At The Point

The Journal of ASL

To

Marc Hanna
PO Box 4401
Oakbrook, IL 60522

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CHARLES FARGO
4841 HAWKSHEAD PARK
SARASOTA FL 34241

At The Point

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ASST EDITOR: AMY HANNA
STAFF ARTIST: LORIE TOKARZ
PYM EDITOR: KEITH LARSON
SCENARIO ADVISORS: D.DOLAN, E.BAKER, R.BANOZIC, R.BUNTEN
EMERITI: MARK NIXON, ERIC BAKER, KURT MARTIN, BRUCE BAKKEN

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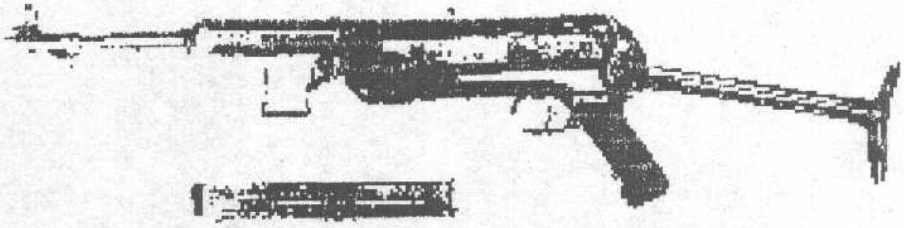

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METAMORPHOSES

The fact is, I was never really happy with the word processing program which replaced the primitive publishing program with which I was even less happy. Some of you know processors can perform all of the functions of a publishing program, but it isn't too easy to figure out how. The lack of easy flexibility finally discouraged me. Equipping myself with a survey done by a PC magazine, I bought the highest rated low-cost publishing program on the market. Hopefully you will like the new look of ATP, as well as some of the practical changes that have been made.

The most important of these is the page layout. While no-one actually complained about the staple cutting through some of the text in the corner, it must have been annoying. The improvement eliminates (I hope, this is being written before the final production!) that, as well as offering a gutter which will allow aficionados to punch holes in the magazines and mount them in binders. That, in fact, is the intent of the new design, so please take advantage of it. No, ATP won't be selling special binders because the policy of avoiding gimmicks will be strictly avoided.

The second change relates not to its design, but to shipment. Starting soon, we will go back to a first class mailing. I've found that people in Michigan, Texas, California and New York (possibly elsewhere) have been receiving ATP up to four weeks later due to local bulk mail delivery hang-ups. It's almost unbelievable, but there it is. In point of fact, this is undesirable from the standpoint that I want to receive timely reader feedback, and five weeks simply won't do.

The third relates to the second, but is also a factor related to a year's accrual of expenditures for this magazine. Those who are interested-- particularly those who have inquired about receiving payment for their work-- are hereby informed that, from January 1, 1991 to December 31, 1992, ATP suffered a loss of $712.00, BEFORE application of extraordinary expenses, e.g. depreciation, which are not insubstantial by any means. In view of these facts, and since first class mailings are 33 cents more per issue than bulk, the subscription rate is being increased to $20 per year (or ten issues); international subs are now $25 per year (or ten issues). Some of you may have already sent me $15 as an early renewal, or even subscribed for two years initially. This kind of support is appreciated, but I still must deduct two issues from your sub ($4 worth, net gain of $1 for y'all). Renewals which are received before February 15 will receive still receive this small boon. If you send $15 after that you'll get 7 issues tacked on, not 8.

NOTICE: THE NUMBER ABOVE YOUR ADDRESS ON THE LABEL INDICATES YOUR LAST ISSUE, AND TO AVOID MISSING ANY IT IS SUGGESTED THAT YOU SEND IN YOUR RENEWAL A MONTH IN ADVANCE.

I do regret this increase but there is no way around it if I am to go back to first class, and that decision is not revocable. In tandem, many will be pleased to hear that our back issue price will soon drop to $3 each. Of course, our objective remains publication of ten issues per year, which has been achieved for the first year (since these will be mailed before February, 1992). This means that those who have been nursemaiding me about publication promises will need to hold their tongues about that for another year; however, knowing such culprits, I expect they will find something else to nag about.

It will remain the policy of ATP to support its authors' works with free issues, I don't expect enough profit to start paying for quite a while, if ever. ATP will continue to concentrate on articles of tactics, playing methods, tricks, replays and associated scenarios. The newest full-scale project will be a series of Guadalcanal scenarios which will encompass every major conflict on/near that island, and are intended as a training module for the PTO. A series of articles will be developed for the scenarios that will aid players in their understanding of Night Rules, the Japanese, Landing Craft, Seaborne Assaults/ Evacuations; Caves, Complexes and the suppression thereof will also be addressed in depth. Lest any of you be misled by Avalon Hill's incorrect assertion in the Aftermath of ASL 73, there WERE opposed landings on Gavutu-Tanambogo more than a year in advance of the Bougainville invasion! One scenario is already being playtested that deals with the suppression of SNLF forces in the rugged tip of Tulagi. Three others covering the Seaborne Assault of Gavutu, an abortive night Assault/Evacuation of Tanambogo, and a more assertive invasion the next day, are in the final stages of preliminary design and, by the time you receive this, will be in the hands of our capable Scenario Advisors. These four scenarios, all parts of "Operation Shoestring," occur during the first two days of the landings and are not even located on Guadalcanal!

It has been a year of Metamorphosis and growth of ATP, and we hope to continue to improve our coverage of the play of our favorite game-- ASL.
Until next time---**FAUST.**

WINTER OFFENSIVE'92!
is a free form ASL tournament, based on the popular Oktoberfest.
WHEN: FEB. 28 MAR 1
WHERE: HOLIDAY INN SOUTH, GLEN BURNIE, MD
WHO: CONTACT BRIAN YOUSK, 8191 TURN LOOP ROAD, GLEN BURNIE MD 21061
410-969-2733

FORUM

Dear Marc,

I feel compelled to clarify a remark attributed to myself regarding scenario design. While it is true that one does not need to extensively playtest a design to see if it is a 'winner' (exciting, fluid, feasible, etc), or a 'dog' (boring, static, impossible, etc.), I never intended to imply that playtesting was unimportant. In fact, my view is that EXTENSIVE PLAYTESTING IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DETERMINING THE BALANCE AND PLAYABILITY OF A SCENARIO. Again, a classic scenario is generally recognized at it's inception; it really does "just feel right". BUT, without extensive, diverse playtesting the odds are that it will have some flaw that will reduce it's playability and/or balance.

Sincerely, Eric Baker

Eric,

My sincere apologies for misinterpreting your offhand remark at Oktoberfest as being applicable to more than simple recognition of a scenario as a "winner" or a "dog". If I may, let me attribute the misunderstanding as due to my own eagerness to resolve the then motionless inertia that ATP's scenario development was in. I latched onto it as a means to seeing my way clear through an opaque, sticky morass of "progresslessness". Anyone who gets the ROUT REPORT will recognize that the scenarios you are involved in developing are well tested prior to publication. Your letter has re-emphasized my interest in assuring that ATP's efforts go as well tested as DAGGER's. Thank you very much; as usual, your points are diamonds in the rough! Keep up the excellent work for DAGGER--- and ATP!

Dear Editor,

[...]

The scenario "Italian Brothers" in Issue #7 is an excellent addition to the ASL line. Since I know that Avalon Hill does not want to attempt applying ASL to any conflict outside the official boundaries of World War II, your magazine is an excellent place to do it. (n fact I would like to see Eric Baker encouraged to provide other scenarios dealing with the Spanish Civil War.

[...] The ASL Scenario list (>170) has a very good representation of most of the normal combat situations in WWII. I, personally, would like to see a series of scenarios that would include each and every country where a battle was fought. Normal scenario types are already covered in ASL, but if someone keeps coming up with unusual and exotic scenarios, please print them. [1]

The Panzer article by Bruce Bakken was a great article. While I have played ASL several years, the amount of new information that I learned makes me feel like a novice again. Perhaps it could be suggested to Mr. Bakken that he submit an "Armor Training Manual" (like Chapter K) to the ASL public. I'm sure that it would sell.

