

# VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

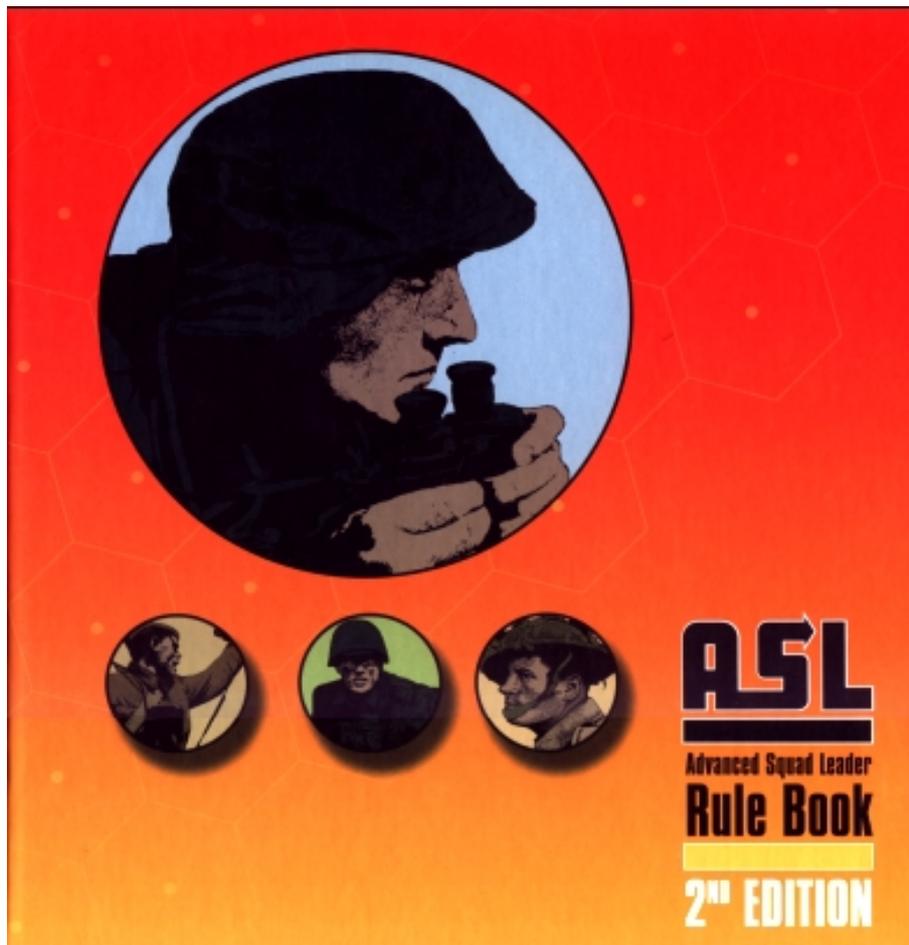
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## To Buy Or Not To Buy The new *ASL Rulebook* reviewed

### IN THIS ISSUE

"RIKUSENTAI REPLAYED" - *Blood Reef: Tarawa* scenario replay

REVIEWED - *Le Franc Tireur 5* and new packs from CH

A FEW WORDS ON STACKING - thoughts on stacking

THE PHYSICS OF ASL - ASL and the real world meet

## IN THIS ISSUE

PREP FIRE	2
2001: AN ASL ODYSSEY	3
INCOMING	3
THE SECOND EDITION ASL RULEBOOK	4
"HOW MANY TPYOS CAN YOU FNID?"	6
FIRST IMPRESSIONS: WA AND BOCAGE	7
DEBRIEFINGS	7
RIKUSENTAI REPLAYED	8
A FEW WORDS ON STACKING	12
THE PHYSICS OF ASL	13
NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THE BALTIC	16
VALOR OF THE 37TH GUARDS	16
TOTAL EAST FRONT, TOTAL PACIFIC	17
"THIS IS THE CALL TO AMERICAN ARMS!"	18
ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL	19

**COVER:** The cover of the new ASL rulebook. Worth buying?  
See the review on page 4.

### THE ASL MAILING LIST

The ASL Mailing List is devoted to discussion of *Advanced Squad Leader*, and is run by Paul Ferraro via a listserv program at the University of Pittsburgh. To subscribe send email to [majordomo@multimanpublishing.com](mailto:majordomo@multimanpublishing.com) with the body of the message reading:

**subscribe advanced-sl**

You MUST use lower case letters!

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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.

Issue 37 should be out at the beginning of May 2001.

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VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

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# PREP FIRE

Yet again the curse of the erratic *View From The Trenches* schedule strikes. This time blame Trev Edwards for forgetting to write his ASLRB2 review and Toby Pilling for not getting the third part of his article done in time – slapped wrists for both of you, and don't let it happen again!! However *VFTT37* should be out at the beginning of May as all that needs to be done for it is the BERSERK! reports. Looking further ahead I have already done some rough work on the rest of this years issues but I am still on the lookout for new material. As always don't just buy, play and read about ASL, **WRITE** about ASL!!

MMP have recently made another batch of out of print scenarios, A – J and T1 – T6, available for free download from their web site. If you do not have Internet access and want a copy of the scenarios, or the already available *Streets of Fire* or *Action Pack I* scenarios, send me a large SAE with one first class stamp per set and I'll post you a copy. Overseas readers should send one International reply Coupon (available from your local post office) per set.

See you all at HEROES I hope (see the back page for details). 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  
<=> grin  
:-( sad  
;-o shocked or surprised  
#-( hung-over

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# 2001: AN ASL ODYSSEY

Curt Schilling, President, MMP, LLC

# INCOMING

## MORE CANADIAN PACKS IN THE PIPELINE

Canadian designer George Kelln, the man responsible for the *WinPak* and *LSSAH* scenario sets is working on the latest editions of both series. Design work on *Liebstandarte* 3 is now complete and play -testing is expected to begin by the end of the month. The pack should be released in mid-September 2001 at the Canadian ASL Open.

Design work has also been completed on *WinPak* 2 but due to many of the play-testers being burned out this one is on hold for the moment.

## BUNKER 11 LOCATED

By the time you read this *Despatches From The Bunker* 12 should be going to print. As usual the 12 page newsletter two new scenarios analysis and designer notes, and articles on all aspects of ASL play, a look at the New England ASL scene, and Tactical Tips for both the Veteran and Novice.

The first scenario, 'Recon Blitz at Sarnowka' is the latest in their ongoing series featuring the 1<sup>st</sup> SS Leibstandarte and sees the division trying to open a route through the forests south of Zitimir in the opening weeks of Barbarossa. A reinforced Recon Company, supported by some Stugs, crashes into the new board 48 village, with boards on both flanks allowing for some manoeuvre.

The other scenario, 'No Respite', is Tom Morin's latest Tunisian action, picking up at Abiod where 'First Clash in Tunisia' left off, with the German force relieved by Elite Italian Paratroops supported by Semovente Assault Guns. Both are 'Tournament' sized offerings that can be played in a single session.

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 [aslunker@aol.com](mailto:aslunker@aol.com).

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I'd first like to thank Pete for giving us a chance to get the word out regarding the next 12 months or so of ASL's future.

Out now are boards 51 and 52. Board 51 is a VERY urban board, with some narrow streets, two steeples, and several 5 hex to 6 hex buildings with roads running into them (perfect for factories). In addition, *Armies of Oblivion* will have a river overlay which was especially designed to run the length of this board down the center.

Speaking of running length-wise down the center, board 52 has a road running down its center through the large woods mass which dominates, or rather which IS, board 52. Some scattered patches of brush and some small central hills round out this board which was designed for some nasty Finnish scenarios in *Haaka Palle*.

*SASL II* should be done, or 99% done by the time you read this. *SASL II* will bring the *SASL* system up to speed with regards to the various nations that fought in WWII. With new dividers for all these new nations the possibilities for play are endless. *SASL I* owners will be able to purchase a special upgrade kit to update their *SASL I* modules.

*ASL Journal* 3 should also be at or near completion at this time also. The latest issue of the *ASL Journal* will focus on the fighting in Norway, several scenarios as well as historical write ups will cover this often neglected campaign for the ASL player. With 30 scenarios to be included in *J3* there should be no shortage of choices if Norway isn't your cup of tea.

Following these two products will be the reprint of the now out of print *West of Alamein* module, with one important twist. *West of Alamein* is now two ASL modules. The first, *For King and Country*, will cover the British in the ETO while the second, *West of Alamein*, will cover the desert warfare aspect of ASL in WWII.

*For King and Country* will include the following:

British Counters

British Chapter H reformatted to the 2nd edition ASL Rulebook format

16-20 British scenarios from out of print ASL products and out of print TPP magazines that were submitted to MMP. Some of these scenarios will be tweaked based on ROAR reports to balance them for

their 2nd edition printing.

Boards 1, 7, 8, and 12

(Why these boards? Because these are the last 4 boards not to be found in any core ASL module that are used for ASL core module scenarios.)

*West of Alamein* will include

*WOA 1st edition* desert boards

*WOA 1st edition* Overlays

*WOA 1st edition* Scenarios

Chapter F reformatted to the 2nd edition ASL Rulebook format

*WOA 1st Edition* desert/info counters

These modules should hit the store shelves pretty close together time wise.

As for the future of ASL? Well I know I'm certain to get into trouble if I give you guys dates and times that are even remotely specific, so I'll just throw you a list of what's in the hopper and being worked on right now:

*Central Stalingrad HASL*

*Ortona HASL*

*Guadalcanal HSASL*

*Armies of Oblivion*

*Haake Palle*

*Intro ASL*

*HASL SASL*

*Operation Bagration HSASL*

*Budapest HASL*

And some various other odds and ends, I think you get the picture though.

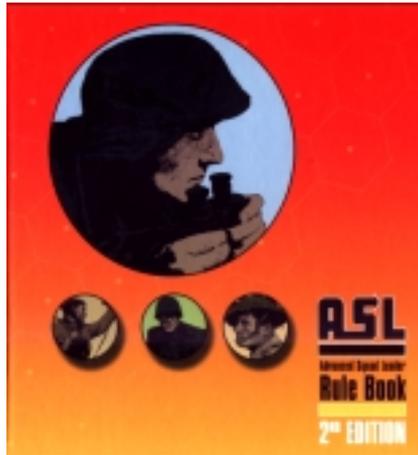
In our minds it truly is the heyday of ASL, and we have you, the players to thank for that. ASL is now in hobby stores around the world and the list is growing daily.

If you have anything, ANYTHING, you want to submit, scenario, article, *HASL* module etc., please contact Russ Bunten through our website or email him at [rbunten@eagnet.com](mailto:rbunten@eagnet.com).

One last note, if for any reason you have problems with anything you buy from us at MMP and have access to email, please email [mmp@pennphoto.com](mailto:mmp@pennphoto.com) or email us through our website and we will replace or refund and defective or returned products.

We appreciate your continued support and hope to make the next 10 years the best in ASL's history.

Thanks and God Bless.



# The Second Edition ASL Rulebook

Trev Edwards

The original ASL rulebook (*ASLRB*) has been out of print for far too long now. We may never know exactly how far this has set back the hobby in respect of new players lost to the allure of “collectible customisable card games,” all because they couldn’t even get hold of the basic kit required to play ASL. From my email in tray I have watched for some time MMP acknowledging the problem and promising to rectify the situation in their postings to the ASL Internet Mailing List (ASLML). The problem was compounded by the fact that the original print masters of the old rulebook were no longer available. However there was an even bigger problem: The *ASLRB* we had was so riddled with errors and amended by errata, Q&A and rule changes that the clamour for a complete rewrite on the ASLML was overpowering.

