



VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

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THE ACTS OF DEFIANCE OF THE CURSED PLATOON - a twisted AAR

CRUSADER LADDER - updated

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COVER: A German flame-thrower team in action.

PREP FIRE

Hello and welcome to the first *VFTT* of 2015.

In March 2015, a dozen copies of the first issue of *VFTT* were posted out to the few UK *ASL*ers I was aware of at the time, mostly from the Opponents Wanted column of *The General* over the two years prior to that. I never expected that 20 years later I'd still be producing *VFTT*!

Back then, things looked bleak for the game. New releases from AH were few and far between, and when they were released were often strewn with errata. Yet now, the game is still growing strong, with strong support from the official producer, support from numerous third party producers, and dozens of tournaments taking place each year around the world.

On the subject of tournaments, INTENSIVE FIRE started the same year as *VFTT* and the 20th one took place a couple of months ago – you can find a brief report in this issue.

Something else celebrating a birthday this year is *ASL* itself. *Beyond Valor* was released at Origins '85, while the *ASLRB* itself was released at the end of 1985.

As I mentioned last issue, I've a couple of scenarios lined up for a future issue that could do with some playtesting – if you're interested in doing so, let me know.

'Til next issue, roll Low and Prosper.

Pete Phillipps



UK STOCKISTS OF THIRD PARTY PRODUCTS

To purchase other third party products such as Critical Hit, Schwerpunkt, Bounding Fire Products, 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 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.

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.

Issue 93 should be out at the beginning of May 2015.

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 should 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/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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INCOMING

FINNS FINISHED

The long awaited Finnish module, *Hakkaa Päälle*, is now available for pre-order and due to be released at Winter Offensive 2015. It contains mapboard 52, four countersheets, 16 scenarios, Chapter H notes for Finnish Vehicles and Guns and Russian Lend-Lease Vehicles and Guns, new rules pages with updates, and four chapter dividers, including a revised National Capabilities Chart with the new Finnish squad types, and the OBA Flowchart. It will retail for \$96.00 (about £70.00).

Due to be released at the same time is *Winter Offensive Bonus #6*, which contains redesigned versions of mapboards 10 and 17 (labelled 10z and 17z) and three scenarios. It will retail for \$12.00 (about £16.00).

Layout for the *Yanks!* reprint is well underway with MMP aiming for a 2016 release. Current plans suggest it will be followed by a reprint of *Hollow Legions*, complete with updated Chapter F rules pages, and the *Soldiers of the Negus* module originally produced by ELR in 1994), and then *Croix de Guerre*.

Also in the pipeline is *Red October*, a companion *HASL* to *Red Barricades*, which focuses on the battles for the factories immediately to the south of the Barrikady. The *RO* map links with the south edge of the *RB* map, and one of the *RO* CG covers the combined battle for both factories. Whether or not *RO* will include

a reprint of the *RB* map is not currently clear.

The Korean War *ASL* module, which will feature rules, maps, scenarios and counters for American, British, Republic of Korea (ROK), French (UN), Chinese People's Volunteer Army (CPVA) and Korean People's Army (KPA) forces, is also making good progress. Dan Dolan is also working on a *HASL* project covering Rommel's 7th Panzer Division crossing of the Meuse in 1940 at Dinant.

BUNKER BASHING

Several scenarios are currently undergoing in-house playtesting for possibly inclusion in *Dispatches from the Bunker #0*, which is scheduled for release in late March or early April.

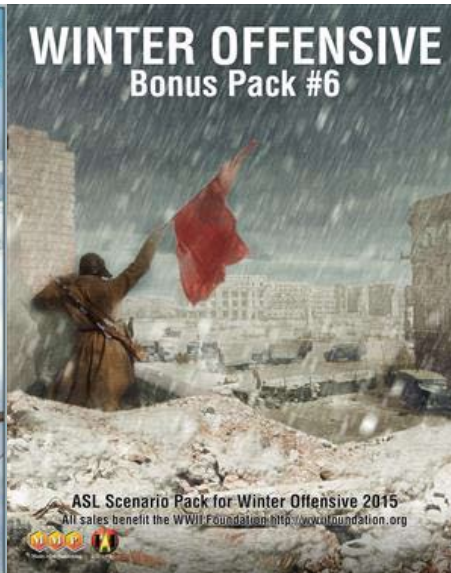
A four issue subscription starting with issue 39 is \$15.00, while a 'Digital The WORKS' order containing PDFs of all prior issues plus a subscription starting with issue 39) is \$60.00. Individual PDF back issues are available for \$3.00 each, except for issues 2-8, 10, 13, and 16-19 which have had 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 aslunker@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.



Above: The new British Gentleman SMC counter.
Below: The birthday cake at Neil Stevens' 50th birthday party in November 2014.



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FOR SALE

ASLRB 1st ed	£20
Beyond Valor	£25
Paratrooper	£15
Yanks!	£50
Partisan!	£15
West of Alamein	£50
Code of Bushido	£50
Gung Ho	£50
Solitaire ASL	£40
Mapboards 1-51	£1 ea

Prices do not include postage.
Collection from London N2 is available.
Contact Lawrence Dimery by email at lawrence001@hotmail.co.uk



INTENSIVE FIRE 2014

20 Years of INTENSIVE FIRE

I doubt anyone who arrived at the Royal Military College of Science in Shrivenham in November 1995 for the first INTENSIVE FIRE tournament would have expected us to still be doing so (albeit in a different venue) 20 years later, yet November 2014 saw the 20th INTENSIVE FIRE tournament take place, in its now familiar surroundings of the Travel Rest hotel in Bournemouth.

Although most of the intervening years have seen the tournament take place at the end of October, following the increasing number of non-gamer guests staying at the hotel at the same time (due to it being the half-term week and us no longer having exclusive use of the hotel since the change of ownership in 2011), it was decided to move the 2014 event back a couple of weeks, in to November. As a result, this year there were fewer guests around, and the majority tended to be older, retired couples. Unfortunately, there were also fewer gamers around, with just 19 people in attendance. And a couple of those weren't even able to stay for the whole weekend :-)

What was also strange, for me at least, was not arriving until late on Wednesday evening. This was due to my move to Edinburgh at the end of August to start a two year Events Management HND course at Edinburgh College – a chance to put my experience of running INTENSIVE FIRE and HEROES for the past 18 years to good use to try and gain employment! As a result I travelled down by train (via London) during the afternoon, arriving at 10pm – this gave me a chance to get two pieces of homework done that were due in the following morning, ably assisted by several beers :- (you'll be glad to know that good marks were gained for both!) On arrival at the hotel I was greeted by half a dozen *ASL*ers who were just returning from the pub next door, where they had been eating, drinking, and watching football! Naturally, a night cap followed in the hotel :-)

THURSDAY

As usual, there were quite a few friendly games taking place throughout

Thursday (though Nigel Blair and Simon Stanisforth had actually managed to get a game in the previous day [the first of 11 throughout the weekend for Nigel!]). Evening also saw the usual visit to the 'Goat and Tricycle' pub where about a dozen of us sampled the fine food (they do a very nice goat curry!) and beers (they do a large range of real ales!).

WAR IN THE PACIFIC

Friday saw eight people take part in the 'War in the Pacific' mini-tournament, which as the name implies had a PTO theme. Martin Mayers beat Craig Benn in the final round (which featured 'J9 A Stiff Fight') to win the trophy.

THE FIRE TEAM TOURNAMENT

Because of the low turnout this year, there were only enough players available to form a single division of four teams, rather than the usual two divisions of four or six



Above left: Martin Snow (left) and Pete Phillipps play 'FT199 Playing Uno' from the new LFT Deluxe Pack. Above right: Marc Hanna (left) and Craig Benn battle over 'DB99 The Gin-Drinkers Line'. Below left: Deluxe Pack designer Dave Ramsey (right) looks on while Gerard Burton reads the rulebook. Below right: Three Amigos! Pete Phillipps, Paul Case, and Ian Morris (minus beer!)



teams each. As a result, each team would end up playing the other three over the weekend.

Saturday morning's theme was 'War in the West', while the afternoon/evening round was 'War in the East'. The tournament ended on Sunday morning with a 'War in Europe' round – any resemblance to the name of SPI wargames is purely coincidental! With it being the 20th INTENSIVE FIRE tournament, all the scenarios selected for each round were drawn from previous years, essentially making them a 'Best of' collection (the same also applied to the choices for the Friday mini.)

There was a clear winner, with Task Force Benn, consisting of team captain Craig Benn, Ian Morris, and Wayne Baumber winning eight of their nine games – only a loss by Wayne against Simon Stanisforth in a game of 'CH41 Test of Nerves' on Sunday morning spoiling their record!

Despite the low turnout, the results of a survey conducted afterwards indicated that there was still enthusiasm for INTENSIVE FIRE to continue, so dates for 2015 have been confirmed. As in 2014, the tournament will take place at the start of November, over the weekend of Thursday 4 - Sunday 8 November.

Up next is HEROES 2015, which takes place over the period Thursday 5 - Sunday 8 March in Blackpool (tho some of use will be there by mid-afternoon on the Wednesday!) – further details can be found in the advert elsewhere in this issue.



Above: Winner of the mini-tournament Martin Mayers.

Top right: the winning Fire Team of Wayne Baumber, Craig Benn, and Ian Morris.



PLAYER RESULTS

Here are the individual win/loss records.