In Defense of "Pegasus Bridge"... the actual terrain was a bridge crossing a canal in a sparsely populated area where there were buildings on each side of the canal. What does this mean in ASL terms? Well first there is only one (1) canal mapboard in the ASL terrain list. This limits the selection process very much, don't you think? [2]

Secondly, the scenario was designed so that only a risk taking British player could win it. With this in mind, I would agree that the scenario is unbalanced for most ASL players. If you choose to pick the safest location to land your gliders IN, then you will most likely run out of time. Thirdly, after watching several playings of the scenario, I have noticed that most players don't use the full capabilities of the British Glider-troops.

[...]

I would rate the 'Pegasus Bridge" scenario as 75/25 for the cautious player, but would give it a 60/40 Pro-German for a British player who is daring and knows how to use ALL the capabilities of the Glider-troops. [3]

Even the famous Mark Nixon once told me that not all scenarios should be perfectly balanced, but that some should be "unbalanced" so that the thrill of winning a hard fight would not disappear from the land. It should also be noted that this scenario was play-tested by the Avalon Hill group before being published. Evidently they did not believe it was too far out of balance. [4] Maybe if a player finds that one style of play does not work, he should try a different style instead of crying "unfair...unbalanced". [5]

The article from Russ Gifford on PBEM and the GEnie network was very informative and timely. For several weeks I have been wanting to ask Russ for some info on GEnie, and now here it is in print. Very Good Job, Russ!! [6]

Keep up the good work, its needed. Semper Fi!

Steven C. Swann

[1] My view is that ASL offers such a variety of simulated terrain, opposing forces and battle situations that almost every scenario could be considered unique, if not exotic. Of the 170 scenarios that you speak of, too many use Mapboards 2,3 and 4. We need more variety than that.

[2] Steven, I can't remember if "Pegasus Bridge" was designed before the advent of COB, but some overlays covering those extra buildings would have helped. A "couple of buildings around the bridge" should not by any means, be construed as "a city around it". Even if such overlays were not available, why not use some of the old overlays from the GI series? As far as I know, Avalon Hill still sells them, but makes no use of them at all. The Guadalcanal series will use overlays from COB, Gung Ho and the GI Series to dramatically alter mapboard terrain. Even SSRs specifying certain buildings as non-existent is acceptable in my view. People who complain about SSRs when they have a 2-inch thick rulebook at their elbows are nuts. But then, aren't all ASLers nutty about the game?

[3] Funny thing. I rate the scenario as 65/35 Pro-British for the very reasons you indicate.

[4] If this is the only criteria, I guess we must solely blame that group for such poorly balanced offerings as "Red Packets", "Shoestring Ridge", "Dash for the Bridge", "Le Manoir", "Backs to the Sea", "Sylvan Death", "Ambush!" etc.

[5] Precisely the reason Avalon Hill does NOT rely solely upon the input of one playtest group, which might have peculiar quirks and styles of play all its own. Let me say, however, that I certainly agree that it is much easier to criticize the balance of a scenario than it is to design a balanced one. Even repeated playings may not reveal a trick that might totally unbalance a scenario, a fact that I am beginning to appreciate as I try my own hand at scenario design. In the case of "Pegasus Bridge", my view is that if the British take those risks and don't have too much bad luck with Glider losses, the scenario is 80% in the bag.

[6] I think now is a good time to take notice that Mr. Swann's own efforts have been lauded by the readership of the General. Volume 27, No. 3 indicates that Mr. Swann's article "Alpine Hunters" claimed top readership approval in Volume 27, No. 1. Many know that I personally view such material as too tedious for my taste, and perhaps this should be an indicator for me to re-assess my views. I believe it was Bruce Catton (a Civil War historian) who once noted that there are two kinds of editors: those that think they know what the readership wants and are right, and those that think the same but are wrong. The ones that are wrong don't last long. Mr. Swann has indicated that he is looking forward to a possible opportunity to work with ATP later this summer, and let me say that I look forward to that. In any case, we ask him, too, to keep up the good work; it is needed.

Dear Marc,

I just wanted to write to congratulate you on "At The Point". In general it is a fine publication, well written, intelligent, and very informative. I for one enjoy your method of inserting editorial comments in the body of the articles themselves. However, you may want to insure that your writers take no offense to your comments- those with thin skin may be offended when you point out their wrong interpretation of the rules. If anything I would like to see more articles on rules interpretation, for it strikes me that every time I play a new opponent there always seems to be a few rules that one of us seem to be applying wrongly. An easy example is the rout rules, for which it seems like everyone has a different interpretation.

I have no complaint about the inclusion of scenarios in ATP, but don't believe that reprinting scenarios from ASL News is a good idea. I would much rather see no scenarios than to reprint those which we can find elsewhere. [...]

One idea that Robert Banozic and I had for ATP was the publication of an ATP player's directory. I believe that most of your subscribers would love to have a list of other good players around the country for when they travel, or simply to set up a dialog. I believe that most ASLers would be unopposed to having their names and addresses printed for the ATP readership, and you could place a little note in an upcoming issue asking subscribers to let you now if they minded. You could charge $1-2 for the issue, which would probably be very easy to produce [...] and recoup some more of your financial investment. [...] Eventually, the directory could become a veritable "who's who" of the top ASLers. [...]

Sincerely, Richard J. Poupard

ATP will not publish any more scenarios from ASL NEWS; as mentioned before, these scenarios were presented courtesy of that magazine and were printed in order to spark some interest in their European efforts. I personally know for a fact that only a very small proportion of ATP subscribers were affected by this and do not regret it in the least. The Belgians have come out with a "Special Oldies" edition (3 volumes) which incorporates over twenty scenarios, only one of which ("The Pursuit") has appeared in ATP.

A Players Directory is a very good idea and is one which should be taken up by a Custodian of some sort. Frankly, I have my hands full with ATP and have no interest in publishing this directory, even though I agree that it would be useful indeed. I would be more than happy to send my updated mailing list to this individual who would then care for it. Obviously, this personage would need to have the support of other key publishers such as Kurt Martin of the Rout Report and Robert Wolkey/Curt Schilling of FFE (a new effort that has a lot of promise, perhaps by now some readers have received a free sample of it). Why, even the editor of OAF might be persuaded

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

AREA & ASL Part 2

Russ Gifford

What will AREA do for you if you are primarily a face to face wargamer, as most ASL players are? I think it can bring you more opponents, better tournaments, and more intense competition! In Part One of this series, Ronald Berger presented the reasons why AREA works for ASL PBM/PBEM. I'm here to shout the news that it could be the most exciting thing to hit face to face play, too!

Before I jump into this, let's backtrack a little: I realize MANY wargamers don't even really know what AREA is, and many of those who have used AREA have ONLY used it in PBM/PBEM. Here's the Reader's Digest version of what AREA is:

Like the USCF (the United States Chess Federation) after which AREA is loosely modeled, AREA is an international "club", whose members play Avalon Hill Games. Members of this club may use the membership directory to find opponents, and any games between these members are scored much like tennis, bridge or chess. This is done by giving a numerical rating to the players based on their results. Unlike chess, AREA also gives three alpha ratings which show many games have been played, how many different opponents, and how many PBM games a player has completed.

The AREA ratings are standard. Win, you gain 'x' points; lose, and you lose 'x' points. The amount depends on the difference between the ratings. The more you play, the more accurate your rating is, and I maintain nothing could be better than EVERY game you play being AREA rated (EXC: Playtest games). If you play a lower rated player and lose numerous points, then your rating was in need of adjustment anyway, wasn't it? And "protecting" your rating by not playing only means your rating is worthless, since you aren't going to "use" it anyway! Where is the honor in that?