The 1<sup>st</sup> edition rulebook of a true ASL grognard could be identified by an accompanying bundle of printouts of errata and Q&A that was nearly half as thick as the rules. The bocage rules were still dreadful despite an extensive attempted rewrite and some of the errata pages were only available in modules that not every beginner would have access to. Nationalities added late to the system had guns in their OB that did not have an entry on the C7 TK# tables and some parts of the book were just too awkward to use in the heat of play. All in all, a bit of a mess. So, MMP took the bold decision to delay re-publishing the RB until they had given the basic rule system a much overdue overhaul, re-write and modernisation. I say bold, but in reality it must have seemed to be the only rational way to proceed.

There had never been a better time for a rewrite. We were now very near the end of

the publication of the core modules, so most of the nationalities and their special rules and odd gun calibres were in place. Also by this time, 15 years into the life of this incredible hobby, most of the errors and the clarifications that may be needed had been identified. The ability to send text around the world in an electronic instant to a company of proof-readers gave MMP an advantage that Messrs Greenwood, Medrow and McNamara never had. And the result? A remarkable new rulebook which is every bit worthy of the hours and money the publishers invested in its development. A rulebook worthy of the game.

The new 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition *ASLRB* has a redesigned binder. There is no slip case. That German guy we know from the old SL days is now most prominent on the cover, but the image has been darkened and he is no longer obviously from the SS, perhaps to reflect the politically correct times we live in (MMP point out that it is illegal to sell anything with SS insignia on it in Germany). Beneath him appear the smaller, familiar images of Ivan, G.I. Joe and Tommy Atkins that are nearly as old. There is a faint pattern of hexes and centre dots over part of the cover and the whole effect is rather fetching, despite the German’s helmet and clothing being far too dark, for my liking. The spine design is very good and will leap out from the shelf. Inside the covers is the quick reference guide to the markings on the infantry counters (front) and vehicles (on the back) which seem to be exactly the same as the original in content but are laid out in a slightly clearer pattern.

The contents of the book arrive in one tablet of paper and card, unmounted as yet on the three rings of the binder. What you

get is chapters A to E, chapters J & K, an index, chapter H’s generic DYO rules and finally vehicle listings for the German and Russian vehicles and ordnance that also form part of chapter H. Also included is a new introduction and a comprehensive table of contents. There are redesigned chapter dividers for A, B,C, D, E, and a national capabilities chart which doesn’t seem to be intended to replace the “old” chapter G card since it has the OBA flowchart inside. There is also a copy of the overrun flowchart with the IIFT inside and a large print ASOP. A cautionary note: Check that you have a complete run of all the pages as you open your book for the first time. Some of the early runs had sequences of pages missing and mine arrived with an *extra* set of pages A25 to A39.

The inclusion of chapter E is a positive step. Later scenarios are often found to use one or more of the miscellaneous rules from here and the inclusion of chapter E acknowledges that they are now part of the “core” rules. For those beginning the play of the game, a complete set of the chapter K that also comes with *ASLRB2* will be welcome. Chapter J is now pared down to one page of rules and the references to the use of miniatures (one of the greatest follies in the history of ASL) is reduced to a couple of sentences. The back of this one sheet of paper is where the credits for the original and new editions appear.

The printed text of the new rulebook is a pleasure to read. The font seems bigger somehow than the earlier edition (whether or not it actually is), the print is darker and the whole thing reads very easily. Leaps right off the page. Some of the illustrations are a



little dark for my taste but you will find that there are several more than in the original RB, some of which I'll get to later. Those bullet points on the errata pages of the old RB are no longer to be seen and the pages seem so much tidier.

The content of the rulebook has been re written throughout and most rules read differently so as to address the questions (the infamous "Q&A") that have been put to the Avalon Hill and MMP rules gurus over the years. These can be subtle or can hit you right in the eye. Some rules have been completely re written, for example the whole wall advantage and bocage section has been re done. The apparent result of this re working of B9 is that they finally seem to have come up with a mechanism that is easy to write, read and to play (allowing for a howler of a mistake in an important illustration). Another rule change I have noticed is that cowering is now factored into the strength of attack required to encircle a unit, in order to bring it into line with the DM rules. Some rules from the later chapters that were retro fitted into the original system have been put in their proper place. I welcome this because I have found myself in unnecessary arguments with other players about whether the F.1C "rout anywhere if you can't reach proper terrain" and the F.10 vehicular smoke grenades rules apply to all scenarios. Which they do. Some rules are changed a little by the re write, most are not but many of us think they should have been (the ability of an AFV platoon to start, turn and potentially disappear out of LOS before a gun can fire at them is one). However, the majority of rules now just read more clearly and unambiguously. You reviewer imagines that it is here where the greatest effort was involved and he also thinks it is a great improvement.

There appears to have been an intent to try and make the rulebook more user friendly and to shorten the amount of time needed to find a relevant piece of information. A very useful approach for those of us like myself who have found themselves in an "ecstasy of fumbling"\* trying to find an obscure snippet of information at a crucial moment in a tournament game, only to give up after a couple of tries as you opponent starts sighing and rolling his eyes. I have already had the benefit of two particularly fine examples, the first being that the FP of various calibres of canister are listed right with the rules a C8.4, thus saving you having to delve into the chapter H vehicle/ordnance listings. The other is that the vehicle and gun notes in chapter H themselves now include a list of those multi-applicable notes that apply to that

vehicle or gun, thus saving you having to look in the tables for those notes before referring to the notes themselves.

User friendliness is also the reason why the writers have expanded the number and size of the examples in the main body of the rules. Tom Repetti's excellent comprehensive rout example (as appeared in Journal 2) appears in full and there is a smaller but just as useful example along similar lines for the CC rules. I was particularly happy with this last as I first read it as I have ironed out a couple of wrinkles in my personal knowledge of how CC works where vehicles are involved. Although I was basically sound. I was also pleased to find a case that I was once asked to adjudicate on as a tournament director which I had got right (sheer luck I'm afraid). In that example a unit withdraws from CC/Melee into a hex where there is an HIP enemy unit. The HIP unit is revealed and the withdrawing unit is eliminated.

The chapter dividers have been laid out cleanly with the IFT on the large Chapter A divider now big enough that it occupies a side of a fold out on itself. If like me you like to prop it up near the game and refer to it (when I have to) with a quick glance, this is a bonus. Sadly this and the fact that all the firepower modifiers and DRM are listed in full means that such useful tables as leader generation, SW usage and Heat of Battle all appear on the other side.

The Chapter B divider still folds out but now the terrain types there listed are greater in number since the Mediterranean and North African alternatives for Brush (Vineyard), Orchard (Cactus Patch and Olive Grove) and even hedge (Cactus hedge) all appear in Chapter B itself and not just Chapter F. One thing I don't like is the absence of any vertical dividing lines between the columns. To my eyes, the table seems harder to read. The obverse carries all the expected SMOKE, Rubble and Fire summaries and also a guide to the MF/MP costs for the various different types of Railroad.

The Chapter C divider is the least changed of all. Of course there are more TK numbers for all the calibres we've seen added since that game was new. However, even this divider has benefited from the use of a large typeface on the TH tables and modifiers which are now really, really easy to read. Chapter D's grey card is now fully utilised as the back has a summary of stun, STUN and Shock, PFs and ATMM and vehicular MG (ranges and usage restrictions and the

like). Very useful. Chapter E's card looks similar on the front to the old one (although again we see it brought up to date with the inclusion of all the nationalities' air support listings). Gone are the squares of the cloaking display on the obverse however where we find the night player aid we saw in Pegasus Bridge. Seems a good idea for those of us who don't dig HASL.

The redesigned play aid card is much more colourful (really catches the eye) and makes better use of space by having a "tens and units" track for you to monitor, CVP, BPV for BI, THH and PF remaining and so on. There have been complaints about the ASOP being printed in large type on 4 sides of the chapter N divider, but I think it's fine since the large type is easy to read.

Another welcome inclusion, especially because the ASL Action Packs are largely out of print by this time, are the OBA flowchart and the overrun flowchart. You'll find some old farts (or fifteen year veterans as we like to be known) like myself muttering how in our day there were none of these poncey flowcharts and how we had to learn the rules properly (I did understand the OBA rules pretty well from the first re write after some extensive re reading and experiment). But, if you press us, you'll probably get us to admit that the overrun flowchart is the very *Apis mellifera's* patellae and that it really did deserve reprinting so it could appear in the ASLRB in the .

There is an IIFT included in the new ASLRB. It is still an optional rule. That's all I'm saying on *that* subject..

As with any product this intricate though, there are one or two things that have left me wondering "Why did they do that?" The biggest single gripe I have with the new RB is that there is only one QRDC meaning I'll have to get a laminated colour copy sooner rather than later for my opponent to use (my regular opponent and I play at my place and he leaves his rules at home). On a personal note, I really miss the chapter logos on the dividers (the MP40, the house and the tree, the Tiger tank etc) but I expect they just plain ran out of space. Incidentally there are no tags sticking out of the new dividers because of this, but then they always were the first thing to get tatty and we're probably better off without them. One final note is that I think the MOL summary which appears on the outside of the OBA flowchart should have appeared on the Chapter D divider along with the PF and ATMM so as to keep all the inherent SW together.

# “How many typos can you find?”

Brien Martin

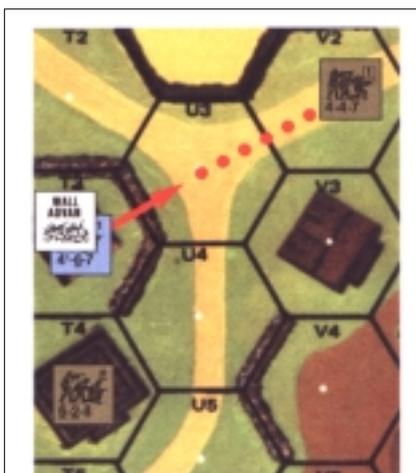
I suppose we should have expected what follows. Errata. The bane of ASLers since the dawn of... well 1985. By the time I am finishing this review (overdue with Pete screaming blue murder), MMP have published two pages of errata on their web page (*which can be found elsewhere in this issue – Pete*). Most of it is minor, some of it is correcting a mistake in one place on a divider (for example) that appears correctly somewhere else. The biggest and most significant error I have yet seen is the absence of a WA counter on the 467 in the illustration at B9.321. Without that, the rules for WA suddenly become very confusing indeed. At this moment, MMP are looking into issuing corrected pages as .pdf files (a type of computer file) on their internet web page.

In summary, despite a niggle here about presentation and the odd errata there, the second edition rulebook is really worth the effort put into it by MMP and company and also of the money you’ll spend to buy it. Any serious ASL player needs this. Anyone new to the game should also ignore the sudden flood of second-hand first edition books and get this.

One final note about the cost. Back in 1985, the rulebook was the same price as I just paid for my second edition. That means that, in real terms, it is practically half price. Not bad.

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\* I only know two war poems. One is “The German Guns” by one Pvt Baldrick and the other isn’t. This quote is from the other.



 The correct version of the B9.321 illustration, complete with WA counter for you to copy and stick in your rulebook.

A lot will be written in the coming days about the ASLRB2 as folks who have bought it and seen it will begin reporting their findings. Comments, both positive and negative, will be made and many thanks (I hope) will be given to the folks who worked on the editing, layout and proofreading.

As the proofreading team leader for Chapter K, I’d like to take a few moments to let folks know about the process as I saw it. Please bear in mind that Chapter K’s proofreading was vastly different from the other chapters in that we were given greater freedom in wording changes because our stuff wasn’t “rules”. Other teams may have had similar or differing experiences, and other proofreaders may not have viewed the process as I will. So, please, don’t take this as a blanket statement about every proofreader’s experience.

Curt sent us all out with one mission ... find mistakes. Other than my team, no one was allowed to submit wording changes unless agreed upon by MMP. In our team’s experience, we were never corrected when we found something. We were encouraged to find \*any\* type of error, such as the following:

- line spacing issues - font size changes in mid-section, mid-paragraph or mid-sentence - spelling errors - grammatical errors - typos - problems with graphics or illustrations - punctuation errors - issues with section headers - incorrect rules references or changed rules references

That’s just some of the things we found in doing Chapter K. Again, other teams will have roughly similar experiences ... and all other teams will have their own laundry list of things that were much different than we experienced.

