

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

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GUN PIT'S TRIP UP NORTH - Paul Case's view on **BERSERK!**

DIEN BIEN PHU PART DEUX - more scenario analysis

ANOTHER LOOK AT CAMPAIGN GAMES - Chris Riches' views on third party CG

CRUSADER LADDER - updated

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COVER: some of the action at BERSERK! 2003. A full report can be found in this issue.

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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 50 should be out at the beginning of July 2003.

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PREP FIRE

Hello and welcome to the latest *View From The Trenches*. This issue starts the 9th year of *VFTT*, which is one hell of an achievement for an ASL publication! Issue 50, another landmark, is about done, and should be out on time at the start of July. Although it may be a few weeks early. Those of you who saw me at BERSERK! will know that the company I work for is closing down (June 6th, D-Day of all days!) and so I will be out of a job. As far as *VFTT* is concerned this means I will no longer have access to the photocopier to produce it on, which means paying to get it printed instead. This could mean either a price increase, or the end of the paper edition of *VFTT*. Much depends on how quickly I can get another job to pay towards the printing costs.

Despite that possible bad news I'm still looking for material to fill up the issues after that. Even if the paper edition folds, and I hope it doesn't, there'll still be the electronic version available. So get writing! How about an article on the way to win the scenarios at BERSERK!? Or lose them, depending on who you are! What's the best way to use tanks – blitzkrieg or infantry support? Hube's Pocket – someone told me this was a dog the other week, do you agree? Wine or beer, which one is best with ASL – OK so maybe the last suggestion isn't too serious, but I'm sure there are plenty of other topics to discuss. So what are you all waiting for! Get writing!

Double 1. My last, best hope for victory.

Pete Phillipps

EMOTICONS

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

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

:-) humour or smile
;-) winking
:-> devious smile
<g> grin
:-(sad
:o shocked or surprised
#-(hung-over

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INCOMING

MMP REPRINT AS AOO NEARS COMPLETION

The reprint of *For King and Country*, the new British module, is being finished with the print runs of *OCS Korea* and *Monty's Gamble*. Following that will be a reprint of the *ASLRB* and *Beyond Valor*. Unlike the earlier reprint this will not include *Red Barricades*, to cut down on the cost of the module.

Armies of Oblivion is nearing completion, with one scenario needing play testing, and some counter layout and vehicle notes to be finished. *AOO* will be placed on the pre-order list but will have no pre-order number to hit; this will allow customers who purchase directly from MMP to buy the module at a discount.

Due for submission to MMP within the next few months are *Valor of the Guards (HASL)*, *Ortona (HASL)*, and *Hakkaa Päälle* (the Finnish Module).

16th BUNKER READY

Issue 16 of *Despatches From The Bunker* is due out as this issue goes to press. Inside will be three East Front scenarios; 'Paking a Punch', 'A Hotly Contested Crossroads', and 'The God of War'. Accompanying them will be the usual design notes, Jim Torkelson's analysis of 'Acts of

Defiance', Tactical Tips for Veteran's and Novices, and all the usual features.

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 *Despatches from the Bunker*, P.O. Box 1025, Hinsdale MA 01235. You can email them at aslunker@aol.com.

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LEISURE GAMES

As of 6 May 2003 the address of our shop shall be as follows:

Leisure Games
100 Ballard Lane
Finchley
London
N3 2DN

Thank you for your support.

Michael E Berry
Director



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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*:

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<i>Melee Pack 1</i>	£10.00

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Add 50p per item for postage and send your payment made out to PETE PHILLIPPS to 23 Jean Drive, Leicester, England, LE4 0GB.

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

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

LEISURE GAMES, 100 Ballards Lane, Finchley, London, N3 2DN. Telephone (020) 8346 2327 or e-mail them at shop@leisuregames.com

SECOND CHANCE GAMES, 182 Borough Road, Seacombe, The Wirral, L44 6NJ. Telephone (0151) 638 3535 or e-mail them at sales@secondchancegames.com

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

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



Shaun Carter updates the rules to the *Tavronitis HASL* as Steve Thomas works through them. Paul Case looks on.

Gun Pit's Trip Up North

Paul Case

Thursday 13th March

Well, here I am at Blackpool fighting with other cardboard warriors. So far, there is not much action, except for a few sad sods who will insist on playing ASL at anytime. Me, I'll just have a few beers and report on the proceedings. Please do not expect any professional reporting, as I intend to join these clowns and play some ASL. More players are turning up, but if you are not here, you will never know who! So, my advice to you lot is this:- Get your asses up to Blackpool for the 2004 competition, so that you do not have to read any of this crap to know what went on!

My first game is against Nigel Blair, from the West Country, at 'TAC 51 Strength through unity'. Doing my usual and losing, but both of us did manage to throw a 'Giggy' (ie. Boxcars), and with yours truly not even managing to go all the way. I will not be playing this one in the main event, even though, at ASLOK 1996, I won as the Allied Minors. The same side as this playing!

Friday 14th March

After an early night, I got up and had breakfast. Had a chance of a game, but choose not to (got to save myself for the tourney, you know). I have to learn the Bocage rules to play 'TAC 47 Roses For Vandervoort', as after losing so easy in my last game, I need to boost my 'Win/Loss' record.

The first Tourney game is against Brian Hooper, a fellow West Country boy, at TAC 47, with me as the Americans. Well folks, it looks like it isn't all 'Roses For Vandervoort' after all, as I lost, which is about my usual. The results of the 'Snakes and Boxcars' is as follows:-

Brian - Snakes- 1, Boxcars- 5.

Paul - Snakes- 3, Boxcars-3.

The highlight of the match for me was on German Turn 3, when one of my 81mm Mtrs had a nice run of 9 (nine!) ROF shots at his 9-1/4-6-7/HMG combo, causing his 9-1 to wound, his 4-6-7 to disappear, and leaving the HMG for me to pick-up (which I did not). Now I must get ready for the next round, and choose between A60, A69 and A70. But first, something to eat.

Next came Dave Tye, who decided to try his luck at 'A 70 Wintergewitter'. And guess what? His luck held, and he won. It came down to the wire, as my heroes from the 6th Panzer Division just failed to capture the village of Verkhne-Kumsky. Nearly, but just not quite. The results of the 'Snakes and Boxcars' is as follows:-

Dave - Snakes- 2, Boxcars- 2.

Paul - Snakes- 2, Boxcars- 5.

Not much to report in this game, but hey, I enjoyed it.

At nearly mid-night, I think I need some (a lot!) beauty sleep, so time to clock-off for now.

Saturday 15th March

The first game of the day, and I play James Crossfield, at 'SP 95 Burn, Gurkha, Burn!' I have to mention that Schwerpunkt spelt the middle word in the title differently to how my 'Spell-Checker' does. According to it, the correct spelling is Ghurkha! James comes from my neck of the woods, he's another West Country boy. The game went down to the wire, with yours the fantastic doing his level best to keep up the good work, and coming in a very respectable 2nd place. Yep, I lost again!

The highlight of this game for me was

when James, with his berserk Jap 4-4-8 (but now with 10 morale) threw a DC uphill at my 2-4-8 on a level one hill-hex. The result of his endeavour was to Pin my 2-4-8, and Cas-Red his 4-4-8. Now for the results you have all been waiting for, the 'Snakes and Boxcars' :-

James - Snakes- 4, Boxcars- 4,

Paul - Snakes- 1, Boxcars- 4.

Rules lesson of the day:- Read all the set-up instructions, enemy as well as yours!!! Something I failed to do, Doh!

Something of interest to the wider ASL community is the new ASL-speak, 'Japanese Hand-to-Hand Job'. Invented at Berserk! by the Gun-Pit specialist, Me! What gets me is that I did not even realise what I had said until the other guys around me told me!!!! So you see, even in losing, you still have a great time, and more importantly, A LAUGH!!!!

Lets see about tourney game Number 4.

Ok! At 0-3 there is not much competition for the greatest prize that exists at Berserk! So Malcolm Hatfield decided to try and take what is rightfully mine, the 'Wooden Spoon' (actually, this year it is a framed photo of a model Scottish Bagpiper. Pathetic really, troops). Well, your hero saw him off with a game from one of the HOB Packs involving those not-so-nice Waffen SS boys from the 'Das Reich'. The scenario was 'NFNH 8 Wounded Three Times In One Day', which, after playing, I think favours the Nazi Wonder Boys. There's not much that I can say about this scenario, just that some-one ought to tell those bloody Russians to buy/borrow/steal a decent lawn-mower, as the lawn needs cutting. So, me and your illustrious editor went to the pub during the game to watch the football, which was not shown on their giant TV. So, after having a couple of pints, we went back to the hotel, and yours truly continued with his game (just in case you are worried, the stoppage had been pre-arranged with Malcolm). So here is the results that are of



VIEW FROM

interest to you lot, 'Snakes and Boxcars' :-

Malcolm - Snakes- 3, Boxcars- 0,

Paul - Snakes- 0, Boxcars- 1. I am sticking to the excuse that I was dived in this one (well, I have to make out that I am trying to win the occasional scenario, just for appearances sake, old chap!).

Today, Andy Ashton and his flying games store visited us, and I managed to swap £78 for a copy each of 'A Bridge To Far' and 'Operation Veritable'. Many would say that was not a fair trade, but I think Andy would of gone lower had my kind and understanding soul not stopped me (such is the benevolent person that I am!).

Now, back to business, war has been declared against the kindly personage of me. Ian Pollard has decided to try his luck at taking what is rightfully mine by birth-right. Yes folks, that up-start has decided to try and steal my crown. Naturally, as you would expect from a seasoned loser like me, I will defend it to his death. So, tomorrow is the final battle of this long campaign, and if justice be done, the crown will be going to the West Country. The playing field is involving those brilliant little British vehicles, the Carrier. I am personally hoping for the Schwerpunkt one.

You may be wondering why Saturday's bit is quite long, no, well I will tell you anyway. It is because my game finished pretty early, and I need the practice with this new-fangled contraption (the Lap-Top Computer, you nosy sods!).

Sunday 16th March

Well, now we come to the final battle of this long campaign. Yes ladies, it is the championship deciders. For the unimportant one (first prize), it is Toby Pilling and Derek Trocher, with Toby judged to be the winner (they ran out of time, those two slow players). The deciding game for each pair (Toby vs. Derek, and Ian vs. Me) was *SP 96 Husum Hotfoot*. We will not concern ourselves with the riff-raff at the wrong end of the trophy positions, but will just report

on the important contest, MINE. So, without keeping you crowd waiting any longer, I shall proceed. The championship was a close fought contest, between two very good practitioners of the art of losing. But there was to be no upset this year. And so it is with great pride, that I can announce to you all, that I, the greatest loser of them all, has won back my crown. Yes folks, after a hard fought game, the elitism of yours truly showed through, and after a long absence, the crown has come home to it's rightful owner and mantle-piece. This joins the original 'Wooden Spoon' won at the first 'Berserk!', by your hero.

Now for the side-line results, which I can see you are anxious to know, these are as follows:-

Ian - Snakes- 4, Boxcars- 4.