PLAYER	P	W	L
Joe Arthur	5	3	2
Wayne Baumber	3	2	1
Craig Benn	7	5	2
David Blackwood	7	3	4
Nigel Blair	11	4	7
Lee Bray	4	3	1
Gerard Burton	5	3	2
Paul Case	1	0	1
Richard Dagnall	1	0	1
Marc Hanna	4	2	2
Gordon Jupp	4	2	2
Paul Legg	6	2	4
Martin Mayers	9	8	1
Ian Morris	5	3	2
Pete Phillipps	5	3	2
Ian Pollard	6	1	5
David Ramsey	4	1	3
Nick Ranson	3	0	3
Martin Snow	7	4	3
Simon Staniforth	9	4	5

FIRE TEAM PLACINGS

ELITE DIVISION

POS	TEAM & PLAYERS	PTS	OPPO
1st	Task Force Benn Craig Benn(3815) Ian Morris(3120) Wayne Baumber(2720)	24	25435
2nd	Gruppo Mayers Martin Mayers(3390) Joe Arthur(3305) Simon Staniforth(2835)	18	18470
3rd	Battle Group Burton Gerard Burton(3430) Paul Legg(3040) Lee Bray(2990)	12	12115
4th	Gruppo Ramsey David Ramsey (3540) David Blackwood (3115) Nigel Blair (2625)	0	n/a

The **OPPO** value is the total value of the Crusader ladder points of the opponents beaten by that fire team.

As this issue was being finalised it was announced that John Hill, designer of *Squad Leader* and many other wargames, had died of a heart attack.

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THE SCENARIOS

Here are the Scenario Win/Loss records:

SCENARIO	ALLIED	AXIS
77 Le Herisson	4	0
A32 Zon with the Wind	3	1
A70 Wintergewitter	0	1
AP90 Smashing The Hook	1	0
AP95 Operation Kutuzov	1	0
AP96 Food Fight	0	1
AP99 Bare Foot Beating	0	1
BoF7 The Fields Of Black Gold	1	0
CH26 Close Order Driel	1	0
CH41 Test of Nerves	1	3
DB023 Leibstandarte Series #3: Recon	0	1
DB099 The Gin Drinkers Line	1	2
Ff73 Sledgehammers	1	0
FT197 Spoiled Afternoon	0	1
FT198 Full of Fire	0	1
FT199 Playing Uno	1	0
J140 All Down the Line	1	0
J43 3rd RTR in the Rain	2	1
J63 Silesian Interlude	2	0
J9 A Stiff Fight	2	0
RPT4 Transylvania 6-5000	0	1
RPT88 Pape's Incursion	0	1
SP125 Nunshigum	4	1
SP240 Quiet Desperation	1	0
SP36 Desantniki	3	0
SP4 Point 270	1	0
U35 Semper Paratus	0	1
WCW7 Eye of the Tiger	2	2
WO3 Counterattack at Carentan	1	0
TOTALS	53	34



HEROES 2015

ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER TOURNAMENT

5TH - 8TH MARCH (THURSDAY THROUGH SUNDAY) 2015

COLWYN HOTEL, NEW SOUTH PROMENADE, BLACKPOOL, ENGLAND

THE EVENT

Following its success in previous years HEROES continues in 2015 to fill the gap for UK ASL action in the first half of the year. As normal the action starts on Thursday and continues through to Sunday so you can play in an ASL tournament and/or play friendly games (or even try your hand at a campaign game if you can find an opponent). The focus of the weekend will be the main tournament, in which players of like record are paired off to allow us to determine the winners - depending on numbers attending there will be four or five rounds. The first round will start on Friday morning and each round sees players choose from three carefully selected scenarios. Main tournament entrants are to be familiar with the rules through to the first half of Chapter G.

BOOT CAMP

Don't worry if you are a new player (someone who has only ever played five or fewer games against a live opponent), as there are plenty of chances to learn the game with an experienced player nearby to offer advice on rules. There will never be a better time to try your hand at ASL!

Remember, you can also drop in just for part of a day if you can't make it for the full weekend.

THE VENUE

The Colwyn Hotel is familiar to those who have attended in the past and offers plenty of gaming room for the whole weekend, Meals and good beer are also available in the hotel, and numerous alternative food outlets are close by. The hotel is easily accessible from the M55 and the train station is a 5 minute walk away. Bed and breakfast is just £31 per person for a shared room or £34 for a single room.

THE COST

The weekend, whether you enter a tournament or just play games with the people you will meet, is fantastic value at only £15.00, or just £10.00 if you register before the beginning of March 2015.

HEROES 2015 HOTEL BOOKING FORM

To book your room simply fill in this form and send it with a cheque for £10.00 to cover your deposit (payable to COLWYN HOTEL) to Colwyn Hotel, 569 New South Promenade, Blackpool, England, FY4 1NG. You can also telephone them on 01253 341 024 to book your room.

NAME							
ADDRESS							
NIGHTS ROOM REQUIRED FOR (tick each one)							
THURS		FRI		SAT		SUN	
SINGLE ROOM				DOUBLE ROOM			
NAME OF PERSON SHARING WITH							

How to Lose with Double 1s

(A.K.A Pete's Worst Nightmare)

Marc Hanna & Russ Buntun

[Marc] In Spring 2013, I ran into my old friend Russ Buntun at the BITTER ENDER tourney in North Carolina. Amazing! Both of us were rusty old grognards coming out of the dustbin. With the exception of a resurgence in 2009 at the HEROES tourney in England, I've been pretty much languishing in play since 2003. Before that, I had earned ragged laurels as a burned-out publisher of a pre-Internet fanzine, semi-official rules question reviewer for Bob MacNamara at AH and winner/placer in a few national tourneys. During that time, aside from being an excellent and knowledgeable player, Russ had been heavily involved in *ASL* development as a member of MMP prior to his prolonged hiatus from gaming.

After the tournament, I hooked up with Russ on *VASL*. We played a couple of fun scenarios, but we both recognized our dented armour needed some polishing and retrofitting were we to aim for contention among the current era of skillfuls. I suggested Russ pick three short, sweet and balanced scenarios for that purpose. We decided on 'WO3 Counterattack at Carentan'; I'd be the Germans attacking Russ' American "coconuts" (his moniker for cardboard footsloggers). WO3 is a good choice for learning the WA/Bocage rules more thoroughly – it's easy to forget WA and why it can matter in a game.

[Russ] When I saw the BITTER ENDER flyer for 2013, I finally decided to dig out my *ASL* set that had been sitting collecting dust for some 12 years and make the roughly three hour drive over to throw some dice. Glad I did. I had forgotten how much I enjoyed the game. Marc and I immediately started discussing some possible openings for online (*VASL*) play. Our schedules matched up well, and we set aside Fridays for a regular match. 'WO3 Counterattack at Carentan' drew my attention because of its size, subject matter, terrain challenges, and forces involved. I preferred to defend here, mainly because I wanted to try to get back into the swing of managing a delaying action style of defence. I'd like to take credit for calling *ASL* infantry "coconuts", but truth be told, I picked that up from Guy Chaney many years ago and never let it drop.

The Scenario

[Marc] Judging from the online record

ROAR, many readers are familiar with this scenario. The Germans have six player turns to get sufficient troops/AFVs off the enemy map-edge while keeping losses in check. The Americans interdict this effort with paratroops armed with a couple of BAZ and a HIP 57L AT. The German advantages of range and firepower are mitigated by bocage terrain, limited manoeuvre opportunities for armour and the lethality of American anti-tank measures. While Americans cannot HIP BAZ (as has become popular as an SSR), German inexperienced tank crews may become sitting ducks trying to get unbogged after crashing through trees and hedgerows. It looks to be an edgy, action-packed scenario.

American Setup

[Russ] I really like the offsetting strengths and weaknesses of this scenario. As Marc mentioned, this one may appear to

be primarily manoeuvre based, but in reality it is much more of a knife fight. It is also an excellent scenario for "gronking the essence" of the Bocage/WA Rules due to the types of in-hex terrain scattered throughout the bocage. In terms of the big picture of what I wanted to do, I had four things in mind. First, I wanted to utilize the OB provided "?" counters to make my defensive positions appear as nearly identical as possible. The longer I could make Marc play the shell game with my BAZ assets, the better. I didn't expect it would take more than one game turn, but even that would prove useful. Second, I wanted to maintain a defence that was flexible enough to respond to an attack in any of the three main sectors; from my left, right up the gut, or through my right. By default, this would also impede simultaneous attacking pressure on all three. I suspected my right side was a tasty avenue, especially with only the two woods hexes to slow his AFV from easily flanking my force and/or exiting. Third, hex 5415 is a hex

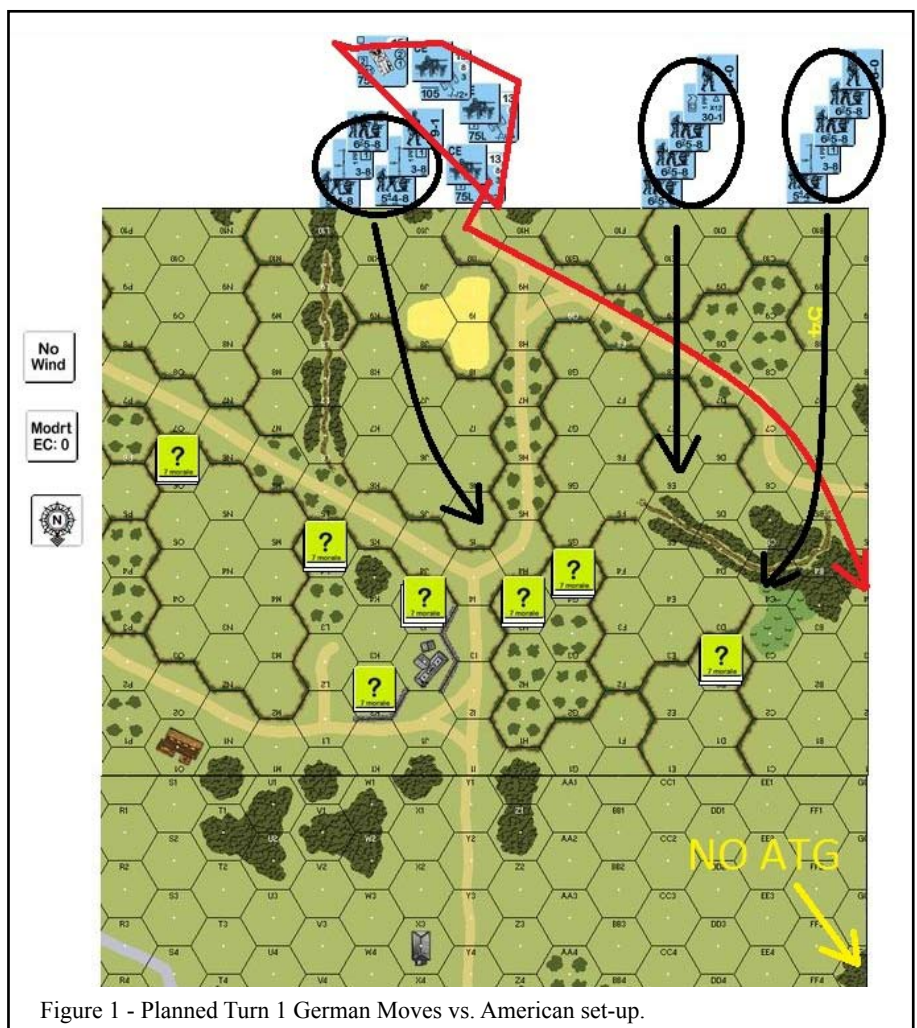


Figure 1 - Planned Turn 1 German Moves vs. American set-up.

