

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

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COVER: The Caen Canal Bridge (later renamed Pegasus Bridge in honour of the unit which captured it), securely in British hands, is crossed by military vehicles on 7 June.

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

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PREP FIRE

Another *View From The Trenches*, but at least I am getting back on schedule a bit. A number of you have taken heed of my constant demands for articles and I already have enough material for *VFTT34* which should be out just after INTENSIVE FIRE (since the convention report is the main focus of the issue) so I'm looking for stuff for use in *VFTT35*. Since *VFTT35* isn't due out until January 2001 that gives you all plenty of time to write something for me!!

A couple of people have asked what has happened to the SW Reference Notes. Since the final piece deals mainly with the Axis minor allies I am waiting until the release of *Armies of Oblivion* before running it; this also gives Geir Aalberg more time to research some of the more obscure weapons used.

See you all at INTENSIVE FIRE I hope. Until then roll low and prosper.

Double 1. My last, best hope for victory.

Pete Phillipps

EMOTICONS

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

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

:-) humour or smile

;-) winking

:-> devious smile

<g> grin

:(sad

:-o shocked or surprised

#(hung-over

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INCOMING

ASLRB 2 DELAYED, MAPS MOUNTED

The release date for the second edition of the *ASLRB* has been put back to Christmas. Although most of the major rules revisions (such as wall advantage and bocage) have been finished, as has the layout of Chapter A the proof-reading and laying out of the remaining revised pages is taking longer than expected. MMP are determined to make the *ASLRB 2* as error-free as possible even if it delays its release.

Play-testing on *Armies of Oblivion* is in full swing, with all five of the boards now finished (boards 48-50 can already be purchased direct from MMP). Work is continuing on the Chapter H notes and MMP are confident that *AOO* will be completed by Christmas.

Mounted versions of the reprinted mapboards are now available direct from MMP.

Further ahead, work continues on *ASL Journal 3*, which will feature a set of scenarios from the *Provence Pack* team on the Norway 1940 campaign.

HIGH GROUND

Heat of Battle have released their *High Ground!* module, which features eight new scenarios based on two new geomorphic map boards. Unlike normal map boards these are designed so that they can be put together



A sample of the map from Heat of Battle's High Ground.

along one of the long edges to form one large hill four levels high and up to fifteen hexes wide. The scenarios range from elite Italian Alpine troops vs. the French to Gurkhas vs. the Japanese in Burma via the deserts of Tobruk and the Eastern Front.

High Ground! is available for \$25.00 from Heat of Battle, PO Box 15073, Newport Beach, CA 92659. Add \$4 for S&H in the US (add \$2 for each additional order), \$5 to Canada (add \$2.50 for each additional order) and \$6 overseas (add \$3 for each additional order).

HOB are still are working on their *Company Commander (CCOM)* CG system. Among the features set to be included are Tactical and Strategic Locations, a highly detailed Platoon and SW Depletion Chart and Level of Action and Level of Intensity Tables that determine the size of the Action and the number of Reinforcements available. There will also be rules for features such as Spiking Guns, Regimental Support Charts, and the risks to AFVs which attempt to set up in buildings. A full colour 11" x 17" Chapter Divider allows a player to have all of the necessary information to reorganise his company once the "Cease Fire" order has been given.

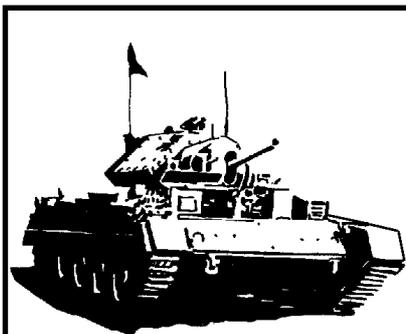
In addition to accommodating traditional *HASL* modules, *CCOM* will also support HOB's *Small Unit Action Series (SUA Series)*, which will be comprised of short and sharp Mini-CGs using geomorphic map boards. The first *SUA Series* is ready and includes actions covering the fighting at Balta in 1941, the Japanese vs. Russian clash at Nomohan in 1939, and the pillbox struggle in the Hurtgen Forest in 1944.

BUNKER 11 BEING BUILT

Work is under way on play-testing the scenarios to be included in *Despatches From The Bunker 11*. The first is part of the Early War Philippines series and is set at the Abucay Line at Bataan, while the other is part of the Sgt. Rudolph Brasche series. The latter is a continuation of the battles featured in *DFTB5* and *DBFT7* and uses the same board configuration as its predecessors.

In addition to the two scenarios and their accompanying design notes and analysis, there will be an analysis of the Schwerpunkt scenario 'SP60 Commando Kelly' and the usual tactical tips for novices, grognards and SASL players.

Continued on page 19, column 2



THIRD PARTY PRODUCERS UK AVAILABILITY

As well as editing *VFTT I* also help to distribute those third party products not generally available in the shops over here.

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O/S - Out of stock temporarily	

Add 50p per item for postage and send your payment made out to PETE PHILLIPPS to The Crusaders, 49 Lombardy Rise, Leicester, England, LE5 0FQ.

For the latest on stock availability telephone me on (0116) 212 6747 (as usual evenings when Man United are not playing are your best bet!), or email me at pete@vftt.co.uk

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SECOND CHANCE GAMES, 182 Borough Road, Seacombe, The Wirral, L44 6NJ. Telephone (0151) 638 3535 or e-mail them at ahashton@globalnet.co.uk.

PLAN 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen, AB25 1NE. Telephone (01224) 624 467 or e-mail them at PLAN9@IFB.CO.UK.

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

THE NEVER-ENDING NEWBIE MANTRA

Dave Reenstra

Newbie tips have been said before but most are worth repeating, again and again ...



SMOKE

Know it, use it, love it. Look over your Chapter H notes before a game **just** to find out what kind of Smoke you've got. I watched a guy play "The Hawk" from *BRT* a couple of weeks ago as the Marines and he never threw the first Smoke or WP grenade (and yes, Virginia, the 768's are all Assault Engineers, Smoke on a '5', WP on a '4'). Needless to say, he lost. Never forget Vehicle Smoke grenades since the crew of any AFV gets to toss them on a 1 or 2 dr, regardless of Nationality (usually better than a squad's smoke exponent for some Nationalities). Heck, as long as a vehicle has a MA, it can possibly get them on a '1' if unarmoured. Since a 6 dr has no effect besides no smoke, the check is pretty much free as long as you're CE. See F.10 for more details.



ELITE UNITS

In any scenario where you have Assault Engineers supporting other elite units, don't forget that any Elite unit can use DC's and FT's without penalty, not just an Assault Engineers. Leaders are defined as Elite for this purpose. Many a time I've seen an opponent deploy his Assault Engineer squads so they can use FT's and DC's (usually dangerous tasks) without risking a whole squad. Deploy the other guys and let them handle the "Look What I Got, Shoot Me" weapons, keep the Assault Engineers together for Smoke throwing!



CONCEALMENT

Attacking or defending, try to keep somebody concealed, even if it is just a HS or leader with no negative modifier. You never know when you'll need that -2 mod on Ambush. On the attack, threatening to advance in with a concealed unit (especially with Japanese) will often force the defender to voluntarily break and run away. On the defence, having that concealed guy in there makes that stack

more formidable and should make the attacker think twice about coming in on you. Leaders are particularly useful for this. I'll often bring a concealed stack of squad and leader up, advancing fire the squad, keep the leader concealed (especially if he's -1 or less on his leadership mod), jump both in for CC.



SNIPERS

So your opponent activated your Sniper and you rolled a '2' on the resolution. In this situation, always think about repositioning your Sniper counter **before** you make the Random Location DR (heck, sometimes think about doing it on a '1' resolution dr!). Often you'll spend a few moments at setup carefully considering the location of your Sniper and then see him snooze through the first half of the game. Now, the end game is approaching and this is typically a time when you'll see a lot of dice thrown and the SAN has a better chance to come up. You want that Sniper where he'll do the most good. Having him back in an area that your opponent moved through two turns ago isn't going to get you squat, except to DM a broken HS or two. Use this chance to get that Sniper back up to the action, right near where the game is going to

come down.



RALLY CENTRAL

Plan your rout paths and set up a rally base. When planning your moves, always think, "If this squad breaks in this hex, where will they rout to? Can I get a leader there to be waiting for them?" When comparing leaders with the same mod (0 to 0 or -1 to -1), send the higher morale guy with the attacking units, the lower morale guy stays back as the rally base. Consider using a leader with a negative modifier as your rally guy. Depending on terrain, a -1 leader might have a negligible effect directing fire, but he might have a shot at popping guys back up in good terrain, even under DM.

Ω



"OK gentlemen, perhaps the following flowchart can help you understand how a 2 or 12 DR is handled in CC". ASL newbies at the Repetti ASL Academy are put through their paces.



VIEW FROM

“Hold Until Relieved”

An Analysis of the *Pegasus Bridge* scenarios

Mark McGilchrist

This article was originally published in Rate of Fire, the newsletter of Australia's Paddington Bears, and is reprinted here with their permission - Pete.



Ham and Bloody Jam [PB1]

A tough one for the Germans, and their defence set-up is key to any victory for them in this scenario. Obviously, the British must overcome this defence, and at speed, so what the Germans should do is what the British must defeat.

The first thing to point out is that the 3 Trenches around X16 will do absolutely no good in this scenario. The Brits need only control the 2 hexes of the bridge and the 6 adjacent hexes, and make a successful Clearance attempt.

There are really only two things that can stop the British in this scenario. One is a bad crash landing, which can cripple the British force. The second is the Bridge itself, or rather the need to control the Bridge in 6 turns. Used together, these two aspects may be enough to hold up the British long enough to win.