Paul - Snakes- 2, Boxcars- 5. So, you see, my title is totally safe. What I remember about the game, was that I nearly came close to losing the crown, but when your in melee, you are not in Good Order, so I lose. It went down to the last die roll, and if I had got ambush, I would of won, ah well. When I fired Panzerfausts, I kept missing by one, even though I did manage to burn one of his Comets (Burn, Baby, Burn). Ian's 9-1 leader could not Self-Rally to save his life, and so, after about 4 turns of watching him giving a very good demonstration of how not to Self-Rally, I decided to use my sniper and end his misery. Yes, that die roll of 1 does wonders on the Sniper roll, killing his 9-1 and a squad, and Cas-Red the other squad. The sniper was awarded the Iron Cross First Class. Of note was that Ian had declared No-Quarter against us defenders of the Third Reich, naughty boy!

After Trev had done the Snakes and Boxcars prizes, he handed me back my crown. This year it was a framed photo of the first prize, a painted 54mm model of a Scottish Bagpiper, with the words 'Last Place at Berserk! 2003'. The photo was taken by Steve Thomas, and is his usual standard, out of focus. I doubt I shall ask for any wedding photos from him!

Now, read what you want into this, but the hippy (your editor) wants to play me at this

infernal game.

Well, Pete 'I can now ride a pushbike' Phillipps and I have decided to play another scenario from the tourney, the one of choice being '*J 68 Unlucky Thirteenth*'. With the hippy choosing to play the British, that leaves me with the Germans (shame it is 1940 and not 1944, as I like playing with Panzerfausts and ATMMs). The Snakes and Boxcars went as follows:-
Pete - Snakes- 1, Boxcars- 4. Paul - Snakes- 1, Boxcars- 3. Pretty much even I believe. So, how did the game go?

Pete's 25LL AT gun basically did sod all, except fire one shot at one of my tanks, who promptly went and Overran it! That will teach them!! Other hippy bad luck includes breaking his S35's MA twice, and once the 25LL's crew had rallied, they had difficulty finding their AT gun in an open field! (just how difficult can it be to find a big chunk of metal in an open field?). I did declare No Quarter, because prisoners would be a liability to me in this street fight. During the last 2 or 3 turns, my brave boys in the lonely shack by Pete's entry area managed to survive many fire attacks, and even at least 2 Overruns, becoming, at worst, Pinned. Something that can not be said about the 8-morale superhero with them, the coward just could not hack it at the sharp-end. He broke and ran out to try to surrender, but, it looks like the British do not like cowardly German officers either! His family are on their way to Dachau as you read this. Those boys in the shack have all been given Free-For-Life Passes to the Reeperbahn, and free condoms for life!, and also, FREE BEER!!! As you may of gathered by now, the hippy gave me my one and only win of the weekend. The game went down to the last turn, and when my shack-hugging boys did not break under the umpteenth fire attack, Pete surrendered.

Pete had been having fun at my expense all weekend, saying that at IF this year, all the Newbies will be playing me, just to know what it is like to win at this game we play. Well, as I pointed out at breakfast the next morning, all the Newbies can play Pete, so they will know what it is like to win at ASL. Looks like your hero here

Continued on page 17, column 3



Derek Tocher and Toby Pilling contest the championship decider.



Toby Pillings receives first prize from Trev Edwards.

The Crusaders Open ASL Tournament Ladder

BERSERK! 2003 Update

Derek Tocher

There have now been 1745 games played at the INTENSIVE FIRE and BERSERK! tournaments since the first INTENSIVE FIRE back in 1995. There are now 56 players who have played over 20 games, 30 who have played more than 40, and 10 who have played at least 60 games. The largest number of games recorded is 93, by Brian Hooper.

The top 10% of players have ratings of 3280+ while the upper quartile are rated 3160+. Those in the lower quartile have ratings below 2810 while the bottom 10% of participants are rated 2665 or less. These numbers have remained essentially invariant over the last four years and the distribution of results is essentially Gaussian about 3000.

Toby Pilling went undefeated over the course of the weekend to win the championship and regain his top position on the ladder. Paul Case managed to lose all six games he played and dropped 225 points to firmly put him at the foot, on a new all time low score of 2220 points. Other notable gains were made by Dutch newcomer Peter Struijf (+270 pts) putting him in 26th position, Michael Davies (+235 pts) and Michael Essex (+185 pts). Graham Smith managed to drop 275 pts over the weekend and several other players (James Crosfield, Russell Gough, and Ian Pollard) dropped over 150 points. Over the course of the weekend the higher rated players won 58 games while the lower rated player won on only 15 occasions, a margin which I think clearly justifies the virtues of maintaining the ladder.

Below you will find the full ladder with all 203 rated players as of 8 April 2003.

Ω

Rank	Player	Played	W—D—L	Points	Rank	Player	Played	W—D—L	Points
1	Toby Pilling	55	48—2—5	3810	45	Jean Devaux	3	3—0—0	3190
2	Derek Tocher	88	65—2—20	3770	46=	Armin Deppe	13	7—1—5	3185
3	Steve Thomas	42	32—1—9	3755	46=	Michael Essex	20	12—0—8	3185
4	Dave Schofield	88	60—0—28	3695	48=	Bill Durrant	5	4—0—1	3180
5	Mike Rudd	38	32—1—5	3660	48=	Lars Klysner	6	4—0—2	3180
6	Bjarne Hansen	31	23—0—8	3630	50	Jonathan Pickles	8	5—0—3	3175
7	Michael Hastrup-Leth	45	31—1—13	3615	51=	Grant Pettit	7	4—1—2	3170
8	Aaron Cleavin	6	6—0—0	3565	51=	Bruno Tielemans	3	3—0—0	3170
9	Peter Bennett	14	12—1—1	3560	53=	Rodney Callen	6	4—0—2	3160
10	Carl Sizmur	16	11—0—5	3515	53=	Mel Falk	9	5—0—4	3160
11	Simon Strevens	67	43—1—23	3500	55	Jeremy Copley	9	6—0—3	3150
12	Fermin Retamero	8	7—0—1	3480	56	Nick Edelsten	22	14—1—7	3145
13	Trevor Edwards	74	38—1—35	3380	57=	Paul O'donald	72	44—1—27	3135
14	Ran Shiloah	11	7—0—4	3370	57=	Frenk Van Der MEY	4	3—0—1	3135
15	Jes Touvdal	20	13—0—7	3365	59=	Chris Courtier	13	7—2—4	3130
16	Bernt Ribom	5	5—0—0	3350	59=	Bob Eburne	44	26—0—18	3130
17	Phil Draper	14	10—1—3	3320	61	Paul Sanderson	41	21—0—20	3125
18	Joe Arthur	21	13—0—8	3305	62=	Lee Brimicombe-Wood	12	8—0—4	3120
19	Frank Tinschert	15	10—0—5	3295	62=	Paul Ryde-Weller	10	5—1—4	3120
20	Philippe Leonard	9	7—1—1	3285	64=	David Tye	34	14—0—20	3115
20=	Steve Linton	11	8—0—3	3285	64=	Mark Walley	4	3—0—1	3115
22=	Will Fleming	3	3—0—0	3280	66	Luc Schonkerren	5	3—0—2	3110
22=	Russell Gough	51	29—3—19	3280	67=	Andrew Dando	44	23—2—19	3105
22=	Ralf Krusat	6	5—0—1	3280	67=	Paul Haesler	6	3—0—3	3105
22=	Alan Smee	4	4—0—0	3280	67=	Simon Morris	11	6—0—5	3105
26=	Dave Booth	7	5—0—2	3270	67=	Stewart Thain	15	8—0—7	3105
26=	Luis Calcada	39	20—1—18	3270	71	Russ Curry	6	4—0—2	3100
26=	Michael Davies	14	9—0—5	3270	72=	Nigel Brown	26	11—0—15	3095
26=	Peter Struijf	5	4—0—1	3270	72=	Mikael Siemsen	6	3—0—3	3095
30=	Steve Crowley	44	20—1—23	3260	74=	Kevin Beard	13	9—1—3	3090
30=	Dominic Mcgrath	84	44—1—39	3260	74=	Iain Mackay	43	22—0—21	3090
32	Stephen Burleigh	9	5—0—4	3255	74=	Peter Michels	3	2—0—1	3090
33=	Keith Bristow	37	22—1—14	3245	77	Paulo Alessi	6	4—0—2	3085
33=	Daniel Kalman	11	8—0—3	3245	78	Dirk Beijaard	5	3—0—2	3080
35=	Daniel Batey	4	4—0—0	3235	79	Robin Langston	9	4—2—3	3075
35=	Paul Saunders	19	10—0—9	3235	80=	Jean-Luc Baas	3	2—0—1	3070
37	Ray Woloszyn	31	18—1—12	3225	80=	Serge Bettencourt	3	2—0—1	3070
38	Christain Koppmeyer	15	8—0—7	3220	80=	Robert Schaaf	3	2—0—1	3070
39	Tom Slizewski	5	4—0—1	3215	83=	Alexander Rousse-Lacordaire	4	2—1—1	3065
40=	Klaus Malmstrom	4	3—1—0	3210	83=	Bob Runnicles	3	2—0—1	3065
40=	Nils-Gunner Nilsson	5	4—0—1	3210	85	Patrik Manlig	16	9—0—7	3060
40=	Yves Tielemans	3	3—0—0	3210	86=	Stefan Jacobi	11	5—0—6	3050
43	Francois Boudrenghien	3	3—0—0	3205	86=	Ben Jones	39	17—0—22	3050
44	Aaron Sibley	43	26—0—17	3195	86=	Bo Siemsen	4	2—0—2	3050



