150=	Bob Nugent	3	2—0—1	2940
150=	Jon Williams	14	6—0—8	2940
154=	Derek Briscoe	1	0—0—1	2935
154=	Martin Bryan	19	8—0—11	2935
156=	Andrea Marchino	1	0—0—1	2930
156=	Andy Price	3	1—0—2	2930
158=	Paul Boyle	5	2—0—3	2925
158=	John Sharp	8	3—0—5	2925
160=	Steve Allen	6	1—1—4	2920
160=	Tim Collier	17	7—0—10	2920
162=	Iain Ainsworth	1	0—0—1	2915
162=	Edo Giaroni	3	1—0—2	2915
164=	Joel Berridge	3	1—0—2	2910
164=	Brian Martuzas	5	2—0—3	2910
164=	Andy Smith	4	0—0—4	2910
167=	Mark Caddy	1	0—0—1	2905
167=	James Neary	5	2—0—3	2905
167=	Phil Ward	5	2—0—3	2905
170	Josh Kalman	10	5—0—5	2900
171=	Ian Daglish	131	59—2—70	2895
171=	Martin Kristensen	6	2—0—4	2895
173	Tim Macaire	59	30—0—29	2890
174=	Jakob Norgaard	6	1—1—4	2885
174=	Bernard Savage	21	9—1—11	2885
176=	Sam Belcher	8	3—0—5	2880
176=	Graham Smith	40	16—0—24	2880
178	Patrick Dale	38	15—1—22	2875
179=	Eric Gerstenberg	6	3—0—3	2870
179=	John Johnson	1	0—0—1	2870
179=	David Kalman	5	2—0—3	2870
182=	Shaun Carter	73	32—1—40	2865
182=	Russell Gough	81	45—4—38	2865
184=	Brendan Clark	16	6—1—9	2860
184=	Brian Hooper	152	53—2—97	2860
184=	Peter Ladwein	21	9—0—12	2860
184=	Lutz Pietschker	4	1—0—3	2860
184=	Neil Piggot	4	1—0—3	2860
184=	Neil Stevens	60	24—2—34	2860
190	Nick Angelopoulos	5	1—0—4	2850
191	Bill Eaton	21	8—3—10	2840
192=	Mark Furnell	13	5—1—7	2835
192=	Dave Otway	5	1—0—4	2835
194=	Mike Daniel	5	2—0—3	2825
194=	Ian Parkes	4	2—0—2	2825
196	Mark Chapman	6	2—0—4	2820
197	Michael Robertson	4	1—0—3	2810
198=	Michael Essex	30	14—0—16	2800
198=	Ivor Gardiner	17	8—0—9	2800
198=	Clive Haden	5	2—0—3	2800
198=	Justin Key	57	23—1—32	2800
198=	William Roberts	11	3—1—7	2800
203=	Kevin Croskery	16	6—0—10	2790
203=	Alistair Fairbairn	3	0—0—3	2790
203=	Nick Sionskyj	8	3—0—5	2790
206	Chris Littlejohn	14	3—2—9	2780
207=	Gerard Burton	24	10—0—14	2775
207=	Paul Legg	120	49—2—69	2775
207=	Graham Worsfold	3	0—0—3	2775
210=	Lee Bray	14	3—0—11	2770
210=	Richard Kirby	7	2—0—5	2770
212	Bill Hensby	31	10—0—21	2765
213=	Andrew Hershey	10	4—0—6	2760
213=	Flemming Scott-Christensen	6	1—0—5	2760
215=	Oliver Gray	9	3—0—6	2755
215=	Jonathan Townsend	4	1—0—3	2755
217=	Martin Barker	9	2—0—7	2750
217=	Peter Neale	3	0—0—3	2750
219	Martin Mayers	23	8—0—15	2745
220	Burnham Fox	23	10—0—13	2740
221=	Rupert Featherby	3	0—0—3	2735
221=	Nick Quinn	14	5—0—9	2735
223	Gareth Evans	4	0—0—4	2730
224	Hamish Hughson	4	0—0—4	2725
225=	Steve Cocks	4	0—0—4	2720
225=	Marc Horton	6	1—0—5	2720
227	Ray Jennings	11	3—0—8	2715
228	Paul Kettlewell	84	37—0—47	2705
229=	Simon Hoare	4	0—0—4	2690
229=	Pete Phillipps	122	52—0—71	2690
231	Jeff Howarden	7	2—0—5	2685
232=	Andy McMaster	29	10—0—19	2680
232=	Christain Speis	5	1—0—4	2680
234=	Wayne Baumber	61	27—0—36	2670
234=	James Crosfield	15	6—0—9	2670
236	Pedro Barradas	7	1—0—6	2655
237	Ian Pollard	109	42—1—66	2640
238=	Nigel Ashcroft	52	19—1—32	2635
238=	Nigel Blair	104	39—1—64	2635
238=	Paul Jones	6	1—0—5	2635
241	Adrian Catchpole	11	2—0—9	2625
242	Adrian Maddocks	12	3—0—9	2620
243	Arthur Garlick	21	2—5—14	2615
244	Bryan Brinkman	9	1—0—8	2610

Rank	Player	Played	W—D—L	Points
245	Chris Walton	38	10—0—28	2605
246	Damien Maher	4	0—0—4	2595
247	Roger Cook	29	9—2—18	2590
248	John Fletcher	6	0—0—6	2585
249	Chris Netherton	30	10—2—18	2560
250=	Mike Stanbridge	47	13—1—33	2555
250=	Simon Taylor	8	1—0—7	2555
252	Michael Rhodes	43	10—0—33	2545

Rank	Player	Played	W—D—L	Points
253	Paul Case	122	32—3—87	2520
254	Robert Seeny	5	0—0—5	2510
255	Nick Carter	11	2—0—9	2475
256	John Kennedy	24	5—0—19	2415
257	Chris Ager	26	7—0—19	2400
258	Jackie Eves	39	11—0—28	2345
259	Ray Porter	33	3—0—30	2340
260	Nick Ranson	26	3—1—22	2150

A New Firebase for LASL

The current economic turmoil almost claimed the London ASL club as its latest victim when, earlier this year, we unfortunately lost our Central London HQ at very short notice. Having regrouped and reconnoitred the surrounding area, we have now rallied in the "lower ground floor" (i.e. *RB* cellar rules are in effect) of Starbucks in Fleet Street.

The new location is well lit and, at a push, could host about 20 ASL games simultaneously. The current staff at the coffee shop are happy for us to use the facilities for nothing and have been known to provide table service for both sandwiches and drink refills. The venue is very quiet on a Saturday, with most trade being passing tourists, with only a very few brave individuals venturing downstairs (and then disappearing into a corner). All levels of ASL are catered for (including Starter Kit) and there is always someone on hand who can help out with queries on rules and / or suggested tactics.

The full address is 32 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1AA and we tend to meet from 10.30 am until about 5.30pm on the 2nd Saturday of each month. Provisional dates for the rest of 2009 are as follows:-

11th July
8th August
12th September
3rd October
14th November
12th December

Our website remains the same - <http://www.doubleone-online.net/8.html> - with the *LASL* forum also unchanged at <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/LASL>. Anyone planning to attend is advised to check both pages arrange games and ensure no last minute hitches.

Visitors to London are always welcome to visit, and with a little notice, we can normally arrange a game and supply the necessary kit. The April meeting saw two US players attend, one of whom had only arrived at Heathrow on holiday with his family at 7am that morning.

We look forward to seeing as many of you there over the next few months.

Derek Cox

BLOWTORCH AND CORKSCREW

A Primer on Utilising and Assaulting Caves and Cave Complexes in ASL

Jon Neall

Since the development of gunpowder (and its various uses in the attack) defenders have resorted to using the earth for cover. As weapons have become more accurate it has become imperative that those under fire find ways to avoid it. As one example, we are all familiar with the trench works of the First World War (indeed such systems of defence were familiar even earlier, to combatants in the Maori Wars of the 1840s, the American Civil War, and the Crimean War). Various advances in technology, from the Napoleonic Wars onwards, have meant that with less room for error and augmented by the dangerous combination of more accurate fire and high explosive weapons, the average soldier has been forced to burrow into the ground for protection.

Many *ASL* scenarios make use of either Foxholes or Trenches, those basic (and often quick and convenient) methods of getting out of the way of enemy fire. However, the elaborate trench systems of the previous war are rarely (if ever) seen. This is mainly because of the changing nature of warfare as it presented itself to soldiers and their commanders throughout Europe in the opening days of the Second World War. In Europe, mobile warfare between opposing sides that often (though not always, of course, especially in the beginning) shared similar ideas, culture, industrial capacity, weaponry and technology made permanent entrenchments a thing of the past. Any defensive structure could be bypassed and attacked from behind. Any strong and lengthy line of defence had a weakness somewhere, especially if it were attacked by a concentrated superior force.

Things were different in the Pacific, however. Here, faced with the overwhelming military and technological might of the US, the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) was forced further into the ground rather than out of it. Japanese soldiers in the latter half of the war found themselves building and then occupying elaborate systems of tunnels, caves and pillboxes stretching deep into the hills and mountains of islands dotted throughout the Western Pacific, at places such as Peleliu, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. These defences, almost ancient in their nature, would be

the home, and often the final resting place, of thousands of Japanese soldiers who calmly awaited the arrival of the might and firepower of the US war machine throughout 1943-45. This article will attempt to elaborate on how the Japanese player can maximise his defence to meet this threat in *ASL* terms.

For US forces, such cave networks provided a distinct challenge. The coral atolls of Tarawa, Eniwetok and Kwajalein may have been heavily defended by pillboxes, blockhouses and other entrenchments, but their sandy soil was otherwise unusable in the defence. As the Allies started assaulting the more mountainous volcanic islands on the Pacific Rim, such as Saipan, Tinian, Guam and the aforementioned Peleliu, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, their tactics were forced to change. At the same time, Japanese strategists underwent a major rethink. The IJA high command started to think in terms of causing Allied attackers as many casualties as they could. Rather than trying to defeat USMC invasion forces on the beachhead in fruitless bloody Banzai counterattacks, Japanese commanders favoured digging themselves in, forcing the Allies to root them out of their defences one by one, trench by trench and cave by cave. By the time of the battle of Okinawa, US forces had developed an approach to destroying such complexes known as Blowtorch and Corkscrew. Blowtorch and Corkscrew was an idea based on getting close to the cave, applying flame and other firepower to it to reduce the defenders, and then destroying the cave entrance through the use of high explosives. Thus, this article will also examine how the Allied player (usually the US) can maximise his troops and tools of war to emulate these tactics as used by the USMC to defeat their fanatically determined enemy.

