



VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

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COVER: A painting to commemorate the Nachang Uprising of 1st August 1927, the first major Kuomintang-Communist Engagement of the Chinese Civil War. The day was later regarded as the anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army.

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES is the quad-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.

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Back issue are now out of print but can be downloaded for free from:
<http://www.vftt.co.uk/vfttpdfs.asp>

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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>

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PREP FIRE

Hello and welcome to the latest late issue of *VFTT* – maybe I should scrap deadlines, then I'd never be late again :-)

And that's about all I've got to say, so until next issue, roll Low and Prosper.

Pete Phillipps



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

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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 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.

INCOMING

RISING SUN RISING SLOWLY

Rising Sun, the long-awaited PTO reprint was placed on pre-order by MMP in early March, reaching its target soon after. Printing and proofing is expected to take a month or two due to the number of components the module includes, so it is unlikely to begin shipping until the end of July at the earliest.

Rising Sun combines the original *ASL* modules *Code of Bushido* and *Gung Ho!* into one package, and includes the entire Japanese, Chinese, and United States Marine Corps orders of battle; a 2nd edition of Chapter G, which covers the rules needed to play *ASL* in the PTO and incorporates all the current errata; and an updated Chapter H for the Japanese and Chinese vehicles and ordnance and for landing craft. Also included are 32 updated scenarios with errata

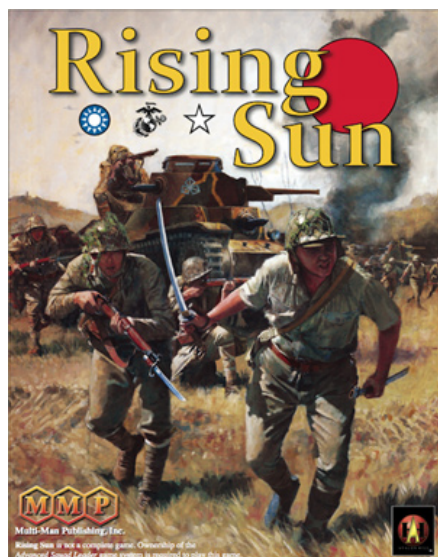
incorporated, combining the original *Code of Bushido* and *Gung Ho!* scenarios with 16 out-of-print PTO scenarios that originally appeared in the pages of *The General*, the *ASL Annual*, and the *ASL Journal*. The package includes seven 8"×22" geomorphic mapboards (boards 34-39 and 47) and dozens of overlays, all updated to match the latest style of boards. As a final bonus, the Gavutu-Tanambogo campaign game, 'Sand and Blood', from the *ASL Annual '93b*, is included, complete with new 17"×22" Gavutu-Tanambogo map, and Chapter Z pages.

Owners of the original modules who do not plan on buying *Rising Sun* may wish to pick up *ASL Journal 10*, which includes the errata to bring the original Chapter G rules up to 2nd Edition standards.

Rising Sun is currently available for pre-order from MMP for \$123.00 plus shipping; when printed it will retail for \$164.00 plus shipping.

A four issue subscription starting with issue 36 is \$15.00 (\$18.00 outside the USA if you wish to receive a paper copy of issue 36 rather than a PDF version). A 'Digital The WORKS' order containing PDFs of all prior issues plus a subscription starting with issue 36) is \$60.00. Individual PDF back issues are available for \$3.00 each, except for issues 2-8, 10, 13, and 16-19 which have had their material which was reprinted in *Out of the Bunker* replaced and are only £2.00 each. Issue 1 is available for free upon request, by emailing them at aslbunker@aol.com. You can pay by PayPal to PinkFloydFan1954@aol.com or by cheques made payable to Vic Provost and sent to Dispatches from the Bunker, P.O. Box 2024, Hinsdale MA 01235.

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PAPER BUNKER ENDS

Dispatches from the Bunker 36, the final print edition, is now shipping, as the newsletter moves to electronic (PDF) distribution from issue 37.

'Assyrian Ambush', the second scenario in the 'Battle for Iraq' series, is an all armour vs all infantry tournament-sized scenario, while 'The Police Station' sees the Japanese 38th Division try to capture a police station near a key road junction on Hong Kong Island. 'Hunting Gray Wolves' sees a company of NKVD 6-2-8s with armour support battling a Ukrainian Insurgent Army unit known as the Gray Wolves partisans from board 34. The final scenario, 'Defending the Twin Villages', sees the US 2nd Infantry Division defending the approaches to Rocherath-Krinkelt from Kampfgruppe Muller of the 12th SS Hitler Jugend during the Battle of the Bulge.



This spectacular birthday cake was made for Neil Brunger's 60th birthday back in March.



Plundering Denmark!

The Scandinavian Open 2012

Toby Pilling

I'd last attended the Scandinavian Open about three years ago, when upon victory I'd declared my intention to retire from European competitive play for the foreseeable future. My reason was that I'd discovered the Albany tournament and, to be blunt, the appeal of all other competitions faded in comparison. It was ironic therefore that my reason for returning to the fray in Copenhagen was meeting up with Michael Hastrup-Leth and Bo Siemsen (the organisers and hosts of the ASO) in, of all places, Albany. My praise for that championship had persuaded them to make the trip themselves and, alongside playing some fantastic games, they were picking up tips for their own tournament and recruiting competitors.

I must admit that I was hesitant at first, but when they told me they were hopeful of attracting JR Tracy and possibly Paul Sidhu, I promised them that if they could attract such top US players, then I would myself attend. Alas, as it turned out that pair could not make the trip, but having begun preparations and made the mental affirmation, I found myself agreeing to compete regardless. Certainly they had made some changes to the tournament to improve it - five scenarios to choose from each round and ditching the default IIFT - but the main addition was the introduction of a mystery round. This would be a choice of three scenarios yet to be published (but ready for publication), one each from some of the best designers around.

Anyway, Bo was good enough to offer to put me up at his apartment for the weekend, so my ticket was booked...

Friday

The first couple of rounds in seeded tournaments tend to be short. Of course, they are always potential banana skins to slip up on, but usually provide me with fairly straightforward wins. So it proved in this case, as I gained victories against Henrik Sannerrsson and Derek Ward. In the latter game, as the German defender in 'Messenger Boys', I did have a bit of a wobble with an under-par defensive set up, but redeemed myself with some good play which stalled Derek's British attack. At the end of the day I felt exhausted after an early flight and gaming all day.

Saturday

Round 3 - 'Margeret Mixer' (J155) vs Mattias Bergwall

Another change at Copenhagen this

year was the introduction of flexibility in the pairing system, to avoid match-ups between players who were regular opponents.

Though I don't think it affected me, it was good to play someone new and Mattias proved a most skilful opponent. We both bid A1 and Mattias won the dice off, so I got the Germans with an extra squad.

It proved an extremely enjoyable game, tense but good natured. An extra SSR had been included which prevented the sleazy tactic of pinning the 'surprise' PzIV with a half-squad in it's hex, to the scenarios undoubted benefit. This enabled my own tank to take out a squad and two Shermans when it came back from the dead, before getting blasted itself.

Basically, Mattias' attack rolled up my left flank, slowly but surely, though at some cost. I suppose it is true that this scenario often comes down to an Alamo moment, with everyone trying to hold the last building, but the fun to be had is in the build up to that. Also, the PzIV resurrection as well as the command and control movement restriction on the bulk of the US infantry, provide unusual elements that add excitement and replay value.

Mattias as I say was an extremely capable player and organised a good attack, but I was able to hold him off at the end and secure the win.

Round 4 - 'Broken Wings' vs Martin Svard

The surprise round! Michael and Bo called all the players together to give a briefing on the scenarios on offer, which was a good idea but each had variable victory conditions. Although each was as yet unpublished, I soon discovered that I'd helped playtest one - 'African Brothers' by my friend Peter Struijf, against the designer himself - so I decided to ditch that one in the selection phase to make things fair. Martin Svard, my opponent this round, was a previous winner of the ASO himself, so would be no push-over.

We'd actually played before, though Martin's recollection of the occasion was far better than mine. Anyway, we ended up choosing a scenario called 'Broken Wings', designed by Pete Shelling. It appealed to me because of the 1944 timing and eastern front location, as well as the aspect of trashy Germans defending against Russian hordes until SS reinforcements can bail them out.

Now, as everyone knows, I usually like to prepare for tournaments in advance by getting a feel for the scenarios and an inkling of their balance through play. That way, I can make educated bids for sides and avoid the dogs. Martin and I studied the

boards and scenario card and made our bids: I bid G3, while Martin went R0. Doh!

Anyway, what a great game it turned out to be. My Luftwaffe Field Division fought like veritable demons to keep the Soviet tide at bay! One of my squads in a fortified building location shrugged off massive IFT shots, burning one KV in its location (and hence protecting itself with the resulting smoke) and immobilising another that had bulldozed a breach in the wall. They were eventually overwhelmed but by then it was too late - the SS effectively turned up when it was all over, simply ensuring that Martin felt he could not break into my backfield to achieve the alternative victory condition as he hadn't taken both key buildings by the end of turn four. It was an epic game, immensely satisfying against a top class player - and I hadn't been able to prepare at all! Will such a fact put an end to the snide comments about 'Prepping Pilling'? I suspect not. I care not.

Sunday

'The Gin Drinkers Line' (DB99) vs Alan Smee

It was good to cross swords with Alan again. We'd last played in Melbourne in 2001, when he beat me in the first round under the infamous 'chess clock' restrictions. Alan manfully admitted that he felt bad about that and wanted to apologise for the pressure he thought he'd put me under. I explained that no apology was necessary, as the pressure had been wholly self-inflicted, my game falling apart spectacularly as the chess clock dominated all my thinking. It was nice of him to proffer one though.