VIEW FROM

Rank	Player	Played	W—D—L	Points	Rank	Player	Played	W—D—L	Points
89	Scott Greenman	8	3—1—4	3045	159=	Alistair Fairbairn	3	0—0—3	2790
90	Steve Pleva	6	3—0—3	3035	159=	Nick Ranson	5	1—0—4	2790
91	Peter Hofland	4	2—0—2	3025	159=	William Roberts	3	0—0—3	2790
92	Shaun Carter	58	26—1—31	3020	159=	Nick Sionskyj	8	3—0—5	2790
93	Vincent Kamer	4	2—0—2	3015	163	Bill Eaton	16	5—3—8	2785
94=	Colin Graham	5	3—0—2	3010	164	Chris Littlejohn	14	3—2—9	2780
94=	Andrew Saunders	33	15—1—17	3010	165	Graham Worsfold	3	0—0—3	2775
96=	Nick Brown	3	1—1—1	3000	166=	Lee Bray	14	3—0—11	2770
96=	Steve Grainger	8	4—0—4	3000	166=	Richard Kirby	7	2—0—5	2770
96=	Martin Hubley	4	3—0—1	3000	168	Bill Hensby	31	10—0—21	2765
96=	Ian Kenney	4	2—0—2	3000	169=	Andrew Hershey	10	4—0—6	2760
96=	Phil Nobo	11	6—0—5	3000	169=	Flemming Scott-Christensen	6	1—0—5	2760
96=	Duncan Spencer	4	2—0—2	3000	171	Peter Neale	3	0—0—3	2750
102=	Ivor Gardiner	2	1—0—1	2995	172	Burnham Fox	23	10—0—13	2740
102=	Gilles Hakim	5	2—0—3	2995	173=	Rupert Featherby	3	0—0—3	2735
104	Ian Daghlish	80	39—1—40	2990	173=	Nick Quinn	14	5—0—9	2735
105	Eric Baker	2	1—0—1	2985	175	Gareth Evans	4	0—0—4	2730
106=	David Farr	4	2—0—2	2980	176=	Steve Cocks	4	0—0—4	2720
106=	William Hanson	13	6—0—7	2980	176=	Marc Horton	6	1—0—5	2720
106=	Malcolm Rutledge	3	1—0—2	2980	178	Graham Smith	17	6—0—11	2695
109	Pete Phillipps	76	33—0—43	2970	179=	Wayne Baumber	28	13—0—15	2690
110	Michael Maus	7	3—0—4	2955	179=	Simon Hoare	4	0—0—4	2690
111=	Raurigh Dale	19	10—0—9	2945	181	Jeff Howarden	7	2—0—5	2685
111=	Laurent Forest	3	0—0—3	2945	182	Christain Speis	5	1—0—4	2680
111=	Alex Ganna	2	0—1—1	2945	183	Neil Stevens	50	18—2—30	2670
111=	David Murry	5	2—1—2	2945	184=	Pedro Barradas	7	1—0—6	2655
111=	Pedro Ramis	6	3—0—3	2945	184=	Malcolm Hatfield	24	8—0—16	2655
116=	Bob Nugent	3	2—0—1	2940	186	Ian Pollard	52	21—0—31	2635
116=	Jon Williams	14	6—0—8	2940	187	Adrian Catchpole	11	2—0—9	2625
118=	Derek Briscoe	1	0—0—1	2935	188=	Neil Brunger	20	8—0—12	2615
118=	Martin Bryan	19	8—0—11	2935	188=	Arthur Garlick	21	2—5—14	2615
118=	Martin Mayers	15	5—0—10	2935	188=	Mike Stanbridge	36	10—1—25	2615
121=	Andrea Marchino	1	0—0—1	2930	191=	Chris Ager	8	1—0—7	2610
121=	Andy Price	3	1—0—2	2930	191=	Bryan Brinkman	9	1—0—8	2610
123=	Paul Boyle	5	2—0—3	2925	193	John Fletcher	6	0—0—6	2585
123=	John Sharp	8	3—0—5	2925	194	Jackie Eves	21	6—0—15	2575
125=	Steve Allen	6	1—1—4	2920	195	Nigel Ashcroft	45	16—1—28	2555
125=	Tim Collier	17	7—0—10	2920	196	Paul Legg	58	20—0—38	2550
127=	Edo Giaroni	3	1—0—2	2915	197=	Brian Hooper	93	28—1—64	2545
127=	Tim Macaire	33	15—0—18	2915	197=	Michael Rhodes	43	10—0—33	2545
129=	Joel Berridge	3	1—0—2	2910	199	Patrick Dale	18	4—1—13	2490
129=	Tim Bunce	14	7—0—7	2910	200	Roger Cook	28	8—2—18	2460
129=	Oliver Gray	3	1—0—2	2910	201	David Ramsey	9	1—0—8	2435
129=	Justin Key	36	14—1—20	2910	202	John Kennedy	21	4—0—17	2405
129=	Brian Martuzas	5	2—0—3	2910	203	Paul Case	76	17—1—58	2220
129=	Andy Smith	4	0—0—4	2910					
135=	Paulo Ferreira	4	1—0—3	2905					
135=	Phil Ward	5	2—0—3	2905					
137	Josh Kalman	10	5—0—5	2900					
138	Martin Kristensen	6	2—0—4	2895					
139=	Jakob Norgaard	6	1—1—4	2885					
139=	Bernard Savage	21	9—1—11	2885					
141=	Sam Belcher	8	3—0—5	2880					
141=	Nigel Blair	19	8—0—11	2880					
143=	Simon Croome	27	13—0—14	2875					
143=	Paul Kettlewell	49	20—0—29	2875					
145	David Kalman	5	2—0—3	2870					
146=	Peter Ladwein	21	9—0—12	2860					
146=	Lutz Pietschker	4	1—0—3	2860					
146=	Neil Piggot	4	1—0—3	2860					
149	Ulrich Schwela	34	13—1—20	2855					
150	Nick Angelopoulos	5	1—0—4	2850					
151=	James Crossfield	8	4—0—4	2835					
151=	Dave Otway	5	1—0—4	2835					
153	Sam Prior	12	4—0—8	2830					
154	Mike Daniel	5	2—0—3	2825					
155	Mark Chapman	6	2—0—4	2820					
156=	Chris Netherton	16	6—1—9	2810					
156=	Michael Robertson	4	1—0—3	2810					
158	Clive Haden	5	2—0—3	2800					



The *BERSERK!* 2003 attendees gathered outside the hotel at the end of the event.

Dien Bien Phu Part Deux

Michael Davies



DBP8 Keeping Isobel Fed

This is a French-massed armour and infantry attack against a strong PAVN position. All ten Chaffees are featured, each with its original name on the counter. One memorable counter name is Douaumont, an important fortress that featured in the Verdun Battle. Verdun is roughly comparable to the Somme in terms of sheer horror, though with an even greater loss of life. For some including individual tank names may be chrome, others, like myself will appreciate the link to the past.

PTO is in effect, with an expanse of irrigated rice paddy, lots of very thick mist, and some interesting support weapons. The French attacking force is very strong in armour, and comprises mostly Elite infantry. The PAVN are very resilient, winning if a single unit remains within their set up area.

PAVN Set Up Options

There are two very simple ways to win. Either destroy four enemy tanks or have at least a single MMC in your set up area at the game end. To achieve either victory you can employ a number tactics ranging from setting up for a deadly game of hide and seek, a carefully planned hedgehog of defensive Islands or a series of tank ambushes supported by Infantry assets.

Keys to planning your defence are the terrain and environmental conditions. Brush, Wooden Buildings, huts, Kunai and even Palm trees provide you with excellent cover, the irrigated Paddys' slow and even discourage armoured movement. Other important features are the stream, with the ford at oG2, and the road from 19I10 to 16R4. The mist is very thick, until it starts to burn off, a process that takes three game turns. It is possible for mist to start disappearing on turn one or be in play as late as turn eight!

Whilst mist is in effect interfering with French entry and movement is complicated by line of sight and LV hindrances. Without mist, a web of machine gun fire would complicate French entry, while long range RCL fire could strike at armour. On the minus side reciprocal fire would be more effective. For the short term it is best to

accept that the French entry will be aided by Mist, and accept that troops and tanks can move freely through open ground. Accepting this does not mean you have lost! Although the French can move fairly freely and rapidly on board there are terrain features that work to your advantage. To my mind the nastiest is the deep stream. Any tanks crossing the stream will be vulnerable to underbelly hits. As seven of the French tanks enter from the North and need to cross the stream to be effective there is a good case for concentrating the bulk of your anti tank assets to meet them. Short range bazooka shots will be useful. Longer range fire from the RCLs is harder if the mist remains thick. The ford will appeal to both French Armour and Infantry. If you can try to catch the French as they advance out of the Stream. Watch out for troops using the stream as cover, firing from crests or moving along the stream for protection from fire.

In the South Tanks have further to travel, over less difficult terrain. Fortunately only three tanks enter from this direction. Keep in view Irrigated Paddys' slow vehicular movement and can cause bog.

At first glance enemy forces look overwhelming. Hordes of Infantry, masses of tanks, all well equipped and well led. It is important to study when and were French troops arrive. To begin with you only face ten French squads who must spend the first player turn entering. Tanks arrive on turn three, with more Infantry on the opposite board edge a turn later. Further reinforcements arrive on turns five and seven. The slow arrival of French forces really helps, certainly if everything arrived on turn one I'd feel a deal less confident of a win. It can help to consider the Frenchies problems. His tanks are subject to a casualty cap which should make his armoured thrusts more cautious, he is also tasked with finding every unit in your OB. Now that is difficult. The enemy knows you have hidden units, and lots of places to hide. If they can't find you last squad, even if the rest of your OB is Kaput you have won. From this you can deduce the French plan to search every piece of terrain on the map looking for your troops. Although the French forces are strong, they face a difficult task.

The vast majority of French squads are elite with an ELR of five, and for the Paras underscored morale. The basic morale of your troops is lower, partially offset by all PAVN troops being considered Fanatic. That includes Leaders, and the RCL crews. Even with a fairly low ELR of three this isn't too bad. Scenario Rule 3 gives us a few more rout options, expect to use some of these during play. With twenty one squads, four Leaders, two crews, fourteen support weapons and twelve trenches you are not going to lose this one on turn one. In my opinion the only real weakness is the limited number of Leaders. It is nice to see a 10-2 Leader, but I would happily swap him for a pair of commissars or lower quality leaders. With only four in play you have to make some harsh

choices. These range between up to four strong positions all the way through to twenty three individual locations. What will work best depends a bit on what the French do, I'll suggest a skeleton of a set up which you can, and you really should, modify to suit your own ideas, knowledge of your opponent and estimation of how the game will play out.

Before play starts assess the effectiveness of your anti tank weapons. The Frontal Armour of an Oxen, Bison, M24 or Chaffee is six, side armour is three or four. The '45, and 50 Bazookas have to kills of 11 and 12, the 57mm RCL using HEAT rates another 11. Modified to kill numbers are low say four, five or six. Not in the Panzerfaust league but deadly enough when destroying just four tanks bags you a win.

I'd begin by exchanging a leader for a commissar, then organising the defence into four main positions of five squads each. Assign each large platoon or half company to a defensive sector. I think the main ones to consider are the Kunai and Village East of the road, the rest of the Village and nearby brush or Kunai West of the road. On board 19 there are two expanses of brush east and West of the road with some Palm trees in the West. Consider each sector in turn and plan a defence for each. This really does take a while and probably the first set up you try may need some modification. An early decision must be made as to how you will contest French moves. If you are planning to open up at the first opportunity and blaze away for as long as possible a line of Trenches up front is a fair idea. Alternatively you might go for a series of tank ambushes using the available infantry to protect the Bazookas and RCL. Keep in view even a mortar can do some damage against a tank. The centre of resistance could be a line of three trenches containing the sectors Leader, a MG and anti tank weapons nearby. The other two squads can provide a fragile screen ahead of the main position or be set up hidden to play hide and seek, conceal the strength of the position of to wait in ambush for enemy armour or Infantry.

Examples of central trench position for the Village could be around the brush in 16FF4 or the Kunai in o19FF8 if you are aggressive, further North in Brush say oY8 if you are patient. There are some tough calls to make. To my mind the hardest is how to contest the French crossing of the Stream. You can concentrate on the J hexrow and hit the enemy as they cross the ford or start further South.

I'd be the first to admit the above description is very vague, and provides limited insight into how to win! In my defence you can make an awfully large range of judgements on where to place individual units. These are important, rather more important is how you develop your defence.

French attacks can be across a broad front or concentrated on a narrow Axis. During play you need to decide when to abandon a hopeless



position, when to slug it out for another turn or two, whether to trade units, concentrate on tanks, even if moving units from one position to support a threatened area is valid. All very interesting stuff, the points I'm trying to make is you will not win just be a cunning set up and some demon die rolls, this is going to be a complicated game of carefully calculated moves.

A few wheezes can help. In Kunai you have a good chance of causing search casualties which might give a few ideas for hiding one or more of the three squads you can set up hidden. This is also a valid idea with concealed units or dummies. When using concealment vary the number of concealment counters used in a stack. If you can get a neutral or friendly third party to have a quick look at your set up and ask them if they can spot the dummies, and if they are game assess your strength in general. If you find your cunning set up is a bit obvious maybe some modification is in order. Give thought to rout. Moving towards a Leader makes sense, moving towards another sector is pretty smart when the one you started in is about to be overrun. One idea with the RCL is to use them up front with the rest of your forces. There is some scope for backfield positions say 19T2 or T9. At long range they are less vulnerable to Infantry fire and just as able to kill from a distance, if the mist stays well its tough, but this is partially offset by other difficulties in IFT combat for the French, conversely if the mist clears nervous French players will have Kittens.