Planning the crash. Forget about Anti-Aircraft Fire, it isn't TPBF. The only thing to hope for is trying to crash a glider, or force landings further away. There is a 1 in 6 chance the glider will land out of its ILH. (See PB20, a +1 drm on the coloured die of the Landing DR). This makes Y23, AA22, X22 & W22 a little bit hazardous, since on overshoot or undershoot may land the glider in a pond, utterly destroying it (E8.232).

The other possibility is using the Fortifications to add a +1 Crash drm to certain hexes. Only the Wire and Trenches give the +1 drm, but coupled with the general +1 Night landing drm on the Crash dr, it may

make the Brits think twice. Good hexes to stick a Trench or Wire are Z21, AA21, X21, X20, W21 and X22. Personally, I favour the Trenches in X20, Z21 and AA21, with the Wire in W21, X21 and X22. Nothing can be done about landing in Y21, Y22 or Y23 except hoping for an overshoot or undershoot. This entire Crash planning relies upon increasing the risk, and the Brits rolling badly. It probably won't work, but on the other hand, the fortifications are not otherwise that useful. What it may do is make a cautious Briton land further back, and waste a turn approaching the bridge

Delaying crossing. I wish I could say this relied upon a networked defence, but it doesn't. It relies upon meat. The German defence should seek to put sacrifice units in Y18-Y21. Even broken HS will still block British movement across the bridge. 1 squad and 2 HS should set up in the Trenches, ready to line up along the bridge to slow down the British meat chopper. Don't shoot, stay concealed if possible, don't get into CC. These are human speed bumps (or as human as German cardboard conscripts can be). All the dummies on the East side as well. May confuse the Brits into wasting a little time on them.

The other 3 squads, the two leaders and all MGs on the west bank. The MMG in Z17, awaiting the arrival of the 8-1 and his Fallschirmjäger. A HIP squad in X18 may provide that helpful encircling fire. If possible, a squad with an LMG moves to Y18 to lay a firelane, and provide the final speed bump.

The British basically have to land (a dicefest that can potentially go very wrong), and then kill everything in sight, cross the bridge ASAP, and again kill every thing in sight, or at least in those vital 3 hexes. Getting through Y18 is the major problem, so I would tend to use the three 6-4-8, the three LMG and the 9-2 as a firebase, and the rest as assault troops. Definitely recon the Café Gondrée by fire if it appears empty. Rely upon the night, your leadership and morale to take chances to cross the bridge quickly, since this cuts back the speed bump problem. Time is the critical problem, and the Brits must be in Y19 in strength by the end of Turn 5 to stand a good chance. Turn 1 is the landing, Turn 2 is closing with the eastern defences, and the eastern bank should be German free by the end of Turn 3. If a unit

can cross to Y19 by Turn 3, then things are going well. Turn 4 & 5 involve reducing the western defences, and if possible breaching Y18. Turn 6 must breach Y18, and advance to control Z18 and X18. Z17 is irrelevant except for the firepower it can place on Y18.



Howard's Men [PB2]

Personally my favourite, and one of the best balanced scenarios too! The Germans marching down the road, when the lead tank bursts into flame. British Ox and Bucks scattered through the defences, and only a single PIAT to fend off the French tanks in German colours!

Things to watch for in this scenario include the 2 hex illuminated zone around the burning tank(s), and the blind zones associated with that. (eg. At start, AA15 is not illuminated, it is a blind hex to Y14). The Brits get HIP for 2 squad equivalents, and 8 dummy counters. The Germans get 6 Panzerfausts, useful against buildings. Limited starshells (PB19), and the Illumination rounds from the British 2" Airborne mortar. Also, the British are Ox and Bucks, so PB14 applies.

The VC are important here, since the British must leave at least 2 GO MMC within 3 hexes of Y19. The embarrassment of losing because a sniper broke your lone MMC sentry while you are off kicking German butt would be too much. Deploying the 4-5-8 east of the canal at start, and using one HS to fire the mortar and the other to guard the bridge at Z20 is probably the safest solution.

Similarly, for the Germans, the tanks don't matter a damn (see PB16 for no voluntary abandonment!). So attempting to rubble buildings, lock up infantry fire and used up close to the enemy is no real problem. If they die, so what, did they kill any Brits?

With 7 turns, the Germans need only press resolutely forward at a pace of one hex per turn to meet the second part of the Victory Conditions. The British can hardly afford to fall back, and must form a strong line from Z15, AA16, AA17 and BB17. There is also the possibility the Germans will swing wide towards the schoolhouse and loop in towards the bridge. Controlling Z13 at the start is therefore quite vital to slow this movement, even though this is probably a sacrifice defence. Bringing in the W12 area set-up units to Z13 may allow the PIAT to escape, whilst the X18 area set-up units can use the delay to rush to defend the Schoolhouse.

The onus seems to be on the British in this scenario, but Airborne troops in stone houses are hard to beat. Weight of numbers, the close support of the tanks and a flexible attack strategy to take any British weakness offered will get the Germans home. It would seem very unfortunate if the Germans ever won on the first part of the Victory Conditions, but a reasonable chance for the second part.



Piecemeal [PB3]

Another well balanced scenario. This is a classic bottleneck and slow retreat defence. The onus is on the British to slow up the Germans without being killed in the process. The British must play quite conservatively in this scenario, or be wrapped up in CC. German losses are irrelevant if they kill all the Red Berets. Failure to rout is the worst loss the British can make.

The German FlaK trucks virtually have to enter on/adjacent G8 to be any use, and can't cross walls or hedges. So for the vulnerable trucks a Turn 2 or later entry might be the ticket. I8 must be the ideal PIAT spot, but very obvious, so J7 may be better. Expect a stand off between the I6 & I8 units and the FlaK truck entry.

Against the infantry, I14 and I10 are two significant defensive sites, with I6, I8 and I11 & I12 good spots to contain the initial rush. Moving back through the village,

L12 and M12 are choke points, and N11 and O12 are difficult terrain to assault (with some good LOSs from the 1st Floors).

Beyond row O is the final defence area, and this just depends upon putting fire onto Germans, and possibly laying firelanes. P11 lays a good firelane to the west. A rush to Q16 or R15 may stop that flight offboard along the canal towpath.

The Germans have numerous options, but generally they have two main options to consider. The first is frontal assault, the second is a flank run. Somewhere in an infinite combination of the two is probably the ideal.

The frontal assault option basically seeks to pin the British to their positions, encircle and destroy them. This is no headlong lunge, but rather a gradual manoeuvre of British units out of position, since they can ill afford losses. As the western flank is cleared, the FlaK trucks can be safely brought on, and add their long range firepower. However, at some point push must come to shove, so if the British are making good a slow retirement past row L without significant loss, then the flank run manoeuvre must be attempted.

The Germans must press forward at a rapid clip, a game average of 2 hexes per turn through stone buildings. British long range firepower is weak, so the eastern or longer western flank run manoeuvre may work, but needs to move quickly to outrun the British defenders moving back through the village to intercept it. This strategy also makes it unlikely the 12 CVP cap on the British will come into effect, so the Brits will be less cautious.



Killean's Red [PB4]

The German's must defend Le Port from a British attack. The small number of pieces means that this one can be decided by a bad DR, so really the best advice for both sides is don't stack, minimise the effects on your units, and maximise it on your opponent's.

In terms of a German defensive strategy, buildings FF11, GG13, HH14 and

JJ16 seem the most key, offering a frontline of defence in stone buildings against lesser TEM.

The alternative is to leave dummies in the south-eastern block, essentially giving it away, and to defend the crossroads. HIP units in MM15 and GG9 may go undetected, and provide a needed distraction to the British end game by emerging in German Turn 4 to recapture some buildings behind the British main thrust. Another key defensive site is HH11, which guards the only covered route to the west end of town, plus a LOS to the crossroads.

However, the guts of the matter is that the British have the initiative, the morale and the firepower, so that the Germans can do little except fight a delaying action. Any attempt to make a stand except in the last turn will be disaster for the Germans, since they are likely to be destroyed without loss.

For the British, little needs to be said. Remember to conceal your units after set-up if outside German LOS. Since this is simple to do in the blind zone behind the woods, it is easy to press through the woods and onto the south-eastern block. This accounts for 9 locations. If the Germans can be destroyed, or broken and pursued in this early encounter, the game will probably fall to the British.

The main enemy of the British is time, so once in the stone buildings, the British need to press forwards quickly, sweep all locations for HIPsters, and maybe deploy a squad to defend their flanks against unexpected HIP squads until the HIP units are accounted for.



Taylor Made Defence [PB5]

This scenario struck me as similar to Piecemeal, but the more confined play area means that it a straight up village fight. Basically the Germans have to take the Bénouville buildings.

However, this time the vehicles count! Lose 3 AFV and it is all over for the Germans. Therefore, caution is the order of the day for the German tanks and the Marder. Careful manoeuvre outside PIAT range for

the tanks, and outside normal range for the Marder should see them safely through. The ideal for the Germans is to break through on the western flank and to have a tank far in the British rear.

For the British, life is much tougher. The walking wounded slow things down, making it difficult to skulk effectively, and there is really very little ground to give. Worse still, the Germans virtually set-up on top of the Paras, so the Brits really have to just grit their teeth and take it. On the bright side, PIATs can be used by SMC, so the hero and the 8-0 can move quickly to bring these weapons to bear on any tanks so rash as to approach too close.

Overall, it looks like a tough one for the Brits, but obviously not impossible.



It's About Time [PB6]

A monster scenario. Simply put, there are far too many variables here to look at specifics, but there are some general tactical considerations.