Using Caves in ASL

You'll find the rules for using caves in Chapter G. I would hazard a guess that quite a few newer *ASL*ers might not even own either of the Pacific modules, in which case this article might not be of much interest, or if they do, have struggled with what many have seen as unnecessarily complex rules sections

(learning enough just to even use the IJA units in a scenario is often enough for many players). Some may have attempted the Landing Craft, Beaches and Seaborne Assault rules out of sheer necessity, as to neglect them would be to neglect a major part of what Second World War combat was about. Few players, I think, go much further and I believe this is a shame. To miss out on caves is to miss out on an aspect of playing the Japanese that is integral to understanding the nature of combat in the Pacific.

Caves are only available to the Japanese player (although an SSR might allow their use to another nationality if the historical context is right). They are a fortification that once placed at the beginning of a scenario, like trenches or pillboxes, cannot then be moved. They cannot be created in the course of a scenario, nor can your opponent's forces use them, or even enter them. A cave is most commonly set up along a crest line, or on cliff, or in some circumstances in a Depression hex. In most cases its level is the lowest level of what is known as its Entrance Hex, the hex pointed to by the cave's CA arrow. They are extremely good defensive structures, with a +4 TEM against most attacks (+6 against Area Target Type and OBA), and can only be attacked through their CA (from all other directions they are out of LOS, although there is one exception which we will deal with below). However, what is most interesting about caves is that a group of them can be joined together into what is known as a Cave Complex. A Cave Complex interconnects previously designated caves through a collection of unseen subterranean passageways and tunnels, thus allowing units in such a Complex a way of moving from cave to cave, or cave to pillbox (if also connected by a tunnel), in an absolutely safe and secure manner, unseen and unharmed by the enemy.

A Japanese player can designate 25% (FRD) of his cave counters as Primary Caves in a cave complex (e.g. if he is given 12 caves, he can create 3 complexes, 9 caves equals 2 complexes and 6 equals 1). A complex includes all of the hexes within two hexes of whichever cave is considered the Primary Cave,



except for those hexes that cross a water feature or a marsh/swamp. For all intents and purposes, the area covered by that complex, regardless of whatever terrain exists above ground, can be freely and easily traversed by the Japanese units making use of the complex and its caves. Stacking capacity of the complex equals twice the number of cave counters used in that complex (and this is additional to the 1 Squad capacity in each cave counter hex – meaning that a six cave complex could be housing 18 squads, 12 in the complex itself, and six under each of the cave counters). Units considered within a Cave Complex are placed in a cloaking box that matches the Primary Cave’s letter designation (e.g. if the Primary Cave is letter A, the Cave Complex is known as Cave Complex AA, and uses that Cloaking Box).

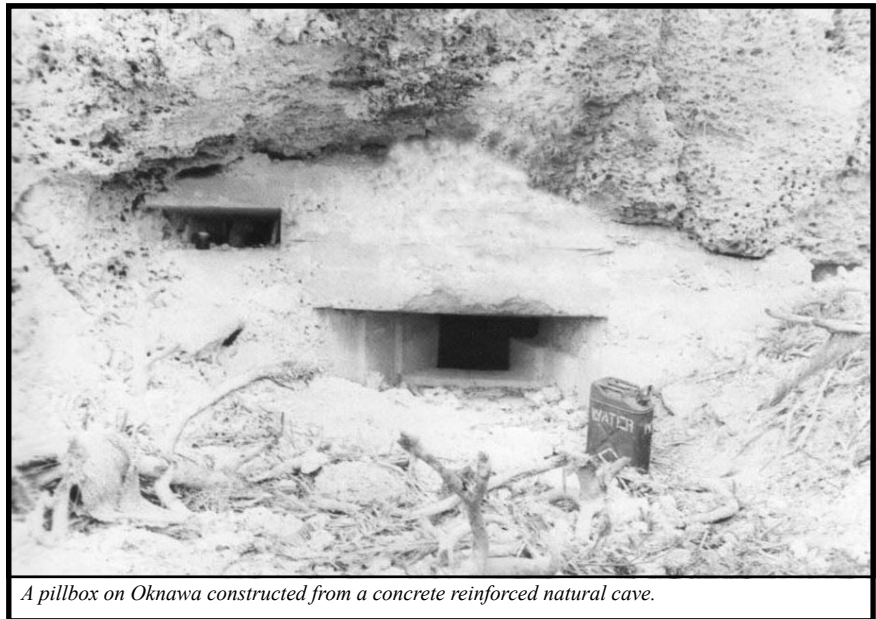
Each cave in the complex is Accessible/Adjacent to:
 The complex to which it belongs.
 Its own entrance hex
 Other caves within its Cave (or counter) hex (even if on different levels)

For movement purposes that means that in a Movement or Advance Phase, a Japanese unit can move from:

- A cave to the Cave Complex
- The Cave Complex to any of its accessible caves
- A cave to another cave in the same cave hex.
- A cave to the entrance hex of that cave and beyond
- Above ground, through the entrance hex, into the cave (at a cost of 2 MF) – unless the Cave is on a cliff hex side, in which case Climbing will be necessary for access.

And (in the Movement Phase alone), you can move units from one complex to another as long as the two complexes are next to one another, or from a Cave Complex to a Pillbox linked by a tunnel. In your own player turn you can conduct some seriously effective Skulking, from the cave to the complex in the Movement Phase, and back again in the Advance Phase, thus avoiding all Defensive Fire.

In effect, caves allow the Japanese player a wonderful amount of hidden movement, and thus the ability to reinforce areas under attack, withdraw weakened units and replace them with full strength units, and escape from an area that has been overwhelmed, only to pop up again elsewhere where the enemy least



A pillbox on Oknawa constructed from a concrete reinforced natural cave.

suspects. Think in terms of Saigo and his Kempetai colleague in Letters From Iwo Jima, who travel from Mount Suribachi at the southern end of Iwo Jima to the frontlines a mile or more north without crossing open ground, or of the machine gun nest in Flags of Our Fathers that remains firing even though the Marines are convinced the opposition soldiers within had been subdued. In each, the movement advantages of caves are clearly demonstrated.

Caves and their occupants can set up HIP, and units that enter a Cave Complex or complete any Concealment Loss activity within that complex get to remain Hidden. A cave can only be found through a successful Search or if its occupants or if its units conduct any Concealment Loss activity (such as firing on enemy units). A Cave Complex can never be searched. It is up to the enemy to guess where it is. As long as at least one Cave counter remains, a Cave Complex exists. Should all caves in a Complex be destroyed, the Complex itself is also considered destroyed, as are any units that might still be in it. Other advantages of caves include the fact that they can replace woods or buildings for Rout purposes and broken units get the -1 Rally DRM while in either a Cave or a Cave complex. Caves cannot be illuminated and, best of all, HOB results of 9 or more result in a Battle Hardening result rather than an uncontrollable charging Berserker (there’s nothing like an impenetrable tunnel to boost one’s morale).

Set Up Considerations

When setting up caves and Cave Complexes, thought should be given primarily to creating overlapping fields of fire wherever possible. In one immediate sense this would appear to be quite difficult. Most caves will tend to be set up on hills, and it is not always possible, when setting up along crest lines, to point a cave’s CA towards that of another.

However, as in all aspects of setting up a defence, the first thing to do is to look at the victory conditions and work out what you need to do. Do your troops need to survive, does the enemy force need to destroy all of your caves, or do you need to hold onto a certain terrain feature (invariably a hill top)? The second thing to do is, as always, look at the VC from the enemy’s point of view. What approach is he likely to take; from which direction/s will he come from; are there any chokepoints that you need to specifically defend? What you then do is up to your OB.

Do you have any SW? Examine G11.83 and 11.51. It’s possible for Japanese Light Mortars (only) to fire from a cave, and if you have MG you might be able to set up a Fire Lane along a Continuous Slope, if such a one exists. You might also be allowed to Boresight. If this is the case, set up some good ambush positions with good crossfire and stay hidden until a juicy target comes into view. When battle commences, remember to hold your fire until the enemy gets close. Aside from the occasional shot that you just can’t ignore, save your Defensive First Fire; at least until the enemy is

in front of you. You're far more likely ruining his day by leaving a nasty amount of Residual Fire than by firing at him when he's nowhere near you. He needs to move, you don't. Anything you can do to hinder his movement will help. You might not have much FP or SW, but if you do such considerations are crucial to your approach.

Consider also the use of Pillboxes. Few scenarios including caves do not include Pillboxes, and these can be set up outside the two-hex limit of a Cave Complex, connected to it by a three-hex tunnel. This means that a PB can be set up to guard the approach to a cave. Such a killing zone can conceivably exist in front of a cave that makes approaching it almost impossible. Don't forget that in concealment terrain, a PB can set up Hidden, and can remain so until its occupants fire.

Consider the threat of envelopment. The rear of a cave, as we will see, is more vulnerable than you might think. It should be protected by both Pillboxes and other Caves. Should an enemy unit get behind a cave unscathed, and should it possess a DC, begin to worry. Maybe a HIP unit in Concealment Terrain could be left lurking to deal with any such adventurous Marines. If you can stop anyone with a DC, your caves will tend to remain pretty safe.

Lastly, remember that although they may seem so, caves are not impervious to fire or to destruction, and (as noted) are particularly vulnerable if surrounded. Caves are able to protect your forces, but they can also become death-traps. Maintain mobility when the time is right, and know when to leave a cave. In reality, Marine forces usually tried to seal all of the exits of a cave complex before night arrived as they knew that if they didn't the Japanese soldiers would often attack them or escape to other positions. Many Japanese stayed deep in their cave complexes long after the battle, sometimes for months and even years after the war (which is why, in game terms, a sealed off complex results in all of the units within being eliminated – they are out for the duration, so to speak). Leave forces outside to protect the cave entrances, and to keep enemy forces on their toes. Your caves have limited fields of vision – should an enemy get past and you've got nothing up your sleeve to stop him, things will get bad.

Cave Busting

As the Allied player, scenario options are pretty limited. In a scenario with caves you usually have to destroy the enemy or his caves (and usually to do the first you have to do the second). Firstly, let's go over the problem from your point of view.

Simply put, you have to find the caves. Deploy your units and use HS as scouts; try to get the Japanese player to show his hand by firing on expendable forces. If you think he's waiting for a juicier target, and you've got a few DC to play with, consider arming an HS with a DC. Your opponent won't be so cavalier about letting him past, and the worse that might happen is that you have to search for a dropped SW later on. Also, a successful search can be used to reveal cave hexes. Don't forget the procedure – roll at the end of a MMC's movement for the cost of one MF, -1 for each HS equivalent, -1 if Stealthy (some USMC are, at times), + any leadership, +1 if Lax or CX, and +2 for facing Japanese units (reflecting their superiority at remaining hidden). As always the lower the DR the better; the result indicates how many hexes in the unit's six-hex radius you can't Search.

Each cave has a TEM of +4. This in itself will make you feel a bit impotent if using just your basic FP unless, that is, you have a killer stack with a -2 or -3 leader – and although you could use such a method from time to time, you don't want to get tied down with committing to large Prep Fire shots at the expense of movement and manoeuvre. A single squad alone, even with a good leader, will have trouble neutralising the defenders of a cave. Those Japanese squads might Step Reduce (at best), only to be replaced with a fresh squad before you can get close and do anything about it. The one thing you can't do is occupy the hex and deny the cave's benefit to the enemy. You either bypass it or destroy it.