The plan outlined above favours four defensive positions, two in the village and two more in the brush further North. Other approaches are worth some consideration. One idea is to concentrate to face the Northern or Southern attack leaving a smaller screening force to delay advances on the other Flank. An extreme example of this could be a line of trenches covering the board 19 stream filled with PAVN units. I'm not too keen on this as an aggressive French player will concentrate against part of the line while pushing much harder in the South. You could still have winning chances, try it if you think it is the way to win.

Turning the Village into a Hedgehog has some potential. A weakness is allowing the French to cross the stream easier, and possible allowing faster searches of concealment terrain in your set up area. Not radically different would be concentrating in any single sector.

In my opinion the way to go is defend four main areas, inflicting some casualties and seeking to make French searches for your units more difficult.

Watch out for the T'ai, in truth they are lame in a firefight but they are stealthy and equal your rifle squads in a melee. Enter melee with other French units when you have a decent advantage otherwise fall back and delay.

This is a long game, ten turns. With the density of counters in use overall playing times of three hours plus are expected. Take regular breaks if your concentration starts to flag. It is important to get a feel for the Tempo of play, it helps to have a better idea of when the French reinforcements arrive than your opponent does. Estimate the distances that can be travelled by each reinforcement group in its first couple of turns and seek to impose halts on this by firepower or guile. Expect the first couple of turns to be

pretty good fun, slow French build up and the smell of fear as the first unit crosses the stream. Pretty soon all hell will break loose and you will have more of a fight on your hands. If the French make use of armour support killing a tank will make you feel better, if the tanks are kept back your losses should be lower and you can win just by keeping one unit alive and in good order. The last couple of turns will be hectic. Rarely you will be in an unassailable position, more often a desperate struggle will occur. At times you will lose when you should have won, which might make up for some devilish luck in close combat on another occasion.

I'd like to win this one on the armour cap, failing that by a deft defence, but I'd have some respect for anyone who pulls a victory out of the jaws of defeat by revealing a single hidden unit in a location that should have been searched!

French Attack

A very quick way to lose is to breach the Armour casualty cap, lose just four tanks and you are out of the game. Apologies for starting with bad news but it is essential you are careful with your armour. Being more upbeat you win if there are no PAVN good order units in their set up area at the game end. Essentially this is a seek and destroy mission.

At first glance enemy forces are rather feeble, twenty one squads, four Leaders a pair of 57mm RCL and crews, with a fair selection of support weapons. An ELR of three is nothing to worry about, nor is a SAN of four. Looking more carefully there are some things to worry about. Twelve trenches provide good cover for the defender, PAVN Mortars and MGs' can bore sight, one of the few Leaders is a 10-2, all PAVN units are Fanatic and thanks to Scenario rule 3 can do some pretty fancy routing. The PAVN finales are concealment, and HIP combined with the need to root out every single unit, and to kill, capture or at least break them.

That said the PAVN are not invincible. In terms of raw firepower and range the inherent firepower of PAVN troops is inferior. Even in close combat you should be able to hold your own and trade off squad for squad. The MGs have decent range, with the threat of a six or more IFT attack directed by a 10-2 Leader into a Bore sighted location subject to non assault movement. Nasty if it happens but you should not suffer a multitude of similar attacks. Keep in view the MGs have a basic B11 and you have the perfect antidote to MGs' several tanks.

Anti tank capability is difficult to assess. Some threats can be avoided. You can reduce the occurrence of Infantry attacks by remaining buttoned up, and guarding your armour with your own troops. The to kill numbers of Bazookas' and even the 57mm RCLs' are low, unfortunately a lucky hit will ice a Chaffee. Bazookas do have a significant weakness short range. At six or more hexes they are totally ineffective. Keeping your Chaffees beyond effective range is viable. Against the 57mm RCL this is not so easy. The RCL range is considerable, and the darned thing even has rate! Keep your fingers crossed for the RCL breaking down or depleting H7 ammunition. At some stage in the game you will find one or both RCL and enter into a gun duel. When this happens you need to think fast. Hit the RCL crew with as

much firepower as possible and try to reduce the chance of a damaging hit. Obvious things to use are smoke, White Phosphorous, MGs' and good old HE. If in motion keep moving as RCL do not gain acquisition against moving targets. Once the gun crew is dead watch out for squads or SMC manning the 57mm gun and continuing to shoot. If they hit their fire will be as destructive as its original crew. Another nuisance comes from the mortars, chances of a hit are good, a Kill is less likely but still credible (barely!). Getting out of harms way is the best defence, killing its crew and the guys who rush to take their place even better. Despite the precautions you can take, blind luck can play a part. Low odds shots could hit and destroy a Chaffee, with a ceiling of just four vehicles you could be diced. If you are reckless, charging into huts, presenting your underbelly to Bazookas and searching Kunai with Tanks you will lose a lot quicker....but you can still claim to have been diced.

Don't overestimate the strength of the enemy. Your own troops are pretty good, in fact some of them are superlative. A company of Paras, and another of Algerians nearly equal the PAVN in numbers, surpass them in fighting qualities, have higher ELR and more numerous Leadership. With less concealment terrain they could do the job on their own. The need to search and destroy all PAVN forces in an area ideally suited to hiding means they will need help. Ten tanks is a lot of help. Although they do not all arrive on turn one this is a long game, even those arriving on turn seven will be in play for four turns. Potentially that is a lot of firepower. To begin with 75mm Guns are pretty deadly. Hits are resolved on the 12IFT Column, with MG fire also effective for searching or direct fire against known positions. White phosphorous and smoke mortars will help to cover open ground or hinder the fire of PAVN Anti tank units. Without any sort of casualty cap you could be much more aggressive with the Armour but the scenario designers and playtesters have carefully considered that! Two 60mm Mortars in your OB will be useful when the mist clears, WP would be nice, HE is still useful. Don't forget or denigrate the T'ai, they are feeble in a firefight but effective in melee, better at searching than your other troops and arrive with some more tanks.

To a great extent your tactical plan is influenced by the terrain and PAVN set up. You will have to address the problem of crossing the stream, and moving onboard and over the board to reach the enemy. Some PAVN troops are hidden, all the others will initially be concealed. Even so you should be able to make some pretty tenuous guesses as to PAVN dispositions. The absolute strongest hidden force could be two 57mm guns, their crews, three hidden squads and their support weapons. There are twelve concealment counters able to create a maximum of six dummy stacks everything else is a real. Chances are you will be able to spot obvious PAVN strong points, certainly within an area you will be able to say there are some units there. All well and good but remember you could be wrong so resist the temptation to get too specific, all that is needed is a rough idea of enemy strength in certain areas and a willingness to keep an open mind as to everywhere else.

Enemy defensive options are numerous,

you might be looking at a single hedgehog, a linear defence or more likely several small defensive Islands. In the North you need to move onboard ready to cross the stream. With mist in effect you can move through open ground fairly easily. The Viets might open up with a MG or two or begin mortar fire but if you are spread out you should not expect more than a morale check, followed by a quick rally. Exactly how you go should take account of enemy positions but if these are totally beyond guesstimation splitting into three platoons and advancing broadly across board 19 will just about work. As you move into and over the stream expect some fire from PAVN troops. Use you Chaffees from at least more than five hexes away to support you Infantry. Although their is no casualty cap for infantry and you have to be a bit careful with the armour you should not throw away Para squads or Algerians or even T'ai without some compensating gain in terms of enemy casualties or knowledge of his whereabouts. If you can search board 19 up to row U with the Paras and you supporting armour by turns seven or eight you will have done well. If you meet negligible opposition or cope well with what you do hit, push further South through the Paddy and Kunai into the Huts.

In the South your entry should take account of mist, if this has thinned out running through open ground is more dangerous. It is possible the PAVN will advance some units or dummies to complicate your entry. Again splitting into platoons and advancing on the enemy makes sense. Avoid stacking, try to engender firefights with the enemy. Keep pushing forwards to create space for your armour and reduce the areas to be searched.

Armour support can be used from a reasonable distance, the abundance of Kunai and brush might allow obstructing line of sight with hindrances for protection from known enemy anti tank assets. In my opinion the Southern force has a lot of work to do. They are probably better placed to search the Village and the other terrain South of the Paddys. Any help they can get from the Paras will be appreciated.

No doubt the 57th Regiment will have a few ideas of its own and will seek to frustrate your moves. A concentration in or around the Village will be nasty if the Paras take a long time searching empty brush hexes. If it becomes obvious the Village is heavily defended push harder in the North and seek to throw serious amounts of firepower in support of the Algerians, T'ai and the tanks with them.

Keeping notes can be irksome, but it can also save grief when looking for hidden units. Kunai is tricky stuff, it must be hit by IFT attacks or searched to reveal Hidden units, brush, huts and Palm trees need only be move through. Record any hex you search, and any you subject to fire. It is possible to lose simply because you neglected to search one hex. Almost as bad you could lose a tank to a bypassed anti tank weapon. If in doubt search a hex again, shoot at it, or move though anything other than Kunai.

The PAVN is very hostile in this one, time is also an issue. The Handicapping provision allows an extra French player turn. Ask for the balance as it greatly reduces the pressure you are under. Without it, well, ten turns is still a long time. Appreciate there is a lot of ground to cover

and your troops arrive in instalments. With an extra half dozen turns this would be a cakewalk, but as is, you must push hard with the Infantry, take some risks with infantry and the Armour and regularly assess your progress. If you are doing well, stay focused and keep up the good work. If you start to lose infantry at an unsustainable rate you will need to make more active use of the armour. Similarly if you have lost two tanks be more careful with the remaining armour, if three are gone be very, very careful.

A few loose ends. Taking prisoners is humane, interrogation provides a further incentive. A low roll could reveal a hidden or concealed unit. As the nearest hidden unit would be revealed you would not need to search any hexes closer than the one revealed. Make sure your opponent is aware of this as it can search one truly massive area. It would be amazingly humorous to capture a prisoner on board 19 by the stream and search a vast swathe of territory early in the game. Most times this will not happen. Give some thought to escorting them off the map late in the game, there is a slight risk of SAN breaking a guard and freeing some prisoners. Destroy enemy anti tanks weapons if you capture them if there is a risk of recapture. Similarly not donate your 60mm Mortars or an abandoned Chaffee to the Viets.

Expect a hard fight, although the PAVN will try to conceal and hide units, once they are discovered they really will put up a struggle. They will be hard to kill, but you should be able to amass massive amounts of firepower to do the job. Without fanatic status and Scenario rule three this would be a lot easier!

Conclusion

If you have considerable mental stamina and enjoy a challenge this is an excellent scenario to play. I don't think there is a simple way to set up, defend or attack, I do think there is a requirement for strong decision making throughout the game. Nice to see all ten Chaffees' in action, lots of Elite French troops and some very credible PAVN opposition.

Hidden units are important, partially to force the French to push hard, and to threaten the Tanks. The game is unlikely to degenerate into one of hide and seek though!



DBP9 Last Stand on H7

Last Stand on H7 features a massed and

determined Night attack by Elite PAVN troops, supported by Artillery on a small French Garrison in a battered fortification that has seen better days. The French can expect help from a strong relief force.