For the Germans, they are divided into two groups, the Le Port garrison, and the Bénouville garrison. The Le Port garrison is mostly likely a complete loss. The British relief force is likely to overwhelm them, and really it is just a matter of how much time can be wasted in rooting out the last Germans. Setting up a few 5/8" vehicle dummies may waste a bit of time as the British vehicles manoeuvre around them. The two SPW S307(f)s may as well set up in stone buildings, since being hard to hit is the only protection they are likely to get. Some of the more useless infantry could flee to the woods around BB1, to play hide and seek.

The Bénouville garrison are the game winners, and for that reason I'd put the better armour with them. The long 75s are probably better off up the slopes around P4 & H16. Disperse the infantry from the Château to the II area, with enough in the village to keep the British L to W force away. Long range firepower from this force may slow the British attackers down, and then the game of hide and seek in the twilight may win the

game. Try and keep at least one MMC in C4 and around B10, since these are hard to hit.

For the British, time and force allocation is the essence. Eliminating the Le Port garrison is not enough, and the main danger is the Bénouville garrison. Therefore, the main thrust must be towards rapidly closing with both garrisons, and their eventual disposal. The Le Port garrison is the weaker and most immediate, and although the British Airborne in Le Port are not sufficient, coupled with the TT12 entry forces, they should easily overcome the Le Port garrison in 6-8 turns. They will then have to rush to the south to join the battle there. The L to W British force is woefully inadequate to reduce the Bénouville garrison, or indeed even holding the ground they have. An initial defensive set up to hold the ground, coupled with the immediate commitment of both the Ox and Bucks force, and the TT16 relief column should turn this around. The British need to think hard about their sweep through Bénouville, from east to west, of north to south.



Lovat First Sight [J31]

Another monster scenario, this one was a late comer to the module and not widely distributed. This scenario features the march of Lord Lovat's Commandos, and the victory conditions reflect their need to exit to the east.

This one looks like an all out German attack, since the German force is completely expendable, and the Germans win in two ways, preventing the exit of 25 CVP of Commandos who must move quickly to exit in 7 turns, or but amassing 24 CVP.

Obviously the place for the Germans to attack is the bridge, but they need to fight their way past the Airborne blocking forces, which is where the wily British players will hold their own.

The advantage the British do have is that the Germans must set up first, so the British defensive lines are easier to set-up. Major Taylor's men between hexrows N and W will bear the brunt of the attack by the Panzerpionier Kompanie 1, so it is probably

worth sending a few Ox and Bucks to reinforce them. The British AT Gun is to keep the German AFV out of LOS to the bridge from the south western bank.

The draw card for the British is the excellent Airborne and Commando troops that should outfight any infantry the Germans throw at them. Lovat and the Commandos really can't afford to stop and fight, and the best British chance is to arrive at the bridge as quickly as possible and assault move and advance across the bridge.

For the Germans, the weird AFV are a novelty, including the Mortar carriers {the mSPW S307 (f)} that correctly placed can straddle the bridge in a mini-barrage. Knowing that no Germans need survive, the German attack can be pressed home with the utmost vigour.

Ultimately, I suspect the scenario will come down to Lovat's men racing across the bridge under German long range fire. There is very little the British can do about an MMG up in the Château de Bénouville. In the German last turns, the Germans try and get everything within LOS of the bridge if the CVP cap can't be reached, hoping for some lucky results against Lovat's move across the bridge.

The only question is why have a German Turn 7?

Ω



Troops of the 1st Commando Brigade (in berets) link up with 6th Airborne Troopers (in helmets) at the Orne River on D-Day.

"WHO ARE THOSE GUYS?"

The stories of the British SMC in *Pegasus Bridge*

N J Nickman

I've just noticed that there is a mis-print on one of the leaders that come with *Pegasus Bridge* - the 8-1 "Lt Sweeney" should be "Lt Sweeney". This is a very significant error, IMHO :-).

Why? For the non-British (ASL definition) readers, Sweeney Todd was an infamous murderer, a barber who would slit the throats of customers, and whose wife would then turn them into meat pies. Thus anyone named "Sweeney" in the British Army was invariably called "Todd", and vice-versa. A week before the landing, Lt "Todd" Sweeney of the Ox and Bucks met a Capt Richard "Sweeney" Todd of 1st Airborne, and laughed about the co-incident of their names. Todd's parting words at this meeting were, "See you on D-Day."

At 1100 on 6 June, Lt Sweeney was resting against a hedge on the outskirts of Le Port when "a face appeared through the bushes and Richard Todd said to me, 'I told you I'd see you on D-Day' and disappeared again."

That was not the end of Capt Todd's association with *Pegasus Bridge*. After the war he returned to his peace-time occupation - an actor. In the movie 'The Longest Day', he played Major Howard.

For those who are interested in the "Who's Who" of the *Pegasus Bridge* counter set, here's the complete list in "rank" order:

10-2 Col Jeffrey Pine Coffin (no hyphen!): Commander of the 7th Battalion, 5th Brigade, 1st Airborne.

9-2 Maj John Howard: Commander D Coy, Ox and Bucks. The assault on *Pegasus Bridge* was planned entirely by himself. Landed in #1 Glider with Lt Brotheridge and his platoon.

Maj Nigel Taylor: Company commander of 7th Battalion, 1st Airborne. During the early afternoon was severely wounded in the right thigh by a shell splinter, but dragged himself up to a second-floor window, from where he continued to shout orders to his men.

9-1 Capt Richard Todd: member of 7Bn 1 Airborne. Led the assault on the church where there was a suspected sniper, as depicted in the scenario 'Killean's Red'.

8-1: Lt "Sandy" Smith: A member of "B" Company, seconded to Maj Howard's command for the attack. Landed in #3 Glider, sort of (in fact the glider landed rather bumpily, and Smith was thrown through the front windscreen as it came to rest; technically he landed by himself, with the glider credited with an assist). He injured his knee during the landing, making him Walking Wounded from the start. Within minutes of

arriving at the bridge, was caught in the blast of a grenade and his right wrist severely injured, although he was still able to fire a gun. At 0500 the severity of his injuries compelled his removal to the first-aid post and the end of his participation in the battle.

Lt "Todd" Sweeney: Landed in #6 glider, one of three detailed to take the Orne bridge (of which only two arrived). One of the few leaders to survive the day unwounded.

Sgt Bob Kane: As Cpl Kane, took over command of #1 platoon when its leader was killed (by 0500, #s 1, 2 & 3 platoons were all commanded by Corporals), but by lunchtime was a Sgt, leading the platoon in clearing *the* building captured from Taylor's men in Benouville.

8-0: Lt Dan Brotheridge: Leader of #1 platoon. Led the charge onto the bridge and killed the first German to die on D-Day: the soldier on the box-art who fired his Verrey pistol (although Brotheridge isn't depicted on the box art - that's Major Howard leading the charge). Moments later, as he threw a grenade into a MG nest, he was himself shot in the neck, and died a few hours later.

Lt David Wood: Leader of #2 Pltn, landed in #2 glider. Cleared the fortifications to the northeast of the bridge, but was wounded in the left leg by three bullets from a Schmeisser, putting him out of action (in fact, within 10 minutes of landing, all three platoon leaders at PB had suffered wounds, and only one, Smith, was still capable of fighting, if only for a few more hours).

7-0: Maj Stevens: a fiction invented by MMP. (*I can assure you that Maj. Stevens is most certainly a real person. None other than Neil Stevens, of IF fame, who was a most gracious host while Perry, Steve, and I expended a few delay points at the Imperial War Museum and a fine pub.*

A great guy, one day I hope to find out what kind of player he is. - Brian Youse)

Lt Dennis Fox: also a member of "B" Company, led #5 platoon which attacked the Orne bridge. Admits that he was not the real leader of his platoon, but Sgt Thornton was.

Cpl Dunn: Another MMP fiction (*Another real guy, Ken Dunn does all of our playtest map art and has sunk an incredible amount of "behind*

the scenes" time into MMP's efforts. - Brian Youse).

If you've been keeping track, there was no #4 platoon/glider - it landed by a bridge on the Dives, carrying the Coy 2IC as well as a platoon leader.

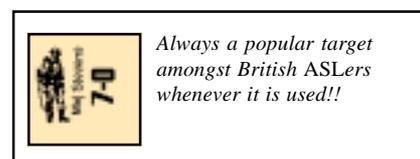
1-4-9: Sgt "Wagger" Thornton: Member of #5 platoon. On landing, immediately set up a mortar. When the only resistance encountered - an MG nest - opened up moments later, he hit it with a single shell, the only ammo expended in taking the river bridge. Later, at the canal bridge, had the only functioning PIAT which he used to knock out the lead tank during the 0130 "counterattack" in spectacular fashion (it burned for over an hour, with the occasional ammo explosion) and which inspired the Germans to immediately retreat, thinking the British had AT guns!

Sgt Thornton also deserves one final mention: a week or so later, he was wounded in the leg and evacuated to England, where he made a swift recovery. Rather than wait around, he volunteered to join 1st Airborne, and went with them to Arnhem. He fought alongside Frost at the bridge, and was captured along with the rest of the men there. He was probably the only man (other than the glider pilots) to fight at both *Pegasus* and Arnhem bridges.

Cpl Killean: Attacking the church where a sniper was suspected to be holed up, he took a PIAT, "mouseholed" his way through some cottages to a firing position behind a hedge, and fired three bombs at the tower, killing the sniper.

I should mention my source: "*Pegasus Bridge*" (now there's an original title) by Stephen E Ambrose (ISBN 0-671-67156-1). Ambrose is/was a Professor Of History at the University of New Orleans, wrote Eisenhower's biography, and for this work interviewed many of the participants, including John Howard and most of the surviving officers, including Taylor, Fox, Smith, and Sweeney, and also Thornton, as well as several German participants, including Col Hans von Luck, commander of the 125th PzGr Reg. I highly recommend it as a good read, as well as for its subject matter.