At no time during the process were we asked to take short-cuts or ignore “minor” problems. At no time during the process were we ever told that our corrections were not going to be implemented, nor were we told that MMP disagreed with our findings. At no time was MMP ever discourteous to myself or my team members that I am aware of. Some would argue that MMP would be

foolish to disagree with us and tell us about it ... and that’s possible. However, that’s also a very pessimistic view of the guys at MMP and the process in general.

If there was anything about the process that I would have to “complain” about, it was the very tight deadline trying to meet the WO release date. Although I have read and re-read Chapter K five or six times (and I never kept count of how many times my teammates read and re-read the same material), I still find myself hoping and praying that we indeed found everything, and that everything we found was ultimately corrected. The final draft looks as though we were successful ... but I won’t be absolutely convinced until I see it in print (which should be soon).

As to other parts of the ASLRB2 which we were asked to review, the chapter dividers, index and ASOP all looked very, very good. The full-color player aid card (which is on the Chapter K divider, IIRC) is very cool-looking. The tables and charts are more plentiful than in the original, and the layout is, IMHO, pleasing to the eye ... although I did disagree quite strongly with the layout of the ASOP (my opinion may have been in the minority, however).

Again, others involved with the process may have different tales to tell. Theirs may be similar to mine. Theirs may be the mirror opposite. And many others will be somewhere in between. If so, those are \*their\* tales to tell if they so choose.

As for me, I enjoyed being part of the process. Given the history of the ASLML, I felt a very serious amount of pressure to get everything right. I felt as though I was not working for MMP ... but that I was working for you guys right here. I’m less worried about what Curt might say if we’ve goofed as I am what you folks will say ... because you will have paid your hard-earned dollars (pounds, francs, deutschmarks, kroner, etc.) to own the end result of our proofing.

I hope that all of the proofreading teams will have done you proud.

Ω



# First Impressions: WA and Bocage

## A brief look at the revised WA and Bocage rules

I've been play-testing an upcoming Ian Daghish Deluxe scenario for MMP which is designed to showcase the revised Wall Advantage and Bocage rules in use. As these are two of the few rules sections in *ASLRB 2* to be changed I made a few notes before beginning play and have decided to share them with you here. Note that these are not meant to be a comprehensive guide to the new rules in action – I'll leave that to the experts!!

### WALL ADVANTAGE

The first thing I noticed about the Wall Advantage rule was that has been split down into a number of sub-sections, which makes it easier to read. The main rule (B9.32) basically defines when a unit can claim WA and its effects, while B9.321 makes it clear that a unit claiming WA must be able to claim WA over all of the hexsides of its hex or it cannot claim WA at all. Thus if there is a unit in 3L2 with WA, an enemy unit in 3K3 cannot claim WA over the 3J2/J3 and 3K2/K3 hexsides because it cannot also claim WA over the 3L2/K3 hexside. As before *DASL* is an exception to this rule where WA is gained/lost per hexside.

B9.322 clarifies the five points during a turn when a unit can claim WA. An important change here is that during the MPh/APh only the moving/advancing unit can claim WA, so a unit in 3J2 which does not have WA cannot claim it when an enemy unit moves or advances into 3K3. Previously the unit in 3J2 would have to choose whether or not to claim WA when the enemy unit moved/advanced into 3K3.

B9.323 Mandatory WA is a new rule which basically states that a unit unable to claim a positive in-hex TEM automatically has WA (unless enemy units already have WA) and cannot voluntarily forfeit it. Thus a unit moving from 3T3 to 3S4 will automatically gain WA (assuming there is no unit in 3R4 already claiming WA) as grain has a TEM of 0. If it carries on moving into 3R4 it will again automatically gain WA as Open Ground has no TEM. If an enemy unit then moves into 3S4 in the next MPh it

would not gain WA despite the lack of in-hex TEM as the unit in 3R4 already has WA.

Between them these two rules should prevent any confusion as to when a unit can gain WA, which was the biggest problem with the old rules.

Let's see how these rules work together. A squad sets up in 3J2, and because it sets up in a woods hex it must decide whether to set up with WA or not; the owning player decides not to. Another unit sets up in 3L2 where the lack of TEM means it automatically has WA. In the first turn an enemy unit moves into 3K3. Even though there is no in-hex TEM the unit does not gain WA because the unit in 3L2 has WA over the 3L2/K3 hexside. In the AFPh the unit in 3L2 breaks, which also causes it to immediately forfeit WA. Because of this the enemy unit in 3K3 immediately gains WA as it has no in-hex TEM.

### BOCAGE

As for the Bocage rules, there do not appear to be any major changes to these, and I suspect the changes and clarifications to the WA rules have cleaned up any problems with bocage.

Ω

### It's Kinda Sad But....

... when I got home last night I put the telly on and Family Fortunes was on. Les Dennis asked the contestants to name a kind of tank and I immediately said Tiger :-)

Strangely enough, it wasn't one of the answers people had given :(

I mentioned this to Trev Edwards who asked "Bizarre...What type of answers had they given then?"

I told him that the contestants had replied with water tank, oil tank, gas tank, that sort of thing and Trev replied "Ah! Now I understand. I have to say that I am like you and I'm so enveloped in the whole WWII thing, that I'd probably have said Tiger as well... Sad R us."

# DEBRIEFINGS

The following clarifications and errata for the *ASLRB Second Edition* was posted to MMP's web site on 19 Mar 2001.

**Index** Under "Field Phone" replace "O6" with "OCG6".

**A1.4** The green MMC illustration does not represent an actual unit.

**A7.7** in line 17 add after "enemy" add "/Melee" then in the next to last line on page A15 after "enemy" add "Melee".

**A19.132** 4th line change "4-3-6" to "4-4-7".

**A25.235 EX** In lines 21-22 [approximately] of the second paragraph, replace "but both pass the LLMC -the broken squad with a 7, the other with an 8." with "which then passes its LLMC with a 7." [This error also applies to the 1999 errata page of the 1st Edition; because the broken leader does not have his ML raised, the unbroken squad has equal morale and need not take LLMC.]

**A25.3** The broken side of the American 6-6-6 squad should not have its Morale Level encased in a square and its BPV should be "11" not "17".

**A25.45** replace "F.8" with "25.53".

**Divider Terrain Chart, 2. Shellholes:** In the Notes section delete "unless BU". [This errata also applies to the 1st Edition.]

**Divider B25.65 Wind Change Chart line 4 of note** replace "Mild Breeze" with "No Wind".

**B8.61 line 7** after "Fortified" add "but would instead be eliminated if the opposite entrance were an enemy-occupied pillbox"

**B9.321 first EX** The 4—6-7 should be marked with a WA counter.

**Divider C5 Firer DRM Table** In Case I replace "MA only" with "MA/SA only".

**C4.2 penultimate line** replace "Gun" with "weapon". [All weapons <= 40mm suffer this modification to their Basic To Hit #.]

**C6.8: line 3** after the "WP" in the EXC, insert "; HD (D4.2)"

**C13.1 line 7** replace "red" with "green". [The "L" footnote on the To Hit table is in green.]

**Divider Shock/UK chart** The rules reference C7.4 should be shown.

In the 3rd bullet under "Results" in line 1: replace "CCPh" with "RPh".

**Divider D4.22 Hull Down Maneuver chart** add "-1 attempt at setup"

**D2.3 line 16** add "/hexside" after "hex". [If a vehicle is trying to VBM a second hexside of the same hex, and is prevented, then the MP are spent in that hex, not in the previous hex.]

**D3.32 line 6** append the following at the end: "if not in Motion; or Case C4/quartered FP, if in Motion."

**D3.32** Delete the sentence: "(See Example at the top of the next page.)"

**German Vehicle Note 92:** The illustration of the 2cm FlaK LKW and the 3.7cm Flak LKW both incorrectly show the vehicle as half-tracked; the Vehicle Listing and the counter itself both correctly show these vehicles using truck movement.

**Russian Ordnance Listing page H28H:** Multi-Applicable Ordnance Note A applies to the 107mm mortar (Note 3) not to the 120mm mortar (Note 4). The individual Notes themselves correctly show the appropriate Multi-Applicable Ordnance Note.

**QRDC**

**A11.11 Close Combat Table** the DRM for Gurkha/Japanese vs Infantry should be "-1" not "-2". [This table on the Chapter A divider correctly shows the DRM as "-1".]

**C5 Firer DRM Table** In Case I replace "MA only" with "MA/SA only".

**OBA Flowchart**

First column of chart, yellow oval, at end after "next" add "RPh" and change color to orange.

The heading of the 2nd column replace "SSR" with "SR".

In Rocket OBA section, in the green oval at the bottom left replace "Access Lost, Remove AR" with "Resolve FFE:1, Replace with FFE:2"

In Rocket OBA section, the white rectangle at the top right should say "Do you desire to Cancel FFE:2?"

In Note e, line 2, replace "of" with "or".

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# RIKUSENTAI REPLAYED

## A replay of BRT4 Rikusentai

Paul Venard and Carl Pfeiffer

The Pocket lies between Red Beach One and Red Beach Two, an exclusive enclave overlooking the scenic northern lagoon with convenient access to the central airfield. The alert observer may spy a playful Japanese sniper among a profusion of palms. The victory area is P-shaped, with a road running east to west along the seawall, a gully to the west, and revetments to the south along the runway.

This scenario is basically about the last stand of a very tough unit, Commander Sugai's Rikusentai, or Japanese Marines, along with other elements, on Betio Island of the Tarawa Atoll. The Marine player has only 6 full Game Turns to amass  $\geq 30$  CVP, and at the same time he has to control more buildings/pillboxes/bombproofs, (within the At Start Japanese perimeter), than does the Japanese player. Only about 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the *BRT HASL* map is used to play the game. It was played by PBEM using *VASL*, with Paul taking the defending Japanese and Carl the attacking Marines.

### Japanese OB and Set-up

**Paul:** The Marines consist of 4 768 squads, 10 668 squads 2 458 squads, a 348 half-squad and six leaders, (10-2, 9-2, 9-1 x 2, 8-1 x 2). "Toys" included the always-feared .50 cal HMG, 2 MMG, 4 DC, 2 toasters, (FT), and a radio for 70+mm OBA (HE only). Rolling stock is provided by one M4A2 Sherman, two LVT(A)2, two M3GMC half-tracks, (that's 75mm guns, mounted).

To defend against those 16.5 squad-equivalents and their machines the Japanese have "spending money" – 21 GPP, 15 CAPP, (extra stacking capacity optional, up to the full 3 squads), and 65FPP, and 14 squads: 448 x 8, (all Fanatic, as per SR2), and 447 x 6. The Japanese player receives 5 leaders: a 10-2, 10-1, 9-1 x 2, and a 8-0. Two MMG and two LMG are provided in the OB, and the rest of the Japanese "toys" are purchased using the 21 GPP. I went to Tojo-Mart and bought a Year 10 120L AA gun, a twin 12.7 AA gun, a .50 cal. HMG, and one Type 92 70\*mm Infantry gun.

With the 15 CAPP I purchased three 1-5-7 pillboxes. With the 65 Fortification Purchase Points I bought 1 Bombproof, (10 pts), 5 wire counters, (5 ea. = 25), 3 fortified buildings, (8 ea. = 24), 1 Trench, (4 pts), and 2 Concealment counters,

(1 pt. ea. = 2).

Note that, as per the BRT rules, one Trench or Passage is provided per 2 OB/ Purchased pillboxes. I used one Passage, but opted not to set up more trenches, so I could have converted the purchased Trench into something else, but failed to do so. (Sometimes a guy just wants to get started playin', ya know? Besides, filling the low-DRM locations with Trenches and the like is a two-edged sword, as loss of such positions would give the Marines protection during their advance.)