To be honest, I remember Alan being a pretty handy player anyway and he'd obviously proved himself extremely capable by dispatching Melvin Falk in the previous round - no mean feat. Our mutual first choice was 'The Gin Drinkers Line' - a scenario that many seemed to feel was hugely pro-Japanese. However, we obviously felt otherwise as I bid B0 and he J0 - I had what I thought was a good British set up and plan to follow.

Alan's initial dispositions didn't look too threatening to me and I felt during his first couple of turns I was able to parry his advances quite well. When his reinforcements came on on turn 3 though, his attack gathered momentum. Both of us were getting tired and under pressure were making mistakes, but that's a tournament final for you. On the final turn I thought

Continued on page 15, column 3



Double One 2013



Friday June 28th to Sunday June 30th

The London ASL tournament "Double One" is set for the weekend of June 28th to 30th, returning to the regular venue, Writtle College, and with continued support from our main sponsor, Leisure Games - www.leisuregames.com.

Double One's college venue offers excellent value for money bed and breakfast accommodation, large gaming rooms, open for extended gaming times across the whole weekend, and is located close to Chelmsford, Essex, with easy access to London via a 40 minute main rail link, the M25, and Stansted international airport.

The weekend

The tournament starts on the Thursday evening with a meal off campus. After the positive feedback from 2012, we will be returning to the local Indian/Chinese restaurant about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile walk from the college, which does a superb buffet deal.

The gaming room opens at 8.30am on Friday 28th June. We will be running several one day minis (consisting of 4 participants, straight knock out) but players might like to consider tackling one of those big monster scenarios that you never get chance to play in a morning or afternoon.

On Saturday morning, players will have the option to continue open gaming or enter the main tournament. Participants that want to take part in the latter will be entered approximately according to their ASL ladder rating.

Players will be organised into groups of 4, and will play each other on a round robin basis. Round 1 commences at 9.00am, round 2 by 2.30pm, and round 3 on Sunday morning at 9.00am. Details of the tournament scenarios will be released in published on the website in early 2013.

The venue

The tournament's venue will be the Writtle Room, Writtle College, Lordships Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3RR - www.writtle.ac.uk. Room opening times are 8.30am - midnight Friday, 8am-midnight Saturday, and 8am-3.00pm Sunday (prize giving circa 2.30pm)

The venue is less than 2 miles outside Chelmsford and is easily accessible:

- By car - the college is less than 15 miles from both junction 28 of the M25 and junction 7 of the M11.
- By train - Chelmsford station has a regular direct service on the London Liverpool Street line. Free pick ups and travel between the station and college can be arranged with the organisers
- By plane - London Stansted airport is less than 30 minutes from the venue, and for those flying into Stansted, free pick ups and transportation can again be arranged with the organisers.

Participants intending to stay overnight should book their B&B accommodation directly with the college (£30.00 plus VAT per person per night). Contact the organisers for a booking form and T&Cs. Further information can be obtained by contacting the college (phone +44 (0) 1245 424200 ext 25645)

The college has a licensed bar which will be open during the weekend. Sandwiches and snacks will also be available. Writtle village is a very short walk from the college, with a varied selection of pubs, restaurants and a mid-sized supermarket.

Attendance fees

The attendance fee for the weekend is £15.00. Payment can be made by either Paypal or cheque.

For further details, please either visit the tournament's website at www.doubleone-online.net or contact the organisers as follows:

Derek Cox, 44 Pines Road, Chelmsford, Essex. CM1 2DL. United Kingdom.

derek@doubleone-online.net

You can also keep up to date with developments by joining the London ASL Yahoo Group - <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/LASL>

We look forward to welcoming you to Double One in 2013!

The Retainer

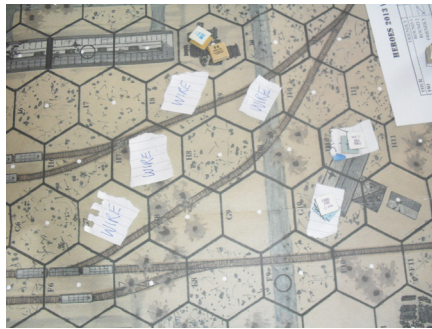
Despite the number in attendance being similar to previous years, HEROES 2013 only saw 16 players involved in the tournament itself, with a large number of players making the most of a chance to play either campaigns or monster scenarios for the weekend. As a result, there was a winner in the tournament after the fourth round on Saturday afternoon. Despite being scheduled to run until midnight, both the final (between Craig Benn and Mark Blackmore) and the game for the booby prize (between Ray Porter and Simon Staniforth) were over before 8pm, so an impromptu prize ceremony was held on Saturday evening instead on the normal Sunday afternoon.

Craig's win over Mark's SS in 'BFP90 Early Morning Action' makes him only the third person to retain the trophy (Toby Pilling won it four years in a row from 1998–2001 when it was BERSERK!, as well as three years in a row from 2004-2006 when it became HEROES, while Tim Bunce won HEROES in 2007 and 2008). With Toby having come out of retirement and planning to attend in 2014, it will be interesting to see if Craig can match Toby's hat-trick, or if Toby will defeat the young upstart.

At the other end of the field, Ray Porter managed to lose against Simon Staniforth in a

playing of the same scenario to go 0-4 for the tournament. Ray needed to ensure a Russian 458 squad was not in Good Order in a building to win, and advanced an 8-1 leader and three SS 658 squads in for close combat. Unfortunately for him he'd also moved a Panther into the hex in the MPh.... Simon rolled a 2 for the Ambush dr, while Ray rolled a 4, which because of the vehicle meant Simon won the Ambush and slipped out into the other hex of the building to win!

Ian Pollard came closest to filling in his bingo card, crossing off 7 of the 12 events on the card, and took home a copy of the *March Madness 2012 Double Blind* scenario pack



graciously donated by the Kansas City Irregular ASL Club.

Away from the tournament, Pete Phillipps, Richard Dagnall, and Ian Pollard played the 'Tangled at Tsangkou' campaign that can be found elsewhere in this issue of *VFTT*. Beside them on the pool table, Martin Vicca, Steve Cook, Gareth Evans, and Frazer Greenshields played the latest CG from Lone Canuck Publishing, *Ozereky Breakout*. For Frazer this was a bit of a case of being thrown in at the deep end, as he was only returning to *ASL* after a long hiatus, and this was also his first time at a tournament! Despite that, he really enjoyed himself and hopes to make it to INTENSIVE FIRE, and return to HEROES next year.

HEROES 2014 will be over the weekend of 6–9 March (which doesn't clash with Mother's Day unlike this year!). And for the optimists among you, the provisional dates for 2015 and 2016 are 5–8 March and 10–13 March respectively, the latter a week later to avoid clashing with Mother's Day!

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TOP: adding a whole new meaning to improved defenses!

ABOVE LEFT: The tournament final between Craig Benn (left) and Mark Blackmore.

ABOVE RIGHT: The action in Ozereky Bay underway.

BELOW: Two groups of players decided to play 'U43 The Roer Bridgehead' on Saturday afternoon.





TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Here are the individual win/loss records for the tournament

POS.	PLAYER	P	W	L	RND	CRUS
1	Craig Benn	4	4	0	0	3262.5
2	Mark Blackmore	4	3	1	4	3306.7
3	Bill Sherliker	4	3	1	2	3168.3
4	Sam Prior	4	3	1	2	3006.7
5	Martin Mayers	4	3	1	1	3256.7
6	Trevor Edwards	4	2	2	3	3020.0
7	Michael Davies	4	2	2	3	2592.5
8	Paul Legg	4	2	2	2	2935.0
9	William Binns	4	2	2	2	2625.0
10	Hakan Isaksson	4	2	2	1	2970.0
11	Gerard Burton	4	2	2	1	2630.0
12	David Blackwood	4	1	3	1	3055.0
13	Nigel Blair	4	1	3	1	2395.0
14	Simon Staniforth	4	1	3	1	2375.0
15	Nick Ranson	4	1	3	1	2375.0
16	Ray Porter	4	0	4	1	No Wins

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

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



PLAYER RESULTS

Here are the individual win/loss records.

PLAYER	P	W	L
Craig Benn	7	7	0
William Binns	4	2	2
Mark Blackmore	8	5	3
David Blackwood	8	3	5
Nigel Blair	7	2	5
Gerard Burton	6	4	2
Paul Case	2	1	1
Richard Dagnall	1	0	1
Michael Davies	7	4	3
Trevor Edwards	6	3	3
Brian Hooper	4	3	1
Hakan Isaksson	8	3	5
Paul Legg	5	3	2
Martin Mayers	5	4	1
Pete Phillipps	5	1	4
Ian Pollard	1	0	1
Ray Porter	6	1	5
Sam Prior	4	3	1
David Ramsey	2	1	1
Nick Ranson	5	1	4
Bill Sherliker	4	3	1
Simon Staniforth	6	3	3
Chris Walton	4	1	3
Miles Wichahn	1	0	1

TOP: the gaming room on Saturday evening.

ABOVE: Martin Mayers (right) is shocked by Ray Porter's move!

BELOW LEFT: Martin Barker finds himself out of his Depth (B21.122) while reading the rulebook!

BELOW RIGHT: Martin Mayers models the latest in rules reminder player aids during his game with Ray.