You could fire your MGs, but much of what was said above will apply to this sort of attack, unless they get ROF (and even then, a 2, 4, 6 or 8 ROF MG shot still won't do much against the +4 of the cave). If, therefore, most of your troops are seemingly impotent, what can you do?

The answer of course lies in the tactics the real USMC employed in battle against the Japanese; i.e. match these ancient but nevertheless formidable defensive networks with thoroughly

modern technology and highly explosive firepower. General Simon Bolivar Buckner, who would be killed by shellfire at Okinawa, named this approach 'Blowtorch and Corkscrew'. This method involved denying the use of caves through the destruction of their entrances. The use of the Tank-Infantry Team was usually a requirement, as infantry alone were often far too vulnerable, accompanied by a group of engineers equipped as demolition units. The engineers might be used to clear any mines on the approach to the cave entrance, and would then stand by as the armour and infantry closed the gap, applying constant fire on the enemy position to keep the enemy down, or even to drive them further and deeper into the recesses of the cave complex. The armour would often be equipped with flamethrowers, but where armour was impractical, hand held FT would be used to force the enemy away from the entrance. Then an engineer would try and get close enough to throw a white phosphorous grenade, while others would follow with satchel charges. With infantry providing covering fire, the phosphorous grenade would blind the remaining defenders, allowing the rest of the engineers to throw their charges as far into the cave entrance as possible. For Buckner, the flame and the fire was the 'Blowtorch', the engineers and their explosives the 'Corkscrew'.

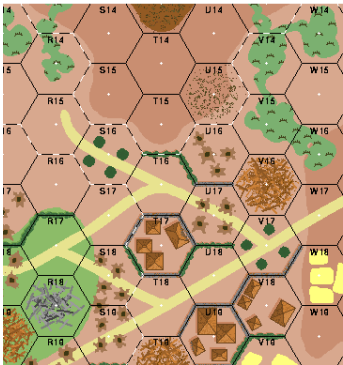
How do these tactics translate into *ASL* terms? Chapter G's section on Caves details a number a possible ways of reducing a cave and its defenders. Essentially they can be divided into two broad areas, those that involve the use of ground forces and their equipment, and those that involve supporting elements such as artillery fire (HE or OBA) or airborne attack. Usually, your assault force will face caves with an array of SW and/or Ordnance. You'll almost always have DCs and FTs, and you'll sometimes have FT equipped Sherman M4A1s, or OBA/NOBA, or sometimes some Ordnance over 100mm. You'll probably have a lot more squads and inherent FP than your opponent, which will mean greater possibilities for movement and manoeuvre, and more opportunities to either focus your assault, or to envelop all of the enemy's positions in a series of co-ordinated attacks. You'll also nearly always benefit from a good amount of good quality leaders. In other words, you will have a lot of tools to work with. All that remains is how you will employ them.

Continued on page 16, column 1



CAVES EXAMPLE

The following is a very simple caves example.



SET-UP

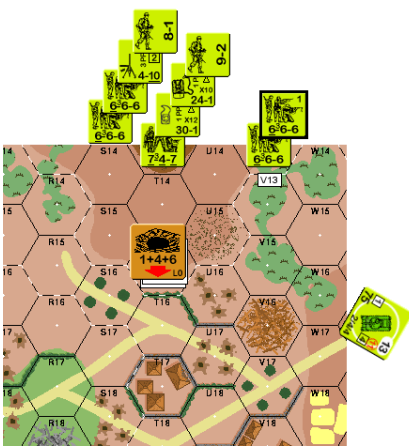
A cave must set up in a hex that shares a crest line with an adjacent lower level, in this case T15 is L2 while T16 is L1.

The arrow points to the covered arc, with the adjacent hex, T16 in this case, being the entry hex.

Although T15 is L12, the cave itself is at L1, which is the level of the entry hex.

The cave in T15 sets up HIP, along with the squad and LMG inside it.

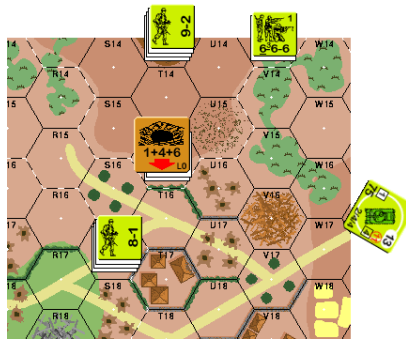
LOS exists only between the cave hex within the cave's covered arc, so no LOS exists from T14 to the cave, although LOS to other units in T15 is as normal.



GAME TURN 1

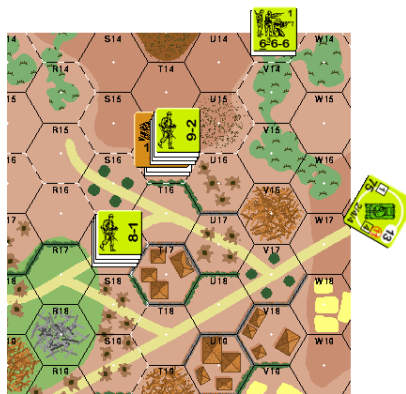
In the American Movement Phase, the Americans enter S14 and move to S15, and then S16. At this point the cave is still not revealed as there is no LOS

between them and the cave as they are not in it's CA.



When they enter S17 a LOS now exists so the cave is placed onboard, but the units in it remain HIP until they perform a concealment loss activity. In this case they fire (with no effect) and thus loss concealment.

The next Americans enter on T13, move into T14 and then into T15. Despite being in the same hex as the cave no LOS exists between them and the cave as the cave's CA does not include it's own hex.



The remaining Americans enter and in the AFPh Step Reduce the Japanese squad, while the tank fires it's MA and gains -1 Acquisition on the cave.

Following an ineffective Japanese Prep Fire Phase, the American tank Defensive Fires WP at the cave. There is a +1 DRM for BU, +4 TEM for the cave, -1 for range and -1 for Acquisition. The +2 DRM for firing SMOKE does not apply when firing into a cave itself.

The shot hits, so the WP is placed

under the cave counter and the Japanese takes a NMC with a +4 DRM as a WP hit is treated like a Critical Hit. The squad fails the NMC and is reduced to a HS.

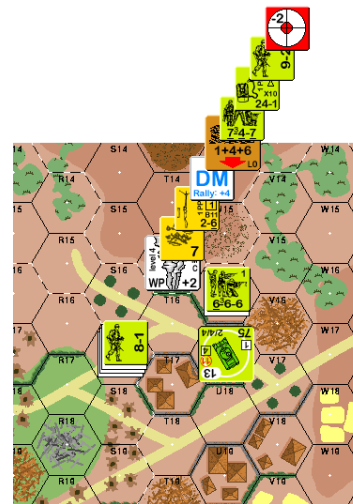
Note you can gain Acquisition when firing SMOKE into a cave, and keep ROF if you roll low enough.

GAME TURN 2

In the American MPh, the 7-4-7 attempts to place the DC in the cave, since he is 1 Level above it – the squad is at level 2 but the cave itself is at level 1.

He is placed on a Level 1 Climbing counter and makes a dr to see if he succeeds. As per the G11.8331 first example this dr is made before any Defensive First Fire against he placing unit. In this case the Japanese unit cannot fire at the placing unit as there is no LOS to it.

In the AFPh the DC explodes with 30FP and a +0 TEM, getting a 4MC which the HS fails, thus breaking. Had a KIA been rolled the cave would have been eliminated, along with all units in it.



In the Rout Phase, the broken HS does not need to rout as there are no Americans ADJACENT. If there were an ADJACENT American the HS would be eliminated for Failure to Rout as it has nowhere to go (unless the cave was part of a cave complex, in which case the HS could rout into that).

Ω

The Ground Approach

Invariably this will be the area upon which you will be required to focus, as only occasionally will your OB give you the benefit of OBA, NOBA, Aircraft or other forms of Heavy Artillery. Your ground forces, whether supported by armour or not, will have to follow these three steps:

Decrease the distance between themselves and the objective (i.e. closing with the position)

Subdue enemy resistance so that the enemy position can no longer put out any effective fire

Move troops in who can either Place, Throw or Set Demolition Charges designed to destroy the Cave.

We've already considered some of these difficulties. Remember to use Smoke in all its forms whenever approaching a cave. Remember that your US forces have a Smoke Exponent of 3 (or even 5 if they've been designated as Assault engineers) and don't forget ordnance Smoke if it's available. US mortars can fire WP rounds, often with ROF, thus possibly creating good dense cover (and possibly even landing in the Cave entrance itself – more on this below). Look for covered approach routes. Use Assault Movement whenever possible. In cases where armour is available don't forget the possibilities of using Armoured Assault. Do whatever you can to get close enough to lay down some serious fire on the cave defenders.

Once Adjacent, or near as, use your FTs. In the Cave's CA they attack without TEM penalty, and this can do some serious damage to the defending forces (an added bonus is that the FT attack, quartered to 6 FP, also affects other caves in that hex). Be aware that your FT unit has to deal with a -1 DRM when fired upon so give him plenty of cover. He should be used to finish the job, not necessarily to start it. Use multiple attacks; don't fire your units in one big attack unless you have to. The more Step Reduction you can inflict on the defenders in one fire phase, the less likely that your opponent will be able to fire back effectively, and he definitely won't be able to reinforce the hex before you've brought in the big guns. Fire your Bazookas and Recoilless Guns if available. SCW and HEAT, too, can be used against Cave hexes. Use adjacent units to throw WP into the cave (or a Baz45 if you have one). This has a lot of benefits, if it works. As long as you can roll 1 or 2 to throw the grenade, and then 1-3 for it to be successfully



Covered by his comrades, a marine uses a flamethrower against a cave position on Iwo Jima

thrown into the cave, it counts as a WP CH, meaning that the defenders have to face an NMC with a +4 DRM for the reverse Cave TEM (this will also reveal other caves in that complex that are higher than the target cave). Every bit counts, as they say.

Once close enough, your DC toting marines have a few options. You can Place a DC for the cost of 2 MF (considered to be spent in the Cave Entrance hex). This means you might receive a fair amount of Defensive First Fire, Subsequent Fire and even Final Protective Fire (bet on it; if the enemy is alive, he's going to do what he can to stop you bringing that satchel charge anywhere near him, even if it means dying – after all, while his units can be replaced, the cave cannot). A riskier proposition involves Throwing the DC; riskier because you have to make a subsequent dr of 1-3. The drm for this includes; -1 for being Adjacent, -1 for being Heroic/Fanatic, +1 for being at a lower level than the cave entrance and +1 if throwing from a moving vehicle (a drive-by cave bombing, I guess). Remember, though, if it fails it's going to blow up in your face, and the cave owners will get a +4 as protection. Should the DC be operably placed or thrown, in each of these cases, it attacks with 30 FP, with a KIA resulting in the destruction of the cave and its contents. If the cave attacked is devoid of enemy forces there is a -4 DRM to the attack (almost guaranteeing its destruction), so remember to lay down as much supporting fire as possible.