that was bound to hold some Germans with automatic weapons. The 54I/63Y hexrow would be key to my defence here. I might need to do a form of reverse slope defence from the area in and around 66Y1/66Y2, or if I felt pressed to cross the road and reinforce one side or the other. To this end, I needed to make sure to be able to flank that position, from the woods in 54L6 to force Marc's hand if he chose to hold that position for too long. Lastly, I needed to keep my ATG HIP for as long as I realistically could. During my preps for setup, my eye was immediately drawn to woods hex 63GG4. Excellent field of fire, to be sure. I was concerned about having to change CA (incurring the penalties for doing so in a woods/building, its position completely isolated from the rest of my force, and no realistic way to possibly change that and, frankly, if MY eye was immediately drawn to it, so would Marc's. I decided to look elsewhere. The orchard hexes in 63AA4/BB4 dealt with many of my concerns with 63GG4. Namely, they had an excellent field of fire, including an emergency shot to my left if needed. They are out of LOS of any push through the 54A/B/C woods mass, and (though admittedly nearly impossible) could be reinforced from a central defensive position in an I decided on 63BB4. In hindsight, 63AA4 is probably the better of the two.

Scenario Play

[Marc] My return-to-the-game style of play has been highly aggressive on

the attack – a “shock and awe” approach designed to create and quickly exploit gaps in the defence. As a result, I tend to hit hard on turn 1 or 2 if scenario conditions allow it, taking more than average risks getting into position. When this works, the defender can be quickly overwhelmed. In a losing situation, the attacker takes too many early casualties and faces long odds to eke out a win. The style heavily depends on rattling the defending player with early shakedown of key positions. It also depends upon hot dice (and my dice have been scalding lately). However, the style is just not up to championship level play because grognards won't get rattled by this sort of razzle-dazzle.

Figure 1 shows the German turn one manoeuvres. Given the American setup, It's a competent approach to blast armour through the woods with a TB on the enemy right, while sending a platoon up the centre to interdict movement across the road, dividing the enemy force. The worst case would be to find the enemy anticipated this move and placed the ATG in 63GG4 (Russ had thought about it, but thankfully didn't do it).

[Russ] As I discussed above, Marc came on forcing my right with AFV and infantry, and supported in the centre. He reconnoitred 63GG4 with fire, and though I may have cramped his style a bit had I placed my Gun there, I more feel it would have been neutralized far too early than the trade-off offered. Even if he didn't

eliminate/break the crew, the SS have more than enough Smoke capability to effectively remove the Gun from action.

A note about where, tactically speaking, my head was, regarding how I wanted this scenario to play out. I feel that for the US player here, the battle between the paras and SS Infantry is the key. His vehicles may be able to lose the game for him, but can't win it without the infantry. If I trade infantry with him, I'll win. I hoped to bag a tank, possibly two, but otherwise, I was focused on getting up close and personal with his troopers.

[Marc] Because of the relatively conservative American setup, all moves succeed (Figure 2), although (as expected), the German AFV becomes bogged in the woods. Due to aggressive CX moves, half the American force must risk fire lanes/OG moves to find an effective interdiction positions on the other side of the central road. Note the position of German LMGs and 9-1 at 54I5 is crucial, but the force should be able to withstand attacks through the bocage while concealed at +2 DRM. Note that mandatory WA applies here; the Germans cannot forfeit WA behind the bocage to remain out of LOS, and in any event they do not want to be.

Also shown in Figure 2 are the Turn 1 MPH and APH adjustments by the Americans and resulting 105mm German AG acquisition of the key hex 54H3, leveraging Russ out of the position. Russ gets a lucky K result on a squad – ouch, first CVP. The thin-skinned OT Marder is held back to avoid sniper attacks, MG penetration, or sure kills by BAZ. The idea is to run this piece off the board, rather than shooting it and risking low ammo gun malfunctions. So far, so good.

[Russ] Marc is very aggressive on his first turn. He moves into position to support and split my defence in two. I bag a HS with K/ result. First blood. I back away from Marc's attack, setting myself to place fire on the open ground hexes in front of him. I flank his firebase in 5315, and back out of the (highly likely) incoming 105mm Smoke. The added benefit being, maybe it will entice Marc to cross the road before his tanks are in good supporting positions.

[Marc] Here is where I made my first major mistake. Instead of maintaining the fire lane potential down the central road from 54I5, I fired smoke from the AG and jumped the covering platoon across the street! A case of being a little too aggressive... not only was the attack a failure and cost me CVP, but all the Americans could dash across the street and begin OG interdiction in the area south of the hedgerows. You can see the carnage of

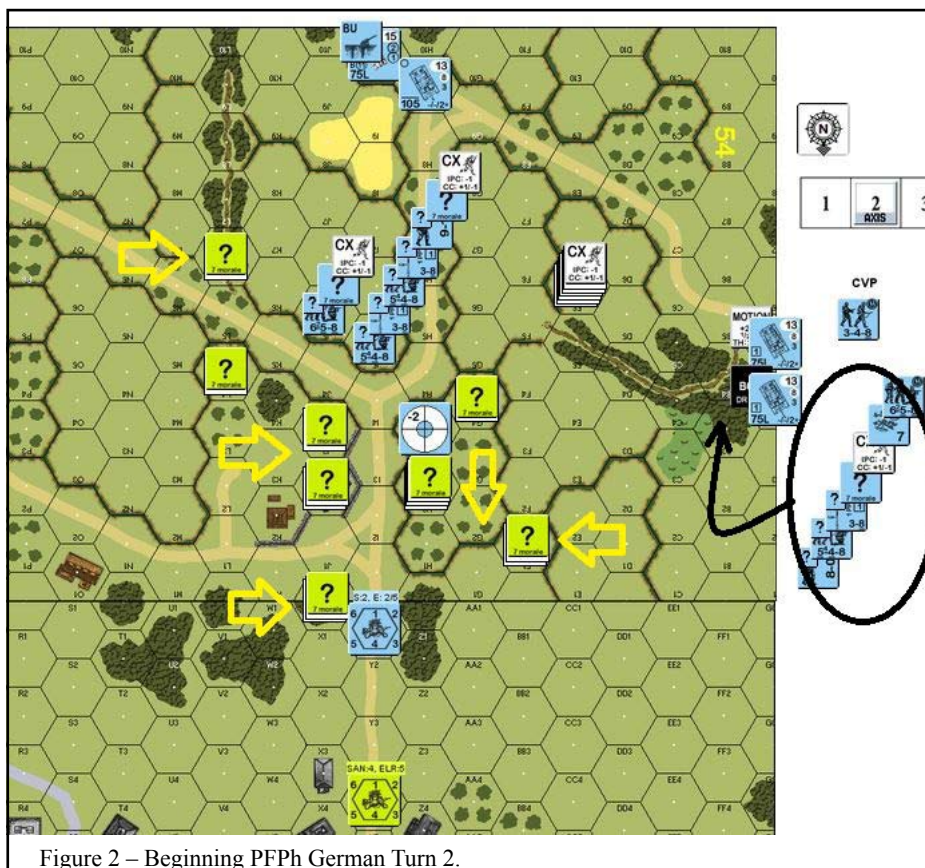


Figure 2 – Beginning PFP German Turn 2.

the attack across the street in figure 3. While many American squads were broken and dispersed, the Germans took heavy CC casualties and lost control of most LMGs. See how the (unbroken) Americans were able to hop across the central road? On a positive note, the tanks have busted through and created a TB along the edge of the woods (dotted line) – but – I have yet to find the ATG (will soon, I bet, via recon by wreck). Keep in mind that we did not keep track of American casualty points, since they have no bearing on the final outcome. Also that lost HS taken is not an assault engineer – minor bookkeeping mistake.

[Russ] Good news! The bait and flank pressure worked! Bad news. The bait and flank pressure worked and now there is a fairly powerful SS force squarely astride my defensive positions. Marc used the word “carnage” to describe the resulting couple of player turns. Indeed. That said, however, I feel like I am keeping to how I wanted the battle to go when we started. I think he sees what I am up to. I sit on my Gun for another turn. I expect that will not be the case much longer.

[Marc] The situation gets more drastic for the German after their move exposes tanks and losing a squad as a prisoner. Figure 3 shows the situation after American turn 3. The attacker has done well here to move forward the German infantry to threaten the newly discovered ATG. The latter has taken out one German AFV. Combined with the heavy infantry casualties resulting from aggressive exposure, the Germans cannot even lose 2 CVP – of course assuming the Americans retain the prisoners. Early exit doesn’t help; the VC apply at game end. Somehow the Germans need to take out the ATG and get off the map without additional losses. One German HS hangs on in Melee, but he is looking juicy for an American capture attempt. The good news is that the German firepower has busted up the American line and the BAZ are out of the picture.