THE SCENARIOS

Here is the table of Scenario Win/Loss records:

SCENARIO	ALLIED	AXIS
2 Mila 18	0	1
A60 Totsugeki!	1	4
AP74 Batty-P	1	2
BFP-52 Kachin Rangers	1	0
BFP-90 Early Morning Action	3	6
BFP-91 Death Roamed Freely	1	0
DB092 The Streets of Kharkov	2	2
FT75 Unexpected Fire	1	3
HOB LM 1 Recruiting Tactics	0	1
HOB LM 4 Taking a Different Route	0	1
HOB LM 7 More Than He Could Chew	1	0
J150 The Sangshak Redemption	0	1
J152 Messenger Boys	0	3
J155 It's Hardly Fair	0	1
J157 Rage Against the Machine	2	1
J94 Kempf at Melikhovo	1	0
O4 Ain't Running Away	1	1
OA18 Parry and Strike	1	5
SF4 A Few Brave Men	0	1
SP11 Pomeranian Tigers	1	1
SP212 Merchant of Venice	2	1
T9 Nissemi-Biscari Highway	1	0
U47 A Small Town In Germany	0	1
WO11 Across The Isssel	0	1
WO9 Sting 'em At Zingem	1	0
TOTALS	58	37

TANK TERROR!

How the T-34 Shocked the Germans in 1941

Paul Weir (with tables by Pete Phillipps)

The three important things about any armoured vehicle are firepower, protection and mobility and I will split my analysis into those 3 categories first.

Firepower

The first thing about tanks is that most of their targets are not other AFV but infantry, bunkers and various forms of artillery. Most WW2 tank loadouts had from 25% to 50% of various types of AP with most in the range of 30% to 40%. So a large shell with good HE content is a decided advantage. Until mid war 75 mm was regarded as good as you get. Various nations tanks that had a "support" role (either supporting infantry or other tanks) like the Pz IV, StuG III, Char B1 bis, T-28 or BT-7A all settled on a 75 or 76 mm gun.

The F-34 76.2 mm of the T-34 m1941 also had good armour penetration, with penetration of from about 70 mm to 80 mm of vertical armour (depending upon the testing criteria). That was better than anything out at the time on any tank/SPG. Only a very few tanks like the Matilda II had a chance of resisting the T-34. The German desired "standard" for armour was 30 mm rising to 60 mm by mid-late '41. Only with the Tiger I did the Germans have something which could resist the F-34.

The gun was easy to manufacture, reliable and accurate. So far so good. The sights were not as good as the German optics, but not too bad. The straight through telescope meant the gunner had to move his head up and down with the gun unlike many other nations' cranked telescopes. Early periscopes used polished steel plates rather than prisms and protective vision blocks usually were greenish, cloudy and gave distorted images. In sum, vision out of the pre-cupola T-34 (late m1943 and

T-34/85 had cupolas) was abysmal. Add to that the internal small size of turret meant a turret crew of two. Like most other nations two man turrets, the commander was also the gunner (the British had the commander doubling as loader in tanks like the Valentine II), combining the two most attention intensive jobs onto the shoulders of one man is not the best idea. The RST penalties are justified. As a side note the Pz 35(t), Pz 38(t), their Axis equivalents (LT 35, LT 38) and most likely the various M3 and M5 US light tanks should also really be RST.

Overall then, good weapons, but disadvantages in general observation, acquiring targets and less than optimal turret crew arrangements. The gun was very useful against soft targets and could shred any German vehicle of that time with ease, if it could see it!

Protection

When it was first produced it had armour that was 50% thicker than the then standard (30 mm) and severely sloped to boot with the same basis all round. Only the Matilda II, Char B1 bis and KV series had thicker armour. The designer's fetish with sloped armour had one downside in that it resulted in a cramped turret and to a lesser extent a tight hull. The turret hatch was heavy which did not assist observation or bailing out. The hull armour was always good quality but some of the cast turrets were a bit on the soft side. Soviet armour had a tendency to shatter when overmatched and sometimes spall when not. However this was a fairly common problem and only British and some US armour did not produce large number of fragments when penetrated. Italian and Japanese armours were notorious for this and even the Czech armour was fairly brittle.

The 1941 standard German tank gun, the 5 cm KwK 38 L/42 (50) had little chance against a T-34 except firing APCR (PzGr 40) against the side or rear. The earlier 3.7 cm KwK 36 L/45 (about 1/3 of Pz III) plus the equivalent Czech guns (37/37L) and the 7.5 cm KwK 37 L/24 (75*) had almost no chance firing AP and little chance with APCR. Only the 7.5 cm KwK 37 L/24 firing HEAT had much of a chance and then hitting a tank with a low velocity gun was another matter. Only with the 5 cm KwK 39 L/60 (50L) did the Germans have a decent chance. The 7.5 cm KwK 40 L/43 or L/48 (75L) were the definite answer to the T-34. So until the very end of 1941 the T-34 was fairly safe from all except heavy FlaK and fairly heavy artillery.

Mobility

The T-34 had a good and reasonably reliable engine, though early air filters were not up to scratch, which produced great power and torque. The suspension was good for high speed, though the ride could get bumpy and was not as good as torsion bar, but still good. The big problem was the early 4+1 speed transmission, which could be a stone bitch to change gear and wore out quickly. The mid war 5+1 transmission cured that main failing. The use of diesel gave an unprecedented range and a slight reduction of ignition risk, though putting fuel cells in the crew compartment undid that little advantage.

Once the transmission design was changed there was enough power in the system to see the T-34 to the end of the war despite up-gunning and the attendant weight gain. Though not as reliable as the Sherman series, the later versions were as good as nearly all else and there is a limit to the gain from better reliability when the lifetime of a tank in combat is measured in weeks if not



days or hours.

However the m1941 was, ... ahem ... difficult, to drive and keep driving but faster than any other tank and deserves both its 17 MP and Soviet vehicle note M.

Other

The lack of radios (only in company and usually but not always platoon commander's tanks) was another severe drawback, which made the bad visibility even more of a disadvantage. The early radios were also quite temperamental and were replaced in production by the end of 1942/early 1943 with radios based upon aircraft radios which were much more reliable and easier to use. The platoon movement penalties are a reflection of the lack of radios.

Many of the faults of the T-34 were recognised quite early on, well before Barbarossa started. It was intended to replace the T-34 with the T-34M which was a fairly drastic redesign, almost a completely new tank. The T-34M was supposed to have the Christie suspension replaced by smaller wheeled torsion bar suspension, a new transmission, the side armour would have been somewhat less sloped to give greater hull volume and the turret replaced by a new bigger 3 man version with commander's cupola. More radios would have been likely as well. The end result in *ASL* terms would have been like the T-34 m1943 but with a T rather than RST turret. However Barbarossa kicked off before production switched.

What Is To Be Done? The T-34 in *ASL*

Barring 88s or other really nasty things a T-34 is proof against most weapons in 1941 from the front and to a lesser degree from the side and rear. The bad turret arrangements, poor vision and lack of radios mean RST and platoon movement which can make it difficult to hit anything or go anywhere fast except in the most open



Tank	MA	TK#	H/T	H/T	H/T	T-34 M40 12TK vs Front H/T
			11/8	6/6	5/5	
PzIIF	20L	6	-/-	0/0	1/1	9/9
Pz38(t)A	37L	9	-/1	3/3	4/4	9/9
PzIIIF	37L	9	-/1	3/3	4/4	9/10
PzIVD	75*	10	-/2	4/4	5/5	9/9
StuGIIB	75*	10	-/2	4/4	5/5	4/4
PzJgl	47L	11	0/3	5/5	6/6	11/11
PzIIIG	50	11	0/3	5/5	6/6	9/8
Pz38(t)E	37L	9	-/1	3/3	4/4	8/8
PzIIIH	50	11	0/3	5/5	6/6	6/8
PzIVE	75*	10	-/3	4/4	5/5	6/8
FlaK 18 o.36	88L	20	9/12	14/14	15/15	n/a

TABLE 1: 1941 TK# Comparisons

Tank	MA	TK#	H/T	H/T	H/T	T-34 M41 13TK vs Front H/T
			11/8	6/6	5/5	
PzIIIJ	50L	13	2/5	7/7	8/8	7/7
Marder II	75L	17	7/10	11/11	12/12	10/11
PzIVF2	75L	17	7/10	11/11	12/12	7/7
PzIVH	75L	17	7/10	11/11	12/12	5/7
Tiger	88L	20	9/12	14/14	15/15	-/2

TABLE 2: 1942 TK# Comparisons

terrain (if you can get the damn thing to start in the first place). The platoon movement requirement may mean that the slower German vehicles have more mobility!

T-34s should travel in packs or pairs at a minimum. You need something behind you to reduce the opportunities for the more flexible Germans to do a dance of death around you. Even a well worn T-26 can watch your back and your T-34 provides a +1 cover to fire against the T-26. The penalty of dragging around a slow T-26 may well be offset by the protection it could provide. Keep your butt buddy around. Two or three T-34 in a group is even better. If things look bad and you think you could be swarmed then don't forget you have the fastest vehicle around and run!

As with every AFV use friendly infantry to protect yourself from CC. Try and keep the range open. You have enough armour that nothing less than a 50L should worry you too much so an

occasional overrun (12 FP column) might be a tasty menu item. On the defence keep it behind infantry and AT guns. Use reverse movement where necessary.