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The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

A personal view of ASL from Toby Pilling

Guilt is a powerful emotion. It's mostly because of the pleas from Pete Phillips for contributors to this publication that I thought I'd finally put pen to paper. What I'm going to try and do in the following trilogy of short articles is look at my most beloved and most hated scenarios, before concluding with a look at Campaign Games. Around that I apologise in advance for the rambling history, thoughts, opinions and anecdotes that will litter my writing. Hopefully most of it will be relevant, maybe even amusing. One thing I won't be doing much of is giving out hints on play. After all, they're my secrets. Did Billy the Kid instruct other gun fighters on quick draw technique? I don't think so (grin).

The Good

Favourite scenarios in terms of this article are difficult to define. I gathered that as soon as I began leafing through the reams I've played. Does favourite mean the most memorable? Is it the most enjoyable? The greatest challenge?

My feeling is that it is a combination of factors and I have been fairly arbitrary in deciding which to include. I imagine there will be a few surprises amongst them, especially as some of them would usually be classified as unbalanced. Including my first choice, indeed.



The Milling Crowd (AA1)

I love the *All American* series written by Ian Daglish and published by Critical Hit. Based upon the exploits of the 82nd Airborne Division around D-Day in Normandy, the three modules that comprise it are *Kellam's Bridge*, *Timmes' Orchard* and *Shanley's Hill*. The former includes this scenario. There is

of course another version, 'Le Manoir', in the official *Paratrooper* module.

Someone told me the other day that you can always tell the work of a true craftsman. They said it was because true craftsmen love their work and treasure their skill. That the care and attention they put into their work leaves a unique imprint, so that almost any object can become a thing of beauty.

If *ASL* has an equivalent, it is this series of modules. The painstaking research that has gone into them is almost awe inspiring in its thoroughness. The maps, photographs and the additional information on each scenario make this, in my view, the most comprehensive historical supplement ever published for the game. It's a real labour of love, which makes it a joy to play. I know some of the scenarios are not very balanced, but I tend to treat them more as non-competitive historical simulations than true matches of skill.

I've played this one three times against different opponents, which is the most I've played any scenario. Each time I had the Germans and managed to win.

Now of course that is quite a feat. For those not familiar with the scenario it features a tiny group of Germans trying to hold out in a fortified manor house against a succession of American attacks.

I like the scenario because it is quick, simple and a perfect historical simulation. Though there are few forces, each side has a lot of tactical decisions to make. I prefer playing the Germans because their backs are up against the wall and it is a real challenge to win. Still, that just makes victory all the sweeter if it can be achieved. It is a fabulous scenario.

Of course, it's published by a third party producer and given the arguments flying around at the moment about the status of these companies, I thought I'd put in my penny's worth.

Now I can understand Curt Schilling's view. MMP obviously pay a lot of bucks for the license to print official *ASL* stuff. Others are producing material without paying a cent to Hasbro. I realise one may see it as unfair. However, third party producers it seems to me are not duplicating or pirating MMP stuff. It's not as if they are stealing market share. They're not even in competition. Most *ASL*

players buy all official stuff and then top it up with the best from other sources. Those sources complement MMP's products rather than substitute for them.

The other reason I feel third party producers should be left alone is that our hobby owes a debt to these manufacturers. It's like Charles De Gaulle snubbing Britain and America after WWII. Hey, we saved your country chum! In the dark days of *ASL*, companies like Critical Hit were a beacon of hope. The honourable thing to do would be to turn a blind eye to their activities.



The Citadel (ASL-10)

I started playing *ASL* around 1989 with a bloke in Ealing, London. Dave Teakle (where are you now?) and I got through a few of the *Paratrooper* scenarios before I moved to Newcastle-upon-Tyne to start my degree. Then my *ASL* apprenticeship truly began, for it was there that I met the player who taught me all I know. The *Advanced Squad Leader* guru known as Michael Rudd.

We played week in week out for nigh on six years. The balance of victories was strongly in his favour until the very end, when I began to creep towards equality. My training complete, I ventured south whilst he retired to a ranch in the hills with his lass. Once a year he makes the pilgrimage to Bournemouth to do battle.

Thankfully we've never crossed swords in a tournament. Probably because we always play in the same team in INTENSIVE FIRE! Usually with Joe Arthur, our trusty comrade, we won the "Elite" Fire Team competition in '97 and '99 and were runners up in '98. I'm just hoping our team can stay together for this October's contest

(*'fraid it won't, this year we'll be using random selection to determine team members – Pete).*

Anyway, 'The Citadel' is my most memorable game with Mike. We played it twice actually, once as each side, in the early years. Naturally enough I was beaten both times. One reason it was memorable was that it was the longest ASL marathon I've ever completed for a single scenario. I think we played it over a weekend in Mike's high rise flat. The only distraction was watching joy riders evading police cars in Newcastle's notorious West End from his panoramic windows. Sadly it seemed to distract me more than him.

Again, for those unfamiliar with the scenario it features a German force besieged in a church by a vast Russian one. A strong relief force is on the way though, which has to fight it's way over a strongly defended canal to break through.

It is a classic. Several factors contribute to this, the most obvious being that each side has to defend with one portion of their force whilst the other attacks. It features armour and OBA, both of which raise the skill levels required to win. The Russian force also has some HIP and OOB given concealment counters, which makes for a much more interesting game.

I cannot stress to scenario designers the value of increasing the "fog of war" level enough. Hardly any commander in military history knows exactly the position and type of force they are facing. War is about overcoming uncertainties and any war game should reflect that. The best and easiest way to achieve that is HIP and OOB given dummy counters. They should be virtually compulsory in my view. Any scenario featuring them is always more enjoyable and realistic.



The Mailed Fist (w95-D13)

The weird thing about playing Mike all the time was that it was impossible to tell how good or bad a player I was. Except with reference to him of course. I knew that he won more games than I did but that was all.

Only by playing in the tournaments did it transpire how relatively skilful both of us were. A fact that surprised as much as it delighted me.

I moved down to Oxfordshire in 1995, just before the first INTENSIVE FIRE and immediately began to scour the UK player listings in *VFTT* for new opponents in my locality. Fate once more leant a hand as the first guy I got round to meeting up with for a game was Peter Bennett. We had an excellent, close first game and have playing weekly ever since, the win loss ratio being roughly equal. Without a shadow of a doubt I've obviously been fortunate in always gaining superb regular opponents. At the time of writing, I'm ranked first on the UK ASL ladder, Mike is third and Peter sixth. I'd like to think they honed their skills against me as much as I did against them. Certainly, they are the best two players I've ever gone up against.

'The Mailed Fist' was an early scenario I played against Peter. It features a French force in 1940 defending a village against German attackers. There are plenty of AFVs in a fairly restricted built up area and also the novelty of a couple of HIP French tanks – an SSR I think designers should invoke more often. I managed to prevail as the French with a couple of turns to spare but I remember the scenario being fast-paced and furious. Very much an "in your face" battle, largely because it is set on the *Deluxe* boards.

I am a great fan of *Deluxe ASL*. The scenarios tend to restrict the terrain whilst increasing counter density, making for a much more intense ASL experience. Everything is virtually point blank, requiring different skills to be exercised than in most games. Also there is the important rule allowing declaration of Hand-to-Hand instead of normal close combat. The ability to claim the ambush advantage therefore becomes a crucial ploy, necessitating far more sneaky tactics than the average conflict.

Buy the boards, if you haven't got them already.



Maggot Hill (A117)

This scenario is set on the Nphum Ga

map that came with the *ASL Annual 97*. As can be guessed from my comments on 'The Milling Crowd', I really like historical map boards. Not only can they achieve terrain combinations that are impossible with the normal geomorphic boards; there is the added interest of fighting over the actual terrain itself. The benefits of these boards are also magnified when the hexes are larger than standard, as in this case. This mammoth encounter has a large force of American "Merill's Marauders" fighting desperately to repel a surrounding Japanese force.

I've played a fair few PTO scenarios in my time and this is my favourite. The terrain is very enclosed, both forces are high quality and a lot of the action is toe to toe. The victory conditions are unambiguous, realistic and not open to cynical manipulation. A high level of skill is also required for either side to prevail. I managed to win it as the Japanese against Peter in a grinding slog of a game.

I find that most PTO rules are fairly straightforward. There are a few extra terrain types and then the nuances of the Japanese themselves, who certainly bring a new dimension to the game. Excellent in defence or attack, their main problem is a tendency to get whittled away. Like in *Deluxe ASL*, they can declare Hand-to-Hand and being both good at it and stealthy makes for a lethal combination.

When playing against the Japanese I've always preferred the Americans or a force of Gurkhas. The former possess squads with the raw fire power to blast away an enemy force and good broken morale, vital when voluntary breaking is such a common tactic. The Gurkhas – high morale, stealthy and deadly in Hand-to-Hand – are simply superb, the only force capable of beating the Japanese at their own game.

The only rules I'm not completely au fait with are Caves and to a lesser extent Beach Landings. However, that's just because I play them so seldom. I'm sure a good Tarawa campaign will solve that!



A Russian officer poses in front of his Lend-Lease Sherman following the liberation of Vienna in April 1945.

The Liberators (GEN-G34)

If I have a personal preference, a period and type of scenario I tend to go for, it is this: Defending as late war Germans against hordes of Russians on the Eastern front with loads of excellent tanks on each side.

I suppose the appeal lies in trying to damn the flood, with the knowledge that historically it was a doomed attempt. I quite like being outnumbered too as it does tend to sharpen the senses. Late war tanks on the Eastern front are also as powerful as they get, which makes for a real battle of the titans.

Add to that the fun to be had with Panzerfaust and ATMM wielding infantry and you have a recipe for enjoyment.