Other options with a DC include Setting it or dangling it down from above. If the cave is empty, and no one else is

firing at you, a good option is for your DC squad to stop and expend its entire MF on Setting the DC. Don't forget the usual Set-DC procedure (e.g. rolling 1-3 if a squad - or 1-2 for a HS - to set the DC and passing an NTC when you want to detonate the charge), and don't forget that your units are considered to be using Hazardous Movement. A subsequently Set DC attacks the cave with 36 FP and -3 DRM. If no Japanese are present in the hex, you get an extra -4 DRM (if you don't destroy the cave with this, then you're just plain unlucky).

If you're feeling particularly adventurous, you can try the rather unique method of placing the DC from the Cave hex, in other words from above the Cave entrance. This method benefits from the fact that the enemy within cannot fire at you simply because he can't see you (other units might, however). The problem is that, firstly, you have to be able to get into that position behind the cave, and secondly, your units have to Climb down onto the top of the cave's entrance from the hillside above. You'll have to declare that your units are Climbing and are attempting to Place a DC using that method. Your units are placed on a Climbing Counter, using all of their MF, with the arrow pointing to one of the vertices on the entrance hex side (consider this carefully, as LOS to your Climbing unit is drawn to the vertice chosen). When your climbing unit is one level above the cave (which may indeed be its starting level), then you can place the DC with a subsequent dr of 1-3. After this, other enemy units with LOS to your chosen vertice can then fire at you for moving, with a -2 DRM for Hazardous

Continued on page 25, column 2

TURNING THE TIDE AND ACTION PACK 5

Trev Edwards

The spring of 2009 saw the release of two new packs from MMP. The first, *Turning The Tide* is a set of 20 old scenarios form the original *Squad Leader* series. The numbering in the 'U' series continues on from where the earlier pack *AGI's Dozen* left off. The original scenarios are 25 years old and betray their age partly by the high contrast and/or stylised imagery and – in most cases – their length in game turns. The shortest is only four turns; the longest is 13 with most of them being around ten turns. This pack might be a poor buy for people whose gaming tastes, style or time limits run to the modern Schwerkpunk style. Things which may attract the potential buyer include the use of just the first 15 boards in all but two of the 20 scenarios and no overlays are required. You'll need Brits, Allied minors and French to play all the scenarios and you can expect everything from simple infantry city fights to Soviet paratroops at night.

These scenarios have been brought up to date by Jim Stahler, whose name is the only one which appears on the scenario cards. Presumably the original scenario designers identities are lost in time. I rooted out my old bundle of *Squad Leader* scenarios to try and see what changes were made. Taking a look at 'Swatting At Tigers' I can see that the forces are identical, as are the designated set up hexes and the VC are written to be similar to the original but to make sense in *ASL* terms. Therefore I'm confident that the original flavour has not been lost. I do have qualms as to whether 10 turns is still necessary for the events of the scenario to pan out.

Looking at the others I see some scenarios I can distinctly recall playing back in the early 90s. 'Rehearsal For Crete' is a large sized action depicting German glider and paratroops seizing a bridge from Allied forces at the head of an advancing army on Argos in '41. There's flak to deal with and light AFV's on both sides, so it is a busy 10 turns. I note that they've changed board 8 for board 40 in this re release, presumably as there are no hills on 41. I played this a few times in its original incarnation and recall it being very exciting, so this is on my 'to play' list. Another scenario I recall fondly was 'The Road To Kozani Pass' which is a 13 turn combined arms affair set in Greece in April '41. Early Brit tanks vs. superior German

ones, both sides trying to bring on infantry in armed and un-armoured vehicles and a four board playing area make this another classic. So I'm very happy with this, pack which came in at less than a pound per scenario, even allowing for the collapse of Sterling against the US Dollar.

What I'm playing first however is *Action Pack 5*. This follows on from the success of *AP 4* and the 12 scenarios are similarly themed around one aspect of the war. This time the whole of Eastern Front is the subject. This pack comes with three boards and no overlays. Board 56 is a mid-to-large sized village with just a few two story buildings centred on a mid board crossroads with open country at either end. Board 57 has buildings close to a road running along one long board edge, with open country, grain and orchards across the rest of the board. I anticipate that this will often be used as a transition from rural to urban terrain by scenario designers. Board 58 is a large single hill mass rising to a saddleback at level three. Why we needed yet another large hill I don't know. I think they'd have done better to create a two board hill mass like *Heat of Battle* did with their *High Ground* module some years ago.

I've managed to play some of the scenarios. 'AP41 The Meat Grinder' depicts a small 1st line Russian infantry force (6 squads) backed up by some AFVs including two KV-2. They are tough for 1941 but they have to spread themselves pretty thin to defend the multi hex buildings along the board 56 edge. I felt very pressed when I set these Russians up in my game but I soon felt better when I realised the German infantry force (only 10 1st line squads and 6 Pz III) was also going to be thinly spread, and creating local superiority would be tough. Add to this that Fritz has only ten turns to do his thing. It played out quite well. Since CVP count as well as the buildings, killing a couple of your opponent's tanks early will gain you a major advantage. If I play the game again as Ivan I'll set the KV's in position to move onto the roads by the end of their first MPH (if convenient) so that they can use the CE road movement rate to intercept the flanking German armour.

AP42 is 'Frontiers and Pioneers'. This time it's building control within 3 hexes of either of two hexes, so the

Russians must guard them both. Typical mix of early 1st line Russians (8 squads, some thin skinned AFV backed up with a KV1 but enjoying a 9-2 infantry leader) are facing a reduced company of German Motorcycle Pioneers, supported by six tanks. Two FT are the key weapons here. Russians have the benefit of the terrain again, although the Germans can get closer before having to cover open ground than in AP 41. This played out well enough again and I'd play it in a tourney any time.

I'm sad to report that 'AP43 Escape from Encirclement' is an apparently broken scenario. It's a fairly bizarre affair. Two board lengths laid end to end. Russkies enter on either of two entry areas, middle of left and middle of right on one of the two board wide sides. VC are to exit off the other wide side (only 10 hexes away - six turns to cover that gap). Germans set up on the half boards at either end, four hexes in from where the Soviets enter. They do get a first turn to try to close the gap before the hordes (yes there are a lot of Ivans) arrive in three of the first four turns of six game turns. I gave up before the end of the turn 2 Russian MPH. I'd been completely overrun by an infantry company backed up with a cavalry troop in those two turns. And there were tanks coming on in turn 4! Perhaps I'm missing something, so don't let me put you off.

'AP 44 The Burial Mound' is set on the Mamayev Kurgan in Stalingrad. Each side starts with a small infantry force on the top of the board 58 hill. Each side then gets a substantial set of infantry reinforcements and the battle is on. Russians get a 70mm artillery module (off board observer makes the radio problem go away) and Germans get two Stukas about halfway through. It's a lot of fun, the best so far from this pack.

At the time of writing I'm half way through 'AP 45 Reaping Rewards'. Set during 'Little Saturn' it depicts a company of Romanians backed up by a mixed bag of guns defending the board 56 village from Russians enveloping from both sides. The Russians have tanks – 2 T34 and a FT armed KV. It's a meaty scenario, albeit only 5 ½ turns long, so the Russians have

Continued on page 27, column 2

STEEL INFERNO

Toby Pilling

It is perhaps a truism in *ASL* that it is better to be bold early on in a scenario, than have rashness forced upon you at then end. Brendan's mad dash of turn six was surprisingly fortunate in escaping annihilation, but he and Derek conceded before my reinforcements arrived. At that point, my total loss suffered was one PzIV being immobilised by OBA.

Let's look at what happened.

I've had my eye on this scenario from HOB's *Beyond the Beachhead* pack for some time, but it was the release of *Action Pack 4* from MMP that re-piqued my interest in Normandy and bocage. The fact that the forces split into three separate commands fairly easily made it a great scenario for Brendan, Derek and I to play at the London *ASL* club.

As the German defender my first decision regards rubble placement. Whilst I could have opted to restrict enemy AFV movement, my main aim with rubble is twofold; to clear some LOS for my troops above ground level and deny some forward buildings to enemy control (rubble is no longer counted as buildings).

All my men are on the rear board – I decided that any benefits of slowing down the enemy were outweighed by the almost certain loss of valuable troops. Too often I see players set up so called 'speed bumps', that should really be classified as 'death traps' – for their own men. My HIP capability may urge some caution on my foes anyway.

I've avoided setting up many men around the church steeple, which I anticipate to be the pre-registered bombardment hex. But even if the bombardment achieves nothing in terms of breaking or reducing my squads, it will still have made me set up in a dispersed manner. I've got a couple of MMG armed HS covering the level 1 hills – if either survives the bombardment, I shall be happy.

Most of my dummies are pretending to be tanks, just to keep the Brits guessing.

My Fortified building locations are up front, and mostly there to stop the Brits advancing in easily should they shroud my lines with SMOKE.

Note the position and LOS of my AT gun – up slope, it can even see out to board 11 as it is not restricted by the orchards,

rubble or walls.

My spotter is HIP, and observant players will notice that I have not used my full HIP allocation. This is simply to keep the enemy guessing – half of the effect of HIP is a psychological one.

My plan is to hold the centre behind the road, and the bocage line on the right. We'll see where my reinforcements (errata reduces my Panthers to two) are required. I think it will be a tough game for the Germans, as I am vastly outnumbered and the enemy has adequate turns to get the building he requires. However, the firepower advantage of my squads will make the Brits loathe to enter close combat, which could be quite a key factor.

The Battle

I predicted the bombardment hex pretty well and neither of my vulnerable half squads broke. I was certainly glad I'd decided to leave the level two church spire un-garrisoned as it collapsed in rubble!

Brendan set up on board and attacked cautiously on my right flank – taking time to skirt the Board 11 hill and move most of his forces around to the 11V9 wood mass. That took time however, and when he was finally ready to assault the first line of buildings around HOB III U4 and W4, I had my OBA coming down as harassing fire, and a number of fire lanes zipping across from the men behind the Z3/Z4 bocage line. He was forced to charge across the open ground, and though many of his units survived the escapade, with time pressing he and Derek called it a day. He still had his tanks left, apart from the unfortunate Firefly that suffered an OBA critical hit, but they were going to be vulnerable to my reinforcing Panthers.

Derek split his entering force in two – the majority moving slowly across the hill to the area enclosed by hedges and bocage around the HOB III J2 building. They were threatening my M5 building by game end. In the centre, a Sherman, Wolverine and MG stack moved into a fire support position around 11 Q10. Of course, this was what my up slope AT gun was waiting for and it took care of the AFVs, as well as a further Sherman that decided to enter its LOS even after it's position had been revealed. Derek's other Wolverine was 'fausted as it attempted to

tie up an SS half-squad in HOB III L6. That left Derek with his AVRE, and though my Pak 40 crew had by then been broken, the Panthers were about to arrive.