My initial thought was that I wanted to pack everything into a tight little circle so that I could blast the beejeesuz out of anything green daring to get close, but luckily I resisted that impulse and played it a bit more cagey that that. One has to take note of the Marine firepower - — disregarding the DC and FT teams, there's a lot of rock'm and sock'm stuffed into "mere" infantry IFP, add to that the AFVs. and machineguns. The Marine player can stand at arm's reach, (beyond the Jap infantry's Normal Range), and just started pounding away at anything not HIP or Concealed and do damage immediately.

Therefore, I didn't want to stack; I didn't want to drop HIP, (10% of squads, FRU, = 2 squads and their leaders/sw), and Concealment too quickly; and I didn't want to let Carl get the notion that all he had to do was jump on top of a tight little circle and start pounding away. So there was more than a defensive circle, because I put some of my boys out there on the eastern "peninsula" of their defensive perimeter, (defined by the OB), and left it to Carl to wonder whether or not HIP units would be in the same area.

### Peninsula Force:

N30: 1-5-7 pillbox/LMG448 facing southwest, (CA: 6), parallel to taxiway  
O31: 237 hs  
P31: 237 hs  
O28: 448

### Inner Circle:

O27: Wire/1-5-7 pillbox (CA: 2)/448  
(I like this wire-on-pillbox tactic)  
O26: HIP 10-1/MMG448  
N26: Fortified Building/448  
P26: Wire  
M26: Wire  
L25: Wire

P25: 237

N25: Bombproof/12.7 twin AA (CA:4)

M25: 448 and Concealed 70\* Inf Gun/228 (standard HIP N.A. in BRT) (CA:4)

M24: Fortified Building/Concealed 10-2/MMG448

P24: 447

P23: 8-0/448

L23: 447 (tangent to Inner Circle, south side)

M23: Wire

M22: 237 (tangent to Inner Circle, west side)

N22: 1-5-7 pillbox, (CA: 1, facing beach)/447

N23: Fortified Building/9-1/LMG447

N24: HIP 9-1/.50cal HMG/228 (centre of Inner Circle)

O23: Trench/120L/228, (direction 1, facing beach)

J27: Japanese SAN

### Marine OB and Set-up

**Carl:** In any scenario against the IJA, I look to take advantage of my resilience vs. their brittleness. I want the enemy to stand and die while I rotate my troops through the front line. Securing some rally terrain out of enemy LOS was the Turn 1 objective, since there are few buildings in the area outside the Pocket. That dovetails with the building control provision of the VC. With almost all of the visible Japanese in the western group of buildings, my attack had to come from the east—FT and big FG vs. the pillbox covering the taxiway, LVT-supported infantry vs. two rump HS, and some searching for HIPsters.

### The Hammer:

M29: Radio9-1/768/348

M30: DC10-2/FT668

M31: FT668

N31: 8-1/768/668

L30: M4A2 Sherman (CA/TCA: 1)

Q28: DC9-1/768/MMG668

Q29: LVT(A)2 (CA6)/348/DC668

Q30: LVT(A)2 (CA:5)/348

I also needed to fix the enemy in place. Once Paul started feeling the heat, I didn't want him to run a bunch of guys out the back door and leave me chewing on a small delaying force. He doesn't have unlimited room to run, but the Marines don't have the



time or the mobility to chase peas around their plate. The containing force was built around the M3 GMCs, since the available HD positions were in the east. It was supposed to mount only a limited attack, and only after the Hammer had broken into Paul's Inner Circle.

### The Anvil:

- I25: 9-2/50.cal/668
- J24: 348
- J20: M3 GMC (CA:3)
- J18: Crest-HD M3 GMC (CA:3)
- M21: 768
- M20: 458/DC458 in Crest status
- M19: 8-1/MMG668/668
- Q24: American SAN

### The Game

**Paul:** I was a bit surprised at Carl's set-up, in that he had such a big force right on top of my "Peninsula Force", but on second thought, it made sense that he would set up to roll-up that flank as quickly as possible, given the time requirement. Also, I was expecting something to come up from the beach on the north side, (it felt too weak on that side), but there was nothing there - although the LVTs and infantry in the north-east were just a move away.

**Carl:** I was a little surprised Paul spent a third of his GPP on the slow-firing 120L AA instead of two smaller high-ROF weapons. It ends up being a pretty good choice, though—it's one less gun the Marines can capture (a vital point in this scenario), it can kill the Sherman no sweat, and it packs a HE punch the infantry can't ignore.

The land-side weighting of the assault was insurance against the squad in the taxiway pillbox, which was in position to cause big FTR problems for busted Marines if not neutralised early. It did leave the beach road approach undermanned, a big problem for the US.

### Turn 1 Marine Turn 1

**Paul:** The attackers didn't take the first casualties. Just as noted/feared earlier, Carl hit from 6-hex range (with his 8-1/668/MMG668 stack), and immediately wounded and then eliminated my 8-0 leader in P23, and I think step-reducing his squad. The two known 237 half-squads in the Peninsula Force were both kayoed, also - one one for failure to rout, the other getting crushed by 3:1 odds in CC. I didn't have much to shoot back with yet, as I wasn't ready to lose Concealment and HIP so early. A positive

surprise, for me, was that the LMG448 in the N30 pillbox threw a wrench into the Marines' timetable by surviving the first onslaught, despite the leaders, squads, FT, and DC on 3 sides.

**Carl:** In the west I'd gambled with Turn 1 stacking in LOS of the 120L, and it paid off with early CVP against defenders admiring the lagoon. On the east flank, middlin' dice with the FT just pinned the pillbox squad, and the 10-2's inept DC attack did nothing. Even Steve McQueen can't simply waltz into a pillbox hex, deliver his bundle of joy, and expect 30 up 5 to do the job against IJA - I should've waited till turn 2 and Set the DC with an in-hex unit. Wish I'd played The Hawk before planning that.

### Rikusentai Turn 1

**Paul:** Exit my Peninsula Force pillbox squad, when they got toasted by a FT team on the taxiway. On the other end of the perimeter, the half-track in the gully got a hit, knocking out another half-squad from 5-hex range. The Marines' first loss was a big one one - the Jap sniper killed the 10-2 (this sort of hit on a top leader seems to happen wayyyy too often, doesn't it?.) Not a lot I could do yet, although I think by now the Japanese Infantry Gun was acquiring the OBA stack. I was just beginning to experience how frustrating all the hindrances



*The initial set-up positions.*

and obstacles could be. My twin 12.5 AA in N25, I would find, had poor LOS/LOF, (and Carl was in no hurry to place troops in front of it), but this also served to keep them in the game. The 120L missed its first shots, (at the west side group), and then malfunctioned when I used Intensive Fire.

**Carl:** Losing the 10-2 was bad all around – failed LLMC took the second FT out of action for over two turns. And the 9-1 lost radio contact, making things even tougher on the Hammer group; 70mm HE's not much of a threat against fortified positions, but could easily have taken out the 70\* INF, and the hindrance would've come in handy.

## Turn 2

### Marine Turn 2

**Paul:** Different turn, same story line: On the west side, Jap (237r 2nd Line?) knocked-out by a 5-range hit, (8-1/668 firing from palm hex to palm hex, one hindrance), and a step-reduced 348 squad crushed by another 3:1 CC, in the east.

**Carl:** At this point I've got 9 CVP of my 30 and have secured the "peninsula" part of the victory area. So far so good...but here's where the US game first starts to break down. I pushed the two LVTs west up the coast—one along the beach, the other adjacent on the road—with a paltry two HS in support, since the other troops were tied up trying to reduce the last enemy position in front of the wire (which fell in CC). I was trying to turn the corner of the wire and hit what

looked like a thinly defended north flank, but it was the beginning of an uncoordinated second phase of the attack.

### Rikusentai Turn 2

**Paul:** Somebody on the north side got some guts — a Tank-Hunter hero managed to reach a LVT that'd motored down to the beach, (the THH surviving albeit partly due to some misunderstanding about LVT MG CA's, as I recall), planted an ATMM on it, and...well...ka-blooey! 8-) Other Rikusentai continued to pepper palms, sand, and buildings, but not the Marines. I was getting truly concerned about that hefty enemy command closing in on the Inner Circle with full force.

**Carl:** I try to watch Chapter H pretty closely, but I spaced Note Q which gives LVT MGs unrestricted CA. Screwed up, and my guys were LVT flambee.

There was one additional result here which was pretty significant. The only gap in the eastern wire was the N26 fort occupied by a 448. He broke my adjacent engineer squad who, if he'd been there next turn, would've tossed smoke or maybe WP to pave the way for the guys coming up behind. Those units took it in the shorts in an over-ambitious Turn 3.

## Turn 3

### Marine Turn 3

**Paul:** My index cards show nothing for this turn. (Was this when Carl's luck began to slowly turn south?) "Big guys" like

the Sherman, the LVTs, the 120L and the twin AA weren't doing much, and the Marines started having problems when taking on the N26 Fortified Building and the O27 pillbox, close-up. One of the game's gutsiest moves, (Carl might have other words for it), occurred when a Marine 9-1 attempted to DT with a DC and toss it on a key position in the Inner Circle, but he broke and routed back along the shore road, to the north-east.

**Carl:** Here's where things really fell apart. The FTs were out of position in the PFFh, but I pushed the Hammer group's assault anyhow instead of waiting until Turn 4. On the land side, the 9-1 accompanied a second engineer squad forward to toss some WP into the N26 fort, even though I had no other units that could follow up. They pinned and then broke under accurate fire from the INF and adjacent units, leaving no effectives by the taxiway except for the Sherman.

I'd led with a couple of HS onto the wire, which was pretty rational, but then I boneheadedly brought the remaining LVT up onto the wire to support them. I'm at a loss to explain this—guess I just didn't want to expose it to the Twin .50, and I think I had some vague hope I'd clear the wire on the bog roll or roll low on the BFF shot. This left the LVT adjacent to the previously HIP 10-1/MMG, in deep guano. (I think this must have been one of those evenings when I got ROF with the beer tap.)

Both of my remaining hairs stood on end. I frantically looked around for anything I had that could save that bathtub. So here comes my other 9-1 scurrying up the coast road with a purse full of TNT – ducks two or three decent shots, gets ready to unload onto the MMG... and breaks from an 8 up 1. He slinked on back to sulk by the beach for the next couple of turns. Meanwhile, the west Anvil force began a cautious creep toward the wire and the fortified heart of the Japanese position.

### Rikusentai Turn 3

**Paul:** Okay, so now the Marines were getting into point blank range. One 348 tried to use LVT cover, (in the Wire at P26), but the 10-1/MMG(448) had dropped HIP and knocked 'em out, (range:1). A second 348 also went down from a range:1 shot. In the MPh, my second Tank-Hunter Hero was knocked-out at point blank range by 30FP of THH-hating Marines. I tried to regain momentum with a 248 advancing onto wire to CC with a 348 also hung-up on the wire, (in the O27 pillbox hex), but they lost the HtH. And another 248 got FT-toasted during the DFPh. Japanese skulking continued, but it was obvious that space-to-skulk was going to be getting pretty thin.

**Carl:** With the LVT stunned and its



American Marines attack a bunker on Tawara.

escorts busted, I was taking no chances with that THH. It was kind of a silly shot, since the LVT was on wire and the THH would've had a tough time getting a result—but with the vehicle hindrance, I didn't have much chance of affecting the enemy units to the south. For better or worse, I was committed to penetrating along the coast road with two lousy squads and a MMG, to be followed by the 8-1 and whatever he could rally up in the rear. Yeah, I was feeling like King Kong.