In existence since 1974, AREA was largely aimed at creating a pool of PBM players, since PBM opponents had a tendency to "vanish" when they were losing. The alphanumerics rating system would "prove" you were a player that would "stick it out", or at least resign rather than disappear! The reason for the numerical rating is to prevent or eliminate "overmatching" opponents. Matching players of vastly different skill levels creates a very unenjoyable game for both sides, and might discourage new players to quit the entire hobby.

Thus the AREA alpha qualifiers rate your experience, while the numeric reflects your win-loss record. The point rating will fluctuate, but the alpha qualifiers will only increase. I tend to think of these as badges you have earned along the way. For your information, I expect an average rating for ASL will be 1250 to 1500, Good 1501 to 1750, and expert 1751 to 2000. Master 2001 to 2250 and Grandmaster 2250+. (Or you could get cute and assign them leader ranks, or 7-0, 8-0, etc!) [*too cute!- Faust*]

So what good is all this? When you move AREA into the realm of face to face gaming, and for ASL specifically, it brings many good features to light.

1) Creation of a known database of wargamers/ ASL players.

With the creation of game specific ratings in 1989, you can now join AREA for your favorite game. You can then write AH for opponents in your region, or to access the database for tournament mailings.

2) Use of AREA ratings to match opponents of equal strength.

New players that lose every game to "the club pro" often quit the system before they learn enough to grasp the tricks of how to do it right. By using AREA, I have booked matches between players of equal experience, and it is amazing how fired up these players are when they have played a close game with an equal! They are able to "see" things they would have done differently, and capitalize on their opponent's mistakes, or see how their mistakes hurt them. Creating a pool of 40+ local AREA ASL players let me do this. Also, publishing a local "top 20" list prompted many of the players to contact each other and arrange matches to prove or disprove the rating list! In my book, ANYTHING that increases competition is a good thing, and I see this as an example of what's right with the use of ratings.

3) Use of AREA ratings to "seed" tournaments.

As Bill Connor, and Don Munsell before him, have said, "Every player deserves the best possible game." Overmatching ruins that, and also tends to scare marginal players away from the very competitions that will improve them as players! Better yet, AREA also allows me to run better tournaments. Anyone who has arranged tournevs knows the inherent problems. Bill Connor recently stated that all tournaments are basically unfair, and he's right. As he also said, the trick is to make them as fair as possible. AREA can help do that.

No one likes a first round blowout, but the best players in the tourney are also entitled to have an equal chance at the top of the ladder. This is known as seeding, and all other organized sports/hobbies have fairly done this for years. That because all other organized hobbies have a rating system already in place, and not an arbitrary one that changes in method with each tournament director.

Thus, using established tournament systems from other hobbies with this new rating system, we have already improved an aspect of our hobby using AREA. Too, you can "speed up" some tournaments by pairing by the QUARTER, rather than half, which could lessen the

number of rounds to declare a winner. Or, you can create an A or a B section based on ratings for entry.

Take the GEnie PBEM tourney. I may well have too many players next year to finish the tourney in one year since 4 rounds is likely the maximum we can play, which limits us to 16 players. If I have 32 players, how do I fairly decide who gets to play? If this is the case, I could hold two tourneys simultaneously, with section A having all players with "C**" or better alphas, or taking the top 16 verified AREA players. Thus, while making certain the system rewards the players who have worked at perfecting their skills, I am still not forced to revert to a lottery or chance draw. Too, we can use AREA to increase the interest for tournament players. If we assign classes for score levels, you can enter a large tourney, and even though you have little hope of winning, you can compete for the best score in your "class." Thus, as at AvalonCon, say all players entering at less than 1400 were considered "class C". If you finished at 4-3, you might have the best Class C record, and would win a prize, rewarding the fact that you were up against some tough competition!

These tricks can increase interest in tournament play among those of us who KNOW we haven't a shot in hell of WINNING the whole tourney! Now there is a reason to play every game, and thanks to the rating system, still be competing to "win" something.

4) AREA as a governing body.

AREA is also available to set up National competitions, such as AvalonCon, or the GEnie PBEM tourney, or the State ASL Championships. It can work as a focal point for contacts and information. Why should each tourney director be forced to recreate the wheel? Use AREA to trade tournament formats and spec sheets, pairing standards and scenario ideas. Also use AREA to

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Mail Call #4

Keith Larson

In the last "Mail Call", Russ Gifford gave us a glimpse into the exciting world of ASL via computer modem, but the possibilities that computers hold for ASL have only begun. Already, diehard ASLers are beginning to write the code for computer programs that promise to make life easier for those who play ASL by either ground or electronic mail. Though it is hard to say at this point what the future will actually hold, I will stick my head out like a good soothsayer and try to give you a glimpse into the future.

As I see it, computer programs of ASL will fall into three broad categories, the first being simple Playing Aids. These programs are already in the works and should be appearing on the bulletin boards in the next several months. I define playing aid programs as those which assist in just one or two aspects of ASL-PBM. For example, Dave Hailey has written a helpful program on which players record and retrieve hidden information such as the location of HIP units/fortifications and the contents of concealed stacks. The program is very helpful in checking for the presence of minefields as you move (no waiting for the next mailing), hiding the contents of "?" stacks, and checking for the presence of HIP units in hexes which suffered a "?" lose attack. Though it can be used to visually check for HIP units that may be in an open hex in your LOS, such a use is time consuming and better left to the old method of waiting for your opponent to inform you of the presence of such stacks. Other programs which generate dr/DR's or create a standardized format for recording a mailing have been discussed.

The second category of programs is that of full-blown ASL PBM GAP programs. Several years ago AH released a computer program for the old 8-bit Apple computers called ASL GAP. This program walked players through an ASL turn, remembering all the rules which players so often forget and generating the results of each attack. Sadly the sales of this program never justified an IBM conversion. Surely one of the reasons for the poor sales figures was the fact that it was poorly suited for FTF play (who would want to lug a computer along with all your boards just to play a game). However, these limitations are non-existent in a PBM game. If the old program could be modified to follow the sequence of play of a PBM game and to generate ASCII text reports to be mailed either by ground or electronically, PBMers would have a real gold mine! Hopefully AH will consider such a program, especially with the growth of the PBM/PBEM community. However, I fear the sales of such a program may never justify its creation. One lesson that has been driven home very hard in the computer wargame industry is this: GRAPHIC BASED PROGRAMS SELL, TEXT BASED PROGRAMS DO NOT. However, there is some hope that such a program will be written by the players themselves, a programming group is already forming on the GEnie network.

Finally, we come to the third class of programs which are possible for ASL, the full graphic version of ASL. The recent decision by the MicroComputer division of AH to produce computerized versions of AH's more successful board games gives hope that this may be a real possibility. The recent release of Computer Third Reich is a good foretaste of what might by in the future for the ASL community. The Computer Corner of Vol. 27, Num. 3 of the General clearly illustrates the potential for such a product. With the advent of faster CPUs, VGA graphic and 1+ Megs of RAM on most computers, what was only a dream a few years ago, can now be

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IFT VS IIFT: DEBATE OR NO DEBATE?

After a lot of discussion on the GEnie network as a result of some commentary in ATP and, more importantly, Mark Nixon's article "Using the CRT" which appeared in the ASL Annual '91, the hubbub seems to have completely died down. Rex Martin's comments in Volume 27, No. 3 of the General may have also withdrawn fuel from the fire, so to speak. Many of those who find the IIFT unfavorable have asked me to avoid raising the issue again, whereas pro-IIFTers have written precisely the opposite request. But what do mainstream hobbyists really think?

Mr. Martin has suggested that the IIFT can never be considered more than a variant due to the fact that "the requisite re-write of the bulk of the rulebook would keep us from further expansion of the system for some time." While this is certainly true if the acronym "IIFT" needed to be substituted for "IFT" everywhere in the ASLRB, one wonders exactly how little would need to be changed if Avalon Hill were to adopt the so-called "IIFT" as a brand new "IFT", simply dropping the term "Incremental" from the phrase all together. The world would no longer have two IFTs, one attributed as Incremental and the other Standard, but just one New Standard IFT, more incremental in nature than its predecessor.