It does take a while to set up the H7 position, it took me about an hour to place the numerous trenches, wire and six bunkers. After that you must roll to check for Wire replacement with shellholes but the end result is interesting. H7 was conceived as a large rectangular outpost guarded by wire, with two substantial outposts positioned to slow the attacker and inflict casualties. With two players set up could be seriously speeded up. I think the scenario is worth the effort. As the number of wire counters in play can vary enormously it might be worth discussing balance provisions after removing wire. If the wire is pretty much in tact the PAVN need help, conversely a proliferation of shellholes suggests the French need it. The presence of wire is very important in determining how each side will plan its attack or defence.

Night rules are in effect otherwise the PAVN would struggle a bit! Its also worth re reading the rules on slopes, Bunkers or Pillboxes and Bangalores.

French Set Up

At the game start you control all six Bunkers, as long as you control three of these at the game end you have won. If the enemy destroy a Bunker either by an OBA critical hit, or by DC attack, obviously you cannot control it, but it does count for the PAVN. To control a Bunker you must be the last player to occupy it and it must be in tact.

At the game start you need to assess the impact of Scenario rule 2, which replaces wire with a shellhole on a dr of 1-3. It is reasonable to expect roughly half of your wire hexes to be replaced. Lady luck can be cruel or kind, and you might be sitting in a snug trench surrounded by either wire and mines or shellholes. Even if you are lucky the enemy will be able to attempt to gap your wire using Bangalores or OBA. The maps have some interesting features, lots of shellholes, some expanses of brush that provide a hindrance and slow movement, slopes, a depression around D1D3, some low Hills, and a small Orchard. Although the weather is gusty, I can't for the life of me see this having a significant effect on play. The real big deal is Night.

Night has some negative effects, well quite a few really. If this were a daylight scenario your troops could do a great deal of damage to the attackers at long range. Broken units would be forced to move away from you and the chances of a win would be much better than 50%. With Night rules in play and limited illumination long range fire is less effective. Freedom of movement makes French relocation harder. On the plus side, enemy fire is also weakened, extremely badly as PAVN units generally have low firepower. The possibility of straying is interesting. There should be few occasions when a PAVN units voluntarily moves onto a Wire Minefield hex. Straying creates the possibility of this happening. The last bit of good news, and this really is stretching things a bit is the Night time abilities of broken units. You can stay adjacent to an enemy unit when you are broken, you can even remain in the same hex.

Routing is easier and will probably be along a trench line much of the time.

Trenches are important, primarily they provide excellent protection against on board and off-board fire. They provide exemption from straying, and confer a positive DRM for rallying units. Unfortunately the PAVN also know how to use Trenches. Once they do so your defence becomes just that little bit harder.

French planes drop star shells all Night creating illumination. This will generally be beneficial, occasionally less so. Ground units can also attempt to place Star Shell but don't try this from Bunkers, the roof restricts the launch. The rules restrict the placement of the first star shell but after that its open season. Once you have a line of sight to a known enemy unit in an illuminated location you gain freedom of movement.

Ideally you would like to start the game with your wire mostly intact, enemy units, preferably Sappers blundering onto your minefields and granting you freedom of movement, rate of fire, and a steady increase in Night visibility range maximise your winning chances. Anything less than this is still worth playing. I'd still fight on surrounded by shell holes, and with low visibility. A NVR of zero might upset me, even so it's worth playing a few more turns.

Enemy forces are numerous, well equipped, highly motivated and well led. At the game start you are outnumbered twenty six or twenty seven squads to eight. The majority of enemy Infantry are fourteen elite rifle squads, backed up by eight Elite SMG squads, five fanatic sapper half squads and two 57mm RCL guns and crews. Support weapons are plentiful nine MGs', five Bangalores, four DCs' three Bazookas and three Mortars. The Mortars can fire Illuminating rounds which could be a nuisance when trying to move relief troops on board. PAVN Leadership is strong, six leaders with the option of converting two to Commissars. One is a 9-2, a potential menace if he teams up with a MG team or two. Piling on the grief is an ELR of four, coupled with a basic morale of eight or nine don't expect to see a lot of replacement.

PAVN troops are assigned two Artillery modules, one is 75mm, the other 105mm, both with two preregistered hexes and plentiful ammunition. A draw pile of 7B/2R is dangerous. Keep in view a critical hit can destroy a bunker. Draw some comfort from the restriction that OBA has to hit its pre registered hex to be resolved. I think this reflects the subterranean guns positions used by the Viets, the guns are accurate but restricted in their area of effect.

French troops are initially heavily outnumbered. Three Para squads, three elite rifle squads and two of the much maligned T'ai. Up to two squads may set up hidden, together with their accompanying Leaders and support weapons. In Last stand French SAN is higher than the PAVN, not massively so but still nice. Onboard Leaders include a 10-2 which should raise a few eyebrows. Support weapons are fairly good two HMGs, two MMGs' and a pair of LMGs'. If you get the balance every squad can have a support weapon. The MGs are key to your defence at least for the first three or four turns. I'll discuss the French relief force later.

So how to organise the defence. Begin by

considering the PAVN options. OBA is limited to resolution on pre registered hexes. Perhaps the enemy will target Bunker hexes or any of the hexes adjacent to them with the intention of calling fire onto areas most likely to contain enemy units. A fair guess could be 2V10, or 3N10. Secondary targets could be 2U3 or 3U8. Chances are 2Z5 might be registered, odds are very low of 3Z10 being considered. The Infantry attack is likely to come from both the North and West aiming for the "easy" Bunkers, 2V10 and 3N8, followed by 2U3 and 2Z5 or 3U8. I could be wrong, so back your own hunches and use any knowledge you possess about your opponents style of play.

Even with a rough idea of the attackers options building a defence is not much easier. Massing troops in the forward areas is an option. Given the troops are entrenched and can even be in a Bunker resistance to OBA is considerable. Once they have been attacked by OBA everyone gains freedom of movement and can bug out. If they only face an Infantry attack in either forward position do what damage you can then fall back. Three squads, each with a MG, and a leader is a strong force that could inflict a bloody repulse on the attackers or at least significant delay.

An alternative would be a presence in the front line. Anything less than three squads, all the way down to a half squad and MMG. All choices are a bit of a gamble but you should prefer one idea over another after some thought.

Probably a bad idea massing units at a focal point say 2U3? and thereabouts, seeking to use MGs to dominate the surrounding terrain. Different but not too clever odd little squad or half squad positions all over the show.

Personally, I'd put a squad or half squad in the 2V10 and 3N8 bunkers, each with an MG. The T'ai could start HIP in a connecting trench as a feeble speed bump. The remaining forces would be split between the area around 2U3 and 3U8. Each HMG would be directed by a Leader. These are fairly credible dispositions, nothing too clever or startling, and I'm sure more experience players will have their own better ideas!

In all probability the T'ai will attack the first unit they can. Close combat might be worthwhile, TPBF not too bad an idea either. If they are bypassed a devilish counter attack might just reclaim an unoccupied bunker.

I'd listen to other suggestions. The T'ai do not have to be used as a trap, in a bunker with Leadership they could be resilient. Abandoning the forward bunkers might be a fair idea if they are barely protected by wire and mines.

Key to a successful defence is the realisation the Viets are strong enough to flatten any point of their choosing. At some stage you will need to fall back towards the relief troops. A last stand without their help could be futile losing Leaders and equipment in exchange for a few broken PAVN squads.

Expect all sorts of bad luck, starshells falling in useless places, lucky OBA strikes, receiving sniper attacks, failing morale checks you should be making and the odd broken machine gun. If there is any justice you will also roll rate, a few really sweet low rolls, and land a few star shells in the right places. Try to plan escape routes, for falling back to the South and East. Leave the trenches if you have no choice, slug it out if you can't even do that.

This is a long scenario. The Relief force does not arrive until turn five. Enemy forces have to cover a fair amount of terrain. To reach 2V10 and 3N8 would take three or more turns, another two to reach 2U3 and/or 3U8. Stay alert for PAVN strikes aimed at cutting off your retreat or interdicting reinforcement. The game should get interesting around turns six or seven.

There is a chance the PAVN will opt for some radical ideas. An attack on a small frontage, cunning use of Artillery that anticipates your defence, attacking from a strange direction say towards 2Z5. Time will tell. With such a small defensive force you cannot cover ever possible attack plan, it is just about enough to make the most direct attack plans a tad more difficult.

PAVN Entry And Attack

If you control or eliminate four Pillboxes at the game end you win. With a deal of luck you might manage to destroy four Bunkers before the game end due to some phenomenally successful artillery attacks and/or the use of demolition charges.

At the game start you outnumber the French slightly more than three to one. All your troops are elite, including five fanatic Sapper (H1.23 and B24.7) squads armed with bangalores and a few demolition charges. Sappers receive a favourable DR modifier when attempting to clear wire or mines, hopefully this will not be essential. Bangalores are very useful against wire/mine hexes and are covered fully in the DBP Standard Special rules section. PAVN troops can create DC heroes a very effective method of delivery. Aside from engineering equipment you receive a fair selection of MGs' including two MMG and even an HMG. For anti tank work you have three Bazookas and two 57mm RCL, against three French tanks this is a reasonable allocation. Three 60mm mortar allow for Illumination rounds if you need them. Leadership is pretty good, six leaders including a 9-2, and the option to exchange two Leaders for commissars. Unfortunately you cannot enter cloaked. movement is effected adversely by this. On balance your force is pretty strong, numerous with some useful leadership and plenty of support weapons.

Backing up your ground troops are two Artillery modules a hefty 105mm and useful 75mm, each with plentiful ammunition and two preregistered hexes. This gives you a draw pile of 7B/2R which is pretty good. The first bit of baddish news is OBA is limited to fire at preregistered hexes. An early decision should be which hexes to pre register. The clever answer is to aim for spots where enemy forces are likely or certain to be. The Bunkers in 2V10 and 3N8 are fair choices, adjacent hexes would work almost as well. If either post has no visible defenders better targets might be available. Think carefully as the French can hide two squads. Counting stacks might not help if the Defender has read rule E1.2 carefully and hidden his support weapons and Leaders accordingly. Trying to take a bunker and its adjacent trenches in the face of two hidden squads, a pair of MGs and a Leader without Artillery support is not going to be easy. The other pre registered hexes can be used to support attacks on other Bunkers, say 2Z5, 2U3 or 3U8. Another idea is to hit areas you have a strong suspicion the French will enter or are likely

to set up in. An example of this could be 2Z2, or 2Z3 hitting the easiest approach to the 2Z5 Bunker. This might be a bit defensively minded for some. An even more defensive idea aims to interdict the arrival of the Relief force interfering with its progress by harassing fire. Probably a bad idea unless the French cooperate by moving in stacks. If you destroy a bunker by a critical hit this can dramatically increase your chances of a win. The chances are slim, though still credible.

Enemy forces comprise an initial small garrison, aided by a relief force on turn five. The eight on board squads are pretty tough. All French units are Fanatic so you deal with nine morale troops. Barring a KIA/K result most morale checks will be passed and rally rolls made. The garrison are liberally equipped with MGs, two are HMGs' with another two MMGs' and a pair of LMGs'. Three initial leaders include a rather scary 10-2. The best way to kill these guys is to get lucky, roll low, throw SAN attacks at the bigger stacks, and enter into close combat. Two T'ai squads are present, even these are fanatic, and stealthy. Odds are the T'ai will not be equipped with MGs but will be lurking in a quiet corner waiting for a chance to inflict damage.