## Turn 4

### Marine Turn 4

**Paul:** The LVT in the Wire hex on the north-east side at P27 took two hits from the ADJACENT MMG and went down, crew and all. I think this was after being stunned earlier. A Marine 348 also was eliminated, with a Range:2 shot, by a 9-1/447 I'd moved into the Trench with the malfunctioned 120L, (which had continued to defy repair, although not disabling). In the CCPh, yet one more Marine HtH knocked-out a step-reduced 448, this time in an ambush. This gave Carl 13 CVP (17 to go), and I'm sure he had the required majority of buildings in Marine Control, by this point.

**Carl:** Anvil force completes its ponderous move to the western perimeter just in time to see my 9-2/.50cal go down hard in front of the runway wall. Sherman arrives from the east a turn too late, and lack of coordination causes another combined assault to wither on the vine. A couple of HS join the creep up the coast, though, and the lead engineer squad gets ambush in a critical CC to gain a toehold in the northern buildings. CVP count's still only 13 of 30, but it ain't over.

### Rikusentai Turn 4

**Paul:** Remember the gutsy 9-1 who just broke during his "DC run"? Well, he boxed his self-rally attempt. "Probably died of shame", Carl wrote. The Rikusentai lost another half-squad from a FT zap into the N26 fortified building, but the general "feel" of the game that was developing, by this time, was one of the Marines running out of time, while the Japanese were continually breaking just enough of their "inside thrusts" to retain the integrity of the Inner Circle. This might have been the turn when I really went on a tear, dicebot-wise. Somewhere in here, also, I got the .50 calibre moved in with the 10-2/MMG448, because it was clear – despite the danger of stacking – that I needed some real Hurt that I could throw at the likes of the 9-2/348/.50-cal 668 that had taken over K25. This tactic worked. With Fanatic Elites in a Fortified Building with a 10-2 Japanese leader, worry about stacking is minimised.

**Carl:** Marines' rally dice blow hot and cold (normally, they just plain blow). DC boy meets a humiliating end, but a big stack rallies up in the east to prepare for another crack at that N26 fort in the middle of the wire. Brave but clumsy FT HS reduces the squad inside, but the remaining Japs sneak out and jump him in CC—a devilish counterattack I didn't see coming. Everybody dies and the FT drops to the ground as the LVT-killer 10-1 group moves up to reoccupy the fort. It'll have to be taken the hard way, the only way we know.

## Turn 5

### Marine Turn 5

**Paul:** The 120L finally bounced back and repaired. (Is there such a thing as ASL drool? If so, I got it!) Of course we all know that American units are built to bounce back. So they kept bouncing back, but when one bouncing-back 348 tried to recover the abandoned FT in front of the N26 fortified building, they were wiped-out by MMG fire (the 10-1/MMG448 had Advanced in from O26, since previous tenants had a tendency to die). Carl revved-up his two half-tracks and the Sherman and started slamming into the south line, (one of the GMCs finished-off the Inf Gun crew with a R:1 Advancing Fire shot!), but all three AFVs, bogged down – the half-tracks in wire, and the Sherman in palm debris. A Marine 348 was able to advance into the Inf Gun hex and capture it, temporarily, for CVP purposes, but too many key Marine elements were unable to stay GO as they squeezed the Japanese defenders, (although the Marines did take Control of building locations P23, P24, and P25, along the north line, and O24, and eventually O26). But in this one player turn, the Marines lost 6 half-squads, (including two trying to recover dropped FTs, and two ambushed by a step-reduced 448 [348r]), and a MMG and a 668 were all blown to Hades (with others breaking), as they moved to the N22/shellholes within R:2 of the repaired 120L.

**Carl:** I needed 15 points in a hurry, and I figured the way to get them was to go for the guns. Capturing the INF near the airfield got me up to 21 CVP temporarily, but I couldn't hold the position in the next turn. The 120mm AA by the lagoon was the other target, but it kept the Marines at bay with some well-aimed fire that cost me two more squads. A 668 broke as it tried to place a DC on the kill stack in the M24 fort, and another squad and a half broke under point-blank fire as they approached the Twin .50. Grim stuff.

### Rikusentai Turn 5

**Paul:** All kinds of death had occurred

in/adjacent to that fortified building in N26, and now when they needed it most, the 10-1/348r lost their malfunctioned MMG to a disabling dr 6 in the RPh. Carl matched this RPh blunder by boxing a rally attempt with his 9-2 (thus losing yet another 348). The Japanese just kept firing away and making small moves, where needed. The .50 cal exploded the GMC bogged in Wire in L25. The Marines lost another leader, (the last 9-1), to a sniper hit, and a 348, (to LLMC), and the 120L eliminated a 348 and wounded an 8-1. I also lost a 9-1 in the Trench, (to PBF from MMG668 and R:2 fire from 348/668), but the 120L crew stayed GO, and the 447 squad was step-reduced.

Japanese Controlled locations by this time were N26, N25, N24, N23, O23, and M24, with M25 taken back by CC/HtH, (recapturing the malfunctioned Inf Gun and its CVP), and the 348r that'd won against the odds via Ambush in CC/HtH in O26 tried to dump an American DC on an ADJACENT cx768, but malfunctioned the attempt due to captured use penalties. So I advance-moved that MMC out of there, (thus relinquishing Control of O26), and into the fortified building in N2, where they joined the 10-1/348r already in place (oh, no! More stacking! But there were too many Marines, too close, to leave such a small unit by itself). In the APh, I moved the .50 cal to control L23 (thus going CX) to reduce stacking in M24 (the Sherman and GMC PBF were getting too accurate), and to help repel the last assault from the west side.

## Turn 6

### Marine Turn 6

**Paul:** Amazingly, I still had a reasonable chance of picking up 11 CVP and pulling the game out. But a 20FP shot got no effect against the 120L AA, an engineer squad trying to lob WP on it rolled a 6, and when an 8-1 tried to AM adjacent and place his DC it pivoted two hex-sides and pounded him. It then proceeded to take two more shots in DFPh, killing the leader and breaking the engineer. Some days it just don't pay to get out of bed.

Still, I just had to take my shot at the leader and two squads thumbing their noses at me from the N26 fort. There were two flame-throwers lying in front of it with a 668 adjacent to one and a 9-2 two hexes away from the other. I'm thinking pig roast. The leader drew fire, but was able to grab the heater, while the 668 went down to a lousy 6 straight SFF shot. Sgt. Rock was screaming "Top o' the world, Maaaaa!!!!" and spewin' Ethyl...but all he could manage was an anticlimactic two-check, which the fanatic IJA stack barely noticed. That was the game.

## Marine final comments

**Carl:** Well, yeah, it was pretty Tysonesque, but with less ear-biting and a damn sight less buttocks-fondling. And Tyson's left-right combinations are significantly smoother than mine; I was constantly having problems co-ordinating my attacks. I'm still having problems getting used to the difficulty of movement in this terrain – especially when I'm trying to place DC, seems like. I think the root of my problem here wasn't with the plan – I still like the hammer-and-anvil approach, since it provides rally terrain for the main attacking force – but with impatience and poor execution in turns 3 and 4. The failure to use the OBA was bad; it's partially traceable to the early loss of the 10-2, but the radio probably should've been somewhere else. Regarding Paul's comments on fortifications, I'd mostly agree – the wire was a real problem for me. A better-than-average scenario, worth playing.

## Japanese Final Comments

**Paul:** I have to agree with Carl that this was more a Tyson-type boxing match, not a Sugar Ray fight. It had that "clenching" feel to it, which, if you want to see a couple of heavyweights knock each other around, well... it's disappointing. However, in this match there was enough firepower (for the Japs only when the Marines got close), that the "clenching" got pretty dogged vicious! And I have to admit that I get a kick out of that sort of thing, (as long as it's not lopsided, and I'd say Carl was in it till the thrown towel).

About the bombproof: It's good for making the enemy work harder to take it (since its like a pillbox as a separate Location in the hex), but I wonder if I wouldn't swap it for more Wire and/or Concealments, next time.. I really like the Wire-on-Pillbox tactic, and I only had one of those. The Inf Gun was pretty useless, too (I'd noticed too late it didn't have HEAT until a later date).

As for the Marines, I think I said earlier I was expecting more from the north, in the area of the shore road, and Carl will probably say more on that. There's the seawall for protection there, but not much more – historically the main assault came from the south-west, so maybe lining up most of the force along the airfield walls, (parking stalls?), and in the gullies and environs would be worth the try.

Ω

# A Few Words on Stacking

Roy W. Connelly

Even as a brand spanking Newbie, sitting down to your first game, one of the first things uttered from your opponents mouth was "uhhh...oh yeah....don't stack, not a good idea."

Well, sure, this "don't stack" thing even came down from the better players in the game. Be it far from me to tell you they are wrong. They aren't. Stacking can get you into trouble sometimes but I don't think it is as world ending as some players would have you believe.

Instead, I think there should be a couple of words inserted into the phrase so it reads something like this: "don't move in a stack."

Ahh....moving in a stack. Why do we do it? I was caught doing this a couple of weeks ago in a scenario with a buddy. He blasted that stack and we both agreed it probably cost me the game. I personally get lazy, I don't want to take the time to move each counter by itself, so I move them all! (this is stupid by the way).

Another reason is to gain the extra MF of a leader stacked with them so they don't have to get a CX counter. (not nearly as stupid as the previous one).

Start and end your movement phases (or advance phase) in stacks, but move your units one by one. Think about where you are going and how you can utilise your FP when you get there. There are advantages and disadvantages to both stacks and multi-Location firegroups.

Sure there are good reasons to move in a stack, you just need to be real careful. If there are HIP units lurking, think twice about it. And you better have a good reason to do it.

Stacking in and of itself has some goods and bads too. I daresay there are times when you HAVE to stack. Lets take a look at some of these.

Attacking a fortified position often times requires you to stack. You are usually doing it with a big, negative modifier leader and somehow you have to overcome +4 for a fortified stone building or +5 for some pillboxes. Multi-Location FG's can put a good amount of firepower in there, but the TEM can still ruin your day since a regular leader can't modify the FP. The only way to make that TEM more manageable is to Stack a good amount of firepower with a -2 or better leader.

Restrictive terrain is another place where you will be forced to stack. The *Red Barricades* or the *Berlin: Red Vengeance* maps are good examples to look at. The terrain is not good for multi-Location FGs, some debris gets in the way, or rubble, either adding important hindrances or blocking LOS from one of your vital units trying to form this firegroup.

Of course there is also my favourite. When you have very good troops (EX: 6-5-8, 7-4-7, 8-

3-8, 6-2-8) you stack them with a good leader, even -1. Other than a Tank MA, this is the best way to move your opponents units where you want them to go. Or at least get them out of the way. Your opponent has to decide whether he wants to go for broke and possibly nail a couple of your units, or run. If he stays and misses, he's gonna get it. A stack of these units can pack a wallop your opponent may want to avoid.

Sometimes you have an exceptional leader(s) who, if he passes his morale check will make your 8 morale squads virtual supermen. Or you are playing the Japanese and any squad stacked with a leader has his morale raised by 1.

Of course there are disadvantages too. Like losing a whole stack due to one fire attack. Or losing a whole stack 'cause your 10-3 leader took a sniper bullet in the head, causing your units to each have to pass a 3LLMC.

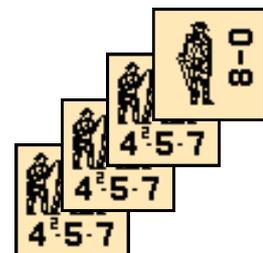
Another great time for stacking is as an attacker in a Night scenario. The cloaked units, limits on multi-Location FGs, etc, make a compelling case for 2-3 kill stacks lurking amongst the masses of dummies and half-squads. Plus, with units retaining concealment so often, and a typically static defence, you need some real fire power to open some doors.

Learn when to stack and when not to. Some situations demand it. Some just don't.

Sometimes a stack can just be used as an intimidator, or used to support a manoeuvre.