It was an enjoyable scenario, though with surprisingly little shooting from either side for five turns, as the British cautiously manoeuvred into position. Of course, they were probably too cautious in the event.

I'm not sure what the lessons to be learnt in this scenario are. I learnt one interesting thing in the preparation of my defence, which is that HIP units can only gain wall advantage once they are placed on board. This meant that my HIP OBA spotter had to relinquish his status once I wanted to spot beyond his hex. Beware of slope hexes is one lesson for the British I suppose – with plentiful orchards in season, it is actually far better to be upslope than to have a level or two height advantage. I'd certainly encourage anyone interested in Normandy games to buy this pack as it contains not only slopes, but also distinguishes between hedges and bocage.

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GERMAN SET-UP (see map opposite):

Rubble – O3, P2, S3

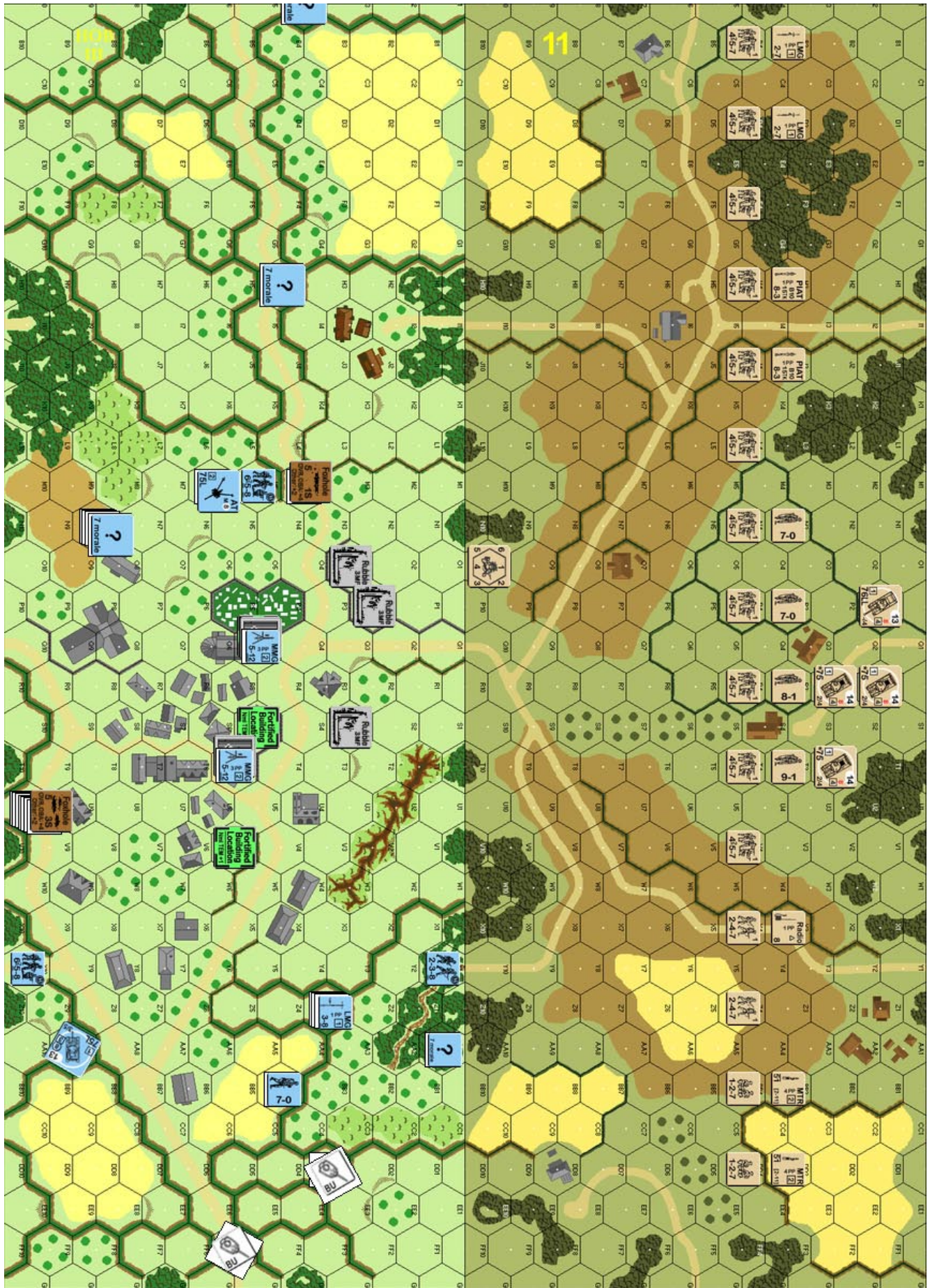
HIP

7-0, Radio – Z3
AT gun, crew – M6, CA M7/N7
1S foxhole – M4
3S foxhole – U10
Fortified locations – Q5, S5, V5

Visible, though all units are concealed

2 large dummies – A4
2 large dummies – H4
238 – M4 (in Foxhole)
658 – M5
2 large dummies, 8-1, HMG, 658 – N8
238, MMG – Q5 (level 1)
238, MMG – T5 (level 1)
9-1, 2 x LMG, 658, PSK, 2 x 838 – U10 (in Foxhole)
238 – Y1
LMG, 548 – Z3
2 dummies – AA1
7-0, 658 – BB4
PzIV, 658 – DD3 (VCA CC4/DD4, TCA DD2/EE3)
PzIV – AA9, CA Z8/9
PzIV – V5 (VCA GG5/6, TCA FF4/GG5)
658 – Y10





Endstation Budapest

A Brief Scenario Analysis

Nick Smith

One reviewer has described this as a monster scenario, and while I think he exaggerates somewhat (“monster scenario” to me is anything in the *Red Barricades* box involving not only 30+ squads but also hordes of AFVs, OBA and triple-figure fortifications), there is no denying that this is hardly a tournament scenario. It pits former Axis allies Hungary and Romania against each other in an extension of the bitter feud festering between the two nations for decades. Both sides have a mixture of Elite and 1st Line squads and SW, and the Hungarians field 3 indigenous AFVs. The Romanians have no AFV but have AT capability in the form of 2 45L AT Guns, Panzerfausts, a FT and DCs, the last two being wielded by a force of Assault Engineers. The Romanians have to occupy the Factory building 45K2 on the western half of the board.

THE TERRAIN

The setup is two urban boards, 45 and 51, the latter with many Narrow Streets and Two Storey Houses. Two things significantly alter the map layout in this scenario. The first is the addition of 3 Railroad overlays which have the most impact on Board 45, essentially running up to the 45K2 Factory (here representing the railway station) and forming some tricky open ground with increased movement costs for the attacker to cross. The second is the SSR that allows both players to alternately place a Rubble counter on a building hex, with a maximum of two such counters per multi-hex building. This can be used to reduce multi-level hexes to a single pile of rubble and to eliminate stairwell hexes, thus in some cases making a multi-hex building a single-storey building only. Rubble of course also blocks same-level LOS and has higher movement costs, a possible disadvantage for the attacker. Finally, the Hungarian player sets up 8 Wire counters.

THE ROMANIANS

The Romanian starts out with a large number of squads, a reasonable amount of SW and leadership, and is reinforced by the 5¹-3-7 Assault Engineers and an extra AT Gun. As attacker he is also somewhat free to decide where the thrust of the attack should fall, given that he has Board 51 to run squads across. However, initial setup is important, as the “ring road” on board 45 running through hex coordinates 9 and 10 allows Hungarian SW or AFV to make life difficult for infantry trying to cross from one board to another. The advantage of an approach through Board 51 is that it allows for a more covered approach to 45K2 without having to cross the railway tracks. The disadvantage is that it is a more indirect route. Entering on the eastern edge of Board 45 offers a greater concentration in force but risks the Romanians being bottled up in front of the tracks: however, there is a “back route” in hex coordinates 0-2 near the factory that offers protection via a Stone Wall should the Hungarians not

defend this area in force. The Romanians can enter concealed, and a wise Romanian player will stay concealed as long as possible while looking to minimise Hungarian FP against his units, or for Ambush possibilities or to draw fire from Hungarian units, thus forcing them to lose their own concealment.

THE HUNGARIANS

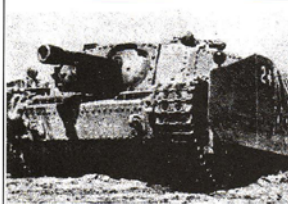
The Hungarian is similarly equipped in terms of SW and leadership. His task is simply to hold the Factory, so provided he still has control of just one location of 45K2 at game end, then in game terms he can afford to lose most of his side, including the AFVs. The light mortars are less impressive than their Romanian counterparts but can still be used at long distances (such as that “ring road” on Board 45) to interdict enemy units. The MMGs and HMG can be similarly deployed, probably in or around the Factory where they have a

wide field of fire (restricted CA notwithstanding if in buildings), while the LMGs can be used to bulk up 3-4-7 stacks or to lay down Fire Lanes. This brings us to another Hungarian ace in the hole, the extra Concealment counters which can be used to form Dummy stacks to hinder Romanian movement. Sometimes the threat of a Fire Lane may make an attacker over cautious. The Wire counters are numerical enough to almost cover the width of one board. Although a passive defence rather than one that inflicts casualties, Wire can be surprisingly frustrating for an attacker, causing his units to lose one or more turns “hung up” if the dr is high. Units thus caught up add +1 to their IFT DR and CC DR, although the Hungarian may well not want to hang around for a prolonged firefight. Clearance of Wire can also occupy one or more turns when the Romanians should be pushing towards the railway station. And of course Wire forms a barrier to

END STATION BUDAPEST

Scenario Origin: Brian Marston

ASL SCENARIO 121



VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Romanians win at game end if there are no Good Order Hungarian non-crew MMG in hexes (including rubble hexes) of building 45K2.

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, 15 January 1945: The 2nd Ukrainian Front, led by General Nikolai Sevast'yanov, had reached the Danube. Hitler ordered that beautiful Budapest be made a "fortress city" even as the 2nd Ukrainian Front encircled it. The Romanians, ill equipped for city fighting, found themselves locked in close quarters fighting for the Eszterom Railroad Station. Facing them were their old enemies—the Hungarians—who intended to exact revenge for the pillaging of their capital in 1921. For years their feud had festered, and now no quarter was expected or granted.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:

BALANCE:

- ♦ Add one *MMG Field PA* to the Hungarian Turn 3 reinforcements.
- ♦ Remove four *Wire* counters from the Hungarian OB.