[Russ] A lot happened on this turn. A lot of my force breaks and is forced to give ground. I bag a tank, and offer a new thorn in Marc’s side with my Gun and manage to get some more CVP through CC (including

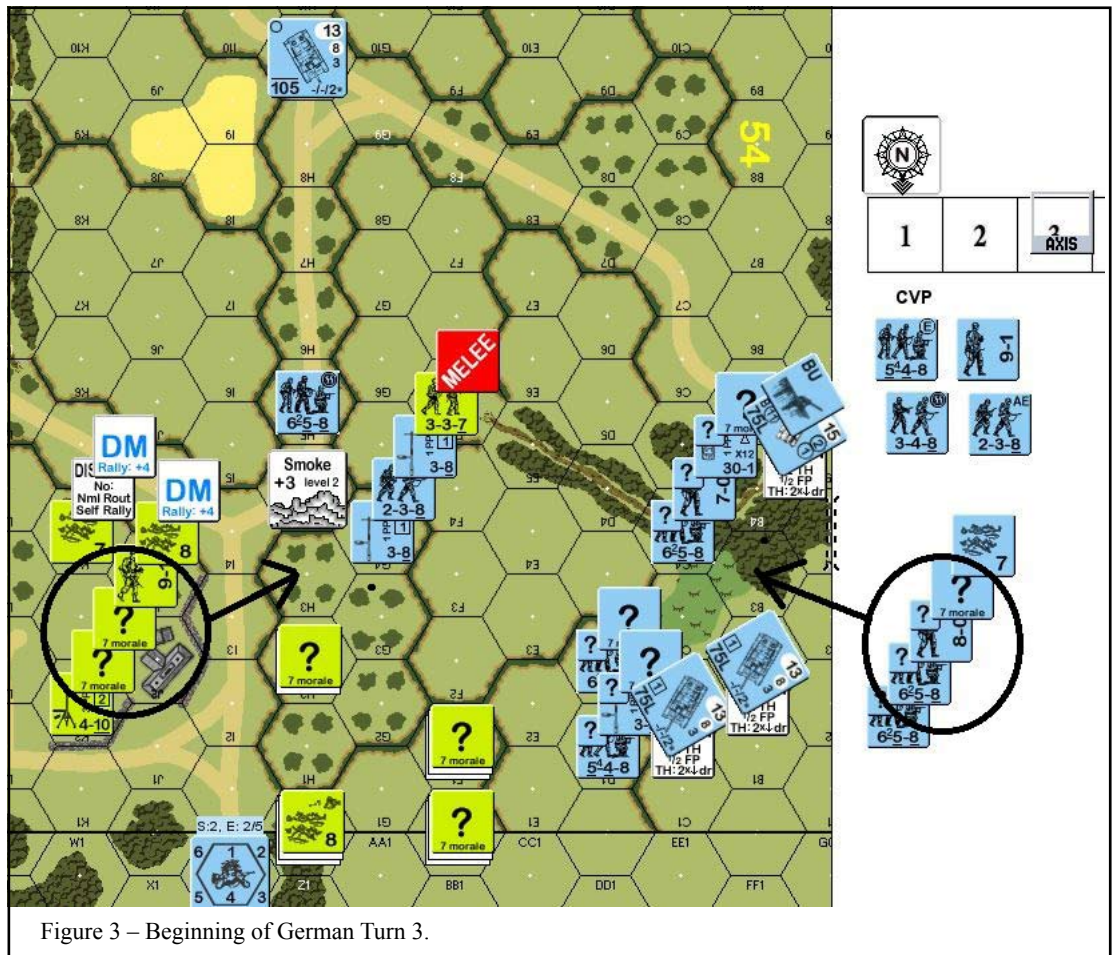


Figure 3 – Beginning of German Turn 3.

capturing some of his troopers). Marc’s force is on the edge of the CVP limit, and if I can get a couple more, it will be over.

[Marc] Figure 5 illustrates the end of the American turn 4 and the end of the game. The last die roll of this session was a double 1 rolled by yours truly. Somehow, up and through to the American CC phase, I was able to avoid any CVP. The ATG broke on an IF shot at charging SS troops with the crew taken out in CC. The AFVs rolled south unimpeded, and would have no problem exiting the board for a victory. Yet – the pesky CC attack remained. Russ had advanced an additional 337 into the hex (54G4) and had 3:1 odds on a capture attempt to win the game. I chose to do a 1-2 on one of his HS. He succeeded in capturing my HS, but on the counter roll, I got the snakes, for non-simultaneous CC and leader generation, getting an 8-1. Wow! But.....! I had decided to only attack one of the half-squads.....huge error. Because I did not fully eliminate the capturing infantry, the remaining 337 still succeeded in the capture at reduced 1-1 odds, Russ having rolled an original 3 DR.

[Russ] One of the strangest endings to an ASL scenario I can recall. I had managed to mostly fight the fight I wanted, and despite some boneheaded tactical mistakes had managed to bring it down to a very small margin of CVP. With a large portion of the German force either already off the map or about to do so, there was still enough

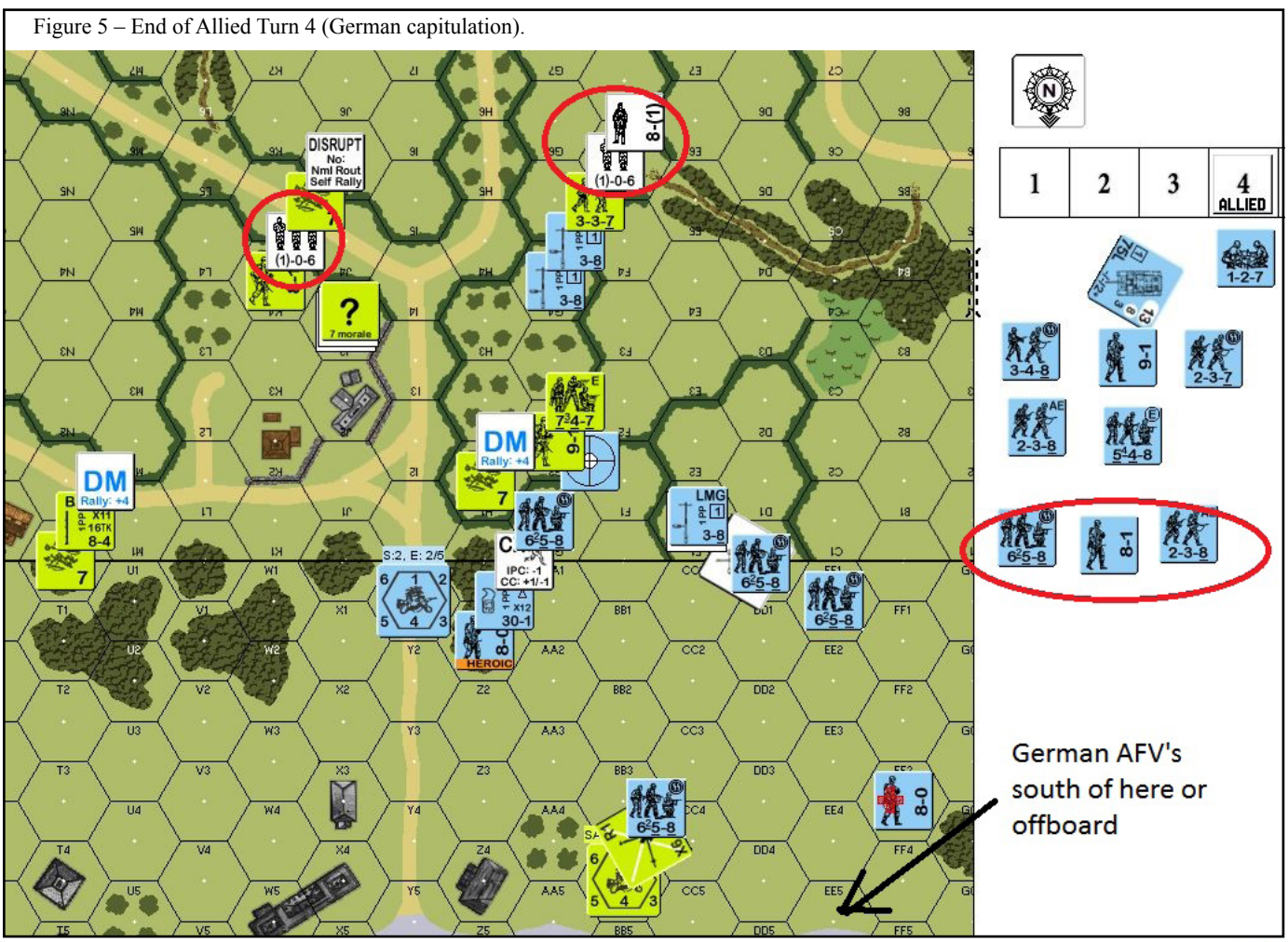
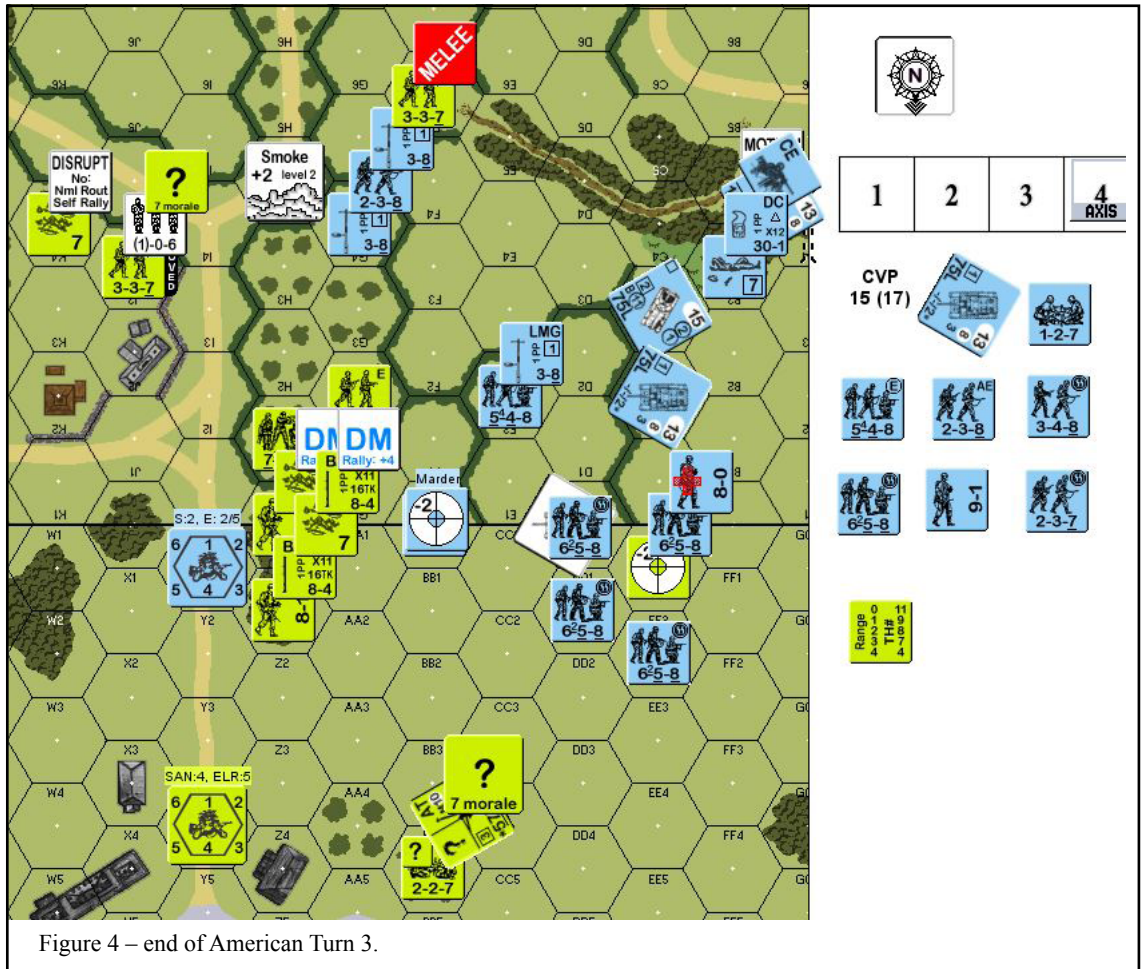
left for me to push him over the cap. As Marc relates, would still have been touch and go for the last turn or two as I went chasing after his remaining troops. Then he rolls “eyes” ... I roll my eyes ... he generates an 8-1 ... I still have dudes there and I had rolled a “3” ... I win!... Wait. I what? I love this game.