You have the equivalent of an early war Infantry Tank on steroids but with C&C problems. You will have fewer shots (0 ROF) and fewer of those will hit (+1 BU) but when they do, they are more effective, so buy in bulk! In '41 you are mainly vulnerable from the side or rear so have something, anything watching your back, buy in bulk! Infantry is often the greatest threat so keep your own with you or very close if possible, buy in bulk!

Overall in 1941 you have a very powerful but often clumsy weapon and it need to have others (infantry, tanks or guns) with it to compensate for its weakness.

As a tactical weapon, in 1941 it was a great tank but from the end of 1942 was only good to adequate. However as an operational and strategic weapon it must be judged superb. It was easy to produce in great numbers, was after 1942 quite reliable (if not up to Sherman standards), was at least reasonably well armed, had long legs due to the use of diesel fuel and was simple if often tiring to use. The basic hull and suspension design was used, with only some detail changes and production simplifications, in production for 10 years. No other WW2 tank can make that claim. It was not the best tank but it was a war winning tank.





共产党 国民党

The Chinese Civil War in ASL and SASL

Nick Smith



One of the victors in the bitter war against Japan, and furthermore the one who faced the greatest number of Japanese troops... supported variously with Soviet, British and US aid during the war, and armed and bankrolled by the USA after the war.... outnumbering her foes initially by three to one, and yet finally abandoning a collapsing cause on the mainland for the relative safety (at least with US warships present) of Formosa.... such is the twist of fate that the Republic of China suffered under Chiang Kai-Shek in the years 1945-49.

To date no official ASL scenario deals with the conflict between Chiang's GMD and Mao Tse-tung's Red Chinese, and only one (as far as I am aware) third party scenario represents the Red Chinese at all (in a post-war conflict with US Marines). Perhaps there is a perception that this was a low-key conflict, or simply that most ASL players are not interested in China per se, still less if not fighting the Japanese. But far from being a low-key conflict, the Chinese civil war dragged on for four years and shaped much of the post-WWII landscape, involving thousands of combatants on both sides. It is also true that the Red Chinese were not the Japanese: in some ways they were more difficult opponents, both in real life and, as we shall see, on the board.

BACKGROUND

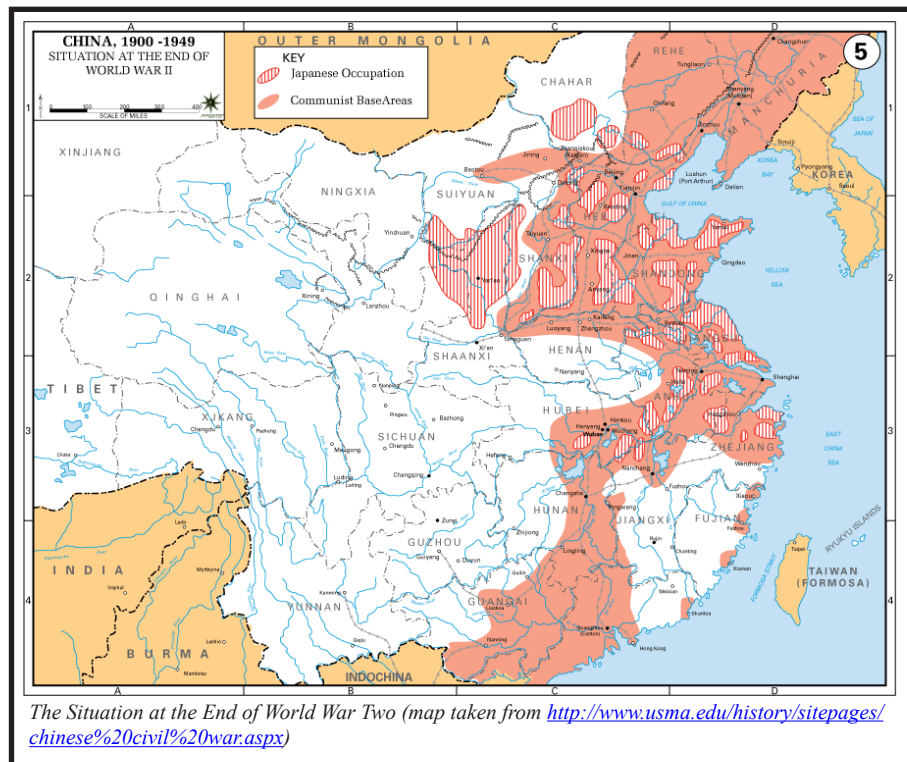
To understand the Chinese Civil War it is worth having a brief look at Chinese history in the first few decades of the twentieth century. The Manchu or Qing dynasty was overthrown in 1911, the last empress dowager Cixi being the last effective ruler. Sun Yat-Sen founded the Republic in 1912 but was forced to yield power to Yuan Shikai, an ambitious and established political figure who soon showed his true colours by proclaiming himself emperor in 1915. This aroused fierce opposition, and in 1916 Yuan abdicated and died later in the year. This left a power vacuum in China, the so-called warlord era (1916-28), in which central government was weak at a critical time of Japanese incursion. Sun died in 1925 and Chiang Kai-Shek, superintendent of the Whampoa Military Academy, assumed leadership of the Guomindang (GMD). The Communist Party of China was already established but at this stage still under Moscow's tutelage, and was instructed to cooperate with the GMD. Indeed, the GMD received aid from

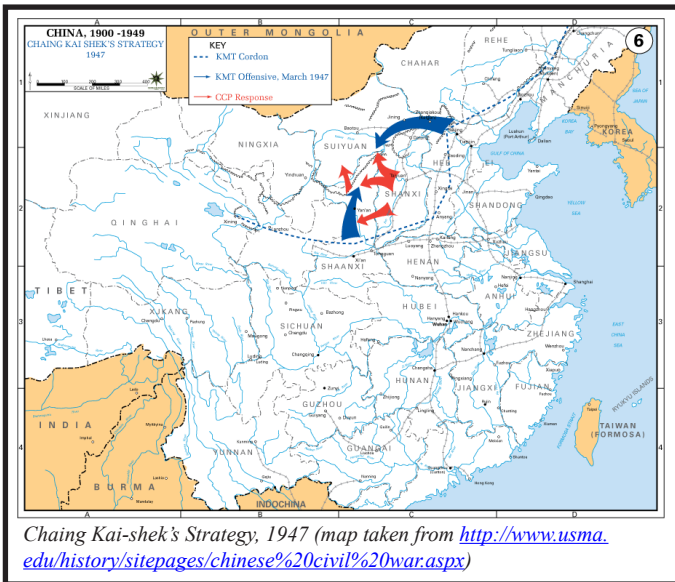
the USSR after being turned down by the Western powers, the latter no doubt being a disappointment to Sun before he died as he had been inspired by several Western values, in contrast to Chiang who remained deeply wedded to Chinese culture. The GMD's power base was in the south of China, but Chiang, supplied by the Soviets, undertook the Northern Expedition and conquered the southern half of the country in nine months. Unfortunately, despite Chinese communist cooperation and assistance in Shanghai, Chiang showed his true colours by the Shanghai massacre in 1927 which sought to eliminate the Communists in this and other areas. This led to the GMD itself splitting between left and right wings and the Nationalist government dismissing him. Chiang simply waited until the government in Wuhan collapsed in 1928 and became the de facto ruler of the republic. It is noteworthy that during this period the party's philosophy changed from one of nationalism, democracy and a form of socialism (or social welfare) to basically a one-party state, a combination of Soviet training and Chiang's own views.

Beijing was taken in 1927, but Nanjing became the new capital of China as a way of dissociation with the old Qing dynasty. In the same year GMD troops also stormed foreign concessions belonging to the Western powers. The GMD subsequently

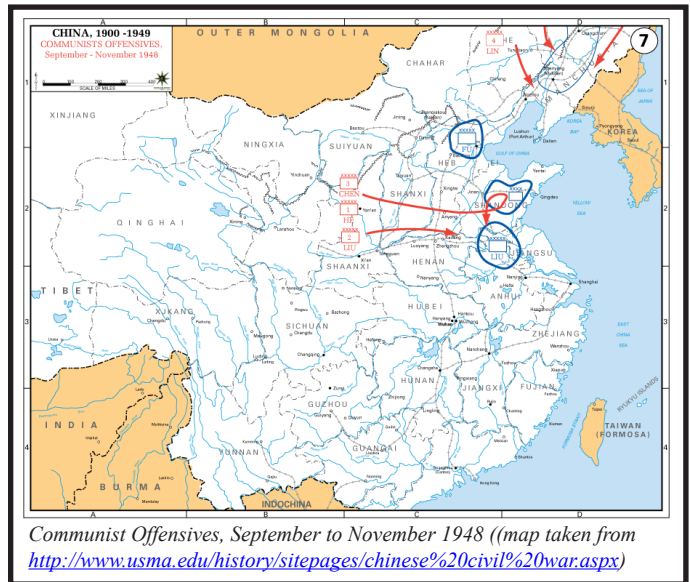
demanded renegotiation of unequal treaties. More serious for Chiang however was the belligerent attitude of the Japanese, who in 1931 used the "Mukden incident" as a pretext for invading Manchuria in northern China. Chinese resistance was initially weak, and during this period Chiang seemed more interested in destroying the Communists than fighting the Japanese – a situation that was in fact to be repeated up to 1945. The "Long March" of the Chinese Communists in 1934 to escape Chiang's net cost them 90% of their force along the 10,000km route.