TURN RECORD CHART

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	END
♦ HUNGARIAN Sets Up First (124)											
♦ ROMANIAN Moves First (204)											

Elements of the 10th Hungarian Division (ELR: 3) set up on/west of new AA on board 45, and/or on/west of new G on board 51: (SAN: 5)

Elements of Group Billitzer enter on Turn 1 along the west edge:

Enter on Turn 3 along the west edge:

Elements of the 2nd Romanian Division (FLR: 3) enter on/after Turn 1 along the east edge: (SAN: 3)

Enter on/after Turn 2 along the east edge:

Enter on/after Turn 3 along the east edge:

SPECIAL RULES:

1. FC are *Must*, with no wind at Start. *Kindling* is NA.
2. Building 45K2 is a *Factory* (B23.74). Place overlays as follows: X12 on SIG/WHB; RRI on SIG/79; RRS on 51A7/B6; and RRI4 on 45O6/P6.
3. Both sides may declare *Head to Head* CC (17.31). No *Quarter* (A23.8) is in effect for both sides.
4. The Romanians may fire at 8 *Panzerschnitts* in the course of the scenario. The 5-3-7 Squads (and their associated IS) in the Romanian OB are *Elite*, and have a broken *Morale* Level 1 greater than printed. The 5-3-7 Squads are also *Assault Engineers* (M1.22).
5. Prior to set up, each player alternates placing stone rubble counters on any building hex until 18 are placed. Falling Rubble (B24.12) DR are NA for these placements. The Romanian player places first. No more than two rubble counters may be placed per building.

AFK/BMATH: From building to building, across track after track, the savage tipping rigged into the rail station until the exhausted, out-numbered defender were finally overcome. The Romanians—now outside the wide Elizabeth Ring Road and close to the Danube—were denied the final victory, however. Russian Army commander Malinovsky, frustrated at the Romanian intent for eliciting a fanatic response from the otherwise demoralized Hungarians—pulled the 5th Corps out of Budapest.



wheeled AFV, forcing the AT Guns to take a different route.

The 3 AFV provided to the Hungarian might at first sight appear to give him an unfair, almost overwhelming advantage, especially as one (the Zrinyi II) comes with a 105mm howitzer. Yet in an urban setting AFV have to be used cautiously. The streets and buildings channel and restrict their movement while creating numerous well-protected hexes for enemy MMC to lurk in and leap out in CC attacks - and don't forget that the Romanian Elite and 1st Line squads have favourable rules to cover this option (A25). Furthermore these are not PzIVs, Shermans or T-34s here but AFV that are less well armoured or have other weaknesses. The Nimrod set up at the beginning packs a very handy IFE of 8 with an ROF of 2 and is thus in effect a rather heavy MG. However as it is OT it is vulnerable to IFT attacks and very vulnerable if caught in CC. Thus it needs to stay beyond Normal Range of Romanian infantry and if possible their MGs, since it has a lowly AF of 1. Ideally it needs a fairly open field of fire around it. The Toldi is a "proper" tank (ie CT with a MA and CMG) and is the only Hungarian vehicle really suited for Overruns should the opportunity arise. However the MA is only a 40mm cannon which will only roll on the 4FP column of the IFT, even should it get a hit against infantry in stone buildings (difficult as the crew will normally be BU in such close surroundings). Its fairly high MP factor of 17 makes it quite speedy, but stopping too close to Romanian MMC may make it vulnerable to the Panzerfausts they are carrying, albeit in limited supply. It should probably be used as a vehicle of harassment, especially if it can cause DM to some broken units. The Zrinyi II is the most potent AFV of the three but suffers from other disadvantages. Firstly, being a self-propelled gun, it suffers from NT penalties. Secondly, the MA lacks any ROF, so only one shot per turn is possible unless Intensive Fire is risked. Thirdly and more seriously in a city fight, it lacks any MGs and so suffers from penalties in CC. A wise Hungarian commander will avoid such entanglement and place the Zrinyi in a position where it has a reasonable field of fire and can be covered by friendly infantry. One possibility for any of the AFV is to use the stairwell in 45 as a Factory entrance and actually make the vehicle(s) part of the garrison. This may cause extra NT penalties but does give the advantages of the cover of stone buildings

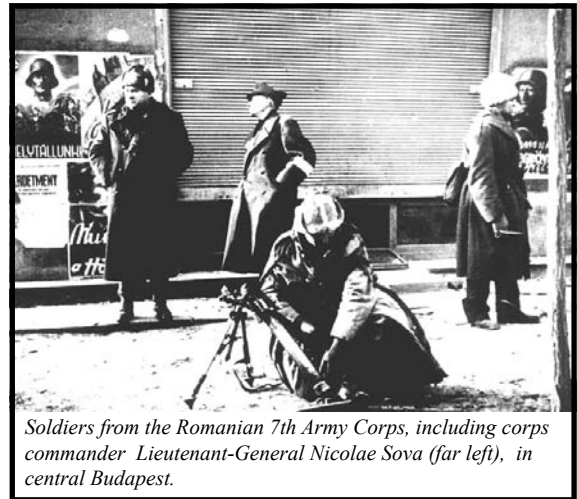
from external shots and also creates a barrier to any Romanian units unable to pass their PAATC (but see the reminder above). Perhaps this could be a last-ditch option.

THE ROMANIANS RE-VISITED

To reiterate, the Romanian has several different options for dealing with the Hungarian armour. In city fights, CC is quite often a viable method, and the Romanians can roll for ATMM (A25). The 8 Panzerfausts should be used liberally - with only 3 AFV, there's no point in holding them in reserve. The two 45L AT Guns should not be overlooked or disregarded. True, they are hardly state of the art for 1945, but neither are the Hungarian AFV, whose highest armour factor is 6. Unlike the heavier AT Guns fielded by the major powers, these small cannons are light (with a movement factor of 10) and have a high ROF of 3. In a city scenario a handy strategy can be to park the trucks round the corner, unhook the guns and use subsequent moves to Push them into position. If the Romanian can push one into the ground floor of a stone building where it can cover the open ground in front of the station, so much the better. In a tank vs. AT Gun duel, the Toldi and Zrinyi in this scenario will have the disadvantages of lower ROF, a lower TH number (don't forget also that the 45L AT Gun is a Small Target) and, in the case of the Toldi, a low FP equivalency. With a TK# of 10 the 45L can account for the Nimrod easily and the Toldi without too much trouble - only against the front of the Zrinyi will it struggle somewhat, and even then the high ROF means it may get enough shots in to make one count.

THE RAILWAY STATION

The railway station itself bears some examination. It is a stone building so will offer a +3 TEM against any fire not directed through an internal hexside. However, the Factory rules (B23) make it a ground level building with no upper storeys as far as the defenders are concerned. Also, unlike in a normal building, fire can be traced through Factory hexes, treating them as a Hindrance rather than an Obstacle, and a Factory hex offers only a +1 TEM to such



Soldiers from the Romanian 7th Army Corps, including corps commander Lieutenant-General Nicolae Sova (far left), in central Budapest.

fire. In other words, once the Romanians have broken into the railway station then the defenders suddenly become a lot more vulnerable. With only 1 FT and 2 DC on the Romanian side, don't expect to see the station going up in flames or down in rubble in the style you may have come to expect from replays of Red Barricades, the Commissar's House or Streets of Stalingrad.

CONCLUSION

Most playings of this scenario will probably see the Hungarians taking Defensive Fire shots against a large Romanian concentration as they fall back towards the station, while possibly harassing their enemies with an AFV before massing around 45K2 for the last stand. In my own playing of this scenario both sides normally rallied quite quickly, and 2 Romanian and 1 Hungarian hero were created, as well as a berserk squad on each side. Don't forget that the broken side morale of MMC in this scenario is raised by 1 (A25) and that No Quarter (A20.3) is in effect, reflecting the deep-seated grudges on both sides.

Historical footnotes to this episode in the tragic siege of Budapest are interesting. Not only did Malinovsky withdraw the Romanians, but their commander was later sent to a gulag, presumably for his failure. Fifty years later however the attempt by the Romanian dictator Ceausescu to exploit the old hatreds by persecuting a Hungarian pastor in Timisoara led instead to people of both nationalities showing a surprising solidarity that led to the downfall of the regime.

IS-2 Tanks and Assault Guns

Michael Davies

What follows is a brief history of the development of the IS-2 series tanks and assault guns, followed by a comparison against the German Panther, Tiger (I & II), Panzer IV tanks, anti tank guns and infantry weapons. Finally I'll suggest some tactical use in the *ASL* system based on WW2 tactics.

Background

Towards the end of 1942 Soviet planners decided to concentrate on the production of T-34 and KV-1 tanks, and to continue to produce some light T-70 tanks. All models of these AFVs would be improved over the course of 1943, and new assault guns introduced, but there would be no radical new tanks entering production. These decisions ensured a great number of tanks and assault guns would be manufactured in 1943, in excess of 24,000.

The Tiger I was first seen near Leningrad in January 1943. Soviet designers saw it as a development of existing designs and expected it only to be deployed in small numbers. Later at Kursk, the early model Panthers appeared, along with new tank destroyer models and rather more Tigers than expected. Prior to Kursk the Red Army expected to lose three or four tanks for each German AFV destroyed, sadly at times during the battle the exchange rate rose to eight or ten. Considering some German losses were caused by airpower, artillery and close assault by infantry something was wrong with the Soviet armour in service.

Tactics and training were part of the problem, but more of an issue was the limited anti armour effectiveness of the Soviet 76.2 mm gun, and the increasing availability of German long 75mm and 88mm guns, which could penetrate Soviet armour relatively easily.

Some development work of T-70, T-34 and KV tanks had been started, leading to the T-80, T-43 and KV-85 tanks. The T-80 tank was a very reasonable light tank, but by 1943 the Red Army was struggling to find a use for it, preferring Lend-Lease or T-34 tanks instead. The prototype T-43 tank used the same 76mm gun as the existing T34/76 with slightly thicker armour, and slightly reduced mobility; the design fell out of favour pre mass production. The KV-85 was a basic KV tank with a new turret and 85mm gun.

An improvement on the original KV series, it did match the Panzer IV series of tanks, but wasn't strong enough to take on the new Tigers and Panthers. Only 130 were made before production was stopped.

The KV-85 turret was useful to improve the T34 series being used for the T34/85. Against German light and medium tanks, the new T34/85 was adequate. Some Soviet sources claim it was better than the Panther, perhaps not on a one to one basis but in an operational sense it might have been.

The Red Army still needed a "heavy" tank to break through enemy defensive positions. Short term, T-34 and KV chassis were used to create assault guns, the SU-85, SU-122, and SU-152 series, and all three proving useful in combat.



IS-2/IS-2M

The IS-2 was developed from the earlier KV tank, or at least the hull, engine and suspension were. The turret was an entirely new design. On the KV the armour had been designed to be proof against 37/45mm guns and resistant to 50mm-75mm guns. The IS-2 needed to be proof against standard 75mm guns and resistant to the long 75mm and 88mm guns. Keep in view this was to allow the IS-2 protection when breaking through positions containing medium and heavy guns rather than preparing for tank duels with the Third Reich's best armour.