Conclusion

[Marc] So there you have it, how to lose on double-one. As you can see, it was pretty hard to do, and there were still a couple of turns left for Russ to take out a couple of points, even had I survived the CC attack with proper doctrine. But I can say I have done it – and I wonder – can any of you roll the snakes to lose? Does anyone else even want the dubious honor?

Cheers all! Last bit of news – I’ve relocated from the States to the UK, courtesy of an English wife. Look forward to seeing you at a tourney in England sometime. As ever, I highly recommend rolling low, in spite of this colorful result.

[Russ] Fun scenario and I think it has solid replay value. I’d take either side again. And despite the ending, I highly recommend rolling “double 1” whenever you can!



The M1937 AT Gun

Michael Davies

Under the Saint Petersburg Declaration of 1868 and Hague Conventions of 1899, a weight limit of over 400g was set for exploding shells. This eventually led to a number of heavy machine guns of 37mm calibre, firing shells with a small black powder explosive charge. The explosion was primarily intended for spotting the fall of shot, but the effect on human targets was noted and seen as useful; simply put it killed people. By WWI several countries were developing 37mm weapons, including some light portable guns with slowed rates of fire for trench and mountain fighting. They also proved useful against aircraft, balloons and Zeppelins. The French and later the British expected the Germans to develop a light gun of 37mm calibre to counter tanks, and eventually the Germans did but it is doubtful many ended up in the front lines in time for WWI.

Post WWI the Germans could not openly develop the idea due to restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. The Russians or rather the Soviets designed and tested at least two 37mm designs but hit all sorts of minor problems they never really bothered to fix and dropped the idea. In the 1920s a German company Rheinmetall began work on a new 37mm design, eventually leading to the 3.7 cm Pak 36. Rheinmetall developed a version for the Soviet Union, the 37 mm anti-tank gun model 1930. The Soviets liked it, and used it as a dual purpose weapon for infantry support as well as its anti tank role. It was used as a tank gun in the BT-2 and in some prototype T-35.

The Soviets thought a slightly larger shell could fire a HE shell with a larger explosive charge and experimented with 45mm rounds in a larger barrel. The design worked. The HE round was more powerful and the APHE round more effective than the 37mm rounds. A 45mm tank gun was developed which used electrical firing and in early models a primitive photoelectric sight, that is sometimes compared to later stabilised guns, but wasn't that effective. The Soviets hit a problem with recoil from HE shells not being sufficient to allow semi automatic fire, that took a while to resolve, but by 1941 the 45L was a decent light tank gun.

The 45mm anti-tank gun model 1937 used the same carriage as the 37mm gun. Effective against German Panzer I and II tanks, and light self propelled guns, it could only defeat Panzer III and IV tanks at close range or by attacking the sides and rear. Something more powerful was needed. To penetrate armour with the same calibre greater muzzle velocity was needed. The

Red Army went for a longer barrel which allows the propellant to accelerate the projectile for longer. The new M1942 gun slightly improved armour penetration with the same ammunition and was considered to be good enough to deal with most Panzer III and Panzer IV, which were all the Soviets expected to fight.

Other than the longer barrel and some streamlined production techniques the two guns were very similar. The M1942 had a thicker gunshield but beyond that there wasn't much difference between them. Over 38,000 M47 guns and 10,800 M42 guns were produced. In 1943 their value as anti tank guns was diminished by the growing numbers of Panthers, Tigers, up armoured Panzer IV and heavier assault guns. Gradually 57mm and 76mm guns replaced the 45mm with the gun being retained mainly as it could still destroy soft skin vehicles, light armour and had a useful HE round for anti personnel work.

Production trailed off in 1945, and ceased as the war ended. Post war the guns were still used for training, and either given or sold to Soviet satellites and allies.

The M1932 gun was adapted for use by the Soviet Navy as the 21-K. Although useful as a light gun which packed a decent punch, it wasn't ideal as an anti aircraft weapon, due to a low rate of fire and its shells lacking a time fuse. The navy liked the gun enough to develop single and double gun mounts for use on coastal craft, mainly for patrol work and shore bombardment.

Platoon/Battery Organisation

The basic organisation of 45mm anti tank units was the platoon of two guns, with two platoons forming a light battery. As you might expect batteries were included in infantry and cavalry regiments, and formed some separate anti tank regiments and brigades. A small number of 45mm guns were found in armoured units, usually with motorised troops. Before the war three

platoons would form a battery, from 1941 onwards this was reduced to two platoons. Early war units had few radios, usually one at the highest level of command, this gradually increased to two radios, with another two held by each battery. The additional radios made the unit more effective; fire orders could be better coordinated, and guns relocated in response to calls for support.

A wartime platoon attached to an infantry unit had a full strength of one officer, four NCOs, and 12 enlisted men. Two two-horse wagons were used to transport them men, and ammunition. The guns would either be towed, or in difficult terrain or close to hostile forces manhandled. Two platoons formed a battery with a HQ of another seven men, two officers, a Commissar (till late 1942), and two enlisted men. The HQ would travel with the platoons. Their role was to cover logistics, plan fire positions, and coordinate action with other units, primarily anti tank rifle troops and higher command. Their personal weapons were usually rifles with a few pistols in 1941, with an increasing number of SMGs as the war progressed; by 1944 almost the whole unit was armed with automatic weapons to fend off infantry attacks. The platoon might also have a LMG, and might pick up from the battlefield spare Soviet and German weapons. Civilian transport was occasionally requisitioned, so you might find a gun being pulled by a farm cart, tractor, car or truck, and gunners riding liberated bicycles or ponies. Supply would be provided by the battalion and company trains units.

Red Army cavalry regiment organisation also included anti tank units. As you might expect most troops rode horses, and the unit size was similar to the infantry version, but with an inherent supply train. Before the Great Patriotic War the unit's four guns had been towed by trucks. With the expansion of the Soviet Army and greater demand for motor transport horse drawn limbers and caissons were issued, each contained fifty rounds held



Soviet 45mm M1937 ATG on display at the Finnish Tank Museum in Parola.

in ten ammunition boxes, plus fusing and surveying equipment, digging tools and odd items like rope, saws and other tools. Crews could travel on the limbers and caissons; the rest of the battery would ride horses or ponies. Small arms equipment changed from mostly rifles to SMGs as the war progressed. Again, civilian horses and motor transport could be requisitioned, and war booty used to drag the guns.

In motorised units and specialist anti tank units overall unit size would be similar, the main difference being trucks were provided for transporting the guns and ammunition. Sometimes specialist artillery tractors were used to tow 45mm guns, but the maintenance overhead of a tracked vehicle and the shortage of tractors needed for heavier guns discouraged the practice. American jeeps and Soviet Gaz 67b could tow a limber and gun fairly easily; as increasing numbers became available infantry and cavalry units also made use of jeeps for towing.

Red Army mountain troops had truck drawn 45mm guns, airborne units manhandled theirs but may have used limbers or trailers for ammunition. Soviet Naval Infantry used manhandled guns, and occasionally horse drawn guns with limbers. The only units that don't seem to use 45mm guns are ski battalions and regiments, who relied on ATR and grenades for defence against light armour.