As a matter of fact, it seems to me that only the Cowering/Residual FP rules would need to be dealt with specifically. Realizing, however, that what is suggested here is a metamorphosis of the IFT from its organization that is fundamentally different from that of its origins. That, in itself, is likely to preclude any changes along this line, even if only rules sections A7.8 and (to a very minor extent) A8.2 were affected. Let's face it, if the IIFT were really as hard to integrate into the existing body of rules as Mr. Martin suggests, people wouldn't be so fond of it, would they? Is it not possible that the designers have an inherent fondness for this old skeleton? That they don't really want to change it?

Such speculation is moot if the IIFT is demonstrably inferior to the IFT. It has been suggested by super-grognards that concealment is stripped more easily, that Firepower tends to dominate the game more with the IIFT. Personally, I agree, but one must remember Bruce Catton's advice. I have in the ATP files a mathematical analysis of the IFT/IIFT differences and advantages by Mr. George Windau. It is an extensive effort that supports the IIFT. However, a certain amount of controversy revolves around his conclusions, and an excellent rebuttal by Mr. Nixon is also in my hot little hands. Furthermore, the originator of the IIFT, Mr. Jay Kaufman, has his own unique view on the IIFT and sheds light on just how the IIFT came into being. Though I did promise Rex not to use the Kaufman letter because he might, I will renege on that deal if that's what you want. Readers, what shall I do? Open the Pandora's box or no?

Just to titillate your fancy, you will find an interesting piece by Mr. Windau that utilizes the existing IFT as a sort of IIFT. As it uses procedures similar to ROF retention, it is quite an elegant solution for those of you who want to use the standard IFT with a little more bang for your buck. Now there is a reason to use that extra LMG, but George offers no guarantees!

Q-IIFT

(Quick Incremental Infantry Fire Table)

George Windau

Use the standard IFT to resolve all fire attacks. Fractions are rounded down, no fractional FP units will be expressed in the resolution of the Fire Attack (EX: 3.5 FP is resolved as a 3FP attack on the 2FP column).

All fire attacks that correspond exactly to the Standard IFT FP Columns are resolved on the Standard IFT....1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 30 and 36. However, all other FP attacks are resolved on the next-left IFT column (e.g. 3 FP on the 2 column) with a possibility of a Wild Negative -1 DRM (WN DRM).

To determine if a WN DRM applies, follow this simple procedure:

1. Subtract the column FP used from the actual FP of the attack (e.g. 2 column used for a 3FP attack, 3-2=1).

2. Compare the result on the Colored Die to the number determined in step 1 above. If less than or equal to this number, a WN DRM applies to the resolution of that attack (e.g. in a 11FP attack with no DRM a '6' DR is rolled with a '2' on the Colored die. Since the colored die result is less than 11FP-8 (column used)=3, a WN DRM applies to the attack, so the final result is a '5', which is a 2MC on the '8' column).

The advantages of the Q-IIFT are: Players will know exactly what their odds for a WN DRM are at all times. No new charts need to be constructed...this system is easy to memorize and as easy to use as the IFT and ROF procedures. Those players who like to use "even-numbered" stacks can continue to use their same "time-tested" methods...and those who wish to take advantage of WN DRMs can build "odd or weird" non-conventional stacks with a chance of getting a more favorable result using the standard IFT.

POINT CROSSFIRE #2
"THE PROFESSIONALS"

ROBERT BANOZIC: Yugoslav

MARK NIXON: German

YUGOSLAV PERSPECTIVE

RATING: 50%-50%
ADVANTAGES: HIP, MOLs

I'm really partial to those few scenarios where the defense sets up completely HIP. There's just something about having an "aerial view" of the battlefield, noting the buildings, woods, and other terrain - and knowing the defender is out there, somewhere, even though he can't be seen. It just feels right, if you know what I mean - and can be more than a little intimidating for the attacker.

Unfortunately for me, Mark has been around this block more than a few times; I know he won't be unduly frightened by my entirely HIP force. Still, since my Yugoslav cadets are clearly outgunned and outclassed by the attacking Germans, HIP status for my entire OB is easily the most important factor in my favor. The MOLs are also a big asset, as their availability will probably deter Mark from trying too much PBF activity with his armor. But I will think twice before using these against infantry just to kick my FP up another column, due to the risk of breaking my own units.

DISADVANTAGES: ARMOR, SMOKE, TIME

My biggest problem is that the Germans have tanks and, of course the Yugoslavs don't. The PzlVEs aren't bad, either, and have a generous smoke allowance which I expect Mark to exploit to the fullest. With my 47mm ATGs I am not only going to have to hope to have some good tank-killing opportunities, but even if I get these I will still need a fair bit of luck to get some kills. And it seems to me that, at 9 turns, Mark has quite a bit of time to cross the bridge and meet his VC, so I feel under pressure from this factor as well.

YUGOSLAV SET UP

I expect Mark to hit me full force squarely in the west. My set-up in defense is (All units set up HIP and on Board 6.):

N8 squad
K4 squad
N5 squad
T3/6 ATG, crew, Boresight 7Q9
M5 squad
R2 squad
S5 2x squad, LMG, 8-1
U1 squad
M1/3 ATG, crew, Boresight P2
N4/2 2x squad, MMG,9-2,
Boresight S9

A looping attack around the south is possible, but not what I'm planning for. I believe building N4 must be secured by the Germans before they attempt to cross the bridge, and an attack from the west is the most direct way to accomplish this. Mark will probably park his tanks on the 11J5 hill mass on Turn 1 in preparation for a smoke bombardment on Turn 2. 6M6, N5, and O4 are all obvious targets for smoke, because the second level of each would give an excellent field of fire for my MMG and 9-2. That's why I located my kill stack at N4/2. The field of fire is more restrictive (but still good), and I'm hoping the PzlVEs will exhaust their smoke capability before getting to N4, or perhaps will ignore that hex altogether. With this in mind, I will keep this stack HIP through Turn 1 even if Mark gives me some GE targets to shoot, because I don't want to prematurely give away this position.

6N9, M9 and L8 seem likely spots for the halftracks to try to disembark troops, and my guys at N8 are waiting with MOLs (I hope) for some to come this way. A word here about MOLs: Nothing in the rules or on the QRDC indicate there is any penalty for using MOLs in the AFPh. However, SSR2 from DASL #3 ("Storming the Factory") indicates there is a +2 DRM on the TK DR, and I believe this is the general rule, but wouldn't it be nice to have this in the rulebook? [*Yes! Makes a lot of sense--Faust*] On the other hand, cowering, SMOKE and other Hindrances/ TEM/ HD status/ Leadership apparently do not affect the TK resolution at all when using MOLs against AFVs [*Strange, isn't it? Why shouldn't MOL have to obtain a hit like every other projectile in the game...?*]. The 8-1 FG at S5 covers the T3/6 ATG. Lone squads at N5 and M5 should hinder the assault I am expecting through the N4 building, while the one at K4 supplies some flank protection. And in a pinch I will try to Manhandle the M1/3 ATG to 7M10/1, from which it can cover the length of the bridge.

The squad at R2 will use CX, and by the end of Turn 2 should be at 7Q3, where it will try to entrench. If the Germans come into LOS before this is accomplished it can Assault Move into P2 instead while maintaining Concealment. Assuming the attack does come from the west, the squad at U1 will move to 7Q10 and try to entrench on Turn 2, or alternatively can take up position (Conceal in P10). Both these squads could give Mark serious problems in the end-game.

With the exception of the squad at N8, my force is positioned in the rear half of my set-up area. I am hoping Mark will be inclined to use a few turns to approach cautiously and Search some of the more forward positions before he stumbles onto the main body of my troops. I considered R9 and P9 as locations for a couple squads, and O3/1 for an ATG. However, these are all too vulnerable and obvious, and would probably be wiped out before they could be effective.

What I would really like to do if all else fails is to destroy/Immobilize an AFV on the bridge, especially if at least one of the halftracks has already been knocked out. This would bring the 22 ton load limit from SSR 3 into play. Nothing could

crush Mark's hopes more completely or dramatically than a collapsed bridge!