Armour protection was improved by sloping the tank's hull and by increasing the armour thickness. To keep the size of the tank down the armour reduced the size of the crew compartment instead of being added to the outside to create a larger tank. Getting the crew, engine, armament and ammunition in was a bit of a squeeze, so the crew was reduced from five to four.

Deciding on a gun was difficult. Originally the 85mm gun was favoured, but although giving a good anti infantry performance, and lethal against Panzer III/IV tanks, most self propelled guns or towed anti tank weapons, something with more punch and range was needed against pillboxes, fortified buildings,

and the best German tanks and assault guns. Both the 100mm and 122mm guns were considered. The 100mm gun had a better anti tank performance, but neither the gun barrels nor the ammunition were available in sufficient quantity. So the 122mm (D25-T Model 1943) became the stronger candidate. The 122mm gun was tested against a captured Panther; the first round penetrated the hull front, straight through the engine and out the hull rear. The gun also had excellent high explosive round, plus smoke, and HEAT ammunition. On balance the 122mm gun was the best choice, offset slightly by limited ammunition stowage caused by the sheer size of the shells and propellant. The turret had space for 28 rounds, 16 long armour piercing or high explosive rounds and twelve shorter APC or HEAT rounds. The HEAT round wasn't used much as it was most effective against light armour or in confused situation where the next target could be infantry or armour. A smoke round for the 122mm gun wasn't used in the tanks. Rate of fire was slow at best, two rounds a minute, or three in the opening stages of an engagement. Further work to develop a tank with a 100mm gun were successful but didn't result in a mass produced vehicle.

A coaxial and rear machine gun were mounted, later an anti aircraft machine gun was fitted, though these were mostly used against personnel. The bow machine gun was fitted to the extreme right of the driver, and fired by an electric button. It's just visible next to the klaxon and one of the hull lights.

The IS-2M featured a greatly improved hull and turret armour. Both types were employed in heavy tank units, assigned for specific breakthrough missions.

In summary the IS-2/2M tanks were well armoured, heavily gunned tanks, whose chief deficiencies were limited ammunition stowage and to a lesser extent a lack of any smoke making capability.



ISU Assault guns

In the 1930s and '40s the Red Army made several attempts to develop self propelled artillery. Some of



A column of IS-2s advance through Viipuri in July 1944.

the designs led to truck mounted guns of various calibres, others to limited production of experimental armoured designs. Probably the best early design was the KV-II that used a KV chassis to mount a huge turret containing a short 152mm gun. Further thought led to the SU-152, also based on the KV tank, mounting a longer 152mm gun in a casemate. Much liked by its crews, the SU-152 was able to engage German Panthers, Tigers, and Elefants at long range.

The new assault gun was the ISU-152, which was slightly more heavily armoured. The design was cheaper and easier to produce than a standard IS-2 or IS-2M as it had no turret. The performance difference between tanks and assault guns was accepted.

The ammunition stowage problem remained; only 20 rounds were carried, partially offset by each HE projectile weighing 96 lbs, and the AP rounds even heavier at 107 lbs.

More of an issue though was the limited supply of 152mm ML-20 guns and ammunition. The 122mm gun was more readily available which led to the ISU-122 assault gun.

Each type was employed in separate units to simplify supply and maintenance. For most missions the ISU-152 was preferred, in part for it's powerful HE round, also as it was easier to spot exploding shells at long range. Engagement ranges were phenomenal for WW2, at times ISU would open fire at 3000 metres (75 hexes), from ambush positions against infantry or armour.

Over 4,000 were produced in the last two years of the war. Like the IS-2 tanks, the assault guns were employed in heavy units, assigned to specific break through missions and withdrawn to be reformed on completion of their mission.

Overall the 152mm version was preferred. It's high explosive rounds could

do damage to the tracks of any German tank it hit regardless of range, and there are reports of it's blast distorting armour plating and causing spalling.

Low Ammunition

All IS-2 tanks and assault guns carried very small amounts of ammunition, the ISU-152 stowed just twenty rounds, the IS-2 and IS-2M twenty eight, and the ISU-122 thirty. This was because of the considerable size of individual rounds, and particularly in the case of the IS tanks limited space in the fighting compartment. Accepted some ISU did start actions with ammunition stowed outside the vehicle, but this was generally when expecting to start the fire fight at long range.

Contemporary tanks carried more rounds, the T34/76 series stowed 77, the T34/85 series 55, and the KV-85 tank 71. The Tiger I tank could carry 92 rounds, the Panther held 72. Some aggressive tank crews also went into action with extra shells either inside the vehicle or externally stowed. When firing from a static position extra supplies of ammunition could be stacked nearby.

Generally Russian tanks would expend half the rounds carried. Soviet tankers tended to engage targets whilst moving whereas most other armies tended to shoot from a short halt or static position in a more deliberate fashion. In action German tanks would tend to expend about a third of ammunition carried.

In *ASL* terms, all IS AFVs are subject to D3.71 Low Ammunition rules. The rulebook is very clear and gives the IS-3 tank as an example. The IS-2, IS-2M and ISU-122 vehicles are all Circled B11, the ISU-152 is circled B10.

The rules are well written. It's a good idea to keep some Low Ammo counters handy, and be very pleased if you do not need them. The worst news is that

the high rolls that trigger Low Ammunition or malfunction are likely to have missed their targets.

It's possible to play without giving Low Ammunition much thought, blazing away and consistently rolling low. Alternatively you can limit the risk by taking fewer shots. In most scenarios I'd recommend limited use of Advancing Fire or low odds To Hit rolls. The obvious exception is the last game turn when being recalled might not be an issue.

Keep in view armour with a Low Ammunition counter on still has a functioning Main Armament.

The IS series opponents

ISU vehicles tended to be used in a break through role attacking a specific weak point in the enemy line. The expected opposition would be mostly infantry with light support weapons, panzerfausts, panzerschrecks, anti tank magnetic mines and medium sized anti tank guns. Seeing any armour would be a bit of a novelty, perhaps an assault gun or light armoured vehicle.

Against infantry in good cover, bunkers or entrenchments the ISU would approach to a safe distance and engage the target until it was destroyed, evacuated or neutralised. Infantry support is pretty essential to stop the target running forward to close the range on the tanks.

All IS/ISU are vulnerable to close range infantry attack. Flamethrowers, anti tank magnetic mines and infantry close assault largely ignore thick armour. For close defence ISU assault guns are more vulnerable as they will not have a manned machine gun unless Crew Exposed. IS-2 and IS-2M tanks can defend with both their coaxial and rear machine guns. Some IS-2M have an anti aircraft machine gun fitted generally though it's a poor tactic to use it for close combat. If you keep some of your own infantry nearby or in the same hex as the tank close combat will be less likely.

Panzerfausts and panzerschrecks are effective against all IS tanks and assault guns, especially the assault guns. The thick armour of the tanks is resistant to rocket attack but can be penetrated on a low roll. Range is a good defence, at four hexes the threat is small, and further reduced if you are moving. It is good fun to withstand a panzerfaust round on an IS-2M's thick hull armour but don't tempt fate just for the thrill of it!

Beyond five hexes infantry are pretty defenceless. IS can hit back with main armament and any machine guns.



An ISU-122 in the Berlin area in May 1945.

The 122mm gun attacks on the 24 factor IFT column, or 12 factors for Area fire. The 152mm gun uses the 30 IFT for direct fire, but drops down to 12 factors for Area Fire (unless you get a Critical Hit!). My own preference is to use Area Fire to gain acquisition then switch to direct fire to complete the destruction. Against a protected target in good cover Area Fire yields a better chance of a hit, and I am happier with a weaker attack than a potentially devastating one that has slightly missed. A further advantage of Area Fire is you can shoot from some pretty fair distances. Out to 36 hexes your basic To Hit is a 7, beyond that is still reasonable but unlikely to be seen in *ASL*. I've read short accounts of ISU shooting at targets at 3,000 metres on the steppes, which is pretty impressive for a WW2 era tank.

Long range fire is also useful against enemy anti tank guns or field artillery. By 1944 most German anti tank guns were 75mm calibre, with the occasional 88L, and plenty of 50L guns still around. The main threat from the 50L is Deliberate Immobilisation, but the 75L and 88L can do damage if given enough time to acquire, start scoring hits and will eventually penetrate if they get lucky.

Going head to head with an anti tank gun is generally a bad idea unless there is a sound tactical reason for it. Don't forget the ISU-122 does have a supply of smoke rounds, worth a try against a gun. If engaging a gun always use your machine guns. This can be before the gun attack or after it. My preference is to fire the coaxial MG first; it might strip concealment and if lucky hurt the crew. If the crew breaks it's easier to hit with the gun or you have the option of saving the main gun for another target. Of course there are arguments for

firing the gun first and your choice does really depend on personal preference.

Very occasionally the German will field some monstrous gun like a 128mm or 88LL. Their To Kill numbers are extremely dangerous, so try to avoid a direct fire fight with them. Dodging behind a building or other blocking feature is sensible and it's not as if the gun can chase after you. If a strong gun really has to be destroyed and by tanks or assault guns, try to attack in overwhelming numbers from different directions. A better bet though is to use infantry, artillery, a Sniper attack or air power to do the job.

Most players will want to play scenarios in which Tigers, King Tigers or Panthers take on similar numbers of IS-2 or IS-2M. The short story is both the IS-2 and IS-2M are stronger than the Tiger I and the Panther at short to medium ranges. The IS assault guns are a bit weaker than IS tanks but still able to take on similar numbers of Panthers or Tiger Is with good prospects. At longer ranges the better chances of a hit give the Germans something back, though in *ASL* most shots are under 20 hexes (say 800 metres in the real world).

At 68 Tonnes the King Tiger outweighs all the IS series, with frontal hull armour that is strong enough to stop most 122mm rounds. The turret armour can be penetrated. The Tiger II though does have an edge if numbers are near equal. If the firelight takes place at range the Tiger gains further advantage due to better chances of a hit, despite being a very large target. Factor in Low Ammunition and things can look bleak. One advantage of the IS series is mechanical reliability, and you should encourage enemy armour to stop and start by relocating your own

forces, to risk immobilisation and fray your opponents nerves!

Truth is the Tiger II is generally better than all of the IS series, except for the IS-3 (which is a pretty rare sight in *ASL*!). Don't despair though Soviet armour is not as outclassed as other Allied armour.

Most Tiger II or more correctly King Tigers were destroyed by Allied bombing either at the production stage or in transit. There are less than a dozen recorded instances of IS tanks engaging Tigers or King Tigers on the Eastern front.