This scenario features all of the above. It pits elements of an SS Panzer Corp against those of a Russian Guards Mechanised Corp in Austria, 1945. A mouth-watering combination! Elite troops all round and IS-2ms up against either King Tigers or Jagdtigers. I say either because that is what distinguishes this scenario against almost all others: Each player has a choice of forces.

Earlier I stressed the importance of creating the fog of war. What better way to achieve that than the option taken here by Mike Daniels, its creator? Both players have, with some restrictions, to choose four out of eight possible groups to comprise their total force. Neither side knows what the other has chosen; though as more counters become revealed during play they can piece together the enemy OOB. It's the nearest an official ASL scenario comes to recreating the purchasing of forces that take place in Campaign Games. It also gives the scenario more replay value through having more possible OOB permutations. A brilliant idea, it is a shame it has not been attempted more often.

As for when I played it, I remember really enjoying planning my set up. Obviously the time I lavished on it must have paid off because Peter conceded in just a few turns – a very rare occurrence in itself!



Howard's Men (PB2)

Yes, another scenario set on a

historical map sheet! This time it is *Pegasus Bridge* and a scenario that depicts an early counterattack by a German force against Major Howard's airborne defenders around the bridge.

The factor that classifies this scenario as one of my favourites is that it takes place at night. Yes, I'm afraid I'm a night-time junkie! Now I know a lot of people don't like the night rules and I admit that they take some getting used to. Surely though that's all part of the fun of our hobby? Night games are completely different to normal games, which simply gives us all more variety and a chance to master new tactics.

There's always HIP and dummies for the defender and the attacker gains cloaking. Concealment is much harder to lose for both sides and straying means a commander can't even rely on his troops moving where he wants them. The use of star shells alone could warrant an article (*good idea :-)* – Pete).

I suppose the main thing that night does is increase uncertainty and the fog of war and as I've stated already, in my view that can only be a good thing.

This scenario was also memorable for the fact that I played it at INTENSIVE FIRE '99 against a good French opponent who I think had won a tournament himself on the continent. I managed to win with the British I seem to recall even after giving up the balance.

I do enjoy the INTENSIVE FIRE tournaments, though I'd agree with the prognosis that three scenarios are never really enough over the weekend. I understand the format may change this year, though it would be a shame to see the Fire Team idea vanish, or even for the participants to be randomised. Then again, having hogged the awards with my comrades for so long I imagine most other people would love to see it go!



Parker's Crossroads (GEN-G26)

My reasons for liking this Germans versus Americans bash set in the Ardennes offensive, 1944, are quite simple: I loved playing it. It is probably my most enjoyable game against Peter. It went all the way to the

last turn, which is unusual for a large scenario. I won as the Germans by blowing up a tank in Close Combat with the final dice roll of the game. Ironically, we subsequently discovered that errata published about the victory conditions meant that I would actually have lost the game instead! It certainly made me more wary of playing brand new scenarios that have not had the chance to have any misprints corrected.

A facet it displays which is always attractive to me is the attacker being able to enter from several directions. This gives both sides more tactical possibilities to play with.

When I played it, one of my main memories was malfunctioning the German radio with my first try for contact. A few turns from the end though I managed to repair it and got a few artillery stonks down.

Although it has a lot going for it, with lots of tanks and some OBA, I feel that sadly if I had played the same scenario today against Peter I would have conceded rather than fought on. You see, I think I have become a bit tournament minded, seeing my 'friendly' games against Peter virtually as sparring – preparing for the real bout.

I've also found that the better I become at ASL, the more I can predict the probable outcome of a scenario. I can also get more of a feel for a scenario's inherent balance. This has the unfortunate side effect of making me prone to throw in the towel early on, if I feel the odds are against me. The idea being that I'd rather start a new scenario than spend a lot of time and effort on what is likely to be a losing cause. I don't think this is a good thing by the way but it's becoming a hard habit to shake. I also don't think it's fair on Peter, because although he gets to rack up more victories, we hardly ever have many tussles that go the full twelve rounds. It's definitely a psychological flaw I'm going to have to grapple with if I want to enjoy scenarios like 'Parker's Crossroads' in the future.

The second instalment, 'The Bad', describing Toby's most hated scenarios, will appear in the next issue of VFTT – Pete.

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From Dawn to Dusk

Random thoughts on defending Pegasus Bridge

For the German defenders in the *Pegasus Bridge* CG Coup de Main, the general consensus of opinion seems to be that they should abandon the eastern side of the bridge and concentrate on defending the western end. Apart from a single hex, controlling the eastern side does nothing to help them win the CG, whereas losing the area around X13 on Night I means the Germans will be unable to link the Benouville and Le Port areas into one large set-up area for Night II. A concentrated British force can then set up with a few PIATs in and around AA15 (with the hedges and buildings as cover) and stop a counter-attack from Le Port on Night II in its tracks.

A typical British attack will see them land in Z21, AA22, and BB21 and take the Pillbox and Z20 building on turn 1. Others may be tempted to land right on top of the bridge (Y21, Y22, X21) to take out the Gun

and Pillbox on turn 1. The British then consolidate and move across the Bridge (probably retaining concealment while doing so). If there are Germans on the east side of the bridge a HS in Z20 will isolate them during set-up for Night II.

With the above in mind, most German players set up primarily in foxholes located in the grainfields on the hill behind the Café Gondree, and aim to limit British expansion west of the canal during Night I. But should they give up the ground east of the bridge without a fight?

Figure 1 shows a set-up which sees the Germans defend the eastern side. The idea behind this set-up is to force the British player to waste time and units clearing the strongpoint around V21. If he chooses to land near the bridge and ignore the trenches

the threat to his rear could become serious in future turns.

Using the set-up shown the Germans are likely to have 2 ½ squads and 2 leaders defending the western side once the turn 2 reinforcements arrive. This force is unlikely to stop the British getting across the bridge, but how far they get across the west side depends on how many forces they allocate to the task. If the British ignore the eastern group they will push across the bridge quickly but how much do they leave behind to secure the landing areas? One squad, two?

The British must be careful they do not lose the fight against the German strongpoint. If they lose the eastern end of the bridge the Night II reinforcements have to enter and fight their way to the western side. In addition British units on the west side will have their hands full fighting the units coming from Le Port in Night II. If they have not dealt with the strongpoint east of the river they will be subject to possible encircling fire and the threat of losing the eastern edge of the bridge.

One problem with the set-up as shown is that it is too far away from the bridge to have an effective impact on the British set-up areas. If you set the trenches up one hex closer (as shown in figure 2) the trenches will isolate the bridge with overlapping set-up hexes.

The other flaw with the shown set-up is that if the British do not land within three hexes of the strongpoint they may not gain Freedom of Movement during the first CG date. A cautious British player will only advance onto the bridge when concealed. If the units in the strongpoint do not gain Freedom of Movement they will be stuck in their trenches until Night III. By then it will probably be too late for them to do anything. Again, setting up closer to the bridge would alleviate this problem somewhat.

Some players may be concerned about the weakness of the German defences west of the bridge. With that in mind figure 3 shows a set-up which moves one of the trenches across from the east side to X16. As long as the Germans hold this trench, the



FIGURE 1: defending the east side of Pegasus Bridge.

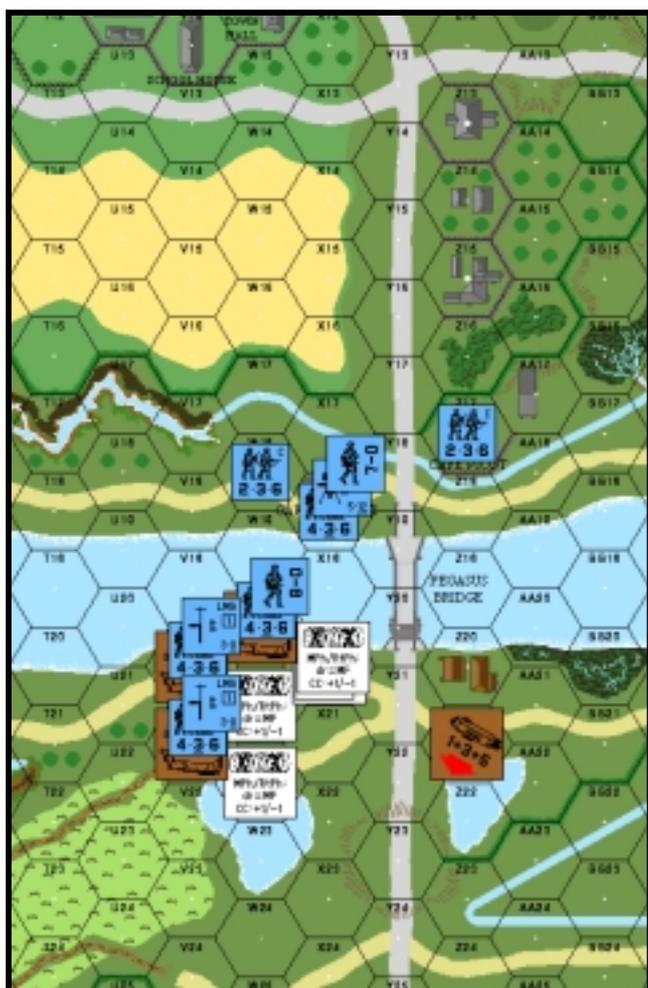


FIGURE 2: defending closer to Pegasus Bridge.



FIGURE 3: increasing the defence west of Pegasus Bridge.

bridge exit hex will be no man's land, a situation which is bound to be unacceptable to the British.

One thing I have not taken into account in the set-ups is the fact that some of the German units can set up using HIP and the Germans also receive some Dummy counters. The set up restrictions limit the value of the HIP unit as its location is likely to be easily guessed by the British, especially as the trenches may not set up hidden.