Emplaced and Fortified Positions

Although 45mm Guns were fitted with bullet resistant shields crews would usually dig them in for protection from shell, mortar and sustained small arms fire. The text book emplacement was a circular pit four metres in diameter and just 30 cm deep, with a small parapet made of turf and soil. This allowed 360 degree arcs of fire, and used in conjunction with the gun shield a moderate amount of protection against small arms and light shellfire. This could be dug in about two hours by two crew members, whilst the others started to build a further two dug outs adjacent to the pit. One for ammunition storage and the other as cover for the gun and crew against

heavier bombardment or air attack. Both of the dug outs would be reinforced with logs, doors, planks or other available materials to reduce the chance of collapse, and if time allowed given overhead cover. During a heavy attack the crew would wheel the gun into its dug out, and remain till the enemy fire died down or approaching enemy troops force them to return to the pit to engage. The dugouts provided protection against guns of up to 75mm, and mortars of up to 81mm, as well as near misses from large calibre weapons. Heavier ordnance would destroy the overhead cover or concuss the crew. Once the basic positions had been built they would be improved by the addition of camouflage, trenches connecting to other positions, and dummy positions to draw enemy fire and confuse reconnaissance.

Two guns would usually be located perhaps 50 metres from each other, with supporting anti tank rifle men, Molotov cocktail armed troops and the battery commander's position nearby. The key to the battery's offence was to hit targets with coordinated attacks by the guns and other weapons at the same time. The guns main defence was concealment. As soon as it opened fire, its target or supporting troops would quickly find the gun and take action against it. Soviet planners expected a gun and crew to take out one tank before being destroyed or the crew forced to abandon their position. If engaging lighter vehicles such as armoured cars, or halftracks a higher kill ratio would be expected.

Field telephone lines would link the battery to higher command, Radio sets were rare till later in the war, forcing the Soviets to rely on phones and occasionally runners.

Crews would make use of terrain, some natural dips would need little improvement to make a gun pit, and sometimes gullies, ditches or dried rivers could be used for dugouts or pits with limited arcs of fire. In villages lightly constructed wooden building would be avoided as they offered limited protection and restricted arcs of fire. Brick build buildings and cellars might be used as they provided better protection without digging, could be camouflaged and were comfortable for the crews. In time even positions in buildings could be improved with sandbags,

timbers, and reinforced floors to allow guns to fire from upper floors. Usually the guns would be set up to cover roads, particularly crossroads as tanks tended to stay close to the roads.

If time and resources allowed, mines, wire, roadblocks, and anti tank ditches would be added to the defences. Part of the defensive set up could be armour, usually light tanks or T-34s, which could have dug in fighting positions, as well as pits dug to conceal the tank from enemy observation which the tank could drive out of to engage enemy army slowed by other anti tank defences. The Soviets found using mobile tanks to counterattack enemy armour attacks worked well. Even small number of light tanks forced the Germans to manoeuvre around terrain that had been mined, prepared with anti tank ditches, and swarming with hostile Infantry and guns.

Some 45mm were used as fortress guns in the Molotov and Stalin Lines. Most were in concrete bunkers with armoured mounts for the guns, MG support to protect against infantry assault and anti tank obstacles protecting the position. The fortifications also included old 45mm tank turrets mounted in concrete bunkers, and tanks with their engines removed dug into trenches. Generally the Germans countered by breaking the line with Pioneers then sending Armour and mechanised troops through the gaps.

Ammunition

The first HE round produced was the UO-243 HE FRAG, containing 118g of explosives about the same as a hand grenade. This was later increased to 135g in the UO-243A which had a steel cartridge case to reduce cost. Both shells could produce serious wounds within a 15-20 metre radius and would throw small fragments to a considerable distance perhaps 200 metres. As well as shrapnel, the explosion would cause some blast effects and additionally the impact of the shell would cause some structural damage. The explosive content was a considerable improvement on the 22g (less than an ounce) of explosives that filled 37mm rounds. A 45mm HE round was roughly equivalent to a hand grenade, but with greater range, and the ability to penetrate light cover, blow a door off its hinges or knock a small hole in a door or window. The explosive filling was originally TNT, later the more powerful Russian explosive A-IX-2, composed of RDX and aluminium powder, with between 1.5 and 2 times the blast effect of TNT. This increased both blast and fragmentation effect.

Both the M1937 and M1942 anti tank guns and the tank gun of the same calibre fire fixed rounds, though the anti tank gun shells has percussions primers and the tanks had electrical primers so the shells were not



A destroyed M1937 ATG.

interchangeable. You could load them but they wouldn't fire.

All of the guns would fire HE rounds at about 343 metres per second, maybe a little faster for the longer M1942. At short range the sound of the gun firing HE rounds would arrive very close to the shell detonating, which would make detection more difficult. AP rounds travelled at supersonic speeds, APCR rounds even faster the round would arrive just as you reacted to the muzzle blast.

Rate of fire is always tricky to estimate. The 45mm rounds are very light and a deft loader starting with one round in the breech could get the first three rounds off very quickly. The limits on rate would be ammunition supply, barrel heating, fouling, and crew fatigue. Perhaps 15-20 rounds a minute could be achieved in action, similar naval guns claimed 30 rounds per minute as a maximum.

The first APHE-T (Armour piercing High Explosive Tracer) round was the UB-241M, a 47mm Hotchkiss round machined down to fit a 45mm barrel. It contained a fair sized explosive charge of 77g, and a base fitted tracer. It was replaced by the UB-242 that contained a 58g explosive charge but was designed specifically for the 45mm gun and was both cheaper to produce and more effective. The UB-243 followed with a smaller explosive charge of just 19g but slightly better armour penetration. Later a ballistic cap was fitted to reduce the tendency of shells to shatter against armour on impact, and improving flight characteristics.

Between 1941 and 1943 shell performance was compromised by low production standards, with increased incidence of duds, underpowered explosive filler and propellant, and defective shells.

The Red Army developed Arrowhead

rounds based on captured German APCR. The BBR-243P, was a 45mm round with a ballistic cap, solid tungsten carbide penetrator, and increased propellant. This pushed muzzle velocity for the M1937 from 760 m/s, up to 985 m/s, and for the M1942 from 870 m/s, up to 1070 m/s. Penetration at 500 metres would increase from about 43mm and 61mm to around 50mm (M1937) and 81mm (M1942).

Against light tanks, armoured cars, half tracks soft skin vehicles and most 1930s medium tanks, standard APHE-T rounds were effective. Certainly light armoured vehicles could be penetrated at 500 metres range, with fragments of the round and the explosive charge killing or disabling the crew. As German armour thickness increased the M1937 and pretty soon the M1942 guns had to aim for specific weak spots on enemy tanks, even if using BBR-243P (Arrowhead rounds), and against Tigers, Panther and heavy self propelled guns they were reduced to firing at the tracks, gun barrel, sides and rear, and working in conjunction with other weapons. Gun crews unable to penetrate armour would aim at weak spots. Exposed crew, tracks, the gun barrel, periscopes, gun sights and external fittings were worth shooting at. Even hitting a tank without penetrating would serve to distract the crew, who could not be sure what they were being hit with.

Shch-210, 240 and 243 canister rounds were developed for 45mm guns. Containing 105 or 137 lead antimony balls these would be used against personnel and soft targets. It is not known how widely the rounds were distributed or used. One Soviet 76mm anti tank gunner mentions carrying them as part of a standard ammunition load, but only remembers firing them three times during the entire war to disperse close range infantry attack. Usually gun crews relied on

small arms for close defence.

Certainly other rounds existed. Most were inert or dummy rounds for training and practice. There are rumours of experimental smoke, AP Chemical and sub calibre rounds but nothing I've read suggests they were ever produced or saw service during WWII.

Historical use

A full strength 45mm anti tank regiment was about 260 men with twenty guns and twenty ATR. When conducting deliberate defence regimental frontage could be as little as 1000-1500 metres, giving one gun and one ATR every fifty metres, though deployed in three or more defensive belts, with mines and anti tank obstacles. The Germans could still thrust deep into defences of that density, the idea was to impose delay and inflict significant casualties. The Soviets estimated twelve 45mm rounds from one or more guns was needed to destroy or immobilise a German tank, and accepted an exchange rate of about one 45mm gun for each tank.

The regiment would be set up in small defensive clusters or hedgehogs, pretty much aligned to the road network. This meant villages where roads met were important, but gunners tended to avoid wooden buildings as they offered less protection than emplacements or even light cover with concealment. When there wasn't a choice though guns would be manhandled into buildings, with work done to provide decent firing positions.

Platoons would be connected by field phones sets, runners, or very rarely radios. In front of the guns would be anti tank rifle teams, and tank hunters equipped with grenades, bottles filled with petrol, the occasional German anti tank magnetic mine, and the odd Panzerfaust.

In front of the positions would be mines, lots and lots of mines. At Kursk extensive minefields contained an average of 1700 anti personnel and 1500 anti tank mines per kilometre, some road blocks, trenches for concealment and anti tank ditches. Mines would be placed by specialist units, the digging work could be performed by enlisted personnel, penal battalions, or local militias or workers.

When the enemy arrived there was an attempt to target the nearest tank with everything to hand and keep firing till it was in flames or the crew bailed out. If the enemy attacked in small numbers the position generally held. Unfortunately during a full scale attack a Panzer regiment might be attacking with over a hundred tanks and self propelled guns, supporting artillery and close support aircraft. When the Germans were attacking an armoured regiment could generally flatten a Soviet anti tank regiment in two or three hours, then drive forward to meet the next regiment and then the one after that.



Gunners firing their ATG.

Most positions would have some armour, either units dedicated to the sector or reserves pulled in when the line of the German attack was known. Further back would be artillery, and overhead varying amounts of air support. Essential the anti tank guns were there to slow the armour down, encourage it to enter minefields, toodle about under artillery fire and present a better target for air attack.

It all sort of worked. The Germans could smash through the first line of defence, after that it was all a trade off between German casualties and depth of penetration.