GERMAN PERSPECTIVE

RATING: 60% German
ADVANTAGES: FIREPOWER, SMOKE, RANGE.

Combined arms is the key here. Use AFV mobility, firepower and smoke to pave the way forward for the infantry in the first few turns, and when the enemy begin to reveal themselves, throw those squads against them as well in order to hold them a two hex distance from the vehicles, buffer enough from those Molotov cocktails. With s9 available in four tanks, even the enemy 9-2 directing the MMG from a second level position might be nullified, and even after the smoke rounds begin to fail the sD7 will continue to screen my troops. My inherent range advantage over enemy squads will work to my advantage often enough, and the fact that I need do only a bit better than trade squad for squad ought to weigh nicely against the losses I'll likely incur to surprise enemy fire from HIP locations.

DISADVANTAGES: BRIDGE LOAD LIMIT, INITIAL OPEN TERRAIN TO CROSS, FEW SQUADS.

I would list the enemy 9-2 here as my biggest disadvantage, but expect Robert to have already numbered him among his greatest assets. Briefly put, once located, the 9-2 will be hit with smoke, I hope. The bridge load limit, however, is something I can do only a little to combat, as I will exceed it if I have to put more than one vehicle on it, unless both are HTs. Thus, immobilizations, wrecks and even stuns and shocks on the bridge might cause me to lose, and that is why my first choice will be to run across with the two HTs. Unfortunately, should both HTs be stuck on the bridge, the next vehicle across would have to roll less than 8 to avoid a collapse. Notice that had I used a HT and a tank instead, the roll would only have to be less than 10, although this would sacrifice the chance to at least try two vehicles without a single roll (the two HTs), both of which might ideally also contain the squad needed to fulfill victory. Well, this sort of reasoning could continue, but it all might be decided by other events as well (like my armor losses) so I'll leave it here. Otherwise, I will likely lose some squads running at the enemy on the initial turns, for I don't believe I can afford to squander time, and this will not help my initial lack of squads much either. Sounds fairly grim, but the enemy also have problems which should alleviate some of mine.

GERMAN ATTACK

I expect the 9-2 with the MMG in a second level position and both ATGs located very close to the bridge. I won't be surprised if the Yugoslavs run across the bridge and attempt to entrench Q3, but since I can't expect to stop such a move will instead plan to deal with it at game end. My opening move will attempt to lay sD7 smoke in 1105 and 11N5, even using CE HT vehicular smoke grenades in the latter if needed. If successful, my six squads on foot with the two leaders will be able to run up behind this smoke screen and my ending turn #1 positions will be something like:

MKIV P4/2/M,P5/2/M,P6/2/3,P7/3.
HT with one squad each N5/3/CE, O6/3/CE.
O5 9-1, 3x squads, 3-LMG, all CX.
N4 8-0, 2x squads, LMG, 2-HS, all CX.

Both leaders actually tried to deploy one squad each, so the stacks might be a bit taller, the point of which is that if the massive number of sD7 and VSG attempts failed, everybody would opt to run forward singly and deployed as far as possible in order to minimize results from the 9-2 directed MMG. Unfortunately, this would also mean the foot sloggers would be a couple hexes to the rear yet, and my chicken leaders would decide to move up through the woods to the stone wall. Ah well, better smoke and sD7 luck on turn #2 might get them forward yet.

Some of my tanks use the level one plateau to screen all possible ATG shots and line-up the chateau for some turn #2 smoke. One big reason I am attacking up the middle rather than straight across board 6 is because from this angle I can effectively screen second level chateau locations with just a couple rounds of smoke, making it tougher for the enemy to hit me from that building by moving to an alternate second level spot. I will use more sD7 in 11R8 to get my squads across the opening between the plateaus, and soon will be driving on building 6J8. There will probably be three or four HIP Yugoslavs in the area which I intend to disclose with squads and, better still, HS, not with tanks. Through it all, my HTs will remain in the rear in covered positions, waiting for the time when I can take the 6Q9 gateway through the wall. Once I reach my initial objective behind the 6N8-6J6 hedge, I will control the western end of the chateau and lateral movement in and out of the building, and it will be midgame and high time to surge on in to the building itself.

That's about as far as I can project myself into this encounter without seeing the enemy set-up and initial response. Everything else I do will depend on Robert's moves to stop mine, although I will state, as should be obvious by now I guess, that I plan to take the chateau with my squads, control the bridge area with smoke from my tanks and firepower from all, go after the ATGs with infantry first and tanks second, and run the bridge with HTs first, but certainly with whatever is mobile and close at hand when the opportunity arises. I would like to have tanks hitting both ends of the bridge with smoke with a HT making the dash, but this may be only a pipe dream. Reality will likely be much more desperate than that. But the one thing I

will do to try to reach end game with as many units available as possible, will be to risk only a single tank at a time to potential HIP locations, at least as much as I can. That is, I won't pull four tanks into a grouping like 6N7-6K6, for a single HIP ATG in a spot like 6J5, 6M6 or 6O7 might easily take them all out, or at least two or three. Certainly, I expect to lose tanks to those guns, probably one apiece, but will endeavor to force each gun to reveal itself with only one target available. For example, on turn #2 I want to place sD7 smoke in 11R9 and doing so takes a certain amount of risk due to potential enemy ATG placement in the area. But this tank will make his attempt, and then skate off to a spot like 11T8 rather than stop out here in the open. This enables additional tanks to cross this same open area and move on to their objectives without taking a shot from a HIP ATG which, at that moment, would know it could reveal its location to fire at a moving tank and still be able to fire at the stopped (or Motion) tank in its line of fire later on. I risk much less exposing one tank at a time to HIP fire, and will utilize this "leap-frog" tactic as standard procedure. In this manner, once an ATG is revealed, possibly at the cost of one of my beloved MK1Vs, the rest of the panzers can avoid the bloody thing while my infantry move in for the kill, or, perhaps, my entire force bypasses it if poorly placed. I don't really expect the latter case, but thought I'd mention it anyway.

YUGOSLAV RESPONSE

Well, I am fairly pleased with the way this game has gone so far. As I was hoping, Mark is burning some turns to search out some of the forward positions, and I will be smiling to myself as he rummages around in building 6J8 (sorry, Mark, there's nothing there but some empty beer cans; the cafeteria is closed for the duration). The downside of this, of course, is that I won't be doing much damage to Mark's troops in the first few turns either, although the squad at N8 might hurt someone. I expect that as Mark assaults the chateau he will only have discovered the whereabouts of this squad plus the squads digging in at each end of the bridge. The rest of my force will still be HIP, unless he's given me some good shots (unlikely). The longer I can keep Mark guessing about where my guys are, the better off I'll be. With so much still hidden, and time running out, I may profit handsomely as Mark will have to do a lot of moving in the last half of the game. And although he has prudently sought to keep his armor out of danger in the early going, he will likely not be able to afford the luxury of such caution after the half-time show (we don't have a marching band, folks, so we plan to explode some PzIVs instead).

I anticipate that it will take at least three Game Turns for Mark to clear the chateau, which will bring us to turn 6 or later. If Mark runs an AFV to the bridge a bit early to draw out my ATGs, he will almost certainly draw fire from M1/3, but T3/6 is trained intently on the first bridge hex and won't shoot until an AFV gets that far. So this ATG may not be revealed until turn 8 or 9. And my 8-1 stack will remain patiently at its post until at least turn 7 to cover that ATG. If the Gun is still hidden at that point, Mark's infantry will probably have little chance to assault it when it does pop up; hence, I will be able to dispatch the 8-1 FG to a more effective position, like 6Q4 or R1, circumstances permitting. Even that LMG is capable of taking out a HT. Similarly, unless I get some choice shots against infantry, I will keep the K4 squad hidden in the hope that an AFV will park ADJACENT (probably to pound on the 9-2 FG) so I can try for MOLs. And as long as the 9-2 group holds out it should be able to deter Mark from charging across Open Ground toward either ATG; these guys will probably be making their last stand in 6Q3/2. Of course, any s9 capability Mark has retained at this point will certainly help him here.