Remember, just because someone says "Don't stack" it doesn't mean "Never stack", it just means "don't do stupid stuff with your stacks"

Ω



# The Physics of ASL

## Counter-intuitive rules/mechanics

Wayne Hadady

Some of us rely on “reality fantasies” to help us remember the game mechanics. For the most part, these work. However, the rules can seem to defy nature at times. Here are a few of the situations that, on first encounter, had me thinking, “Yeah, right”. Some of these will doubtless be pointed out as misunderstandings on my part; others may be rendered ‘historical curiosities’ upon publication of *ASLRB2v2*. They are all a bit interesting, though, at least to me.

If you’ve been around *ASL* for a half-dozen or more games, you may find this compilation some fun to browse.

### I’ll go first

Playing ‘U3 The Factory’, illustrates this one nicely.

Soft hindrances affect IFT shots but do not reduce the residual FP left by such shots. Residual so created can be more dangerous than the shot that created it. For example, a 467 fires at long range in Heavy Rain at moving Infantry (FFNAM, FFMO, +2 Mist, for a 2-flat, leaving 1 Residual FP). The attack has a 25% chance of affecting 7-morale Infantry. Follow-on infantry, moving though the same Location will take a 1-2 residual FP attack, will be affected 37% of the time.

### A blast at the past

*ASL*’s “abstraction of time” includes shuffling of sequential events.

After entering a hex and taking (possibly effective) defensive first fire, a unit can be targeted with a Snap Shot at the hexside it crossed to get where it already is [A8.15, Q&A].

### That’ll teach ‘em...

One of a number of suspension-of-disbelief problems with the Unarmed unit rules.

Inexperienced Personnel suffer several penalties, including being easier to Capture than to kill in CC. Once captured (i.e., after they become Unarmed), they are no longer Inexperienced [Q&A on A20.5]. So, if you end up in Melee with an Inexperienced 1 FP HS and a free Unarmed HS, it is easier for you to Capture the armed guys than it is to Capture or kill the unarmed ones.

### Ice Nine meets the 50mm Nuke

I wonder if the *BV* reprint will include hole-in-the-ice markers?

Given enough vehicles (of gradually increasing weight), you can “test up” the weight limit of frozen river ice (on board 7 or 8, say) to support any vehicle in your OB (potentially 70 tons), but a 50mm HE Original Effects DR of 2 blows a 40 meter hole in ice of any load-bearing capacity.

### Invisible Fences and “Posted: No Trespassing” notices everywhere

Infantry starting in 2D3 can move via Bypass to 2D2 on the C5 hexside, but have no 3 MF path, from there, into the D1 building. A vehicle on the same course could not avoid a Bog check in D2 or C2.

### Walking on Air

A unit Bypassing 2L8 on the M9 hexside is at Level Two.

### Transit sit-in

Another Unarmed unit puzzle.

Having unpossessed hostile units (i.e., Escaped or Abandoned Prisoners) as Passengers of your vehicle prevents you spending MPs (that would require the Passengers to spend MFs, and they cannot do that during your MPH). Such Passengers may not Unload (that would require your vehicle spending MPs, and it cannot do that during an enemy MPH).

### Real Track and Field Olympians Wear Webgear

A hex is 40 meters across [A2.1]. A Game Turn represents two minutes of real time [A3]. Given a run of dice on steroids, an Infantry unit could conceivably spend those two minutes as follows: o move 9 hexes (CX, Leader and Road bonus) in its MPH o rout 6 hexes, ending in Capture (a move of one more hex) o Withdraw one hex with a CC-winning guard o be moved 9 hexes by the guard o rout 6 hexes with the guard o defeat the guard in CC and Withdraw one hex Total hexes/distance traversed: 33h/1320m (about a 2:30 mile pace)

### Bruce Lee-der and trusty sidekick

It’s been said that *ASL* is a better simulation of war films than of war.

A Gurkha 10-3 and 7-0 are POWs in an enemy platoon stack. By the CCPh, all three enemy squads (4 FP each) have broken. The leader passes his NTC to Escape (5/6ths chance) and helps his 7-0 do the same (at the same odds). The 10-3 and 7-0 attack at 1-6 odds (All on All) in CC. The expected result (a DR of 7) is that the 10-3 and 7-0 will eliminate the enemy platoon without getting their hands dirty. If it’s one of those grimy HtH days, a 9 or less will suffice. The sorry defenders have no chance of harming the dynamic duo.

2:12->1:6 (#s 2b/4r); broken -2, directed -3, Gurkha, -1: net -6 DRM

### Serious updrafts

Military chemical smoke agents are designed to sink to low points and billow smoke from there. That is why, in *ASL*, a smoke hit on an upper building level, say, places smoke at the base of the building.

Smoke in 2I8, however, does not hinder LOS from I9 to H7.

### Early Viper technology

It surprises some, but a vehicle can grow concealment in open ground.

A 26 ton JgdPz IV (with a -2 Armor Leader) grows concealment in open ground as readily as would a SMC. On a hindrance-strewn battlefield, that can be useful.

### The newer models really catch your eye

Time abstraction in *ASL* vehicle combat mechanics is especially bizarre.

An Armored Car moving at 50 mph (33 MPs) and in LOS of your ATG for just one hex adds +4 to your TH attempt (since you only had a bit under two seconds of real time to make the shot). A WWI-vintage British Infantry tank (6 MPs, road rate NA) moving flat out at under 4.5 mph and in LOS of your ATG for just one hex adds +4 to your TH attempt (because you had only twenty seconds of real time with which to take the shot).

## The circular probability of error of OBA is (dotted) circular indeed

I've heard official moaning that OBA scatter should be fixed, but as *ASL* is a game (not a simulation), I don't expect these rules to change.

A Russian SR corrected 1-3 hexes is almost equally likely to land in any of the seven hexes defined as the AR hex and the six hexes adjacent to that hex. A Russian SR corrected 46 hexes is about as likely to land in the AR hex as it is in one of the radial hexes two hexes from the AR, but much less likely to land adjacent to the AR hex. [C1.31]

## Solid rubber tires, perhaps?

I remember the Colonel pining for some oddball solid-rubber-wheel AFV. Seems to me that we already have them in droves.

A MG (not even a .50-cal) may not make a Deliberate Immobilization attack versus the tires and wheels of an AC.

## All-weather mines [EXC: do not use near Streams of running ice water]

Maybe the upcoming Finnish module will finish the winter warfare rules?

Mines may not be placed in Water Obstacles, but they can be placed in a Stream hex (because such is not defined as a Water Obstacle and is not otherwise prohibited from being a minefield hex). If, in a CG, say, it snows overnight, but the Stream does not freeze, it becomes a Frigid Stream (defined as a Water Obstacle, and therefore no longer minefield terrain). So any mines that may have been in that hex are presumably gone, until the snows melt, or the Stream freezes, making the hex no longer a Water Obstacle. Or something like that.

## Captives as management consultants

After reading Luck's memoirs of POW life in Russia, this is not so odd.

A Sangar that contains a Gun may never also contain more MMC than a HS or Crew. So a full squad that happens upon an unmanned Gun in a Sangar cannot possibly gain possession of it. Unless they have Prisoners with them (who, presumably, help the squad sort itself out). [Russian troops planning sub-squad missions are notoriously reliant on POW advisors.]

## Dum dums?

Residual FP generally has no memory

of the LOF that created it. This leads to a number of bizarre effects.

A D1F attack from outside a stone Factory leaves residual FP in the Factory hex. Another unit entering that hex from inside the Factory gets in-Factory TEM (+1). A unit Bypassing outside the factory (even if in LOF of the units that left the residual) gets building TEM (+3).

Bypassing Infantry hit with D1F in an OG CAFP can get the OG TEM (-1). Follow-on Infantry Bypassing through the same hex (even at that CAFP) get obstacle TEM versus any residual FP left by that earlier shot.

## The negative air pressure gradient going into RB factories.

The rules say 'no Wind inside factories,' but are unclear (IMO) WRT smoke that drifts into Factory hexes, from an outside source.

Smoke placed inside a RB factory cannot drift out at ground level because it is always "no wind" in such hexes (O5.411). Smoke placed outside a RB factory can drift into the factory at ground level (that being the normal case for buildings, and there being no EXC to prevent it in this case).

## What is their motivation?

WWII account tell how moving POWs slowed down their captors.

In *ASL*, POWs in no way hinder the movements of their guards. [Double Time and Assault Movement should, IMO, be disallowed to guards.]

## Maybe because vehicles exude some Zen of movement about them?

I picked this one up from some Nixon scenario analysis.

A bore sighted MG can get a -2 DRM vs Infantry only for a D1F attack. The DRM does not apply (vs Infantry) in any other phase. If the target is PRC, however, the -2 DRM applies in any fire phase. So if a vehicle with vulnerable PRC ends its movement in your bore sighted location, you can get that -2 DRM by waiting until Fire Fire or your PFPh.

## Enjoy risking AFVs via VBM freeze? Double your pleasure...

Riders are not allowed to voluntarily bail out off of tanks. If the turreted tank changes TCA, though, they must bail out. So, in the hands of an aggressive player, a tank w/riders might enter an enemy-occupied

hex (while declaring a 360-degree TCA change) so as to place an eight-morale squad, say, on top of the enemy position (expected result: squad doesn't break owing to bail-out). Broken or not, the Bailed Out unit is not subject to D1F after bail-out (per Perry Sez). So the tank might drive on (leaving the position "frozen" owing to target-selection limits) to 'freeze' a second location in the same MPH.

## The tree surgeons must enjoy full employment.

To the delight of ground-support pilots and machine gunners in high places, there are no canopies over the roads of *ASL* woods-road hexes.

## You can't take it with you

If the fight gets too hot, there may be the option to just leave.

If a vehicle gets into trouble, it can conceivably 'save' itself by its inherent Crew deliberately malfunctioning its MA, thus Recalling the vehicle, allowing it to possibly exit before contributing toward a CVP tally.

## PPKs from heaven

Another Unarmed unit head-scratcher. Two opposing HSs, each guarding two full squads worth of POWs, are in CC. If one eliminates the other, there are no weapons to rearm any freed prisoners (because the POWs were not attacking: A20.551). If the two HSs eliminate each other, there are enough weapons to rearm all four unarmed squads (leaving them in melee) [A20.221].

## Are FTs loaded with flammable magnetic jelly?

Drive-by flamings are cool. If a vehicle equipped with a FT is in Motion and fires that FT for an IFT attack, FP is halved. If it fires instead on another vehicle for a TK attempt, there is no penalty for the FT vehicle being in motion.

## Pre-war Circus men?

I think this maneuver deserves a standing O.

Cavalry cannot enter Woods while Galloping, but can declare Gallop (to gain the 4 MFs for a dismount in their present location) while in a Woods hex. This maneuver leaves their horses breathless, but not their cool, calm, collected riders.

## Swamp Thing

I expect this one is invalid, but it is easy to see how it could be misplayed if one relies on A.8 and does not check the Index.



A hex is ADJACENT to another if there exists an LOS between them and if hypothetical Infantry could advance from 'that' hex to the other in an APH [A.8]. Infantry may not advance into Swamp in the APH [B16.4]. So a broken unit in Swamp, adjacent to an enemy unit at the edge of the Swamp, would not need to rout (no Adjacent enemy), but a broken unit next to a Swamp would have to rout away from Adjacent enemy in the Swamp. [The Index definition of ADJACENT differs from A.8 enough to remove this 'directionality' problem.]

## Glass Houses?

In-hex geometry is frequently non-Euclidean in *ASL*.

After Infantry in a partially walled building hex claim Wall Advantage over the wall, they are normally treated as being in Open Ground versus fire that does not cross a wall of that hex, even though the center dot (aiming point) is in the building and the shooter may have no LOS, free of building depiction, to any wall depiction.