On turn five a French relief force of ten squads, three Leaders, three LMGs' and a platoon (of three) Chaffee Tanks. This is a very substantial force. Your anti tank assets will face a difficult fight against the armour. For a tank of only 17.5 tonnes the Chaffee is well armoured and equipped with three MGs plus a 75mm gun, with ROF. Very fast it will create a few headaches. With some reasonable DR you may back on or two, settle for keeping them at a distance if that proves impossible.

At the game start Scenario rule 2 creates the possibility of some, all or no wire counters being replaced by shellholes. Take a great deal of interest in this. Although you have bangalores, Sappers and can even run onto wire the less of it between you and the areas you plan to attack the better. With luck you will get a few favourable roll and find very reasonable gaps in the wire. If you need to you can still use Bangalores. Have a good look at the map. Plan your routes to the French positions. Take account of the cover provided by shell holes, hindrances and the obstruction created by the few Hills dotted around the map. A long hard look at the Trench networks is valuable. Plan how you would like to move from your first objectives through to the later stages of the game.

One slight problem is straying. For this to happen you need to be rather unlucky. An average of one in eighteen straying rolls will result in effected movement. There is a chance you will end up moving in the direction you wanted, more likely is a move in the wrong direction, with a small chance of wandering somewhere ruddy dangerous say a wire hex. The ASLRB is pretty clear, and there are circumstances where straying is negated. For example when you move adjacent to a trench or can see a known enemy unit. If you are planning a wild rush at the defenders this should not be too much of a problem. If your attack is a silent approach a small group of unlucky Sappers setting off a minefield will galvanise the French.

Several plans of attack with different tactical approaches are worth considering. I'll

provide an overview of the basic ideas without going into great detail. The first key decision is whether to commence firing on turn one or adopt a more cautious approach.

Starting with an aggressive opening. If you decide to commence firing the OBA on turn one, draw black cards and roll less than four for your accuracy rolls, there is a chance of inflicting damage in the target area. Without a critical hit the most favourable result you can hope for is some order of morale check. This is pretty bleak as most French squads have an effective morale of nine before you take Leadership into account. Worse news the attack grants freedom of movement to all French troops in the FFE area and allows star shell placement. On the plus side if several French units are in the blast area you have better chance of a morale check, a possibility of SAN generated sniper damage and at the very least the blast area will effect outgoing fire. Keep in view it will take several turns to reach the trenches giving you a fair number of attacks. You can do some pretty complex maths to dispute these tactics, but I think it boils down to style. Some players are cunning and favour stealth over brute force, others might want to save their OBA to interdict the entry of turn five relief forces.

If you choose not to open fire on turns one or two, a stealthy approach is a fair idea. Some illumination is in effect because of Scenario rule three where by French aircraft are prowling around dropping flares. Even so with some care you should be able to arrive at the French perimeter in two turns, three if you overlap the outposts around 2V10, and 3N8. Try to land a spotting round on target whilst you are doing this. Assemble firebases then wake the French up on turn three. Bangaloreos hit the wire and mines, mortars, MGs, and RCLs blaze away, DC heroes run forwards followed by their comrades. The French will have a few ideas about this plan, and will use automatic fire or withdrawal to blunt your attack. Although less aggressive initially this is a fairly aggressive plan. One difficult is the FFE of your artillery to be effective it must be placed on the French which makes Close combat very difficult. A minor variation puts the FFE behind the French to make withdrawal more difficult.

I guess these two ideas are a balance between the destructive power of two OBA modules against the value of concealment. We can choose an approach that suits, equally important the direction and strength of our attacks. You can attack from the Northern and Western board edges. You can choose to attack from a single edge in one powerful thrust perhaps using artillery assets to interdict the easiest approaches for relocating French onboard defenders. This is not my favourite idea, it could still work. Your attack aims for a single outlying bunker say 2V10, then runs down connecting trenches to gain 2U3, 2Z5 or 3U8 and another Bunker. The advantage is you make only one attack from open ground into a French outlying position. When you have won this most subsequent fights will be with the cover of Trenches. Weight of Numbers in the actual sector attacked will be better than 3-1, perhaps approaching 5-1, or upwards to 10-1! Expect significant casualties but if you cannot win then one things are likely to get worse later. There are snags. Long range fire from other French positions can be effective. French troops might withdraw

ahead of you then stiffen to hold you longer than expected.

If the attack goes down through 3N8 you just might grab 3U8 and 3Z10 making the entry of French relief forces tricky. The key word here is might!

Plan B attacks from two or even three directions aiming thrusts at Bunkers in 2V10 and 3N8 with an optional flanking run along the Southern edge to 2Z5. This would be my choice, but obviously that doesn't necessarily mean it is a sure fire winner or even a good idea. The aim is to dispose of most of the French OB at a favourable exchange rate then rush down the connecting trenches to 3U8, 2U3 and possibly beyond.

Plan C et sec are outfield ideas. Bypassing the projecting outposts to start the attack at 2Z5, 2U3 or 3U8. Speculative French fire might put paid to these ideas, another consideration is time. If you dawdle you may end up with just one Bunker your entire OB in tact and no prospect of advancing against mounting French opposition.

French dispositions are important. An apparent mass of units in either forward Bunker would argue for bypassing it. Similarly only potential hidden units argues for at least some attention.

With a large OB there are any number of ways to organise your troops. I'd go for platoon sized units initially. Four SMG/Rifle squads, a sapper half squad, Leader and share of available support weapons. Tailor this for the mission the squad will perform, for example DCs to a platoon tasked with destroying a bunker, Mortars and HMG/MMGs' for a fire support squad. Split the Anti tanks assets but give a bias towards the Eastern Flank where the likelihood of Armoured attack is greater. Without too much thought I'd exchange both 8-0 Leaders for the gentle Commissars the Viets get. Personal preference would also place the best Leader close to the HMG with the other on the other end of the line. There is an enormous amount of latitude for making some platoons stronger or weaker, in terms of numbers and SW allocation. There might be a case for Sappers acting as independent sub units, massing SMG squads in discrete attack groups, a mortar platoon and an MG platoon. Take your time but don't get hung up on the idea of a perfect mission specific organisation of your troops.

Whichever lines of attack you choose, you will have to cross open ground swept by fire at Night. Avoid running through illuminated locations or fire lanes. Use Leaders to round up stray broken squads and push them back towards the enemy. At night DM remains in place until a rally roll less than the squads morale is rolled. Commissars effectively ignore this rule speeding up the rallying process.

Once you get close to the French forward or main positions more open ground has to be crossed unless you can win a firefight against high morale troops in trenches? The plan is to overload the defences. Start with some prep fire, next attack with DC heroes, run in from all directions. Do what damage you can in advancing fire then pile in for a melee. Expect some broken squads, and some K/KIA results as well. In close combat exchange results can be expected.

If you think a dash across open ground unlikely to work, outflank the defenders and hit



them with as much firepower as you can, including OBA. Break them, then rush in to interrogate prisoners hopefully to reveal other French units. Not too sure if the presence on mines would occur as these are all known. ("Over there under the wire").

Taking the first couple of bunkers should be good fun. Decide if you can hold them or it is worth setting a DC in an attempt to destroy the post. In the second half you can still move forwards but will be placed a bit on the defensive by the French relief force.

The threats you face are ten elite squads, three leaders three Chaffee tanks, plus any remaining garrison troops. Consolidate the ground you hold. Pick up any abandoned French support weapons, and organise your positions. Use the Sappers as support weapons crews or as shock troops. Now is the time to use any OBA that can hit a useful spot. Find a shellhole for the RCL teams, use squads or half squad to man them if the crews are broken or eliminated. The next four turns will be a bitter struggle. Determine the French players plans as best you can. He may push extremely hard for one key bunker or engage in a series of thrusts hoping to get lucky in one or other. Stay alert to the possibility of a hidden French unit making an appearance behind the front lines to contest control, or a sprint past your front line to a more remote area.

Expect a close fight. The first two Bunkers should fall to you after a short but intense fight, the next two or three should be slightly easier. A grim struggle to hold on to your gains is the finale.

French Relief Force

After set up Scenario rule 5 allows you to pick two hexes where you can cross the wire for an extra 2MF/4MP without being subject to attack by mines. This is useful if a great deal of wire remains, but most of the time you will be better off using the shellholes in a former wire hex as these provide some cover. At a pinch you can run the Chaffees into wire hexes to try for a gap, hopefully this will not be necessary.

It is hard to predict what you will face on turn five. It is possible the garrison could be killed, broken or captured with the PAVN settling into all six bunkers having suffered few casualties. Conversely the Garrison could be still in place and the PAVN stuck on the wire or gibbering broken in the dark. In general some of the Garrison will be present and the Viets will have occupied four or five Bunkers. You might have some idea where the Anti tank assets of the enemy are, avoid these with your tanks as far as possible.

The basic idea is to enter across a wide front, gain the Trenches then push along them to recapture as many Bunkers as you can in the time remaining. If the PAVN pre registered hexes are known and well away from the areas you need to move through great, that is one less thing to worry about. Otherwise stay out of FFE areas, and gain cover as soon as you can. There is some sense in organising into platoons with on Leader in the middle, and one each on either flank.

Crossing the ground to reach the main trench position is not easy, but it should be possible in two or three turns with a bit of care. Use the tanks in support, avoiding anti tank assets if you can but remember Infantry are more valuable in a fight for Bunker control than a

Chaffee. Once in the Trenches the balance starts to tip in your favour. You should quickly gain control of 3Z10 and/or 3U8 then carefully thrust towards another Bunker. You should be outnumbered but able to amass sufficient force for one strong thrust. Time is pressing urging fast action. Use the tanks in support or to draw fire and inflict casualties. Fire from the 75mm guns should cause concern and a few casualties the M24 MGs are there to help use them.

A hairy close quarters Battle is inevitable. In a firefight you would normally expect to win, take note of PAVN support weapons if these proliferate your fire power advantage is eroded and close combat becomes a better bet. A 10-3 Leader is included in your forces, these can be fun to play. Be careful getting him into the Trenches then make use of his firepower modifier and rally bonus.

Keep fighting hard every turn. On the last player turn pull out the stops. If the PAVN player does not hold four bunkers at the end of his turn he has lost. If he holds five or six you need to take stock. Sometimes it helps to stop for a break, treat the last turn as a puzzle and see if you can plot a win. Some other players prefer to keep up the pressure and will want to keep playing.

Finally, there is no casualty cap in this one. Having three Tanks and the bulk of your forces in tact is admirable if you win, less so if you have just lost due to cautious play.

Conclusion

A lot can happen in this game, ranging from highly destructive Machine gun fire killing or breaking swarms of attackers outside of the wire, through to a sniper attacks taking out one of the superlative French Leaders, leading to a broken stack and easier time for the Viets. Generally the last two or three turns will be a life of death struggle for a key bunker. Aside from an interesting scenario this is a classic example of the value of High quality troops in defence.

Both players have difficult choices to make. The most serious for the French is whether to fall back in the first few turns or fight in place, for the PAVN it is difficult to choose between a stealthy approach and using Artillery support as soon as possible.

If you enjoy Night scenarios and fierce close quarter battle this is worth a look.