One option for the Germans is to set up a mixture of real units and Dummy stacks in the strongpoint. This frees units to set up on the west side while still forcing the British to deal with the strongpoint just to be sure that there are no real units there.

As noted earlier, something that the Germans must also bear in mind is the importance of maintaining control of the stone buildings in Z13/14/15 and the Y13 crossroads for Night II. They connect Benouville and Le Port and if Controlled by the Germans at the end of Night I, it allows

them to set up practically all their forces closer to the bridge which can make it nigh on impossible for the British to get across the bridge.

On the other hand, if the British control the area an attack out of Le Port has to contend with 648s in those buildings. Attacking 8 morale troops in stone buildings is often futile, sometimes suicidal, especially with lower class troops.

British Control of these buildings can be negated to a degree by sending a foxhole detail during Night II to begin entrenching around the AA6/V6/R6 area. Once complete these foxholes form a link between Benouville and Le Port - just don't let the British capture one of them though!

I hope the above thoughts give you something to ponder next time you play the Coup de Main CG. As Dan Dolan said, "People tend to read things and take them for gospel. When they have to think for themselves they tend to make mistakes. Mistakes by opponents ... a good thing."

Stryker's Charge

Pete Belford

I just wanted to reply to the review of *Schwerpunkt 5: The Medal of Honor* Trev Edwards wrote in the last issue of *VFTT*. The scenario 'River's End' was done by me, and I want to thank him for the informed review.

Trev said that it would have been "outrageous", if Sgt. Rivers was originally denied the Medal of Honor because he was black. Of course it is rather difficult to prove, but the author of the main research book believed so. As he was the company commander that submitted the man for the award, I think he would know best. He talked about the resistance he ran into from the battalion staff and he was wounded and sent home about a month after the action. He continued to lobby congress, and said "I refuse to die before Rivers gets the medal".

Earlier this year some WW2 veterans of Oriental/Pacific islander decent were also awarded the MOH. One of them, a senator from Hawaii, is featured in the *SP* scenario 'An Arm and a Leg'. These fellows were eventually denied the award because they looked too much like Japanese.

Anyway thanks again for the nice words.

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SET UP CONSIDERATIONS

The following list of things to consider when setting up was taken from emails posted to the InterNet ASL Mailing List from a number of people including Tom Repetti, Tate Rogers, Mark Greenman, and Rodney Kinney.

“What is your best method for setting up your side in a game of ASL?”

This is a question which just about every newbie needs some help on. Unfortunately, the answer is that people tend to learn from experience. When you get burned by something (once, twice, however many times it takes), you tend to remember it. Nothing teaches as well or as permanently as that “completely hosed” feeling you get when somebody schools you in a new tactic. Steve Pleva and a newbie both set up a scenario and then compared their setups some time ago in *Critical Hit* but on the whole the subject has not been covered much.

Still, there’s a lot of advice to give.

Simple is Good

Got a dominating defensive position? Stick the HMG there with your best leader. Make the other guy deal with your great defensive position.

A corollary to this is: don’t waste time trying to find sneaky LOS’s. Be boring. Stick the guns out there with good fields of fire and you’ll have plenty to shoot at. Sneaky LOS’s come up once in a blue moon and aren’t worth the effort to find.

Fire lanes, Fire lanes, Fire lanes

Lay fire lanes across likely avenues of attack, remembering that “soft” hindrances (brush, grain, etc) don’t affect the strength of the fire lane. Even in relatively dense terrain, fire lanes can be laid in the darndest places.

Alternate Hex-grains

Great for alternate hex-grain fire lanes.

High Doesn’t Necessarily Mean Good

Some upper-level locations just don’t have great LOS’s to where you need ‘em. Count out how many Blind Hexes are created by various terrain obstacles and you may be surprised at how little those “dominating positions” can really see. And when you get down to the ground level, you have more

potential for fire-lanes.

And high also means that more enemy units have the chance to hit you.

Remember Orchard and Grain seasons

Everybody loses a few games because the grain isn’t there or the orchards ARE there. Frustrating, but all part of the learning curve - check beforehand! Better yet, get with your opponent and make sure you both have the same understanding of the terrain. Grain, orchards, stream level, dense/light jungle, etc. Don’t think of it as giving your opponent unfair help; think of it as saving yourself from spending the next 4 hours playing a game that has become totally unchallenging because the other guy missed something crucial about the terrain.

Figure Where You’re Gonna Go When The Hammer Comes Down

Look for places your attackers or defenders can rout to when they break. Not IF they break, WHEN they break. You need to find quiet places where your brokies can shed their DM counters and be talked back into the fight by their leaders.

Some even go so far as to say that routing is the essence of Infantry tactics in ASL. If you can’t do it, you die. If you do it well, you’re back to fight again. On both defence and attack, you need to set up and move your units so that anybody with a possibility of breaking will be able to not just rout safely, but rout safely to the same Location with a leader waiting for them.

Don’t Waste HIP

Don’t bother using your limited HIP capability (if any) on that 10-2 directed squad and HMG when you know they are going to blaze away almost immediately.

Fortifications

When you have fortifications look to use them in conjunction with inhibiting terrain and/or the board edge. Starting that line of minefields, wire, etc, adjacent to that cliff hex side (for example) extends their effectiveness in restricting enemy movement.

Deployment

If you have deployment capability use it to the max, particularly if you have a limited number of total units.

Concealment

Even if your opponent sets-up on board you should still double check to see if any of your units can gain ‘?’.

METAL MONSTERS

As for using AFVs, a number of points are worth considering.

Can You Afford To Lose Them

Evaluate the VC with respect to losing vehicles. If losing vehicles furthers you in your goal of winning, don’t sweat it... Sometimes they are worth loads of VP, and sometimes they are your ‘PUNCH’. Just try and keep their loss in perspective, and don’t be afraid to take risks with them when the gains are to-be-had.

The TK / AF Race

Before a scenario, study the TK# vs. Armour Factors of each side. Decide on what are acceptable engagements for your vehicles. For example I will attempt to swarm a Panther with my 3 Shermans if it is in Motion or they are within 4 hexes of the Panther. I will try and engage the PzIV with my T34’s, but will avoid frontal confrontation with the Panther.

Combined Arms

Lead with the Infantry. Or at least have some nice and close by.

Motion Attempts

If your armour is outclassed by the enemy guns, then never forget to try and get in Motion during the enemy turn, and/or use Vehicle smoke. It also helps to position outclassed AFVs behind walls, hedges, or ‘facing rear-ward’ so as to skeedaddle quickly out of LOS if/when you get in Motion.

CE

If it’s an even-even type armour battle, go CE! And get the first good-odds (To Hit) shot!

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COMBAT MISSION

Going Beyond Squad Leader

A couple of years ago Avalon Hill and Big Time Software started working together on developing a *Beyond Squad Leader*, a computer game based on, but not a direct conversion of, *Squad Leader*. Just before AH was sold to Hasbro the two parted company, but Big Time Software continued working on the program and the end result has just been released as *Combat Mission: Beyond Overlord*.

Combat Mission is a turn-based, simultaneous execution 3D simulation of WWII tactical warfare covering actions from Normandy to the last days of the Reich. One or two players, playing FTF, PBEM or via the internet, command American, British, Canadian, Polish, Free French, and German forces ranging in size from a platoon to a reinforced battalion. These units are composed of squads, MGs, mortars, individual vehicles and guns and leaders.

Combat Mission uses a turn-based system, with each turn representing 60 seconds of action. At the start of each turn the action is halted while the player issues orders to his units. This is simply a matter of clicking on a unit and selecting the desired order from the menu which appears. If you decide to move you simply click on the location you want the unit to move to, if you want to fire you click on the target.

Once orders have been issued the Action Phase begins, during which units simultaneously carry out their orders during 60 seconds or real time. As events unfold in the Action Phase a unit might not perform the order issued to it but react in an intelligent manner. For example a unit which has been ordered to move might stop if it is fired upon. Or it might stop and fire at an enemy unit it sees moving past it. The result of this system

is a game which is resolved in real time but which does not rely on a player having fast reflexes to react to situations that occur to his numerous units, unlike the various 'real-time strategy' games such as *Command and Conquer*.

Unlike conventional wargames there is no fixed overhead view of the battlefield. Instead you can watch the action from any position on the battlefield, even overhead

action unfold as often as you want from the different angles is almost like watching a war movie of your creation.

As is common with computer wargames at this level, the fog or war is represented, with units only visible on the battlefield if a friendly unit can see them. Should enemy units move out of sight then a marker remains visible for a while in their last known position as a reminder of their presence. *Combat Mission* also allows for misidentification of targets so a Panzer IV might be seen as a Tiger, as often happened historically!

In addition to the numerous scenarios that are included there is also a scenario and map editor so you can create your own (some ASLers have started using these to convert ASL scenarios for use with *Combat Mission*) and a campaign system similar to that found in the various *HASL* modules.

Combat Mission can only be purchased online from www.battlefront.com and costs \$45.00, for which you get a CD-ROM and a printed manual. Although the

minimum specification calls for a Pentium 200 with 32Mb of RAM, I have tried it on a Pentium 166 with 24Mb of RAM and it runs OK but it is slow, especially when changing views. A Macintosh version is also available. A free 15Mb demo version can also be downloaded and includes two scenarios – UK readers might be interested to know that it can also be found on the cover CD-ROM of the October issue of *PC Pro* magazine which is available at the moment.



A screenshot from *Combat Mission* showing the detail a powerful computer can achieve.



Combat Mission running on a Pentium 166. The arrow buttons control the viewing angle.



A view from above and behind the attack, allowing the American player to watch the overall situation unfold during the current turn.



A Sherman takes out two enemy StuGs, leaving both ablaze.