## Put those cleared mines behind you, son

A single squad spends ALL its MFs to enter (in its MPh) and clear (in its CCPh) an AP minefield. If Clearance fails, the squad places a partial TB on the entry hexside and may move off, across that hex-side, free of mine attack, during a future MPh. If it succeeds, it may place a full TB across =any= two hexsides. Assume it does not chose its entry hexside as one of those two. If, for some reason, it needed to leave that hex, in a future phase, across the original entry hexside, it =would= suffer a minefield attack, as a consequence of its successful Clearance and choice of hexsides.

## Scalene lines in two-space?

A unit which enters a minefield/rubble/woods hex on a trailbreak may leave the hex without bog/attack risk only by exiting on one of the hexsides connected by =that= trailbreak counter. Two trailbreaks crossing in that hex do not intersect-to enter by one TB, and leave by another, would put the unit at risk of mine attack and/or bog.

## Macro application of gradient particle physics...

Sometimes, no amount of VBM clearance is enough.

VBM is prohibited along a hex/hexside if there is a vehicle (or wreck) in the adjacent hex in Bypass along that same hexside [D2.31]. Even if it is a wall hexside,

with ample Bypass clearance in each hex [EX: the 10X6/Y7 hexside].

## Gravity well?

I usually slow down only for the traffic I can see.

The +1 MP penalty for moving a vehicle into a vehicle-overtstacked hex applies even if the vehicle causing that overtstacked condition is out of LOS in Stationary Bypass of an obstacle in that hex. [D2.14]

## Bullet-proof Ghurkas

Per the ASOP and informal Q&A, a unit moving onto a Climb counter may not be first fired upon until after it makes its Falling DR.

Infantry crossing a hexside to make a 2 MF move INTO a gully may be subject to a Snap Shot on that hexside before they vanish out of LOS [A8.15]. If that side of the gully were a cliff, though, Infantry who first declare Climbing (at a cost of ALL MFs) may cross the hexside (safe from Snap Shots) onto a Climb counter and, using Hazardous Movement, Climb one Level down that depression cliff (and out of LOS) INTO the gully. They may not be targeted while on their Climb counter before making their Falling DR and descent (assuming success) [B11.4; ASOP]. [EX: Infantry who Climb (successfully) from 24D6 INTO E7 could not be targeted by fire from F3. If, per SSR, E7 were an ordinary gully hex, the same move (2 MFs) would be subject to a Snap Shot.]

## The Jem H'dar evolved from Nazis

Fans of space-based games might enjoy how *ASL* weapons can materialize.

Late war German prisoners who rearm themselves (i.e., change from an unarmed counter to a Conscript counter) acquire all inherent weaponry (PF, ATMM) if the date is right. Vehicle Crews who survive the destruction of their vehicles are also so-armed. [C13.2; Q&A on A20.551 & A20.552]

## Is there an intact door or window anywhere in this burg?

Chemical smoke agents, in *ASL*, diffuse at the speed of light and permeate anything.

A three-level high building is three hexes long and less than a hex wide. Two-level high smoke, placed in bypass on one side of the middle hex, appears immediately on the other side of that building. [A24.2] [EX: Infantry or an AFV in Bypass of 1N4

on the O5 hexside place Smoke in N4. When other Infantry subsequently enter N3 from O4, defensive fires from M5 are hindered by the Smoke in N4-even if N4 is a three level high building in every hex.]

## What did they know at Jericho that we don't?

The walls in *ASL* must be rooted in the Earth's crust.

A building may be rubbled or breached. An ordinary wall may not be damaged in any way. Infantry entrenched behind a wall are immune to all forms of level, non-adjacent direct fire through that wall, no matter what the caliber or FP of the attacking weapon. Not even WP placed by such direct fire can effect them. [B9, 3.4]

## Leaders are stout

They certainly carry their share.

An SMC can carry two ATRs five hexes over open ground without effort. A squad of ten men, carrying nothing, making the same move (without a leader), would be exhausted.

## Sharpshooters can't miss the broad side of a tank

A CH is sometimes "so well placed" that it can have no effect at all.

A CH on a non-HD AFV always hits the hull, even if the turret/upper armor is inferior. This means an ATR can't wreck some tanks unless they are HD.

## Sir, your reputation precedes you

Opportunity Fire supposedly abstracts actions spanning the PFPh through the AFPh [Footnote A10].

A leader arriving on his last MF in the MPh in the location of an opportunity firing squad can direct that squad's AFPh shot as though he had been there all along, opportunity firing with them.

{If the squad had a SW and got rate, though, leader direction should not be allowed for subsequent shots from the SW, because leaders who direct are treated as if firing [A7.531] and a non-opportunity-firing unit (the leader) cannot use ROF in the AFPh [A7.25]. JMO. Requests for a ruling on this have so far gone unanswered.}

## Rod Serling's House

Sometimes, no caliber is large enough to obliterate a building.

On level ground, a wall, one hex away, blocks your LOS to a hex two hexes beyond that wall. That hex contains a one story house. The house (a level-one obstacle to

LOS) blocks your LOS to a Level 1 hill just behind it. You cannot hit the hill, owing to the house, but neither can you hit the house that is blocking your shot at the hill. [EX: A 150mm self-propelled Gun is parked in 2T8 in Bypass on the T7 hexside (CAFP T8/T7/U8). It has no LOS to any Location in W7 owing to the Wall at U8/V7. It has no LOS to X6 because its LOF is blocked by the house in T7. It cannot hit that LOF-blocking house, though.]

## What's the B# on those site-to-site teleporters?

Teens tumbling from a backfiring truck should be easier to detect.

Concealed, Stealthy, Elite Infantry who Assault Move into a building or woods (2 MFs) can be hit with Defensive First Fire by bore-sighted, leader-directed machine gunners and possibly cut to ribbons. Conscript Passengers who drive up in a noisy vehicle, Stop in Bypass, and unload (at a CAFP out of all LOS), enter such a house, at the end of their MPH, at a cost of no MFs, making them immune to all First Fire versus their entry of the obstacle [D6.5], and immune to bore sighting DRMs [C6.44].

## Smooth, slow ride

When towing, *ASL* trucks move at seemingly relativistic speeds.

A truck towing a Gun over Open Ground can make up to 80 pct of its rated speed for that terrain. A truck towing on a road can make only 33 pct of its rated road speed. [Credit to Jim Stahler for this observation.]

## Use the Force, Luke

*ASL* vehicles are equipped with tractor beams as well as towing winches.

A vehicle attempting bog removal can get help from another vehicle in its location—even if the two vehicles are in Bypass on opposite sides of an obstacle and with no LOS to each other [D8.3]. [Credit to Mark Nixon for making this observation in one of his articles].

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# Valor of the 37<sup>th</sup> Guards

Toby Pilling

This new product from Critical Hit proclaims on the cover to hold the following: **“9 NEW Scenarios and a Campaign Game all playable on a LARGE HEX MAP of the Dzerhezinsky Tractor Works – Plus historical notes!”**

Sounds good? I thought so and bought it.

I remember *DTW* when it first came out in 1997. I've always loved historical map sheets and was a big fan of *Red Barricades*, so I purchased it. My only complaint at the time was that although the map was beautifully rendered and looked fantastic, the hex size was too small. My memories of *Red Barricades* were scenarios and Campaign Games of a very high counter density, which required the larger hex size. In *DTW* they were perversely a fraction smaller than on normal geomorphic boards! Not only that but there were a few niggling inconsistencies and errors in the location of hex-centre dots – often parts of multi-hex buildings would not reach the dots. Not an insurmountable problem but a bit of a pain nonetheless.

Imagine my happiness then when I heard about this latest offering. Let me explain what one receives in the pack.

*Valor of the 37<sup>th</sup> Guards* is basically a zip-lock variant, which means it doesn't come in a box. One shouldn't judge anything by its cover, though perhaps Critical Hit could have made it look a bit more dynamic for the neutral buyer.

The map itself is the main reason anyone is going to buy this, so let me first focus on that. It looks great with the hexes being *Red Barricades* size. It's mounted on paper the same thickness as the *DTW* map, which itself isn't as thick as the *Red Barricades* map. It seems sturdy enough though.

The main disappointment is not that the hex-centre dot problem remains, although that is irking. No, the main annoyance is that the area covered by the new map is less than that on the old one. The *DTW* map had hex rows from A to KK, numbered from 1 to 40. The new map only goes from A to Y, numbered 4 to 39. That's a loss of twelve columns and five rows, not

in my book an insignificant amount. Yet nowhere on the packaging or indeed on Critical Hit's own web site is this anomaly mentioned. As I pointed out earlier, the cover advertises a “LARGE HEX MAP of the Dzerhezinsky Tractor Works”.

This is misleading: It is a map of the factory but only a partial map of their previous product. I wish they could have made this point more explicit or indeed just printed the whole map.

Onto the scenarios and yes, at least there are nine of them, mounted on card. I'll admit to having not played any yet, though a quick peruse does suggest they should be fun to play. What is unusual though is that the briefings and OOBs for each side are written on different cards. This I found very annoying, as you cannot then assess a scenario easily by looking at one sheet. You have instead to hunt through the other bits of card to find the corresponding one. A rather pointless exercise, in my view.

The Campaign Game is very disappointing. It basically involves using the map as a variant for the *Red Barricades* CG I, with a few different SSR encapsulated in an eighth of a page. I'm sure it would be good fun to play but it is hardly original.

Lastly, the historical notes fill a side of paper with some interesting facts and background. Don't expect them to be comprehensive Ian DalGLISH style though.

In conclusion, you tend to get less when buying this product than you expect. The advertising for it could be seen as misleading, in my view. In spite of these deficiencies though it is still worth getting, even if only for the map. It's just a shame they didn't make it the full size enlarged *DTW* one.

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# TOTAL EAST FRONT, TOTAL PACIFIC

## A brief look at CH's new scenario packs

Richard Gazley

### Total Pacific Pack

This pack certainly has an interesting assortment of scenarios and also comes with a sheet of 140 die-cut counters of Australian squads (no HS's), SMC's, control markers and "Command post" markers (which I assume are for *Those Ragged Bloody Heroes?*). There are also "Cleared Fire Zone" markers which are used to create a open ground hex in any kunai, bamboo or light jungle hex adjacent to a friendly entrenchment or cave.

The scenarios are as follows.

**The O-Patchers:** Some very well equipped US Army units with a pair of M7 Priests try to dig a bunch of second line Japanese, with tons of fortifications and small calibre ordnance, out of a hill on Luzon in Feb 45.

**Volckmann's Guerrillas:** Filipino infantry trying to finish off some second line Japanese (who are also on a hill on Luzon) in June of '45. The Filipinos get some hyper-accurate 75mm OBA to give them some help.

**Koepang Bang:** Feb '42 and the Japanese are doing an air drop against some Australians and some crappy Dutch Colonial troops.

**Battle at Baliuag:** A Philippines tank rumble in Dec '41. Six US M3 light tanks with a 9-1 leader are duking it out with six CHI-HA's and six CHI-RO's and an escort of four squads.

**Oil Strike:** Another Japanese parachute attack against Dutch and Australian troops. This time a couple of overlays represent oil refineries that can catch fire and cause wacky fun!

**Night Dragons:** New Guinea '42. Japanese night attack against Australian militia. The Japanese can blind the militia with their tank headlights as they rumble forward.

**Deceptive Reception:** 13+ Australians set up HIP and get to ambush 24 Japanese bicycle riders who are in column. After turn five, the Japanese get some reinforcements to help identify the remains...

**The South Side of Green:** Nissan Island in the Northern Solomons Feb '44. 18 squads of Australians are trying to finish off 6 Japanese squads, who are HIP and have 3 beached Shohatsu to make a last stand in.

All in all, it looks like an interesting pack. Certainly some fairly unusual situations. Now I just need some time to play them...

### Total East Front Pack

10 scenarios and a small cardstock sheet with 3 overlays on it, a big woods, a woods/gully set and a two hex orchard. All of which look like they were done with Microsoft's Paint program.