If the ATG at M1/3 is still around on Turn 8 and doesn't have a good PFPh target, I will try pushing the Gun to 7M10/1 to await Mark's last-chance bridge crossing. A bridge collapse isn't the only thing Mark will have to worry about if his vehicles get stuck there. The MP penalties for passing a wreck/vehicle on a bridge are double the usual penalties for the same movement on a road. If this game does come down to a last-turn rush, such obstacle(s) could make the difference between whether Mark's AFVs have the MPs to make the crossing - or whether he's trying for "a bridge too far", so to speak. And if I can stop one AFV in 7Q9, I will no longer have to worry about the Case J1 or J2 TH penalties which would otherwise be applied to fire at that hex from my T3/6 ATG. Mark may reconsider sending the HTs across the bridge first if my squads are still entrenched at either end, as they are much more vulnerable to MOLs than are the tanks. I also doubt Mark will be able to use s9 to cover the HTs as they cross. He will probably have exhausted this capability by then, or his armor will be using HE to blast my infantry, or the tanks will have to retain their ability to move in case the HTs don't make it, especially if we're on the last turn.

I'm probably fantasizing here, but... If I get to turn 9 with both ATGs trained on the bridge, and a squad dug in at each end, I think I'll let my cadets off the hook on that Achtung Panzer! book report they've been assigned for the summer. This school gives course credit for experience.

GERMAN RESPONSE

Upon seeing Robert's defense revealed, I am initially disappointed none of his defenders were HIP to the south protecting a possible thrust down the 6Y10-6Y5 road. It would have been nice to nullify the HIP status of any such placed units by my central

attack, but the wily Yugoslav has his entire army in my front, so no advantage gained for me on that score. However, I am absolutely amazed to find the 9-2 not firing at all available targets, and with only one squad between my hard charging troops and the chateau I'll be at that building in record time, by turn #4 as I make it. I don't quite understand the celebration in the enemy camp regarding me "burning some turns to search", for I have mentioned no such activity. "Rummaging around in building 6J8" will amount to a HS either rolling to search or, failing that, to mopup. This is the same treatment the chateau itself will get if I enter it with no enemy yet showing themselves; one HS in 6N4 can mop-up the entire building if the 9-2 is still hiding above. As already mentioned, my troops feel they have no time to spare, and so are running at the enemy. Imagine their surprise as they pass outpost after outpost, only to find all vacant!

It won't take three turns to clear-up the chateau unless the 8-1 group comes over to help try and hold it long before turn #7. Otherwise my tanks will lay in more smoke and fire and the infantry, basically intact still and fresh from their run up from the southwest, will swoop into the chateau at full speed. I really think the Yugoslavs would have been better off showing sporadic resistance in the outlying areas, for it would have gained them a turn or possibly even two. What I can offer now amounts to very nearly my entire OB concentrating on the few defenders in the chateau for a couple turns, which should make for a short battle. At this point I still won't know where those ATGs are HIP, or those blamed MOL toting enemy squads, so the armor will still be dispersed, with the HTs in the rear. The two passenger squads will still be onboard, for nothing has occurred to require their use as infantry. I see the chateau issue ending on turn six and the hunt for HIP units in surrounding locations continuing that turn and the next.

The ATG in 6M1 will be found easily enough, although taking it out of action will be a job, for sure. But the ATG in 6T3 is very well placed, and will probably be found, as Robert predicts, by one of my vehicles trying to cross the bridge. That is, when the gun fires into 7Q9 (boresighted) I will finally know where it is. At that point the moving vehicle can only hope for a miss or a bounce, for it has been caught flat-footed. In this case a HT will be hit on a roll of six or less, and a tank hit with a seven or less, with the tank enjoying slightly better armor protection on what would be a side or rear hit. Assuming a miss with ROF retained on that first shot, things brighten a bit as we consider a second shot as the vehicle enters 7Q8. To be sure, the ATG will now have a -1 acquisition and will discard TH case J2 if the vehicle is moving BU, but that vehicle is also leaving the boresighted hex as well as moving to a seven hex range, which requires an 8 basic TH number. Also, had you been a bit more on the ball than I was, you might have discussed with your opponent before play commenced exactly how bridge hindrances would be handled. With SSR #2 from "Bridge To Nowhere" in mind ("Each bridge hex is considered Inherent Terrain") there might already be yet another +1 TH as your vehicle enters 7Q8.

Assuming now the first vehicle does bite the big one in 7Q9, Robert makes a good point that TH cases J1 and J2 are pretty well shot, although it could happen that a HT would be turned into a burning wreck and provide added cover due to the smoke (but let's not even think about that fire spreading to the bridge itself now!). One vital matter to consider is that the initial run across the bridge has been made much earlier than turn #9, preferably on turn #7 or sooner, although sooner would likely be asking for too much and involve too much risk to still-HIP MOL throwers and the other ATG. The importance is that once the second ATG is located, I will be able to move against it before trying to run the bridge again. What I do about the gun will depend upon what forces I still possess, how much time is available and what other enemy units are still out there. Best bet is to attack the gun directly, which will be great to do on the turn it already fired at 7Q9, since its placement in woods precludes it from changing CA to face a direct threat (C5.11--and one good reason to always consider ATG placement in concealment terrain such as brush, etc, which would allow the gun to change CA, albeit at a higher risk overrun). Another option is to screen hex 7Q9 with smoke. You can fire sD7 in 6RI and 7Q10 (or use VSG or infantry smoke for that matter) without even being seen by the ATG. Prep Firing s9 would certainly work well too if that capability still exists, into 6S2 and 6S1, for example. Even bypass through the Atgs own hex and blow off a sD7 there if you can.

Unless I've gotten lucky enough to nail that squad across the river with units miraculously finding themselves with nothing more immediate to worry about (like, fat chance, right?) the final obstacle will be the threat of this guy and his supply of MOL. Hopefully he hasn't invented the six-pack ahead of schedule, for the real drawback of these weapons is, like the PF, their uncertainty. If he is broken or pinned there will be no chance of MOL, but what do the odds look like for a HT or a tank charging straight across the bridge to hex 7Q4? The HT will be destroyed 21% of the time, a CE tank 14% and a BU tank 8%. In addition, don't forget to apply the Collateral attack (12+2) vs all CE PRC. Even if the MOL availability dr was failed, the 8+2 Collateral attack is something to worry about. But if this bullet is dodged, there will be no more MOL, for once the vehicle enters the enemy hex that unit could not use MOL in TPBF (D7.22). Of course knowing this in advance the 4-3-7 might have held off when the vehicle drew up

adjacent, so it could unleash a TPBF MOL and Collateral 16+2 attack. This has the added bonus of possibly yielding a rear target facing hit (A22.612) which would bump the kill probabilities above to 29%, 21%, and 14%.

Notice that TPBF vs. HT passengers will affect them whether BU or CE, and the likelihood of a green Yugoslav squad actually passing a +2 PAATC and harming a moving vehicle with its lousy 4 CCV is reason enough to forego this more conventional mode of CC attack and opt for the MOL attack instead.

The above is really just a brief sketch of some of the possibilities in this close quarters mobile confrontation at the east end of the bridge. The attacking vehicle must also decide whether or not to PBF from the adjacent hex, overrun or not, unload infantry in the enemy hex, leave the vehicle in the hex or move it on through (free of retaliation if the infantry were unloaded in the enemy hex!), TPBF, and so on. The strength of that 7Q3 position is easy to see, and it is understandable that Robert ran the unit across the bridge. It wouldn't be surprising to face two squads in this spot (the better to entrench) with even the 8-1 and LMG thrown in. Another possibility might have been an ATG pushed across to the east shore, although I believe Robert has his ATGs better positioned in their HIP locations. However, I believe this tough defense at the bridge, the combination of HIP ATG guns, entrenched MOL wielding squads and a troublesome bridge load limit, is usually not going to be enough to save what has been lost by the rest of the Yugoslavs. I certainly expect my troops to get themselves in position to cross the bridge long before turn #9, and to have finessed a way to slip past those ATGs, if not destroy them. It will be a good fight, but I expect the Pros to win this one about 6 of 10 tries.