The "Nanjing decade" (1928-1937) was not all bad and saw social progress as well as help from German military advisers (reflected in ASL by a number of German Guns and AFVs, and the training and equipping of the 4-4-7 squads). However Chiang remained a heavy-handed ruler against opposition while at the same time being unable to wholly control the entire nation, having to deal with the Japanese, Tibet, occasional Soviet incursions and warlords. The biggest menace was certainly the Japanese, who began pushing further into China in 1936. In December 1936 Chiang was actually kidnapped by the warlord Zhang Xueliang to force the former into forming a united front with the communists against the Japanese. Although Chiang relented (Zhang paying the price





Chiang Kai-shek's Strategy, 1947 (map taken from <http://www.usma.edu/history/sitepages/chinese%20civil%20war.aspx>)



Communist Offensives, September to November 1948 ((map taken from <http://www.usma.edu/history/sitepages/chinese%20civil%20war.aspx>)

of 50 years of house arrest!), this “Second United Front” was short-lived, reaching its high point in 1938 at the Battle of Wuhan. Thereafter cooperation began to break down, with major clashes between the two sides in 1940-41. After that both sides spent much of the Sino-Japanese war waiting for the defeat of Japan and husbanding resources for the coming showdown.

CIVIL WAR

Upon the surrender of Japan in August 1945, Chiang appeared to have gained what he sought: a place at the victors’ table, defeat of a tough enemy and lavish support by the Western powers, particularly the USA. Yet this apparent triumph concealed a house of cards.

Firstly, the GMD government was arguably less popular after the war than beforehand. Rampant corruption and ineptitude parallel with the party’s authoritarianism and apparent failure to expel the Japanese during the war had caused a build-up of resentment and a willingness by the populace to consider Mao’s propaganda. Secondly, US support was by no means unqualified. The Americans had tried to bring the two sides together during the Pacific War to create a more effective anti-Japanese front, and some Americans were already



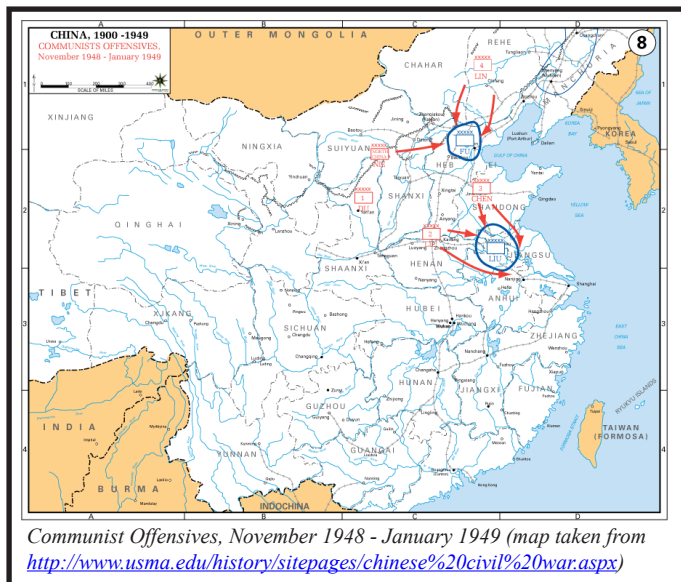
aware that corruption was creaming off aid, weaponry and equipment. Thirdly, the Republic was faced by the cost of rehabilitating the devastated country and its economy, not helped by the fact that the Soviets dismantled and removed over half the industrial plant in Manchuria when they withdrew. At the same time the Russian presence there allowed the Chinese Communists to help themselves to captured Japanese equipment, including AFVs.

The US mediated a truce in January 1946 but this lasted only days, the truce being negotiated on 13 January but the GMD seizing Mukden two days later. The Communists were equally busy grabbing up territory. In March the Soviets delayed withdrawal from Manchuria so as to allow the Chinese Communists to move in, a move that was countered by the US airlifting GMD troops to the area. In April the PLA captured Changchun and Harbin in the northeast, but in May the GMD defeated the Communists south of the Sungari River and took back Changchun. It was in this month that the Red Chinese renamed themselves the People’s Liberation Army. General Marshall managed to negotiate a brief truce in June, but full-scale civil war finally broke out in July and Chiang launched the first full-scale offensive against the PLA.

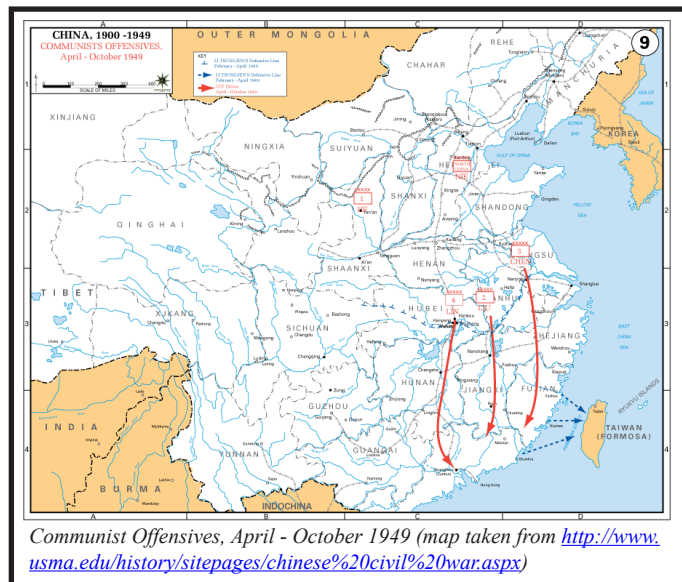
The US, faced with the choice of either full-scale intervention or allowing the war to continue, decided to withdraw in early 1947 and provide economic loans and weapons only rather than become embroiled. At the time it may have seemed that the GMD could still win, but in fact Chiang’s whole strategy (which flew against the advice of US and some of his best generals) was faulty in that he tried to control all of China at once and used his best forces to garrison cities rather than as mobile troops. For their part the PLA decided to control the countryside and defeat the GMD in detail, isolating GMD-controlled centres.

During January to March 1947 the PLA under Lin Piao launched a series of attacks along the Sungari River. The GMD retook the old Communist capital of Yanen in March, but this symbolic victory was offset by Lin Piao’s forces driving the GMD a further 150 miles back in May with heavy losses. Even worse for Chiang, in December the PLA managed to cut the rail links into Mukden, thus isolating Manchuria. This situation led in March 1948 to the GMD commander Liao Yao-hsiang withdrawing troops from other Manchurian cities into Changchun and Mukden, these two cities becoming the only GMD holdings in Manchuria. The tempo of the war now picked up in September, with Lin Piao threatening the supply railhead at Chinchow (Jinzhou), and the PLA attacking Tsinan (Jinan) on the Yellow River further south. The siege of the latter lasted less than a month and culminated in the surrender of 80,000 GMD troops, many of whom changed sides. Gen Wei in Mukden was ordered to relieve Chinchow, but delayed until October. He ordered Gen Cheng to break out of Changchun and withdraw on Chinchow, but this order was never acknowledged. Instead the GMD 93rd Division defected and Chinchow fell, Gen Liao Yao-Hsiang being killed in the fighting. Further defections from the Changchun





Communist Offensives, November 1948 - January 1949 (map taken from <http://www.usma.edu/history/sitepages/chinese%20civil%20war.aspx>)



Communist Offensives, April - October 1949 (map taken from <http://www.usma.edu/history/sitepages/chinese%20civil%20war.aspx>)

garrison, encouraged by the PLA, led to the fall of Changchun to the PLA after a five-month siege from May to October that still causes controversy in China today, owing to the heavy civilian losses to starvation. Ominously for Chiang, both the New 7th Army and the 60th Army surrendered, the GMD General Ceng Zesheng having defected to the PLA with most of his senior officers who were given posts in the PLA on Mao Tse-Tung's personal orders. A further calamity befell the GMD when Mukden was captured by the PLA, who acquired a large amount of material in the process. Collectively these battles became known as the Liaoshen Campaign (12 September to 2 November 1948). The defeat of the GMD can be attributed to factors including inferiority in manpower by nearly two to one and their isolation in three separate cities, the local railway being controlled by the PLA which necessitated airlift of supplies. The campaign of six weeks was a disaster for the GMD, partly due to factional disharmony, disobedience and even changing sides, partially at least due to the dissatisfaction with Chiang's constant interference in Nationalist battle plans. By the end of the campaign, Chiang had lost nearly half a million men, including some elite units, and all of Manchuria. This was the campaign which finally tilted the war in favour of the PLA, who now outnumbered the GMD.

The Huaihai Campaign (November 1948 to January 1949) decisively hastened the end of Chiang's rule and the GMD on the mainland. After the fall of Tsinan (Jinan), Chiang deployed five US-trained and -armed armies to protect Hsuechow (Xuzhou) province because of its vital railway links, but his plans were compromised from the start by the passing of intelligence by high-level moles within the GMD command. In a tragedy of epic proportions, GMD troops were betrayed by personal feuding, betrayal and inept

leadership, suffering a final total of half a million casualties (many of the prisoners subsequently joining the PLA). This forced Chiang into an impossible position and led to his resignation, not least because the USA saw him as a lost cause and refused any further assistance to him. Changes in the political leadership were by now moot, however, as the PLA controlled north and central China and were now in the ascendant.

In February and March 1949 the PLA advanced south to the Yangtze River. Chiang, still party leader, was already preparing Formosa (Taiwan) for a final redoubt even while the GMD moved the capital to Canton and attempted negotiations with Mao. These broke down in April and the PLA took Nanking the same month, and Shanghai in May. Thereafter most of the rest of mainland China and Inner Mongolia swiftly turned Red. Mao proclaimed the People's Republic in Beijing in October 1949 and the PLA took Canton the same month. In December Chiang and the rest of the GMD withdrew to Formosa (Taiwan), effectively ending the conflict on the mainland.