DBP10 All in Vain

All in vain is the first scenario set on the superb Dien Bien Phu map. Although half of the map is in play the action centres around a very small area around the Elaine 1 Hill. Both sides are desperate to control the Hill, the French need it to strengthen their positions, the PAVN need it

as a spring board for developing further attacks. A blood bath is guaranteed by a limited game length, need for the French to Kill the PAVN or drive them off the Hill and the very close proximity of the forces involved. Do not be put off by Scenario rule 3, where by both sides attempt to place shellholes to their advantage. This special rule greatly complicates both attack and defence, giving All in Vain added appeal.

PAVN Set Up

As long as you have one or more good order MMC on a level two or higher Hill hex of Elaine 1 or Elaine 4 you are still in the game. If you satisfy this objective at the game end you win. It is possible to lose on turn one if your set up avoids Level two or higher hexes.

At the game start PAVN forces outnumber the French very slightly, by twelve squads to Eleven, leadership is slightly in favour of the French, support weapon allocation about even. There is a big gulf in troop quality. The bad news is it favours the French. Eleven Elite Paratrooper squads with an underscored ELR of five, compare very favourably to a mixed bag of twelve PAVN squads, only two of which are Elite, and an ELR of three. In terms of firepower, the French really have an edge. A raw firepower ratio of 54 to 66 doesn't sound too bad, unfortunately your troops cannot form multi hex firegroups knocking their effective unstacked firepower down to 34 excluding support weapons. In a firefight the French firepower advantage should prove decisive within the time limit of the game. The perspective becomes bleaker when you consider the French troops higher morale, very high ELR and adequate Leadership. Several factors keep you in the game. The French must move forwards to win, giving you the opportunity for the first shots against adjacent troops, generally in poorer cover. In close combat, especially Hand to hand you can do well. More good news, you start with a Commissar and can exchange another Leader for one more. As always I'd take the second Commissar, especially as the PAVN officers are gentle with troops who fail to rally. Two commissars will give your force a deal of resilience, quickly rallying units and pointing them back towards the enemy. Remaining upbeat, your SAN is slightly higher, giving you a 50% higher chance of activation than the French, expect an average of one potential sniper activation every twelve eligible DR.

More help comes from the Scenario rules and some of the DBP Standard special rules. Scenario rule 2 makes shellholes and all fortifications Concealment terrain. Building on this Rule DBP2 allows up to 10% FRU of your OB to set up hidden. This really does create a wide range of opportunities. One idea is to hide the Bazookas and manning squads ready to ambush the Chaffees'. Alternatively your target might be enemy squads, striking as they move into your hex or attempting to ambush them in close combat. Least favourite, but practical, hiding in a remote spot then running on a Level two hex to claim a win at the game end. What ever you choose the French will try and counter. With moderate luck you will distract them, which will help you to win. DBP 14 is very interesting allowing secret placement of six trail breaks in wire hexes. These could be used as escape routes, or part of a cunning plan to steal the game by a

HIP unit running through wire to Victory. The 57mm Recoilless Rifle can set up hidden of which more a little later.

A sub plot is the armour. Within two or three turns it will make its presence felt. Use your anti tank assets, specifically Bazookas and 57mm RCL against this threat. To hit rolls and to kill rolls are low, fortunately the tanks should not be effective for the first two turns. After that they can be a considerable nuisance.

Your plans should take into account Scenario Rule 3 which allows the placement of three shellholes by yourself and the French. Placement is a bit tricky in that the Shellhole always end up in an adjacent hex. As you have three opportunities to place shellholes the odds of placement in a pre selected individual hex is 50%. By careful site selection you should be able to increase the odds of a favourable location by choosing targets next to several useful spots. This is probably easier for the French, as the PAVN your defences are weaker and more likely to be clustered together. If you hit a rubble building, woods, or Brush a flame is placed. If you can place a flame in J18 and it subsequently becomes a blaze the French lose control of a very useful rubble building at level 5. Other useful spots are any front line French trenches, or if defensively minded try to convert open ground in your set up area into Shellholes. Be a bit careful, trashing your own fortifications is possible if your initial target hex is adjacent to your fortifications. Your opponent will be pleased and your position will have been weakened slightly. If it happens your options are shrug, see the funny side, get theatrical (my favourite), or try to convince your opponent you are pleased with the 'bad' result.

Before setting up decide how you will aim to win. If you want to shoot the French to bits in a firefight, powerful firegroups in trenches and foxholes may be the way to go. French Shellholes' might scupper your plans, failing that the strength of French firepower could do the job! I genuinely do not think you can win this way but if you think I'm wrong try three adjacent trenches surrounded by Sangars and foxholes then roll very low, very often.

There are alternatives with considerable scope for personal choices. I think these can be grouped into a Hedgehog or point defence, a Linear set up or a small series of platoon sized defensive Islands. Sub plots include Anti tank assets and hidden units. A very important consideration is how close to the enemy front line do you want to start. You can begin adjacent to the French, risky if concealed, still a bit dangerous if hidden. The gain is in slowing down the enemy advance. The weakness the potential to lose units early. One or two hexes back, is less vulnerable to enemy prep fire, but can still oppose rapid French movement. A line of Trenches, flanked by foxholes, Sangars and occupied Shellholes a slight distance from the French lines has the advantage of increasing your usable firepower by shooting within the inherent range of most of your units. Against this is the chance of enemy shellholes landing smack in the middle of your position. The French can concentrate on one or more likely both of your flanks and encircle you. Finally where do your front line troops rout? Not the best possible defence, but very strong if the French attack on a broad front on turns one or

two. Admittedly this isn't very likely.

A better bet could be a small hedgehog. Again you have a lot of choice in choosing the centre of the position, up front adjacent to the French, even way back at the Eastern edge of the Hill. Probably the best spot to choose would be around G13/G14. Any French attacks will be up hill increasing movement costs. The Hedgehog can take a range of shapes, roughly circular, square even triangular or diamond shape. My own choice would be a triangle with the apex (pointy bit) towards the French. The base would contain Trenches, with foxholes nearby. The Front line area could use some Sangars or alternatively printed shellholes. The most exposed frontal positions are likely to be hit hard by French fire on turn one, killing or breaking the survivors. The only advantage Sangars have over shellholes is their greater TEM against armour overruns. If you have any spare Sangars they can be used to provide cover in open ground. After set up the hedgehog aims to absorb enemy attacks, trading territory for casualties by falling back or breaking as a result of enemy fire when under pressure. Makes sense to keep Leaders at the Eastern end of the position, ready to round up and rally broken squads or half squads before pushing them back into the fight. The beauty of a hedgehog is its simplicity. It is also able to soak up a number of moderately strong attacks.

A very reasonable alternative might be a series of small defensive Islands designed to give you some defence in depth. A weakness of the Hedgehog is its lack of depth. Most likely this will only be three or four hexes deep. By distributing the defenders between a limited number of small positions the defence gains some depth, at the cost of not being particularly strong in a single place. Each Island is organised around one or two Leaders, three or four squads and some support weapons. The level four hill hexes G13 and G14, are tempting for one position. A gaps in the wire around K13, and I10 are interesting, and accept starting some troops at Level one ready to move to level two in the closing stages of the game. Watch out for the sudden win within the Victory conditions though! Given the relatively small size of the PAVN set up area a closely grouped cluster of Islands could look and fight very similarly to a loose hedgehog. There is a slight difference though, the hedgehog aims to earn victory by doggedly recovering from attacks, the Islands are intended to wear the French down and discourage attacks.

During play you should have some fun with your hidden units and anti tank assets. Killing a Chaffee is a possibility, so is mechanical breakdown or main armament malfunction. The armour is really a game within a game. Left to dictate the action the two tanks will hit you hard with 75mm and MG attacks. Try to use your anti tank assets against the threat. The Bazookas cannot fire at anything else, except perhaps troops in the ruins (J18), the RCL must choose between armour and Infantry. As long as you have HEAT, trying against the armour makes the most sense. Keep in view the Mortar will work against tanks, and your infantry can do damage in close combat.

Time is crucially important. An extra turn would give the French stronger winning chances. A fair result would be a win where you just hang

on with one squad, not everyone idea of a decisive victory but very realistic if a PAVN counter attack is timed for turn six. With such a strong French force you can expect to be on the receiving end of some pretty horrible fire attacks. It would be very unusual to inflict greater loss on the French than you experience, accept this and concentrate on controlling crucial territory rather than winning firefights or even melees just for the sake of it.

Make good use of your concealment counters and HIP units. There is a lot of choice in terms of what to hide, conceal or leave known. Hiding a HMG, squad and crew before opening up on turn one is a waste. There is a stronger argument for concealing units which will not fight in the first couple of turns. I'm not sure you have enough concealment counters to create some dummy's?

A few quick ideas, if you are out of French line of sight gain concealment on turn one. Agonise over decisions concerning close combat. The French have a firepower advantage, but if you can get into lethal hand to hand you can delay the development of his attacks and occasionally reduce his forces. Remember you have teeth, and occasionally bite the French with your Machine guns or even inherent firepower.

Make a determined attempt to be lucky. Place shellholes over the French front line, whilst watching your opponents go anywhere that doesn't help him. Roll low to hit and destroy tanks, win melee and even kill Paras by IFT attacks. If you have average luck wish slightly worse on your opponent, a few box cars may help, tens and eleven's would be nice. Not really a serious plan but something to look forwards to when the French are rattling dice frequently.

Enjoy this one, you are clinging grimly onto a piece of Viet Nam that you have liberated from the French your courage will bring Victory to your emerging Nation.

French Set Up and Attack

The objective is to force all good order PAVN MMC off the level two or higher hexes of Elaine 1 and 4. As soon as this happens you have won. Broken enemy units, are not good order, nor are Berserk ones, nor crucially are those held in melee (I've played that wrong once or twice!). Further good news if no enemy units are on level two or higher Hill hexes you immediately, even if hordes of PAVN are dug in on level one or lower hexes. Worth considering is the total absence of a casualty cap, you can lose your entire OB and still win if the Viets die with you or if they celebrate your destruction by charging off the high ground.

Although you can win on turn one if the PAVN have set up badly, it is more likely you face a stiff fight. There are two ways to aim for a win. One seeks to gain territory controlling all of the level two and higher hill hexes, the other seeks the destruction of enemy forces. In reality a bit of both is needed. Staying in your starting positions and blazing away at the enemy doesn't deserve to work and nor does an eleven squad charge for Elaine 1. I think the difference between the two plans is the ratio of prep fire to advancing fire, and movement phase to advance phase movement. As always seems to be the case there is an alternative, doing a bit of both, varying your approach from turn to turn and even doing things



differently in different sectors of your front!

Whichever approach is selected the 316th Infantry Division will oppose your plans. Some enemy forces can set up hidden, two squads, any accompanying Leaders and SW, as well as the RCL and crew. This is a significant force, that can prove difficult to find. Hidden units must start on a Hill hex numbered less than or equal to 15. This is a lot of territory, and you must allocate some effort to finding them. Unexpected help comes from your opponent, who will reveal units when you move into their hexes, or open fire on your forces. Other hexes will be searched by your troops or hit by sufficiently strong fire attacks to reveal any hidden defenders. Any shell hole can be a hiding place, there is even a nasty little Brush hex behind some wire in D13. A squad in D13 could move through the wire late in the game to control a level two hex, Standard Scenario rule DBP14 allows the PAVN to set trail breaks in a limited number of wire hexes. If this happens late in the game it could be a nasty surprise, although you should have enough units around to blast the enemy with fire. Keep in view this is less of a threat because of the sudden death Victory conditions. The hidden RCL is likely to be a bit back from the front line, it will be revealed when it fires at a Chaffee, or occasionally before then if the PAVN are tempted to shoot at your infantry.