(ideal for determining your overall position), moving the 'camera' around the battlefield at will. You can even replay an Action Phase so you can view it from a different position. With a powerful PC equipped with a 3D graphics card the views are stunning, but even on my Toshiba Libretto, with its 2D graphics and 7.1" screen it stills looks pretty good!

The net result of all this is a game that is a joy to play. The ability to view the battlefield from any angle makes it easy to see what is going on and the order system is simple to use. And the ability to watch the

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Hell's Bridgehead

Paul Kenny

OK, got my copy of *Hell's Bridgehead*. Here is what you get:

Standard CH file folder holder;
Six scenarios on cardstock;

Two *PLCG* with limited new rules on three sheets of normal paper;

One page with RG Purchase Record on cardstock, other side of this is aftermath of battle with standard Kursk picture;

140 die cut counters including black SS counters using CH artwork, squads, HS, leaders, heroes, plus control markers wreck counters, couple of information counters and tank ramming counters;

22 x32 inch historical map of the Psel bridgehead.

The Scenarios

1. Psel River Line: a half board infantry only scenario except for 2 Russian tanks arriving late and a few guns. Looks like a meaty scenario. Six and a half turns in which 20 or so German squads including engineers have to cross the river and capture objective hexes from 13 Russian squads with mines, wire, pillboxes and some guns. Both sides get OBA.

2. Battle at Arms Length: another half board scenario, this one lasting six turns. Combined arms vs. combined arms, this one appears to be a meeting engagement to capture some objective hexes. Each side gets a few squads, a towed gun and six or seven tanks/SP Guns.

3. Just Over the Highway: five and a half turns spread over about a quarter of the

map. The Germans have to capture some woods from dug in Russians. They get around 10 squads including 838 and four AFV against 9 Russian squads, fortifications and a pair of guns.

4. Graveyard of Steel: A five turn slugfest over a quarter of the map. A CVP race with both sides getting CVP for exiting. Three or four infantry per side along with a gun plus 9 German and 18 Russian tanks. Heavy Metal!

5. To the Last Round: seven and a half turns fought over the entire map. The Germans are on the defence this time, with 10 or so squads, a couple of AT guns, four tanks and some fortifications to hold objective hexes or buildings. Against them are around 20 Russian squads, a pair of guns and seven tanks. Both sides also get OBA. A meaty one.

6. Clash of Titans: a biggie lasting nine turns with around 25 to 35 squads per side, many guns, around 15 to 20+ tanks per side, OBA (rockets), even air support. A true east front fest!

The Campaigns

The two CG are short, 7 and 5 dates respectively. Not a lot of surprises in these. CG objectives seem to be to capture terrain objectives. In the first the Germans are pushing northward, while in the second CG the Russians are pushing southward. Pretty straightforward stuff here. The available OOB are solid with SS infantry and Engineers, Pz IIL IIIN, IVH, VIE, Stugs,

Wasps, Marders etc. What no Elefants! The Russians get Elite squads, T70s, T34s, Churchills, SP Guns; all in all a typical solid OOB. My only complaint here is the paper; CH really should put all this stuff on card stock.

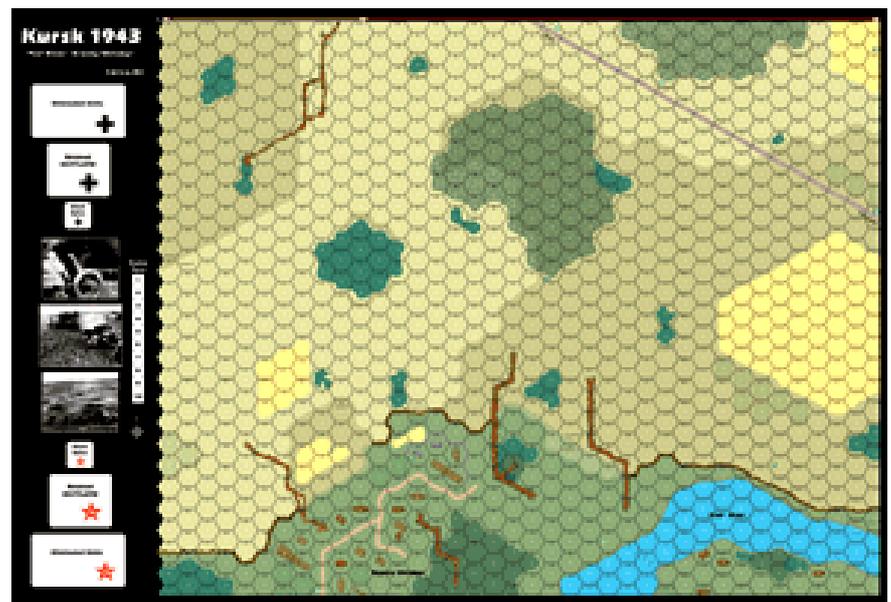
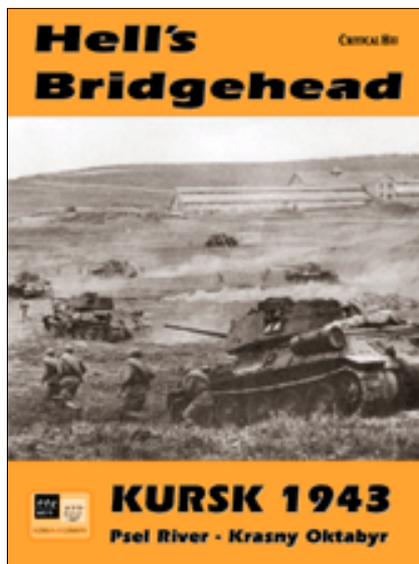
Oh yeah only couple of new rules to include in play. One is a Command AFV where an AL can affect the shots of the rest of the units in his RG. And the Tank Ramming rules. Look way cool. If a tank has his MA malfunction or be disabled and fails a TC he must charge nearest known enemy tank within 2 hexes. Kind of like the tank going berserk! He runs into an opponent's tank and can either immobilise or destroy himself or the enemy. Useless chrome but cool! :o)

Counters. YAWN. Who cares I say. Useless chrome as is true of the MMP and HOB black counters.

Map is a good solid effort. Haven't looked at it in detail but the colours look good, not too "busy". Looks computer generated but with the limited land features it isn't as noticeable as the *All American* maps.

For east front fans this looks like an excellent product. It is a shame that the most recent CH stuff hasn't been converted to *VASL* as I would really like to give this one a shot.

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To FG or not to FG

J R VanMechelen

Combating Skulking

The question often arises as to which is better, firegrouping or firing individual attacks when Mandatory Firegroups are not required. I know many of the grognards can answer this, but for the benefit of everyone else here are some numbers to help you decide.

The basic rule is that if you are firing with positive DRM, using a Firegroup is better. If you are firing with zero or negative DRM, use individual attacks. Consider the following situation: you have to break a single unit and you have the option of firing three units together or separately. The following chart show the chances of getting a break or better when firing at the target with different combinations of FP and DRMs. The top number is for three separate attacks, the bottom for a single firegroup.

FP	DRM			
	-1	+0	+1	+2
3x2	56.63%	36.15%	20.02%	10.06%
6	46.37%	35.03%	21.99%	13.89%
3x4	72.58%	53.92%	36.15%	20.02%
12	64.89%	54.63%	43.90%	32.72%
3x6	84.58%	72.58%	52.53%	36.15%
18	78.24%	68.13%	58.64%	46.06%

When the top number is greater, you would choose three separate attacks; if the bottom is greater, you would choose a firegroup. With the exception of a small glitch at 4 up zero, the rule of firing in groups only with positive DRM works very well.

In the above I assumed that the attack was going to be made against a single unit (or Location). If we make separate attacks, it may happen that the first attack breaks the unit and the firepower of the rest of the units is "wasted" because they lack targets. If there are multiple possible targets, however, we would be wise to compare the expected number of broken+ units in the chart below:

FP	DRM			
	-1	+0	+1	+2
3x2	0.73	0.42	0.22	0.10
6	0.46	0.35	0.22	0.14
3x4	1.05	0.68	0.42	0.22
12	0.65	0.55	0.44	0.33
3x6	1.39	1.05	0.66	0.42
18	0.78	0.68	0.59	0.46

As above, the top number is for separate attacks and the bottom is for a firegroup. The results are similar, with the exception of the 6 up 1 attacks vs. the 18 FP up 1. The expected number of breaks is larger for firegroups with positive DRM and larger for individual attacks with non-positive DRM.

I have not extensively calculated the results for smaller or larger firegroups, but what I have suggests that these results are independent of the number of units in the firegroup.

Skulking - a great defensive tactic.
 Movement Phase - move out of LOS.
 Advance Phase - advance back into LOS.
 Reduces or eliminates your opponents Defensive Fire. You are still in position to hinder his movement. You lose Prep Fire.

So how do you combat it when you are attacking? Here are a few suggestions.

1) Take away his hiding spot. Use flanking, infiltration, upper level 'overwatch' so that he can't move out of LOS.

2) Use your Prep fire to free up opportunities for movement, not to go for kills.

3) Take your lumps - Human Wave, Banzai, or reasonable equivalent. Jump down his throat. After Advancing Fire and Close Combat, let his tattered remnants skulk. You will get them next turn. This requires a major numbers superiority. Another plus, it really reduces counter congestion!

4) Give him targets for his Prep Fire. Advance units into the open (NOT stacked). Assault Move too, if time is a factor. Form large, spread out, fire groups, that slowly, but steadily, crawl closer and closer. Gives him the choice of facing deadly Prep Fire, or trying to break up your fire groups and face hopefully less deadly Defensive Fire. Sometimes the sight of those Open ground, no TEM shots is just too tempting, and your opponent will forget that he is skulking.