RECREATING THE CIVIL WAR IN ASL AND SASL



GMD CHINESE

Taking the GMD Chinese first, the GMD had by the beginning of the Civil War received a lot of US assistance and materiel, including training. Therefore it is not unreasonable to start off with an X/Y-Force type company. For purposes H1.8-.83 the 11/43-45 line of the SW Allotment Chart should be used, using the numbers to the right of the / for an X/Y-type company to reflect the arming of the GMD by the US. The chart for the Chinese infantry companies can be found

in S18.510, together with appropriate rules for their use, including the prohibition of Dare-Death squads for an X/Y Force rifle company. Unless otherwise stated, section G18 rules apply, eg the GMD player may not purchase a Motorised OB.

The ELR of the GMD fluctuates over time. To begin with Chiang's elite units, such as the New First Army under Sun Li-Jen, were confident of victory. Thus such a company starts in 1945 with an ELR of 3 (2 for the standard Chinese on the 7/44-45 column, increased by 1 for having an Elite majority squad type). By 1949, after a year of major defeats, morale had sunk through a combination of forced passivity and defeat, so decrease the basic ELR to 1 to reflect the losing position of the GMD, disillusion with Chiang and the constant trickle of deserters to the PLA.

For selecting company leaders, there is a +1 drm applicable in 1948-49. This reflects the losses of the GMD but also the politicisation of the army.

For Guns and AFV, use the standard charts with the latest columns. It seems that none of the obsolete vehicles were withdrawn, such as the parlous state of AFVs in the Republic of China. Interestingly, Wikipedia articles suggest that the GMD also received M18 Hellcats during WWII and used them. However information remains scanty on this. The mainstay of GMD armour in the Civil War was the M3 Stuart.

For the Red Chinese ENEMY, use the Partisan Generation Tables. However, table P6 does not include PTO armour. I am not certain at which point the Red Chinese/PLA started using AFV, but they certainly used captured Japanese AFV and by late in the war were even using M3 Stuarts themselves, either captured or operated by former GMD troops. Tanks were certainly used by both

sides in the Huaihai campaign. However, Russian T-34/85s were not supplied to the Red Chinese until after the Civil War.

I therefore suggest the following rules for Red Chinese Partisan ENEMY AFV. Red Chinese may not use any AFVs prior to 3/46. In the period 3/46-6/48, make a dr: 1-3, the AFV is rolled for on the Japanese 1944-45 column of table J6; 4-6, the AFV is rolled for instead on the 1939-1945 GMD column of table C6. From 7/48 onwards a dr of 6 means that the AFV is rolled for on the X/Y force column on C6 instead. There is a +1 drm to this dr in 1949. The rule on Activation of a Chinese-ENEMY S? when an AFV is rolled for (S18.510) should also apply to Red Chinese armour.

Mention should be made of the Muslim cavalry of northwest China of the "Ma clique" who loyally served Chiang. These had a reputation as good fighters and capable of matching the Communist units. If you want to use these, use the Chinese infantry company structure but with 4-4-7 GMD squads as the basis and enough Horses to mount all MMC and SMC. ELR is equivalent to that of other Elite GMD units.

Chinese (renamed the People's Liberation Army in 1946) were acting as a regular force in accordance with Mao's theories of guerilla warfare, not as Partisans. Therefore a Communist Chinese company can be used in an SASL campaign. I tentatively suggest the following:

The core of the company is 2 x Ldr and 12 x 3-3-7. A subsequent dr is made and divided by 2 (FRU) for the number of 3-3-7s which can be replaced by 5-2-7s. However there is a +1 to this dr in 1948, and +2 in 1949 (this reflects the increasing amount of US-produced firepower that fell into PLA hands as a result of GMD defeats or desertions).

Make a dr on each column of the following table for SW:

dr	LMG	Lt Mtr	MMG	ATR	BAZ
0	0	0			
1	0	0			
2	1	1			
3	1	1			
4	2	2			
5	2	2	1		
6	3	3	1	1	1
7	3	3	1	1	1

There is a -1 dr for 1946 scenarios, +1 for 1948 scenarios and +2 for 1949 scenarios. If Lt Mtrs are received, perform the standard SW procedure for selecting the type, bearing in mind that Red Chinese

have the option of selecting 50mm(j) over the type rolled up. If an MMG is received, make a dr on the Machine Gun Type Table in S17.85.

Don't forget that Red Chinese are considered Partisans but are also entitled to use Commissars as if 10/42 Russians (G18.31), Human Wave (G18.61) and Dare-Death squads (G18.6).

For AFVs, use the rules listed in the GMD section (above) for selection. For Guns, use table P5. Note also the rule on activation of AFV from Chinese-ENEMY S? in S18.510.

OTHER VARIABLES

Environmental Conditions and Weather also need to be considered for this theatre. The climate of China is varied, ranging from tropical to sub-arctic. The south of China could probably best be represented by using the PTO Weather and EC charts for Yunnan and Hainan Island and the Arid EC and Weather charts for the other southern provinces. For central provinces, use the Temperate charts.

In the north of the country (where much if not most of the fighting took place), Manchuria (here understood to be modern-day Northeast China) is definitely a cold weather zone, with temperatures



Red Chinese

It should be realised that certainly by the end of the Chinese Civil War, the Red

Tangled at Tsangkou

Enclosed in this issue of *VFTT* is a *Platoon Leader 1.0* CG set in the Chinese Civil War. This was sent to me by its designer, Steve Swann, back in 1998, and has been sat in my files ever since. Steve later developed a scenario based on the battle, which was published in *From the Cellar 5* as 'FT159 Tangled at Tsangkou'.

The photo shows the early stages of the CG being played at HEROES 2013, between me and Richard Dagnall (Communist Chinese), and Ian Pollard (Nationalists). We found it to be a fun experience, though possibly favouring the Nationalists (Ian quit after CG Day 2 as he felt he could not win). We also encountered a number of problems with the *Platoon Leader* rules, some of which were fixed in the second edition. None of us possess the third edition so we were not able to consider updating it to the latest rules.



Peiping was the name used by the Republic of China for the city now known as Beijing.



PLUNDERING DENMARK!

Continued from page 4

I'd covered all my bases but Alan finished extremely strongly with a great run through various residual firepower shots of a single elite squad, that flipped but didn't pin, into the hut location he required to make us count up VPs. I thought he'd won at that point, but a careful tally revealed a tie - as he needed to get more than me, I managed to squeak a win by the narrowest of margins. What a final! A great, memorable game and Alan played a blinder.

Though I prefer the old tournament location at the military museum in the scenic surrounding of the centre of Copenhagen, I understand that it is simply not possible to hold it there for the foreseeable future. The school it is in now was alright - more spacious, certainly.

I think the changes that have been made do improve the tournament and am particularly in favour of the mystery round - particularly if the utilization of top designers can be maintained.

One suggestion I would make is to align the bidding process more with that at Albany - where one only makes ABS bids if it is established that both players favour the same side. If they want different sides, just let them get on with it, I say.

Apart from that, it was good fun and I'd like to thank Michael and Bo for their hospitality and my opponents for some great gaming experiences.

So there you have it. I've committed now to returning to Copenhagen on a bi-annual basis, just as I do Albany. The only unfortunate consequence was that I decided I wouldn't be able to make a planned return to HEROES in Blackpool this year, after an even longer absence, as I just felt the two week gap between them was too short. Next year I'll do so, again bi-annually.

It's good to be back!



PLA troops and Chinese Type 97 Chi-Ha tanks advance into Shenyang.

in its northernmost province reaching subarctic lows, but with high humid heat in the summer. For this reason scenarios set in this area should use the Temperate EC and Weather charts but with the possibility of Extreme Winter in the winter months (when *Hakkaa Päälle* is released a weather chart for conditions in Finland and northern Russia may more accurately reflect those of Manchuria). As Chinese troops were usually fitted with quilted uniforms, Extreme Winter should not have the same sort of effect as it does on sides such as early-war Russians or Axis.

No Quarter should not be in effect during any scenario unless invoked, as both sides were anxious to gain converts, if only for manpower purposes. Nor should either side be allowed to conduct a Massacre.

CONCLUSION

The flight to Taiwan in 1949 did not spell the end of the GMD. Chiang continued to rule the Republic of China, and sad to say appeared to have learnt little from his mistakes, instituting one-party rule and the so-called "White Terror" that lasted until 1987. He did however encourage economic development that laid the keystone for Taiwan to become one of the "Asian tigers". Chiang himself died in 1975, aged 87. Gradual democratisation of the island state took place from the late 70s onwards. Today the biggest issue facing the Republic of China is its relationship with the mainland and how one defines "China".

Mao, flushed with success, went on to oversee a number of military campaigns, some successful, such as the invasion of Tibet and the short conflict with India, others inconclusive, such as the Chinese intervention in the Korean War or the border conflicts with the Soviet Union in the late 60s. Unfortunately his increasingly erratic

policies, mainly on industrialisation, rule of the Communist party and especially the Cultural Revolution, inflicted the same sort of damage on China as his predecessor had done. Ironically Mao died the year after Chiang, aged 87. As in Taiwan, the late leader's successors initiated reforms that were to make the country an economic power in the world.

One writer has pointed out that following Mao's success in the Civil War, not only his (winning) tactics were studied, but also the (losing) tactics of the GMD, which despite many apparent advantages was worsted in the field.