ASL Myths

Commissar: Fearless Leader or Homicidal Maniac?

Eric Baker

The final round of tournament play at Avaloncon was the excellent scenario "Bridge to Nowhere". Long one of my favorites, I got involved in a couple of conversations regarding the scenario's Soviet balance provisions; namely exchanging the 8-0 leader for a 9-1. Being set in 1941, this really means exchanging a 9-0 Commissar for a 9-1. Many were of the opinion that this was really no balance at all, the line of thinking being that a Commissar Is ALWAYS good to have on your side. Is this the case?

Look again, all you fledgling Young Pioneers! The following shows the chance for a broken unit of the listed strength to be rallied by, respectively, a Commissar, an 8-0, and a -1 leader, The two numbers are DM/non-DM. The last column shows the chance for the Commissar reducing the listed unit if the rally fails.

UNIT	COMMISSAR	8-0 LEADER	8-1/9-1	RED
2-2-6 (4)	42%/42%	03%/27%	03%/42%	58%
4-3-6 (5)	58/58	03/42	08/58	42
2-3-7 (6)	72/72	08/58	17/72	28
4-4-7 (7)	83/83	17/72	27/83	17
4-5-8 (8)	92/92	27/83	42/92	08

The significant columns for "Bridge to Nowhere" are the 9-0 and 9-1. By comparing columns, we see that the ONLY advantage the 9-0 has is it's ability to cancel DM. Why? Because anyone stacked with the 9-1 in essence has it's morale raised by one; and both the Commissar and the 9-1 will Pin or Break on the same rolls. So each offers their location the same amount of protection. The 9-1, on the other hand, offers the -1 DRM to IFT rolls, a significant advantage in this scenario where -1 Woods terrain predominates. It would seem that the 9-1 is indeed a good trade for the 9-0.

Usually, however, the 9-0 can be traded for a lowly 8-0. But is this always a good deal? The crux of the matter at first simply looks to be the advantage the Commissar has by being able to cancel DM status. Add to that the advantage of raising all units morale in it's location by one, and the Commissar looks like the way to go. But the killer is that last column; if the unit doesn't rally, kiss it goodbye. At best it'll be around as a worse unit; at worst it's DOA upon being kissed by Comrade Fearless Leader.

The question to ask before you set up is this; how important are your individual squads vs. the ability to rally quickly? In a scenario where numbers are not important, a Commissar may be more valuable than an 8-0, for if you snuff your own guys there are more where they came from. But if every unit is critical, and conscripts predominate (a-la "Bridge to Nowhere"), then I'd stick with the 8-0. And if the choice is between an 8-1 or 10-0, then it can be even harder to justify the Commissar, for same rational as appeared in "Bridge" applies, with the only other

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

At The Point

MONSIEUR OX

And now, Introducing The World's Greatest Scenarios! These were selected by a survey of elite players in the USA during 1991. 30 of the best players in the US and other significant parties were polled by yours truly at '91 events such as Avaloncon, with each giving me their opinion as to the best three scenarios published to date. The question was usually phrased "What do you think are the three best scenarios in the world to date?"

This survey discovered which are the very best scenarios ever!!! Well, obviously, this list doesn't show any such thing. But it does give some idea of which scenarios are best standing the test of time, or at least which ones players are finding to be most memorable, or at a minimum, which scenarios players are able to think of when on the spot.

I picked big names in tournament play, playtesting and time with the hobby, including such luminaries as Nixon, Baker, Bakken, Tokarz, Chaney, Conner and Fortenberry. No, I didn't poll everyone, but I tried to get a good sampling. I suppose a mammoth effort might find different results, but no excuses here: I wanted to give newer players and other curious parties an idea of what scenarios might be reasonably expected to produce a memorable experience for the contestants.

First, let's look at the honorable mentions.

A High Price To Pay
Celles Melee
Draconian Measures
Eastern Gate
1st Crisis At Army Group North
The Fugitives
Guards Counterattack
Hube's Pocket
Khamsin

Notice that of these nine, seven include the Germans, one the Italians and one the Japanese, against five Russian, three British and one American. Three are from the General, one from In Contact and the remainder from Streets of Fire, Hollow Legions, Code of Bushido, Beyond Valor and West of Alamein. None re huge and OBA and entrenchments generally take a back seat to mobility, if I can generalize that far. Overall, a good mix.

Our second tier contains the following little gems:

To The Last Man
Bushmasters
The Last Bid

Here we have a General Deluxe offering, a Code of Bushido contest and the monster scenario from Red Barricades. All of these are big ones, with The Last Bid crossing into the unknown territory of the 20+ turn scenario. All are very gritty affairs, with intense combat in the rubbled streets of Stalingrad and Budapest flavored with the intrigue of an enormous banzai charge in the jungle.

I suspect these three got votes because they offer enough variety of strategy and outcome to make replays really worthwhile. Often it seems a scenario is pretty interesting, but isn't attractive enough to make a replay seem like a better idea than going on to new territory. After all, there are lots of scenarios out there.

And now, with a drum roll and a flourish, allow me to announce the winner of today's fashion show.

The Number One, the All Mighty On High:

Hill 621!

Yes, it's no spring chicken, this one, but it has all the ingredients of the classic: Cool units (and lots of them), some geographic drama (the big hill) and numerous possibilities for "the perfect setup/strategy." Hill 621 keeps bringing players back for more. At least a few crazies have played it more than a dozen times, though it's no tournament-sized cookie.

So there you have it. The definitive list of The Big 13. Do with it what you will, but allow me to make this suggestion:

Go through this list, starting with Hill 621, and make sure you've played every scenario shown. In the process of playing/reminiscing you may find some personal favorites of your own, and you probably won't find any of them to be a big disappointment. Okay, some of you will probably be really disappointed, but I'm sure it's you and not the scenario.

At any rate, consider this a connoisseur's list of fine wines, to be sampled thoroughly before moving on to make your own discoveries. It never hurts to see what other people have found rewarding.

Next Time: Bad scenarios and what makes them bad...

This issue's Really Insignificant Trivia:

What is the farthest an MMC can travel (with any/no SW/SMC) in one MPh on a normal ASL board without use of a vehicle? The answer when M. OX visits again!

KURT

(FROM PAGE 5)

to send a copy of his mailing list to this custodian, especially since he might just want a copy of the results for himself. Again, however, let me say that I have no time to "do it all"! Perhaps even you, Mr. Poupard, might want to take on the job of "Mailing List Custodian?"

Dear Sir,
I subscribed to At The Point at Avaloncon on the recommendation of Gary Fortenberry. [...]
Being a rabid Free Marketeer who understands the value of a copyright, I fully applaud your defense of your property in Issue #6. However, if a yearly subscription of 10 issues is $15, isn't $5 per back issue a little steep? I've never run a paid newsletter so if the price somehow reflects the cost of printing and mailing the back issue then it makes sense. If you need the cash to help run At The Point, perhaps the yearly subscription price for this fine publication should be bumped up. Relying on sales of back issues to subsidize an ongoing magazine doesn't sound like a safe strategy to me. If you don't need the money, then the $5 price is only an impediment to honest folks who want to "spread the good news" and an encouragement to photocopy. End of Rant. Thanks for your time.

Pax Vobiscum, Russell Mueller

As explained in an earlier issue to Mr. Hench, the high price of back issues does reflect the "cost", not only in terms of printing and mailing but in dealing with inventory and so forth. Further, with a high price I seek to limit the demand, so to speak. I rely on all revenues to subsidize this magazine, believe me. You make a good point that a too high price of back issues might have other hidden costs such as you mention; I certainly don't want to discourage the dispersal of ATP hither and yon. I do plan to reduce the price of back issues sooh.