The guns were issued with HE rounds, specifically for use against infantry and soft skinned vehicles. Anti tank guns are usually engaged by enemy infantry supporting armour, so the crew would retaliate with small arms and HE rounds. When enemy tanks were not present 45mm fire would be directed against infantry. The blast from HE was effective, and the shells also produced shrapnel. Against troops in cover high velocity rounds could smash through wood, stone and concrete with ease, causing casualties, destroying cover, smashing open doors, creating breaches, and generating a lot of noise at the point of impact. Soviet crews would manhandle guns into buildings to attack German positions, during combat in urban areas. In more open terrain HE was still useful.

During the Russian Civil War the Russians noted the presence of even a single gun or armoured vehicle could have a big impact on the fighting. Even improvised armoured cars and lorries, as well as small calibre guns with limited ammunition had an effect. Certainly the 45mm gun was better than nothing, comparable in effect to a light mortar or medium machine gun team, and looked pretty good when up against troops armed with just small arms.

Another factor that kept 45mm guns in service was the Soviet dislike of throwing stuff away. Even when improved 57mm and 76mm guns were issued troops still retained 45mm guns as long as they had enough men to crew them and ammunition to fire, dragging around kit of marginal use wasn't a problem.

In the Far East the Japanese barely up armoured their tanks during WWII. Consequently 45mm anti tank guns were still as effective in 1945 as they had been in 1938 and 1939 during border incursions. The Japanese based their own 47mm gun on the Soviet Model 37, selecting the calibre to use shells and some components from existing naval guns, and use existing barrel making machinery, widening the carriage, strengthening the barrel and using better munitions. The Japanese gun entered service in 1942; it was easily moved and concealed, and its only real failing was limited armour piercing capability.

Captured 45mm anti tank guns were used by the Germans, Romanians,

Hungarians, Finns and possibly other nationalities. The Romanians and Hungarians went as far as making shells for captured guns; the Germans seem to have used Soviet shells.

Conclusion

Both of the 45mm designs were light easily portable guns, easy to camouflage, cheap to produce, firing a half decent HE round, accurate, simple to use, and produced in sufficient numbers. Their main faults were poorly designed ammunition that performed badly ballistically and lacked explosive power until 1942 or 1943, and limited capabilities against later war armour. Certainly the M1932/37 when designed were modern effective weapons. The rapid increase in AFV armour thickness, spaced protection and sloped plates presented a challenge, which the M1942 though an improvement and with better ammunition wasn't quite good enough.

Every nation hit a similar problem; the increasing thickness of tank armour required harder hitting anti tank weapons. This led from 25-47 mm guns, through 50-57mm guns to extremely powerful weapons that could have engaged battle cruisers at Jutland with good effect. Anti tank guns went from small portable guns to massive weapons that were expensive, extremely difficult to move or conceal, and only really worked when emplaced, protected by mines, and supported by infantry, artillery and armour.

Post WWII, recoilless rifles and anti tank guided missiles replaced light anti tank guns; their closest living relatives nowadays would be the cannons mounted on armoured personnel carriers, which are still useful against soft targets, light fortifications and lightly armoured vehicles.

The 45mm gun was good for its day.

It provided the Soviet Army of the 1930s with a world class gun suitable as the main weapon of light tanks and armoured cars, and as an infantry anti tank weapon. Had the Red Army relied on a 37mm gun, it is almost certain the German attack in 1941 would have gone further faster and lengthened the war. Even mid and late war the M1942 had some value, not the least because sometimes it was the best anti tank weapon available to Soviet troops and better than nothing. Admittedly the M1937 and M1942 guns struggled against Panthers, Tiger I and II and the heavier German self propelled guns. These became an issue from mid 1943 at the battle of Kursk. After Kursk and the Soviet offensives that followed the threat was reduced to perhaps 100 operational Panthers and a similar number of Tigers, plus 1000 lighter tanks and assault guns, a threat that Soviet tanks and 45mm guns could just about manage. The next year saw increasing numbers of Panthers, Tigers, and a growing number of Hetzers and heavy self propelled guns with very strong frontal armour. The Soviets responded by creating more 57mm gun armed anti tank units and by using 76mm guns and later SU-76M self propelled guns as light anti tank capability for infantry units. An awful lot of units were still equipped with M1942 guns but these tended to be used in quieter sectors or reinforced with anti tank artillery when used in the front line.

On balance the Red Army got its moneys worth from its 45mm guns, not the least from their value against light armour and soft targets. A robust design produced in sufficient numbers gave Soviet infantry better protection against German armour than most other Allied infantry enjoyed till 1943.

Ω



A gun crew and observer in action at Kursk in 1943.

The Acts of Defiance of The Cursed Platoon

Martin Mayers

Recently played 'J68 Acts of Defiance' for the first time. Great scenario, even though I couldn't catch a break as the attacker at all. Shame as it looked destined to go the full distance but I just couldn't force enough results to make it happen....lots of 12/20/24 attacks and lots of 9s and 10s rolled.

But I want to talk about 'The Cursed Platoon'....

En route to the battle this German platoon, comprising three 548 squads, all with LMGs, were full of confidence.

Having lead his platoon through the war Kapitän Kermit Klop Koch-Knocher had achieved almost legendary status. His middle name, 'Klop' translated as 'don't fuk with me because I'm a hard bastard and don't fuk with my platoon either or else'. Honest, check it out in any dictionary.

He achieved fame during the Battle of France for a single handed attack across the Meuse, during which, whilst in the process of swimming, he destroyed a pillbox with his Luger.

In Normandy he was the guy manning the MG at the start of Saving Private Ryan. He shot that opening landing craft up whilst eating Knockwurst and masturbating at the same time.

But on this fateful morning, when crossing the road, he'd noticed a black cat. Not being the superstitious type he decided to test out whether cats really do all land feet first when dropped from a height, by dropping the cat from the Chateau which his platoon were bivouacked in. Unfortunately some dickhead had left his stash of Anti Personnel mines outside the front door, the cat landed on top of them (feet first), and quickly went through lives 1-9 before being spread across various parts of the village.

Fast forward the action....to turn 4 of 6....Sadly one of the squads lead by Guenther Das-Komplete-Arsch had fallen behind after attracting the attention of one of the local girls in the Tavern in town. With orders to 'catch up' they stormed down the main highway.....ignoring the cries from Kapitän Koch of "not that way you bellends...there's a 50 cal..... BRRRRRRRRRRRR".....they decided to disperse....when I say disperse, a 1 2 rolled at -3 dispersed their body parts in various tidy piles around a 10 yard radius.

Captain Koch though is nothing but resourceful. And he didn't like Guenther anyway after the incident with the goat. So...in the critical part of this battle, with 2/3rds of his platoon still in perfect shape... the best 2/3rds. The 2/3rd he would trust

with his LIFE, and his WIFE....Koch had some options.

He was at this time in a stone rowhouse, across the road from a couple of Russian squads playing a game involving seeing if he could piss at them across the road. And occasionally using the skulls of enemies he had taken in previous battles as projectiles. However, things weren't going so well in the centre of town. So, being the greatest strategist in the history of the German Wehrmacht, he knew that he could drop back behind the rowhouses, move to a nearby building, and STILL support the attack in town (548x2 (plus mgs)....assault fire....-2 leader.....).

What could possibly go wrong he thought? Sure, hell, there's a Russian 120mm artillery spotting round about 240 yards away in town...but Jesus the chances of that coming across this way are like... hell the chances of not catching a sexually transmitted disease from those whores he was partying with last night. Mind you he did have an odd odour this morning.....

Then when his evil work was completed....he'd advance back into the rowhouse further along and deal with these irritating Commie bastards across the way. Speaking of irritating he'd noticed an irritating itch in the groin region since partying with Madam Mushroom-Volovant the evening before. Hmmm.

Now...in town....Junior Lieutenant Klumsky-Lucky-Bastardinskyiyiyiy decided to bring down his 120mm artillery on the building opposite. Noting that things were desperate he decided "I'd better bring it down there....RIGHT THERE.....and death to the utter pondlife who doesn't drop the artillery where requested. It must land THERE.

Minutes passed....5....then 10.... Klumsky waited for his artillery to rain down bringing with it hellish metal, and devilish fire, to eviscerate the Nazi to his front...nothing....another 5 minutes pass..... jack ****. Angrily picking the phone up Klumsky rings his Artillery Captain, 1st Lieutenant Shotinthedarksky "where's my ****ing artillery"....answered with "I



fired it....I'm in the pub now....they've got Doombar....do you want a pint?" Placing his order for two pints and a Drambuie chaser, Klumsky put the phone back down wondering where the hell his artillery actually landed....

Back across on the flank....Koch and his two remaining squads, lead by Corporal Schneaky-Twat and Sargeant Plopp loaded their 'Spezial' bullets. The really evil ones that the baddies always have in crap US police programmes and took aim. They waited for the perfect target, biding their time when "VOT IST DAS VISTLING SOUND"

And all went dark.

.... cue tinnitus, whistly noises....foggy pictures.....all the usual tripe that happens according to Hollywood when a 120mm artillery shell hits you.....

Now.....in a nearby building sits Leutnant Koogleschwaffer. Having laughed when his Kapitain strutted around the houses, wooped when he took aim, and chortled when he saw his Kaptain preparing a special dose of Schmeisser Sauce for those commies across the way.... and finally shitting himself when he saw the 120mm shell land on Koch's unit..... Koogleschwaffer made the decision to go see what remnants of Kochs platoon remained....

And in an almost biblical scene, he gave thanks to God as he saw Koch, with a minor flesh wound emerge from the ashes of rubble, followed by 20 unbowed men. They were dazed. They were injured. They were....fking perplexed quite frankly how that OBA ended up here....what actually were the fking chances of it being inaccurate then moving two hexes in exactly their direction to land adjacent to them....Jesus.... where's my calculator.