In the meantime, if you're tired of late-war heavy metal battles on the Eastern Front or 6 FP squads battling it out in Normandy, take on the challenge of trying to win a campaign with lower FP units, few AFV, little ordnance and falling ELR. Who knows? Faced with having to fall back on the basics of *ASL* infantry combat as applied to an all-Asian setting, you may not change history, but you may truly become a "squad leader".

Ω

Ω



The victorious PLA enters Peking.

5cm Granatwerfer 36

Michael Davies

In this article I'll cover the early history and development of the German 5cm Mortar, outline the organization of an early war German rifle platoon and mortar section, and provide some details of historical use.

Design and Manufacturing

Rheinmetall AG (Rheinmetall-Borsig from 1936) started design work on a 5cm Granatwerfer in 1934, and began production in 1936. The basic idea was to produce a light mortar capable of throwing small grenade-sized bombs out to a reasonable distance. The weapon was factory fitted with a telescopic sight until 1938, but at the relatively short engagement ranges it was not essential. Rheinmetall produced an extremely well engineered weapon, with relatively sophisticated sights, traverse and elevation controls. The Germany Army adopted the weapon, purchasing approximately 6,000 before the war and another 24,000 between 1940 and 1943 when production ceased as the Reich rationalised armaments production.

Platoon Organisation

Early War German platoons (or Zug), were composed of forty nine men organised as four ten man rifle/LMG squads, a small six man Headquarters section, and three man light mortar section. Each squad largely relied on a three man LMG team for firepower, with the rest of the men adding very little unless fighting at close range when grenades and SMGs could be used. The HQ section could fight but generally was used to control the other squads, coordinating combat and communicating with higher command or support units. The light mortar section of three men manned a 5cm Mortar, formed part of the Headquarters unit. It comprised a section

commander, loader and gunner.

Platoons would rarely be at full strength, but tended to operate with reduced strength squads and sections instead of reducing the number of squads.

The Table of Organisation for German infantry platoons changed dramatically in October 1943 when the 44 Infantry Division TOE was introduced. This reduced the size of most infantry units but added additional automatic weapons and more 8 cm Mortars. Even before then the number of 5cm Mortars was often reduced to one per company in 1942, and sometimes none, due to shortages of the weapon. Troops weren't deliberately discarding mortars; they just weren't available to be issued.

Mortar Section Organisation

The three man mortar section consisted of a Truppenführer or detachment commander; Mortarman No 1, the layer who aims the weapon; and No 2 who loaded and fired it. The commander directed fire, and also liaised with other platoon units; he identified targets and maintained awareness of the situation around them. No 2 opened ammunition containers and replenished ammunition, No 1 would assist if not laying or aiming the mortar.

The section could operate with just one man though at a reduced rate of fire. Maximum rate of fire is sometimes given as 40 rounds per minute, which is weird as the best claim for a short burst of fire is six rounds in eight seconds, after which fire would slow. The British 2 inch mortar had a rate of fire of 8-12 rounds per minute; the Japanese claimed the knee mortar could fire 25 rounds per minute; the Soviets

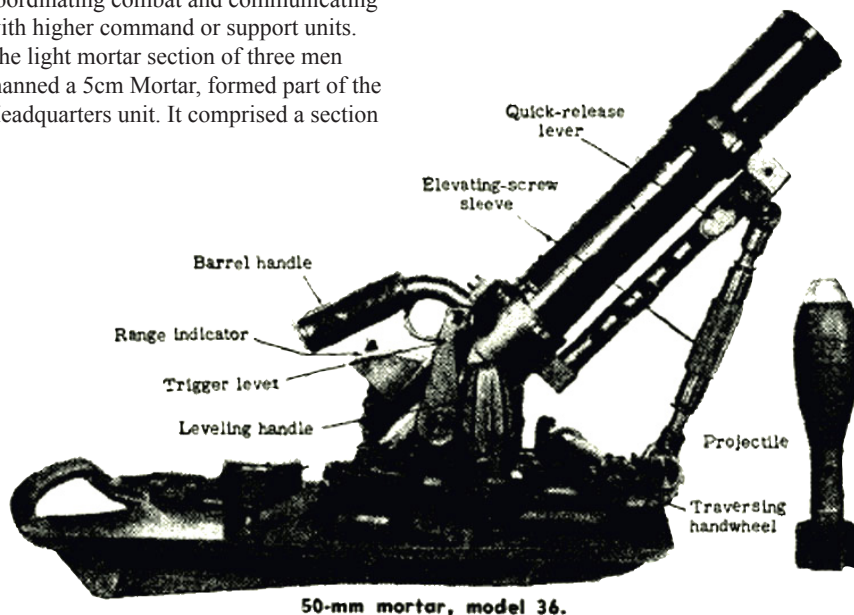
suggested maximum rate of fire for their 50mm mortars was 30 rounds per minute. The limits in all cases would be ammunition availability and the crews' enthusiasm.

Most fire missions would be a short flurry of maybe 3-5 bombs, before observing fire and switching to another target. Very occasionally high rates of fire would be used, for example during an ambush, opposing a beach landing, using up ammunition before being overrun or withdrawing, or during a river crossing.

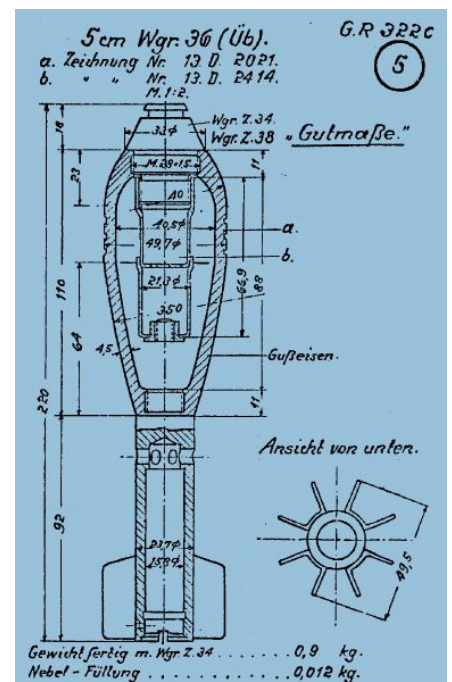
Larger mortars fire by the bomb sliding down the tube to strike a pin, but some smaller mortars like the 5cm are fired by pulling a trigger. On occasions the mortar would misfire. The loader would try the trigger several times then the recommended drill was to wait a minute then unload the round, carefully, and then very carefully throw it away.

Ammunition was carried in ten round ammunition boxes. A team would typically carry five of these into action, or fifty rounds. Rounds were shipped from the factory in thirty round crates, and it's possible in static positions the crates might be used.

The standard HE round was the Werfergranate 36 (grenade thrower), a maroon coloured bomb with a finned tail unit containing a cartridge. The cartridge was trigger fired and looked very much like a long shotgun cartridge filled with a blasting cap and two nitrocellulose powder charges, one a primer, and the other the main charge. The bomb would be launched with a velocity of 246 feet per second. Nitrocellulose is a very energetic explosive



50-mm mortar, model 36.



Gewicht fertig m. Wgr. Z. 34 0,9 kg.
Nebel - Füllung 0,012 kg.

and generates relatively small amounts of smoke. The expanding gas would push the bomb up the barrel. The explosion would generate some smoke, some localised blast effect, and some heat. The crew generally wore helmets and got their heads down when firing.

The bombs fuse was a nose mounted Werfergranatzunder 38 which was fitted with a graze pellet so that it did not arm until it had travelled about sixty yards, depending on the trajectory, but pretty much sixty yards. Then the nose fuse would explode on impact. The bomb weighed about 1.98 pounds; the exploding charge was either 3.5 or 4.5 ounces of TNT. The heavier figure likely includes the explosives in the fuse. The blast would be pretty much the same as one of the larger hand grenades. Most of the damage would be done by fragmentation; the bomb would shatter and send shards of metal flying in all directions. Serious injuries could be caused at 25-30 metres, but occasionally fragments would carry further. Blast damage from the actual explosion could cause serious injury or death, as well as deafness, and in some cases temporary or permanent blindness. Against armour any exposed crew would be vulnerable to blast. A fully enclosed armoured vehicle would probably be safe, except for the odd bomb landing on a vision slit, weapon, or other armour weak spot.

Emplaced Positions

In action the 5cm Mortar team would make use of available cover, often lying down to use small dips in the ground for protection for enemy observation and fire. When time allowed the team would dig in. This might just be a small slit trench, made by piling earth in front of a shallow scrape. If time allowed a deeper weapons pit would be dug. The text book mortar pit was vaguely triangular with a fire step, 2.5 metres wide and 1.45 metres deep. From scratch a crew would need about four hours to dig in, and ideally timber, wicker, or corrugated iron to reinforce the sides, and build a floor. Using explosives was rare but could speed up the work. Crew did make use of bomb craters, shell holes, existing trenches and dips in the ground to save digging work. With time even a standard emplacement would be improved with some overhead cover, sandbags, wire and other obstacles, and communications trenches connecting to other positions, and maybe a field phone line for calls to other sections in the Platoon. The mortar was restricted to firing in its covered arc. The Truppenführer would either be in the pit or nearby directing fire and identifying targets, collecting ammunition or functioning in a command role.