**Eye of the Needle:** The first of four Vienna '45 scenarios, all of which use 1/2 of a board (except the last, which uses two half boards). It has 10 squads of 5-4-8 SS from Das Reich trying

to get across half of board 45 with the help of two Panthers and a Wirblewind. The Russians get some infantry (seven 4-5-8's) and 2 T34/85's to stop the Germans from escaping.

**The Last Waltz:** Elite Russians trying to get to the canal across the Danube. Eleven squads (two of which are assault engineers) and 3 M4/76's are facing six 5-4-8's and a Mk IVH across half of board 20.

**Panzers In the Park:** Three M4/76's with eleven 4-5-8's are trying to take hex 35CC5 from six 4-6-7's and two Mk IVH's on half of board 35. On this half board are 10 (yes, ten) overlays!

**Squeeze Play:** The "large" one of the Vienna group; it has two half boards (12 & 13). It has an SS recon element with 8 HS's and six various SPW 250's (two with 75\*, two with 81 mortars, and two with 20L) trying to stop ten 4-4-7's and two T70's and two SU-76's with 82mm OBA.

**Panzer Pioniers:** An early Barbarossa slugfest with 4 boards. It has eight 8-3-8 engineers with three FT's and five DC's supported by six Mk IIF, one Mk IIF (FI), three Pz 38(t)A and some trucks for the engineers to ride in. they also get 280mm Rocket OBA with a Pre-Reg'd hex directed by an off-board observer. Trying to stop this is a mixed bag of Soviet infantry and some 45L AT guns. The Russians get reinforced by some wagon drawn 37L's and two KV-1 M39's. It looks brutal.

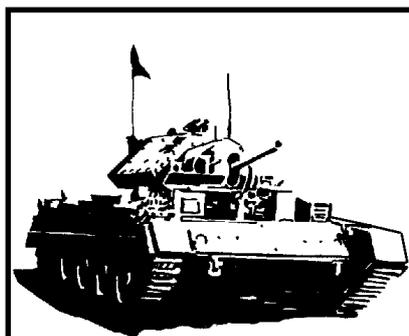
**The Battle For Pisino:** January '42 finds a bunch of elite Germans (two groups of four squads and some HS's with lots of SW's) reinforced by a group of 9+ motorcycle squads and five Mk IIF's. Trying to stop them are nature, in the form of Extreme Winter, and some Russian infantry with tons of SW's dug in on boards 17 & 33. The Russians get to purchase fortification from a list, so the German player won't know just what he is up against.

**Last Line Before Oboyan:** July of '43. Twelve 4-6-8's and some Pz III's (including a Flammpanzer) are joined by three Tigers to try to take a Russian defensive position and crush a Soviet armoured counterattack with 14 T34's (which arrive in three groups)

**Olin's Surprise:** July of '44. Six Mk IVH's, two Mk IIIN and four HIP Panthers (with two armour leaders) are trying to beat on two groups of nine T34's and three T34/85's. The Russians must move as Platoons until the first German fires. Oh yeah, the Panthers lose concealment as if they were guns and all Germans may start HD if applicable. Looks totally brutal.

Once again, I just need some free time to actually play some of these...

I hope these are of some help to folks who may be thinking of picking these packs up.



### 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.

The prices are as follows, and are effective until the next issue of *VFTT*:

<i>Leibstandarte Pack 1</i>	£7.00
<i>Leibstandarte Pack 2</i>	£7.00
<i>WinPak 1</i>	£7.00

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](mailto:pete@vftt.co.uk).

### UK RETAILER STOCKISTS OF THIRD PARTY PRODUCTS

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

**LEISURE GAMES**, 91 Ballards Lane, Finchley, London, N3 1XY. Telephone (020) 8346 2327 or e-mail them at [shop@leisuregames.com](mailto:shop@leisuregames.com).

**SECOND CHANCE GAMES**, 182 Borough Road, Seacombe, The Wirral, L44 6NJ. Telephone (0151) 638 3535 or e-mail them at [2ndcgames@currantbun.com](mailto:2ndcgames@currantbun.com).

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

# LE FRANC TIREUR 5

Daniel Zucker

The day after I got back from Winter Offensive I received in the mail the most stunning looking ASL magazine I've seen since the first ASL Journal came out, *Le Franc Tireur 5*. The only bad thing I would say about it is that it's in French except the scenarios and I don't read French.

The cover is a full colour picture of board 15 with a B&W photo on top of part of it. This features some stupid German looking through his field glasses, looking like he's going to spot the invasion fleet before anyone else and then stop it with his MG set up in AA mode, standing on the top of a ocean/river side embankment wall with this long row of outdoor café tables and chairs right next to him!!!

After Xavier Vitry's editorial is 14 pages of produce reviews covering just about every magazine or scenario pack that has been released in the last two years. A few are looked at in great detail but most are just mentioned. This is followed by a five page listing of French ASLers, a two page article on *RB CG IV*, what appears to be a three page article on how to play using *VASL*, and a four page article on mines.

The feature article covers 'Le Bataille De L'Authion', a series of actions on the French-Italian border in March and April 1945. This is accompanied by seven full colour photos of the massif (I guess as it is today) and lots of good B&W historical photos and an OOB of the 1<sup>st</sup> DFL. I particularly liked the section of photos that have game counters imposed on them, for example a tank with some infantry running behind it has a tank counter and a HS; or the couple of artillery rounds landing with the AR/SR counters.

The six scenarios are also in colour and use the *VASL* art work, units and maps, and a lay out that is not too unfamiliar. The shortest scenario is listed as about an hour in length, the longest around six hours. Five cover the battle of Authion while the last is a bonus fantasy one about a lost dog in which the Italians have to get their dog back from the Germans! There is a whole page of rules (in English) for the use of dogs in the magazine. I want to play them all as the subject looks well researched and all scenarios interesting.

Four of the five historical scenarios use board 15, while the main scenario uses boards 9 and 24 and an enclosed overlay of 'the Readout' which was the dominating position on massif de l'Authion.

The *LFT* team seem to have take the next step forward on the path that *Tactiques* was moving on and I hope they will be able to continue in this vein. In the mean time get off your ass and contact Xavier for your copy. *LFT5* is available for 70.00 French Francs (\$14.00 for US readers) from Xavier Vitry, 1 Imp des Jardins, 35340 Erce

# "THIS IS THE CALL TO AMERICAN ARMS!"

This is the latest edition of the North American ASL Players Directory. It is broken down by country. Within the country, players are listed according to their ZIP/Postal Code.

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

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## AN ALTERNATIVE REVIEW



Have stood naked in front of mirror with rules pressed to genitalia - bigger binder and stiffer ring-clips makes for an altogether more satisfying experience.....was it good for you too?

Ω

Name with-held to protect the guilty!!



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!

## AUGUST

### SISSUKONI 2001

**When:** 24 – 26 August.

**Where:** Parola Finnish Armor Museum, near Hämeenlinna, about 50 miles north of Helsinki, Finland.

**Fee:** 100FIM, which includes bed and breakfast, tournament entry, sauna and a tour of the museum.

**Format:** Five round tournament with the first round starting at around 1800 hrs on Friday, three on Saturday and the final round finishing by 1500 hrs on Sunday.

**Notes:** Among the vehicles on display at the museum is an ISU-152.

**Contact:** Eero Viheraari by email at [aslguru@icenet.fi](mailto:aslguru@icenet.fi).

## OCTOBER

### OKTOBERFEST ASLOK 2001

**When:** 2 - 7 October.

**Where:** Radisson Inn, 7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights, Ohio 44130. Telephone 440-243-4040. Room Rates for ASLOK 2000 were \$85.00 for 1-4 occupants and are likely to be similar this year.

**Fee:** Likely to be similar to last year, about \$20.00 or \$25.00.

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

**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](mailto:aslok@nwsup.com), or visit the ASLOK home page at <http://www.nwsup.com/aslok/>.

### INTENSIVE FIRE 2001

**When:** 26 – 28 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 £31.00 per night (or £26.00 for a shared room) and includes service and breakfast. Normal rates apply if booking after 30 September.

**Fee:** £6.00.

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

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

**Contact:** For more details or to register contact Pete Phillippis, 49 Lombardy Rise, Leicester, LE5 0FQ. Phone (0116) 212 6747 (evenings only) or email [if2001@vftt.co.uk](mailto:if2001@vftt.co.uk).

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## A Dog of War Bites Back

### A Semi-serious rebuttal

Steven Linton

I was reading Toby Pilling's article in the last issue of *VFTT*, where this jumped up johnny come lately pommy wannabe *ASL* player casts aspirations on my playtesting ability.

Right. Not could enough that we flog you in every sport known to man, but we have to teach you how to play *ASL* as well.

: -)

Seriously though, I am disappointed that Toby has taken an approach all too common of our American colleagues in respect of scenarios – in particular 'NQNG 4 Noble Craft of War'. Play it once, win easily and condemn it, albeit creatively, as "a dog so psychotically unbalanced it should be locked up in HMP Broadmoor for the rest of its natural life". Oh dear.

This on a scenario he acknowledges is 26-11 in favour of the Germans according to ROAR. There are 118 scenarios with more than 10 playings with worse records (54 of them the much lauded official productions – as as are ALL of his other worsts).

Unfortunately, I no longer have the playtest reports I did on this, otherwise I could outline a couple of strategies that the British player can adopt with reasonable hope of success. As a HOB playtest co-ordinator, I am always at pains to stress the need to look for problems, to consider all the loopholes, to ensure

the game is a matter of skill, not simply recognising the trick or win the roll for sides. As requested by Eddie Zeman, we also go out of our way to match players of equal ability wherever possible, and to talk through possible approaches for both sides before the start – just just the thought of thing he is suggesting.

Yes, I acknowledge that Noble Craft of War is tough on the British (especially those who don't bother to read the vehicle notes on the AVRE) - and given a straight up choice, I'd chose the Germans, but I think its far from one of the worst scenarios in *ASL*.

Mr Pilling has given me an avenue to an appropriate way of settling this issue, however. With luck and the help of the frequent flyer scheme, I'm going to be attending INTENSIVE FIRE this year. Taking the British (and no doubt the balance :-)). I will teach him that, as in most things, the British are a sad second to the lucky country.

When I win, I expect to see young Toby wearing a HMP Broadmoor t-shirt emblazoned "I lost as the Germans in Noble Craft of War" for the duration of the tournament. In the event that his dice or some medical emergency caused by the local food see him avoid defeat, I will acknowledge that somewhere, possibly, there is an Englishman who can play cricket. After all, he can't possibly lose, can he?

<sigh> the things I do for the free copies...

P.S. I've won a Schwerpunkt playtest tourney too. Should we both wear our medals?

# HEROES – 2001

## MANORCON XIX

Chamberlain Hall, Birmingham University, Church Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.)



Friday 20<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July



Add another *ASL* tournament to your list for 2001. I invite everyone to Birmingham!

For HEROES I will be running a competition based upon the “Market Garden” Mini CG from the *ASL Annual '91*.

Proceedings will start Saturday morning, when there are enough players up and out of bed!

The tournament will run as follows:

Players decide which side they will be (German / Allied), for the Mini CG.

Players must complete at least 5 of the 7 scenarios; each scenario must be played against a different opponent.

Scoring Victory Points as detailed in the Annual.

The players with the highest scores over the weekend will be declared the winners. (Best German, and best Allied players).

In the event of a tie; the number of Heroes generated will decide!

For those of you who don't know, MANORCON is a large annual gaming convention. However, most of the attendees will not know what ASL is. That is why I want this to be an opportunity to introduce new blood into our favourite pastime (obsession?). Whenever anybody takes an interest in what we are doing, then please take time to explain or get them involved. Also have a good look around yourself, some of the games played at MANORCON you won't be familiar with, but most are good fun!

If you want more information about MANORCON or a **BOOKING FORM** please write to me.

See you all in Birmingham in July.

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