(FROM PAGE 7, COLUMN 1)

contact prospective players, or certify tournaments. This is new ground for AREA, and one that offers much for potential for the system.

What is the potential for all this happening? It's actually all happening even now! Yet, to reach full potential, we need to sign up a majority of ASL players into AREA. But since the lifetime fee is only $8, or $16 for an ASL specific membership, the value is very good. The AREA tournaments I have run have been well received, and the fact they were AREA rated has garnered attention for them in The GENERAL.

Best of all, the advent of AVALONCON has signed up many new AREA members, and garnered a great deal of attention for AREA. This is the beginnings of the database idea, and the chance to make large conventions AREA rated. Oktoberfest is coming, and many of the players will already be AREA rated. Use your AREA rating there, and in all the ASL games you play! Join AREA, talk it up to your friends, and see what can develop! The hard work was the first step. Use AREA, and move wargaming into the same status as any other established hobby, and then enjoy the benefits!

(FROM PAGE 7, COLUMN 2)

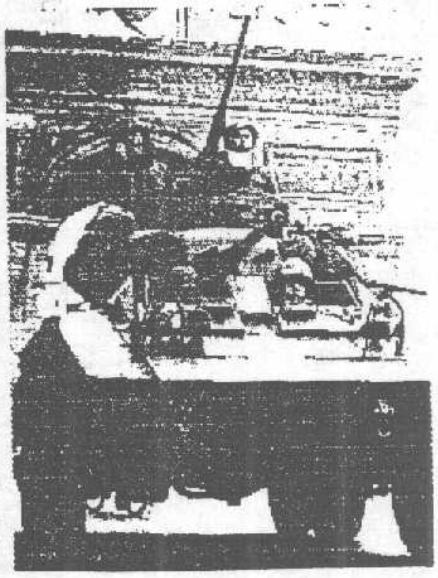
a reality. The fact that the designers of Computer Third Reich added the ability of the program to generate text files to allow players to PBM/PBEM should be quite encouraging to all ASL-PBMers. The article also illustrates the limitations of converting a board game to a computer program, not everything will carry over to the new media 100%. However, I am sure that the finished product would be faithful enough to please most ASLers. What are the chances of such a program becoming a reality? I think it depends on two factors: 1) The interest shown by the ASL community for such a product. 2) The sales of Computer Third Riech. Thus, if you are at all interested in seeing computer programs for ASL I would suggest that you consider purchasing Computer Third Riech (even if you are not a 3R fan) and writing a letter to AH explaining why you bought computer 3R and expressing your interest in a computer produce for ASL. A fact often overlooked by wargamers is that AH is a business and as is the case with all businesses, money talks.

(FROM PAGE 13)

benefit of the 10-0 being it's lower chance to Pin/Break due to a fire attack.

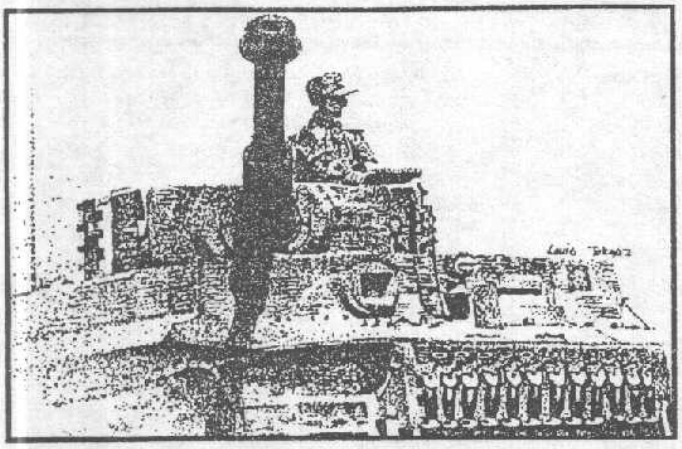
If, however, you anticipate being in situations where close proximity will deny you the ability to lose DM status in time to rally (a-la "Guryev's HQ) or elite squads will predominate, or, as stated earlier, you have so many squads that offing a few won't matter, then a much better case is made for bring-ng in one of Beria's finest.

In conclusion, we can see that the opportunity to exchange a leader for a Commissar is a double edged sword. Be sure to analyze your situation before recruiting that Politically Correct looking guy; he could do you more harm than good.



BLOODY CALVARY

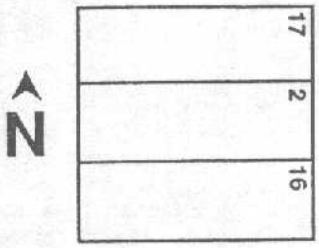
ASL SCENARIO ATP2



HILL 112, NORMANDY, 10 July, 1944: On the night of July 7, 450 heavy bombers attacked Caen in an effort to clear the way for an assault by "I" Corps the following morning. However, when British troops jumped off on Operation "Charnwood," they quickly discovered that the 12th SS Division would resist as tenaciously as ever. Hill 112, the commanding position beyond the river Odon, was the focal point of the attack. Fanatic defense readied to bloody elements of the 4th Somerset Light Infantry and the 7th RTR of the 31st Tank Brigade when they attempted to seize the Hill. Each side though it to be of pivotal importance in any effort to out-flank Caen.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The British player wins at Game End if all level 3 hexes are clear of unbroken German MMC and Mobile AFV with functioning MA AND the British Controls ≥9 buildings within the German setup area.

BOARD CONFIGURATION:



BALANCE:

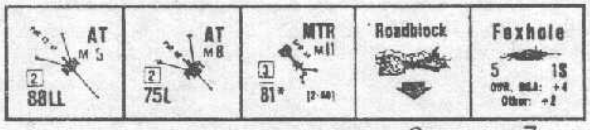
- Change British OBA to 120+mm
- Add two dm 51 MTR's to British OB

TURN RECORD CHART

	1	2	3	+4	5	6	7	8	9	10	END
GERMAN Sets Up First / BRITISH Moves First											

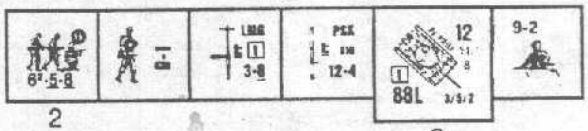
Elements of 26th SS Regt., 12th SS Panzer Division [ELR: 5] set up on/east of hexrow X{SAN: 6}

10 3 4 7



2 7

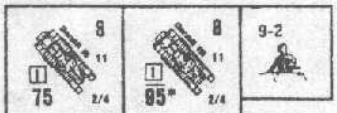
Elements of 102nd Abteilung and 9th SS Panzer Division enter on Turn 4 on the east edge:



2 2

Elements of 129th Brigade, 4th Somerset Light Infantry and C Squadron, 7th RTR, 31st Tank Brigade [ELR: 4] enter along west edge on Turn 1 {SAN: 3}

17 2 2 4 4 2



6 2

SPECIAL RULES:

1. EC are Moderate with with no wind at start.
2. Treat all hedges as Bocage. The outline of Hill 538 and all terrain therein is treated as Grain at level 0.
3. The Germans receive 1 module of 80+mm Battalion MTR OBA. The British receive 1 module of 150+mm OBA with Plentiful Ammo.
4. The Germans may set up two squads or their equivalent and any SMC/SW that stack with them HIP.
5. British 6-4-8's are Assault Engineers.

Aftermath: As the British moved forward, they came under deadly fire from small arms and ATG's hurling HE. With flame and smoke all around them, the Tommies pressed on. It was a battle of shattering intensity, even by Normandy standards. Spade and grenade became the order of the day as the fight for Hill 112 became a maelstrom of death for the infantry. Late-arriving Tiger tanks threw their weight into the battle like horse cavalry of old. In desperation, the British AFV's put forth a smoke screen, but the German 88's flamed several tanks , forcing the enemy to withdraw to the lower slopes of Hill 112. The mount earned the nickname "Calvary" due to the carnage and blood-letting that occurred upon her slopes.