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APPLICATION OF MC/K RESULTS BY UNIT TYPE			
Squad	MC failed	MC 12 DR	K result
Normal	Broken	CR	CR + MC
Berserk	CR	KIA	CR + MC
Broken	CR	KIA	CR + MC
Half-Squad	MC failed	MC 12 DR	K result
Normal	Broken	KIA	KIA
Berserk	KIA	KIA	KIA
Broken	KIA	KIA	KIA
Leader	MC failed	MC 12 DR	K result
Normal/Wounded	Broken	Broken + Wound	Wound + MC
Broken	Wound	KIA	Wound + MC
Berserk	Wound	Wound (+1)	Wound + MC
Hero/Heroic leader	Wound	Wound (+1)	Wound + MC

"THIS IS THE CALL TO ARMS!"

This is the latest edition of the UK ASL Players Directory.

It is broken down by country. Within the country, players are listed according to the county they live in.

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Andy Ralls, 11 Edridge Close, Bushey, Watford, Bucks., WD2 3PF
Paul Ryde-Weller, 44 Farm Way, Watford, Herts., WD2 3SY
Sandy Goh, 12 Mornington Road, Radlett, Herts., WD7 7BL
Michael Murray, 34 Bell Road, Walsall, West Mids., W55 3JW
Ian Price, 19 Upper Green, Yettenhall, Wolverhampton, W. Mids., WV6 8QN
Wayne Baumber, 22 White Rose Close, Linton On Ouse, York, Yorkshire, YO6 2TR

SCOTLAND

Tony Gibson, 107 Queen's Den, Hazelhead, Aberdeen
Ian Percy, 1 Polmuir Road, Aberdeen, AB11 7SP
Steven Trease, 2 Charlesown Circle, Cove, Aberdeen, AB12 3EY
Paul Saunders, 59 Grampian Gardens, Arbroath, Angus, DD1 4AQ
Garry Ferguson, 30E Forrester Park Avenue, Edinburgh, EH12 9AW
Mark Chapman, 6 Quarry Foot Green, Bonrigg, Midlothian, EH19 2EJ
Richard Kirby, 20 Dawson Avenue, Howden, Livingston, Lothian, EH54 6AJ
Bill Finlayson, 19 Taymouth Road, Polmont, Falkirk, Stirlingshire, FK2 0PF
Andrew Kassian, Flat 14/2, 20 Petershill Court, Glasgow, G21 4QA
Ellis Simpson, 4 Langtree Avenue, Whitecraigs, Glasgow, G46 7LW
Oliver Gray, 117 Upper Dalgairn, Cupar, Fife, KY15 4JQ
Andrew Cowie, Elizlea, High Street, Errol, PH2 7KJ
Jonathan Swilliamson, Da Croft, Bridge End, Burra, Shetland Islands, ZE2 9LE

WALES

Kevin Sutton, 1 Gorphwysfa, Windsor Road, New Broughton, Wrexham, LL11 6SP
C. Jones, Deer Park Lodge, Stepside, Narbeth, Pembrokeshire, SA67 8JL

If there are any mistakes, please let me know so I can correct them for the next edition.

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VIEW FROM

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!

OCTOBER

OKTOBERFEST ASLOK 2000

When: 3 - 8 October.

Where: Radisson Inn, 7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights, Ohio 44130. Telephone 440-243-4040. Room Rates are \$85.00 for 1-4 occupants before September 9th. Be sure to mention "ASL Oktoberfest" when reserving.

Fee: \$20.00 before September 9th, \$25 thereafter.

Format: Same as always. Weekend tournament plus numerous mini-tournaments.

Notes: If pre-registering be sure to request any mini-tournaments you would like to enter.

Medium, large and extra large t-shirts are \$10.00 each, double-X-large are \$13.00 each, triple-X-large are \$15.00 each, quadruple-X-large are \$20.00.

Contact: Mark Nixon, 443 Richmond Park West, #201D, Richmond Heights, OH 44143, or by telephone on (440) 473 1680. You can also email Rick Troha at aslok@nwsup.com, or visit the ASLOK home page at <http://www.nwsup.com/aslok/>.

RED OCTOBER

When: 6 - 8 October.

Where: Shilo Inn, Tualatin, Oregon. Telephone 503-639-2226. Room Rates are \$75.00. Be sure to mention "Red October" when reserving.

Fee: \$20.00 in advance, \$25.00 on the door.

Format: To be announced.

Contact: Dave Hauth, 1717 NE 159th St., Portland, OR 97233.

INTENSIVE FIRE 2000

When: 27- 29 October.

Where: The Kiwi Hotel, West Hill Road, Bournemouth, England, BH2 5EG. Telephone (01202) 555 889 or fax (01202) 789 567 to arrange accommodation. Accommodation is available for £30 per night and includes service and breakfast.

Fee: £5.00, free for members of The Crusaders, the UK ASL association.

Format: Three round Fire Team tournament (two rounds on Saturday, one on Sunday). There will also be some single day mini-tournaments on Friday. Open gaming is available for those who do not wish to take part in the tournament.

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

Contact: For more details or to register contact Pete Phillipps, 49 Lombardy Rise, Leicester, LE5 0FQ. Phone (0116) 212 6747 (evenings only) or email if2000@vftt.co.uk.

NOVEMBER

GRENADIER 2000

When: 10 - 12 November.

Where: Hergarten, near Zülpich, Germany.

Fee: The registration fee is DM 100.00 and includes entrance fee as well as bed and breakfast for two days. Players are requested to pay DM 50.00 in advance.

Format: Three round tournament, offering two scenarios per round to choose one from [EXC: round two - beginning on Saturday 14:00 PM - will see all players play one and the same scenario].



THE TRENCHES

Notes: Friday is for free playing and/or making ground visits to nearby historical locations such as La Gleize and Stoumont.

Contact: Christian Koppmeyer, Hagebittenweg 9, 41564 Kaarst, Germany, or by email at Christian.Koppmeyer@gerling.de.

2001

FEBRUARY

WEST COAST MELEE IV

When: 2 - 4 February.

Where: Embassy Suites, LAX, South 1440 East Imperial Ave., El Segundo, CA 90245.

Fee: Club members \$30.00, non-members \$35.00 (players can save \$5.00 by pre-registering).

Format: WCM is a 'structured open' format. Players will be initially paired at random. From that point on, for a game to count toward your overall event record, you must play against another player with the same number of wins, and select a scenario from the year shown on the 'Year Is' board in the main room. Players in the running for a prize must have five games completed prior to Sunday morning. There will also be several 8 man, single elimination mini-tournaments in conjunction with the main event throughout the weekend.

Notes: This year, we will have the 7-0 Leaders corner, where an experienced player will be available to answer questions and explain rules for new and inexperienced players.

Contact: Email WCM@socalasl.com.

MARCH

BERSERK! 2001

When: 29 March - 1 April

Where: Hotel Skye, South Promenade, Blackpool, England. Shared rooms are £21.50, single rooms £26.50 and include breakfast. Bar meals and good beer are also available at the hotel.

Fee: £5.00.

Format: Likely to be the same as usual - details to be confirmed.

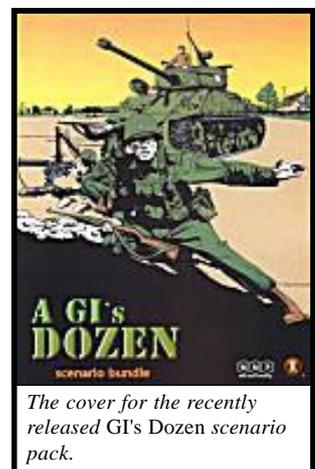
Contact: Steve Thomas, 19 Derwent House, Samuel Street, Preston, Lancs., PR1 4YL, or email Trev Edwards at rev.hulldown@freeuk.com.

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INCOMING

Continued from page 3

Four issue subscriptions are available for \$13.00 (\$15.00 outside the USA). Issue one is available free with a subscription or an SAE, while other back issues are \$3.50 (\$4.00 outside the USA). Payments should be payable to Vic Provost and sent to *Dispatches from the Bunker*, 209 Granby Road, Apt: 18, Chicopee, MA 01013. Tel (413)594-4301 (evenings) or email aslbunker@aol.com.



The cover for the recently released GI's Dozen scenario pack.

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BERSERK!

BLACKPOOL 2001

ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER TOURNAMENT
29TH MARCH - 1ST APRIL (FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY) 2001
HOTEL SKYE, SOUTH PROMENADE, BLACKPOOL, ENGLAND

THE EVENT

2001 sees the fifth annual Advanced Squad Leader event in the North West of England.

What we offer is a relaxed atmosphere where you can become involved in our tournament. In this tournament players of like record are paired off to allow us to determine the winners after several rounds. As usual we are planning five rounds and the first will begin on Friday afternoon. Those of you who cannot make it to the hotel before Friday evening (and we know that some of you can't due to work and family) will be flexibly catered for to allow you to take part effectively, so please do not be alarmed. Attendees can expect either three or six carefully selected scenarios per round to choose from.

Attendees are not obliged to enter the tournament as we also offer a long weekend where it is possible to immerse yourself in a Campaign Game (subject to finding an opponent, naturally) or just play friendly games with whoever is around.

THE VENUE

The hotel is a family run business and is located near the fixed fairground site in Blackpool. The nearest train station is very close by and various fast food opportunities also exist. As before, bar meals and good beer are available in the hotel.

THE COST

Entry to the convention is £5.00

HOTEL PRICING

B&B – for a shared room £21.50

B&B – for a single room £26.50

Single night supplement may also apply

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Steve Thomas,
19 Derwent House,
Samuel Street,
Preston,
Lancashire,
PR1 4YL

Or e-mail Trevor Edwards
trev@cableinet.co.uk