The section would try to conceal their pit using vegetations or netting, but in action muzzle flash and dust would



reveal their location. Crews sometimes wet the ground directly in front of the firing position, or used matting to keep the dust down, even an old carpet would do the trick. Usually flash would reveal the position to an alert enemy. If in a static position for a couple of days, the mortar section would prepare a range table, mapping landmarks onto a sheet including an estimate or measurement of range. The table could vary from a fag packet sketch, to an elaborate water colour panorama of the surrounding terrain. Artistic merit aside the crew would have a credible estimate of range and bearing to likely enemy positions and be able to range on them faster.

Indirect fire positions would sometimes be used, generally with the Truppenführer acting as spotter. 5cm bombs arriving at intervals would disrupt enemy forces. The accuracy of the 5cm Mortar helped, and its short range and relatively low velocity made fall of shot fairly compact. Map shooting wasn't really an option, but a crew would be able to fire over obstacles that blocked line of sight at known or suspected targets.

Small mortars can be fired from rooftops and even rooms. The floor underneath generally needs reinforcing and a clear fire lane is also essential. Arc of fire is limited, offset by protection, concealment and a generally better field of fire.

Smoke Ammunition

Most bombs fired were HE, but there was also a smoke round, Wgr 36Nb FS smoke. This was a standard shell, with the same propellant cartridge and fuses but filled with 0.012 KG (roughly three ounces) of smoke composition. This was likely a low explosive such as Potassium chlorate mixed with Lactose to produce a flash and clouds of smoke. The reaction is exothermic, leaving bomb fragments extremely hot to the touch. The reaction could cause fires

in very dry conditions, but the key word is could.

The smoke round is rarely mentioned in contemporary accounts, just as soldiers tend to refer to mortar fire rather than telling us the calibre of rounds arriving at all too frequent intervals.

Undoubtedly there will have been a practice shell for the 5cm Mortar, but I can't find any references to it, or to coloured smoke or illuminating rounds. The absence of evidence for special ammunition is puzzling as the Third Reich did develop a wide range of grenades for rifles, signal pistols and kampfpistol or battle pistol designed as a grenade projector.

It's debatable how readily available the smoke round was but it did exist.

5cm Mortars in ASL

There have been a few really excellent articles about the use of mortars in ASL so I'll steer clear of tactics, other than to say Roll Low. And I mean roll low on the effects roll rather than the To Hit roll!

Conclusion

The 5cm Granatwerfer was an extremely well designed weapon. It was intended as a platoon support weapon and performed effectively in that role throughout WWII though it became less important as its numbers declined and more 8cm Mortars became available as company and battalion support weapons. Perhaps 12,000 Granatwerfer 36 were available for the 46 day Battle of France in 1940, with in excess of half a million rounds fired. It's doubtful many were used by front line troops much after 1943.

ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL

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

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

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

JUNE DOUBLE ONE 2013

When: 28 – 30 June.

Where: Writtle College, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 3RR. On-site facilities include en-suite and standard bedrooms, free car parking on application, mini market, cash points, a self-service cafeteria and licensed bars. Bedroom rates start at £30.00 for a single room and breakfast.

Fee: £15.00 if paid before 30 April, £20.00 thereafter.

Format: A two day tournament with two rounds on Saturday and one on Sunday offering a choice of scenarios. A number of mini-tournaments are also planned for Friday, and friendly games will also be available.

Contact: For a booking form contact Derek Cox, 44 Pines Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2DL or by email at derek@doubleone-online.net. Check out the web site at <http://www.doubleone-online.net/1.html> for the latest details.

OCTOBER ASLOK XXVII

When: 30 Sept – 7 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. 2012 room rates are to be confirmed but in 2011 they were \$75.00 plus tax. Check the ASLOK web page for the hotel discount code to book on-line.

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

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

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

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

INTENSIVE FIRE 2012

When: 25 – 28 October.

Where: The Travel Rest Hotel, West Hill Road, Bournemouth, England, BH2 5EG. Telephone (01202) 555 889 or fax (01202) 789 567 to arrange accommodation. Single rooms are £46.00 per night, double rooms £36.50 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 <http://www.travelrest.co.uk/Default.aspx?pagename=Bournemouth-Travelrest-hotel>.

Fee: £10.00 if registering with the organisers before 1 October, £15.00 thereafter and 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.

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

NOVEMBER Grenadier 2012

When: 1 – 4 November.

Where: "Gästehaus Heimbach", Schulstraße 6, Hergarten. Hergarten is a little town in the German

part of the Eifel. It is 10 Km to Zulpich and around 40 Km to Cologne. There is a railway station in Heimbach which is the neighbouring town and you can reach it from Cologne by train, which goes every hour. From Heimbach you need to take a taxi to Hergarten which is about 6 Kilometers. The location offers sleeping rooms nearly 60 persons, a huge kitchen (where our Marketenderin Andrea will continue her cooking business for us), a big playing area and an additional separate big room which we will use for eating. Rooms are mostly three and four bed rooms with shower (you will need to bring a sleeping bag or blanket and pillows). Bed and breakfast is €45 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 for up to date information.

2014 FEBRUARY SCANDANAVIAN ASL OPEN

When: 21 – 23 February.

Where: Akademisk Studenterkursus (Academic School of Copenhagen), Titangade 9B, 2200 Copenhagen N, Copenhagen, Denmark. Accommodation is available at the Hotel Jørgensen, which is just a short walk from the tournament venue, from 170 Danish Kroner per night for a dormitory for 6-14 people up to a single room with a shower for 700 Danish Kroner per night. Contact the Hotel Jørgensen, Romersgade 11, 1362 Copenhagen K., Denmark. Telephone +45 33 13 81 86, email hoteljoergensen@mail.dk or visit their website at <http://www.hoteljoergensen.dk>.

Fee: 200 Danish Kroner (about £22.00).

Format: The tournament will be a five round Swiss style affair.

Contact: Michael Hastrup-Leth, Favrholmvanget 15, 3400 Hillerød, Denmark, or email at hastrup@image.dk. For the latest information visit the website at <http://www.asl-so.dk/>.

MARCH HEROES 2014

When: 6 – 9 March.

Where: Colwyn Hotel, 569 New South Promenade, Blackpool, England, FY4 1NG. Tel 01253 341 024. Room rates to be confirmed, in 2013 they were £31.00 for a shared room or £34.00 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 1 March, £15.00 thereafter and on the door (entry is free for those only able to attend for one day). In addition to a discount on the entry fee, players pre-registering will receive a tournament program in February.

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

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

Stewart Thain, 77 Birrell Gardens, Murieston, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 9LF (25 Oct 2007)
Bill Finlayson, 19 Taymouth Road, Polmont, Falkirk, Stirlingshire, FK2 0PF (16 Jun 2001)
Andrew Kassian, Flat 14/2, 20 Petershill Court, Glasgow, G21 4QA (01 Jan 1996)
John McLintock, B25 434 St Georges Rd, Woodside, Glasgow, G3 6JW (30 May 2012)
Ellis Simpson, 4 Langtree Avenue, Whitecraigs, Glasgow, G46 7LW (20 Apr 1999)
Hamish Hughson, 15 Esmond Gardens, Elgin, Moray, IV30 4LB (21 Mar 2010)
Steve Mackintosh, 54 Firthview Drive, Inverness, IV38QE (27 Jan 2013)
Oliver Gray, 117 Upper Dalgairn, Cupar, Fife, KY15 4JQ (04 Feb 2009)
Garry Marshall, 24 Allardice Crescent, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY2 5TY (21 May 2001)
Neil Stevens, 4 Grants Crescent, Paisley, Renfrewshire, PA2 6BD (09 Mar 2012)
Pete Phillipps, 9 Pier Rd, Kilchoan, Argyll, PH36 4LJ (09 Apr 2013)
Jonathan Swilliamson, Da Croft, Bridge End, Burra, Shetland Islands, ZE2 9LE (01 May 1998)

Wales

Andrew Whinnett, 6 Aquilla Court, Conway Road, Cardiff, CF11 9PA (03 Sep 2008)
Paul Jones, 9 Cwm Nofydd, Rhiwbina, Cardiff, CF14 6JX (22 Nov 2002)
Martin Castrey, 1, Thomas Cottages, The Highway, Hawarden, Flintshire, CH5 3DY (03 Sep 2008)
Kev Sutton, 1 Gorphwysfa, Windsor Road, New Broughton, Wrexham, LL11 6SP (25 Feb 1999)
Nick Rijke, Aneddfa, Cellan, Lampeter, Ceredigion, SA48 8HY (06 Sep 2010)
C. Jones, Deer Park Lodge, Stepside, Narbeth, Pembrokeshire, SA67 8JL ()
Emyr Phillips, 2 Cysgod Y Bryn, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 4LR (27 Aug 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/my-account.asp.

LASL

L o n d o n ' s
A d v a n c e d S q u a d
L e a d e r s

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

We usually meet on the second Saturday of each month from 10.30am until 5.30pm. LASL's venue is located in the lower ground floor of Starbucks, 32 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1AA. It's quiet and has space for up to 20 games.

If you want to come along send your name and contact details to brendan@doubleone-online.net to arrange a game and ensure there are no last minute problems.

Ω

INTENSIVE FIRE 2013

24 – 27 OCTOBER 2013



INTENSIVE FIRE is the UK's longest running tournament dedicated to the play of Advanced Squad Leader. 2013 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 has under-gone a major refurbishment following its change of ownership in 2011, and is now known as the Travel Rest. Centrally located in Bournemouth, offers both excellent gaming facilities and reduced accommodation rates (£46 per night for a single room or £36.50 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 <http://www.travelrest.co.uk/Default.aspx?pagename=Bournemouth-Travelrest-hotel>.

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.