Tactical Use

The IS series tanks and assault guns work best in conjunction with other arms. Infantry, artillery and air support are all useful if available. The exception is probably for long range fire fights. Frankly these do not happen very often in *ASL*. Generally you are best off gaining an advantage in numbers, cover or concealment, and to shoot deliberately and gain acquisition. Much of the time German crew training and better optics, better guns and ammunition give the Germans a slight edge, but sometimes you just have to accept this. Generally heavy artillery, SU-100/SU-85 or massed T-34 would be used against a strong armour concentration if it couldn't be bypassed. The IS vehicles tended to be concentrated against weaknesses in the enemy line.

The IS-2 and assault guns are better employed against infantry and light guns, either dug in or defending a town or village. The heavy armament would be devastating against entrenchments or buildings. In close terrain infantry support is essential. Ideally you want a few squads as a screen to keep enemy infantry four or five hexes away whilst the gun and machine guns do damage. Infantry machine gun support is also useful to cover open ground around the tank. Specialist units like engineers can also be helpful. Expect to see enemy infantry pull back as your heavy armour approaches. Admittedly this can be frustrating if you want to kill things, but it is sometimes useful when you need to drive the enemy out of an objective. *ASL* is very rarely about annihilation!

Other friendly armour can help. Lighter tanks like the T-34 or Sherman benefit from fire support from heavier tanks. Exploiting their mobility to outflank or bypass enemy units engaged by your heavy armour.

Artillery and airpower are also welcome. OBA can hold an enemy in place whilst you gain a fire position, whilst

airpower is superb at interdicting retreating units.

In general IS tanks and assault guns are best used against known targets outside their effective range. They benefit greatly from infantry support, particularly in urban fire fights.

Conclusion

The IS series tank was sometimes called the Victory tank on account of its role in the crushing defeat of the Third Reich. Used aggressively in numbers against enemy positions that had been reconnoitred and subject to artillery preparation the IS-2 was extremely effective. Perhaps using the 100mm gun would have led to a more effective anti armour capability but limited availability precluded this.

An ever increasing number of *ASL* scenarios feature the IS-2/2M and/or ISU series assault guns. Don't be put off playing them by the Low Ammunition rules, late war *ASL* action with heavy Soviet armour can be a rewarding part of the game system.

BLOWTORCH AND CORKSCREW

Continued from page 16

Movement. Rolling 4-6 results in the DC been eliminated, so you're kind of depending on a pretty dangerous fifty-fifty chance of succeeding. However, if your options are otherwise limited, or time is pressing, it's good to know you can get behind and still (possibly) destroy that cave.

Calling in Support

If you've got any Ordnance over 100mm you can also do some damage to a Cave. It will take a lucky shot but if you keep firing you'll eventually get the CH required to destroy it, especially as you'll be firing on the Infantry Target Type (you can also gain Target Acquisition on the cave if using this Target Type). Once you find, start firing at it and keep firing. Eventually you'll force a collapse. If you don't get a CH, you might still do some damage to the enemy within, although you'll have to account for the +4 TEM.

OBA and NOBA are less reliable. Each are only effective if they are fired through the cave's CA hex side, traced from Offboard Observer's hex or the attacker's Friendly Board Edge at hex row Q or A5/6 or GG 5/6, and the troops within the cave will be protected by +6 TEM. A CH in either case, should the firepower be 100mm or over, will still destroy the cave and its contents.

An Aerial attack is faced with the same problems, and it will be a unique moment when your FB actually not only hits the cave but actually gets a CH and destroys it. For Sighting Purposes the Cave is considered a building, if non-hidden.

In each of these cases, the *ASL* rules reflect the very real fact that caves were hard enough in many cases for the troops on the ground to locate; for distant observers, or pilots in the air, or artillery men at the other end of a radio or phone, they could be downright impossible to hit. You may do some damage to their occupants, but actual destruction of the cave will in many cases be pretty unlikely.

Conclusion

Despite the general perception to the contrary, the Cave rules in *ASL* are really quite simple to follow as long as you break them down into the areas I've discussed here. If you are the Japanese

player you only need to know what caves enable you to do, and what they cannot. They provide you with a very formidable defence, but they require much pre-game thought regarding their set-up. Caves can be your ally, should you know when to leave them, or they can be little more than an elaborate tomb for your trapped soldiers. As Japanese commanders on Okinawa soon noted caves alone were not a defence; soldiers needed to keep moving, and to use their concealment to their advantage to strike back at the wary (and weary) marines. As the commander of your cardboard IJA units, you too need to know your vulnerabilities and set-up your defence to reduce them.

The American player, invariably on the offence in a Cave scenario, has to work out how he can close with his enemy, reduce him, and destroy his defences. A sealed off cave is one made impotent. Finding them and sealing them is the key, and a task that can be quite challenging. As the US player, you have many tools at your disposal, however, and if you are able to coordinate your attacks well, you could prove to be a worthy adversary.

Warfare in the PTO includes much that can be savoured. Aside from the unique nature of playing (or playing against) the Japanese, there is the nature of the forbidding and constricting terrain. But don't neglect the second half of Chapter G. Aside from the excitement and tension of trying a Seaborne Assault, there is the joy of playing with the USMC, and of being forced into subduing an enemy in that most formidable of defences, the cave. Hopefully, this article has brought you closer to doing so.

Further reading on the subject of Cave Warfare should include Japan's Battle of Okinawa, April-June 1945 by Thomas M. Huber, Leavenworth Papers No. 18, 1990 and 'Cave Warfare on Okinawa' by Dale E. Floyd from Builders and Fighters: US Army Engineers in World War II by Barry W. Fowle (ed), Office of History – US Army Corps of Engineers, 1992. For a good examination of the USMC in the Pacific, look for the Marines in World War II Commemorative Series available on-line. Also, don't forget Dade Cariaga's excellent article, Spelunking 101, from *ASL* Annual '96, which covers aspects of Cave and Cave Complex set up in *ASL* far more thoroughly than I could have done.



An ISU-152 in Berlin at the end of April 1945.

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!

SEPTEMBER ITASLIA 2009

When: 11 – 13 September.
Where: Hotel Antares, Viale Postumia, 88, 37069 Villafranca di Verona, Italy. Tel 045 630-18.79 or visit www.hotelantares.com for details. Rooms are available for €62 per night for a single room, or €42.00 per night sharing in a double room.
Fee: €20.00
Format: 5 round Swiss format, starting at 1PM Friday. And finishing at 2.30PM Sunday.
Contact: Mario Nadalini at rockgheba@gmail.com or itaslia@gmail.com. Visit <http://www.aslitalia.org/verona2009/index.html> for the latest details.

JIM MCLEOD MEMORIAL OPEN

When: 18 – 20 September.
Where: Viscount Gort Hotel, 1670 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3J 0C9, Canada. Tel 204-775-0451 or visit www.viscount-gort.com. There are a limited number of rooms available for a rate of \$105.00 CDN per night including breakfast (but not taxes).
Fee: \$45.00 CDN, with a \$5.00 CDN discount for CASLA members.
Format: 5 rounds of gaming. There will also be a three round mini-tournament on Saturday and Sunday for eight players.
Notes: Souvenir t-shirts (in S, M, L, and XL), beer steins and coffee mugs are available for \$20.00 each.
Contact: Michael Rodgers at mtrodgers99@gmail.com. Payments should be sent to Bill Bird, 839 Strathcona Street, Winnipeg, MB, R3G 3G5.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

When: 24 – 27 September.
Where: Stayokay Hostel, Diepenbroeklaan 27, Arnhem. There are 30 pre-booked 30 beds at the hostel, which will be offered on a first-come first-serve basis. If you wish to organise your accommodation at the tournament venue through the tournament organisers, you MUST register and pay in full before 1st of August, 2009. Accommodation for the three nights in a 4-bed room, including breakfast and dinner, is €130.00; add €30 for a room from Wednesday night, and €6.00 if paying by PayPal.
Fee: €30.00.
Format: 6 rounds of gaming. On Thursday and Friday, all players take part in the main tournament. On Saturday and Sunday, half continue in the main tournament, while the rest compete in a variety of mini-tournaments.
Contact: Peter Struijf at amhemasl@hotmail.com. You can also check out the website at <http://www.xs4all.nl/~hennies/> for the latest details and scenario details for each round

OCTOBER ASLOK XXIV

When: 4 – 11 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 21 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

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, Muirieston, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 9LF (25/10/2007)
Bill Finlayson, 19 Taymouth Road, Polmont, Falkirk, Stirlingshire, FK2 0PF (16/06/2001)
Sam Prior, Flat 4, 264 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5RL (03/09/2008)
Andrew Kassian, Flat 14/2, 20 Petershill Court, Glasgow, G21 4QA (01/01/1996)
Ellis Simpson, 4 Langtree Avenue, Whitecraig, Glasgow, G46 7LW (20/04/1999)
Oliver Gray, 117 Upper Dalgairn, Cupar, Fife, KY15 4JQ (04/02/2009)
Garry Marshall, 24 Allardice Crescent, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY2 5TY (21/05/2001)
Pete Phillips, 9 Pier Rd, Kilchoan, Argyll, PH36 4LJ (02/09/2008)
Jonathan Williamson, Da Croft, Bridge End, Burra, Shetland Islands, ZE2 9LE (01/05/1998)

Wales

Andrew Whinnett, 6 Aquilla Court, Conway Road, Cardiff, CF11 9PA (03/09/2008)
Paul Jones, 9 Cwm Nofydd, Rhiwbina, Cardiff, CF14 6JX (22/11/2002)
Martin Castrey, 1, Thomas Cottages, The Highway, Hawarden, Flintshire, CH5 3DY (03/09/2008)
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 VFTT web site at www.vftt.co.uk/aslers.asp - contact me if you need your user name and password to do so.

THE TRENCHES

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@alltel.net. Check out the web site at www.aslok.org for the latest details.

INTENSIVE FIRE 2009

When: 22 – 25 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 Phillips, 9 Pier Road, Kilchoan, Acharacle, Argyll, Scotland, PH36 4LJ. Phone (01972) 510 350 (evenings only) or email if@vftt.co.uk. For up to date information check out the UK *ASL* tournament web site at www.asltourneys.co.uk.

NOVEMBER Grenadier 09

When: 5 – 8 November.
Where: "Gästehaus Heimbach", Schulstraße 6, Hergarten. Hergarten is a little town in the German part of the Eifel. It is 10 Km to Zülpich 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 €40 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, Hagebüttenweg 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.

2010 MARCH HEROES 2010

When: 11 – 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 Phillips, 9 Pier Road, Kilchoan, Acharacle, Argyll, Scotland, PH36 4LJ. Phone (01972) 510 350 (evenings only) or email heroes@vftt.co.uk. For up to date information check out the UK *ASL* tournament web site at www.asltourneys.co.uk.

TURNING THE TIDE AND AP5

Continued from page 27

to push it to win. Seems good to me so far.

So there it is. Both these packs are good and I'd not be without either.

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INTENSIVE FIRE 2009

22 – 25 OCTOBER 2009



INTENSIVE FIRE is the UK's longest running tournament dedicated to the play of Advanced Squad Leader. 2009 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.