But....they were alive. "Now", Koogleschwaffer mulled, "all I have to do is rally them...." "Koch, Koch", said Koogleschwaffer. "we need you Kapitain. Get back in the fight sir. Help your platoon rally. They're currently coming back on only a 5 if I try, but if you rally they'll be coming back on a 7. "Ja...rally me...rally me...." cried Koch. "Oiiiiiii" shouted some nearby Russians "you're a junior officer, you can't rally HIM". "Err yes I can" said Koogleschwaffer. "no you can't". "err yes I can".....and so forth.

Moments later, after studying the rulebook, ahem military manual, and agreeing that the Russians were talking shitsky, Koch rallies. "Now, my sons. Now it is time for you to come back to the fight,

to face your destiny, to bring these Commie bastards to task, now....you will rally, and we will resume the fight".

Unfortunately under the effects of concussion, whilst his mind stated the above his body articulated it as "hey Schneaky-Twat, I shagged your mother" followed by "oy, Plopp, I shagged your sister". In disgust at the disrespect shown by their Kapitain, 5 guys from one squad decided to go on strike and 5 guys from the other squad decided to work to rule.

The remaining guys rallied.... eventually....when they could be arsed. "Ist everyzing lossstcht" said one..."ist ze battle finished" said another. "Vot time is it" said yet another. In full wrath Koch screamed, in almost animalistic grandeur, "IT'S HAMMER TIME"....."FOLLOW ME".

With a cold calculating mind...borne of four years of gleefully and mercilessly killing enemy soldiers and the occasional cat...Koch had gathered that the Russians formerly to his front had since crossed the alley to enter his rowhouse. Their laughter had proven enough to give the game away. All is not lost thought Koch. Pulling all his reserves together including some random hero who usually gets most of the way through the films but inevitably gets knobbled near the end, and gathering a cowering, sniveling, group of 5 Landsers, en-route, Koch worked out some odds....

What am I up against, thought Koch....hmm a Russian assault engineer squad with a rifle squad...hmm but I'm out of sight and using skill, guile, and German class, I can get adjacent to those guys. Hmm, I think there may also be a rifle unit in the road nearby. I could get into the stone buildings....whack that rifle unit in open ground....then enter and marmelade those other units in the building....."COME ON MENNNNNN LET'S GET EM"

As he crept into the building he saw, outside the window, Russians, drinking Schnapps, and browsing through Koch's porn stash which he'd left in his shelled building earlier. "Passen me my rifle" said Koch. "Vott rifle" said Plopp. "Did no-one think the bring any weapons?" asked Koch. "Nein" said Plopp. "Well pass me one of the nine hand weapons you have"...."nein nein....I meant...nein.....no weapons"

"Bollocks...." ejaculated Koch in frustration.

"Oh well....lets go chop them bastards up instead....GERONIMOOOOO".

Next door the Russian engineers and riflemen were tampering with the record collection of the former owners of the

house. Having found only a rather warped copy of "Mistletoe and Wine" by Kliff Von-Der Richard", they deliberated dubiously on the merits of playing it.....as

Through the front window crashed Kapitain Koch....."DROP THE **** CHRISTMAS RECORD YOU COMMIE SCUMBAGS" he screamed, summoning all his remaining reserves. "IT'S SHOWTIME"...."PREPARE TO DIE IN HAND TO HAND COMBAT"

Scrambling for their weapons, Russian Junior Lieutenant Twattski grabbed a bayonet....his subordinates between them grabbed various items, sharpened shovels, bottles, pans, pens, those knuckle-duster thingymajigs which really probably hurt a lot.

At the same time, Koch's brave, valiant, warriors, having crept into the rear door, down the chimney, through a cellar, and various other orifices, sensing an easy ambush crept out to execute the final 'Coup De Grace' on these unsuspecting Russian sub-humans....

"Pass me a sharpened shovel" said Koch. "err not got a sharpened shovel" said Schneaky-Twat.

"a bayonet?" said Koch. "didn't bring em" said Plopp

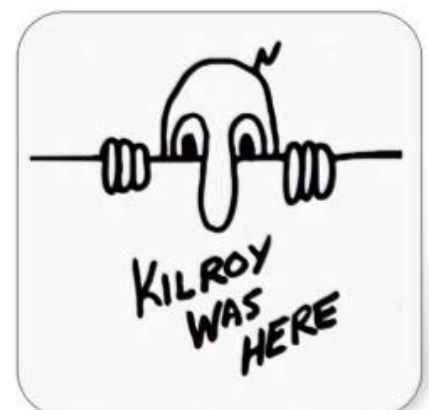
"any kind of knife or sharpened implement?" said Koch. "hmm...sorry nope" said someone else with a comedy sounding German name which borders on the probably slightly xenophobic.

"Listen lads" said Koch...."did any of you fking idiots actually bring ANYTHING to this battle which we can, like, actually bloody use"

"No...." said a German Landser. "did you?"

"That f'king ca....." said Koch

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ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL

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

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

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

2015 FEBRUARY SCANDANAVIAN ASL OPEN

When: 20 – 22 February.

Where: Danhostel Copenhagen Amager, Vejlands Allé 200, 2300København S, Denmark. Accommodation is available at a cost of 1500 Danish Kroner (about €200) per person sharing a four person bedroom including breakfast, lunch and dinner. Other room options are available – contact the organisers for a price.

Fee: 200 Danish Kroner (about €27).

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

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

MARCH HEROES 2015

When: 5 – 8 March.

Where: Colwyn Hotel, 569 New South Promenade, Blackpool, England, FY4 1NG. Tel 01253 341 024. Room rates are £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: Four round tournament beginning Friday morning, with three scenarios to choose from in each round. There will be an additional round on Friday after if the number of participants warrants it. 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, 19 Main Street, Kirkliston, Scotland, EH29 9AE. Phone (1031) 629 1260 (evenings only) or email if@vftt.co.uk. For up to date information check out the UK *ASL* tournament web site at www.vftt.co.uk.

Tony Gibson, 107 Queen's Drive, Hazelhead, Aberdeen, AB15 8BN (24 Jan 2012)
Steve Cook, 159 Lee Crescent, Aberdeen, AB22 8FH (16 Feb 2013)
Martin Vicca, 14 Leslie Crescent, Westhill, Aberdeen, AB32 6UZ (26 Feb 2013)
Michael Green, 27 Rotchell Park, Dumfries, DG2 7RH (12 Sep 2002)
Mark Chapman, Flat 7, 265 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh, EH11 1TX (01 Dec 2005)
Garry Ferguson, 30E Forrester Park Avenue, Edinburgh, EH12 9AW (07 Dec 1998)
Pete Phillipps, 19 Main Street, Kirkliston, Midlothian, EH29 9AE (01 Dec 2014)
Darren Kilfara, 68 Wilson Place, Dunbar, East Lothian, EH42 1GG (26 Sep 2013)
Alan Sheffield, 1 Barns Ness Terrace, Innerwick, Dunbar, East Lothian, EH42 1SF (09 Sep 2011)
Lauchlan Brown, 20, Union Road, Broxburn, West Lothian, EH52 6hr (03 Feb 2013)
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)
John McLintock, B25 434 St Georges Rd, Woodside, Glasgow, G3 6JW (30 May 2012)
Andrew Kassian, 7 Burnbrae Road, Auchinloch, Glasgow, G66 5DQ (18 Feb 2014)
Hamish Hughson, 15 Esmonde Gardens, Elgin, Moray, IV30 4LB (21 Mar 2010)
Steve Mackintosh, 15 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, Linton Mill Farmhouse, Morebattle, Kelso, Roxburghshire, TD5 8AE (16 Dec 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)
Chris Dalgety, 4 Library Street, Canton, Cardiff, CF5 1QD (30 Dec 2014)
Martin Castrey, 1, Thomas Cottages, The Highway, Hawarden, Flintshire, CH5 3DY (03 Sep 2008)
Key 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, Stepsaside, Narbeth, Pembrokeshire, SA67 8JL (31 Dec 1995)
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.

MAY STOCKHOLM ASL TOURNAMENT 2015

When: 15 – 17 May.

Where: Metapontum Gymnasium, Långbroparken, Stockholm, Sweden.

Fee: 200 SEK (€22).

Format: Five round tournament starting early afternoon, with two rounds on Friday, two on Saturday, and one on Sunday. There will be two scenarios to choose from in each round, with all scenarios coming from the *Hakkaa Päälle!* module.

Contact: Mel Falk by email at melkerfalk@hotmail.com.

JUNE DOUBLE ONE 2015

When: 26 – 28 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, Whiteways, 77a St Nicholas Road, Witham, Essex, CM8 2JE 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 XXX

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. Room rates are \$82.

Fee: \$30.00 before 28 September, \$40.00 thereafter and 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 damaavs@alltel.net. Check out the web site at www.aslok.org for the latest details.

NOVEMBER INTENSIVE FIRE 2015

When: 5 – 8 November.

Where: The Travel Rest Hotel, West Hill Road, Bournemouth, England, BH2 5EG. Telephone (01202) 555 889 or fax (01202) 789 567 to arrange accommodation. Room rates are £47 per night for a single room, and £37 per night per person for a double room.

Fee: £15.00 if registering with the organisers before 1 November, £20.00 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, 19 Main Street, Kirkliston, Scotland, EH29 9AE. Phone (1031) 629 1260 (evenings only) or email if@vftt.co.uk. For up to date information check out the UK *ASL* tournament web site at www.vftt.co.uk.

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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 derek@doubleone-online.net to arrange a game and ensure there are no last minute problems.

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Double One 2015



Thursday June 25th to Sunday June 28th

The London ASL tournament "Double One" is set for the weekend of June 25th to 28th, returning to the regular venue, Writtle College.

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. We will be returning to the local Indian/Chinese restaurant about ½ mile walk from the college, which does a superb buffet deal.

The gaming room opens at 8.30am on Friday 26th 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 2015.

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, Whiteways, 77a St Nicholas Road, Witham, Essex, CM8 2JE
derek.cox@dsl.pipex.com

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 2015