Aside from being used to win a game of hide and seek, PAVN HIP squads can be used as anti tank assets, manning the Bazookas, or as a break on your push on Elaine 1. By all means try to guess where they are, devote some effort to finding them, but don't let it become a distraction. At best they will kill a squad and possibly a Leader, more often they will unleash a fearsome 12IFT attack then get nailed in close combat.

The rest of the enemy force will provide plenty of opposition to your plans. Initially the enemy outnumber you by twelve squads to eleven, with a reasonable allocation of support weapons, and some concealment as well as HIP allocation. Two enemy squads are elite the rest are first line with an ELR of three. Expect to see one or possibly two commissars amongst the enemy Leaders. Although much of this force is concealed you can make some intelligent guesses about the defences. I would not expect to see any dummy stacks. There is a very high probability of anything single counter under a concealment counter is going to be a squad, two counters will be a squad and SW, three will be a squad, MG, and Leader. There are sound reasons for this. Stacking is probably a bad idea for the PAVN in the face of your awesome firepower, stacking a leader with a Mortar and crew or even a Bazooka is less likely than with an MG. There are some exceptions. A single counter at the back of the PAVN defences might be a Leader, the PAVN could set up the RCL team concealed rather than hidden, and your opponent is at liberty to man a Bazooka with a SMC or even two of them. Despite the exceptions you should get a good idea of where the opponent is.

This picture becomes a lot clearer as the game progresses. Fire combat will reveal units, both as a result of your fire, and when the PAVN shoot. There are no prizes for revealing the entire OB on turn one, it can make more sense to deal with the units that are known, or on prime real estate first. A concealed unit is not shooting at you.

One interesting factoid from the ASLRB, "UNARMED UNITS ARE IN GOOD ORDER". Taking enemy prisoners is a judgement call. It is generally harder to eliminate enemy forces once you have declared no quarter, very tough when the enemy includes commissars and a number of other Leaders. Prisoners can be interrogated, again very useful. A finite chance of a prisoner escaping exists. If this happens kill or capture them as soon as possible but do not totally ignore them.

The 5th BPVN are excellent troops, elite with an ELR of five. In this scenario they will need to dish out and absorb punishment, a firepower of six, and morale of eight helps, a broken side morale of nine is superb. French firepower is impressive. Two half squads will man the Mortars, whilst a staggering 78 IFT factors come from ten squads, four LMGs, an HMG and MMG. Most shots will be against troops in +1 or +2 cover, a shell hole, Sangar, Foxhole or Trench. Against stacks of units massive IFT attacks make sense. Against more scattered positions six or eight IFT attacks should be adequate. Most of the time a morale check will result. A fair result against unconcealed units in shell holes or Sangars would be eight or nine morale checks on turn one, resulting in three or four broken squads. This assumes the majority of your forces will prep fire. If most of your attacks are in the advancing fire phase, you lose some firepower for movement, might gain some more for and PBF, less anything lost as a result of enemy fire.

For the first turn at least I favour shooting at the PAVN. Personal preference would shoot the 9-2 directed stack first to limit the dire effects of SAN, but there is value in firing the Mortars first to attempt to strip concealment. If opening fire is very effective, move some troops forwards. If you are unlucky you might have to limit movement to the advance phase. Prime targets should be enemy machine guns nests, followed by anti tank assets, down through manned support weapons to squads.

After the initial fusillade choices get harder. If you are aiming to kill the enemy, try for double breaks. If you plan to move forwards aggressively, two broken squads are more valuable than a dead half squad. The LMGs and spraying fire are dandy for keeping broken units under desperation morale, though this is pointless if a commissar is at hand to rally them!

Which is all a bit previous, before you attack you must place shell holes and set up. You start with eight Trenches. A decent number but you do need them. They will be used to provide protection for your assaulting units and to build a firebase to support them. There is scope for varying the strength of these two elements. At the very least the firebase could consist of the Mortars, and MMG/HMG. From Elaine 4 you can dominate Elaine 1. Good sites for a trench include Level three hill hexes, I17, J16, with adjacent level two hexes being almost as good. The Level four hex is rubble giving +3 TEM, if hit by a shell hole it becomes a flame but is still usable for turn one at least. On level one hills trenches can serve as a firebase and a covered approach to enemy lines. F16, G16, H16 and even I16 are very close to enemy lines. Placing a squad and LMG here is a slight gamble but does get the attack off to a good start.

Planning a rough line of approach for your attack is sensible. The Northern flank of Elaine 1

is the easiest to approach initially. A strong thrust from around G16 will have to push hard to drive all the enemy off the Hill. Attacking across a broader front or on both the Southern and northern flanks of the Hill weakens the strength of the attacks but alleviates some of the time pressure involved in clearing the entire Hill. This really does come down to style.

Personally I'd go for a platoon led by the 9-2 Leader equipped with the MMG, HMG and Mortars as a firebase on Elaine 4. A platoon attacking down the Northern and Southern faces of Elaine 1, with a reserve platoon serving initially as a firebase then moving to support either attack.

There are many alternatives. The 9-2 Leader could be in an attacking element, the MMG could go forwards with the troops, the reserve platoon could be split between the attacking elements or could go straight for the centre early in the game.

Armour support is arriving. With Mud in effect there is a small chance of bog. You can reduce this risk by moving as a platoon or just balls it out. If one or both vehicles mire and subsequently immobilise give any long range support you can with the gun or MG armament. If you can move closer to the enemy though, bog become less of a problem just about the time the enemies' Anti tank assets become more of an issue. If the threat has already been neutralised you can get reasonably close to the front line and render valuable support. If the location of the RCL and Bazookas, and to an extent the Mortar are known you can try to avoid them but still assist the attack. Losing one or both tanks is not the end of the game. If their loss reveals hidden units, follows some destruction of your own, or ties up significant enemy effort you have some compensation. A lot can go wrong with the tanks, aside from bog and enemy weapons, there is a chance of main armament malfunction or mechanical reliability to cause woe. On the upside, the MG armament is effective, whilst the 75MM gun can cause damage, or encourage acquired targets to withdraw.

Attacking up Hill is always difficult, mud makes it harder, increasing movement costs. Going CX is very dangerous adjacent to enemy units, and reduces the effectiveness of your fire. There will be instances when you do need to do this though. Close combat should also be part of your game plan. Your attack is not a bayonet charge but superior firepower does give you an advantage in melee. When faced with pinned Rifle half squads a 6-1 attack is tempting, even against a SMG half squad the chances of effective retaliation are remote. Against stronger opposition the choice is harder, in the last turn or two it may be imperative any risk is accepted.

The most important hexes to control either by physical occupation or by firepower are the G13 and G14 level three Hills. Control of enemy trenches gives protective TEM, complicates rout, and improves movement options.

Before the attack starts you need to place shellholes and watch your opponents attempts to place them. You have no control over your opponents choices except where they land with good grace. At worst three key trenches will be removed, at best open ground in the path of your

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ANOTHER LOOK AT CAMPAIGN GAMES

Chris Riches

Within *VFTT*, one often sees hot-off-the-press reviews of Campaign Games, especially 3rd party products. Their focus is on “what’s in the box”: maps, counters, scenarios etc, and serve a good purpose for info on products you might want to buy. What hasn’t happened until recently is anyone giving their thoughts on how the campaign games themselves play. Seeing Toby Pilling’s thoughts on Campaign Games in the May/June 2001 issue of *VFTT* made me set to work on compiling my notes on CGs I have played. So here is another article in a similar vein, but I have deliberately avoided the official CGs as these get enough press already and it would duplicate part of Toby’s article.

It has to be said that I prefer *ASL* with some continuity, be it Leader progression, Company Campaigns (per *SASL*), or Campaign Games. Thus, I play CGs much more frequently than stand-alone scenarios, although I do agree with Toby in that I have rarely had to play a CG to its conclusion before one side concedes.

I have aimed the following comments at those who own the game (hence references by hex) but also added some general comments for those who might be considering buying them. Experienced players of the CGs may well say “well, if you went about it like that, then of course you lost”, but at least a gamer has a chance to replay it, unlike our historical counterparts, and I look forward to many more CG summaries from people out there.....

Stonne

One of my favourites, even after having to re-start the first CG. I had carefully driven vehicles up through the woods, creating TBs and take Bog checks and avoiding double crest-lines, only to find this was prohibited by the special rules. Oops!

The Germans have enough strength to pursue various approaches, so I sent a left flank force to the hilltop (Y11) in halftracks as far as they could, a small force up the road (which got held up fairly easily around P7/O8), and the main infantry attack up the steep hillside to I8 and K8/L7.

The French were able to hold out in the rowhouses and foxholes around Q10, supported by a trench in O10, and also in the buildings in the area I10-K9-N10, but were under fire from V10/V11 as well as the town. The French counterattack I found difficult to execute. Again, because of the strength of their force, various routes can be used, but for many of these they are dangerously exposed. The left flank via entry area D was a sacrificial diversion, and got cut down in open ground. From areas E or F through Le Champ Carre is funnelled into a small front aimed at G10-H11 and is easy to counter, hexrow N is very exposed, and the right flank from area G was held by German forces of better quality in the woods at Y12.

In the midst of all this the village was OBA’d and set on fire, so the tenuous French hold

was again threatened, although I must say it had the feel of the damage the town must have taken in the real battle. Eventually the combination of fire and firepower forced the French out back to M17 and the F19 area, and then the combination of German strength and exposed attacking routes made it obvious which way the result would turn.

I really enjoyed the first three scenarios, but then the quantity of items able to be purchased seemed huge - how many killer stacks of HMG/MMGs do you want? A counterattack with 2 Companies and 6 Tank Sections in addition to any surviving forces just seemed too much. Hence I now replay with about half the CPPs and it still has a good feel to it. As a French player I also tend to use more OBA, particularly smoke, and to preserve a dug-in presence on their right flank as a way to funnel forces back into the fight.

I found the map a bit strange - how can someone playtest the map and end up with crest lines exactly straddling the centre hex dots - blame the printers! This has been corrected by an essential errata sheet, so you know what height various hexes are and where the double crest lines exist that are otherwise obscured under the woods.

Pointe du Hoc

Again, a strong favourite and a clear map (maybe too glossy for some). I played the first couple of turns about three times, both to understand the amphibious rules, and also to work out what the Germans were supposed to do to defend the area. I’m still not sure they can do a lot if deployed forwards other than get shot up, but aiming to pull back and conserve forces is dangerous in giving up ground too quickly.

Ignore the captured French Guns - these are going to get discovered no matter where you put them. My preference is to keep them in the fields to the south, so at least they aren’t discovered and captured along with the rest of the defences, and are another thing marginally on the mind of the US player.

On the last occasion, I deployed German heavy weapons on the rising ground to the south (rows C/D) and was able to do a good job at curtailing US movement. I also aimed to set up two defensive positions somewhere on the road - the US will take out one with their strength, so went for a concealment strategy with the intent of whittling them down prior to a tough fight for the second.

The US landed on a wide front with substantial NOBA and direct fire to keep the defenders from responding, rather than a concentrated attack on one side of the headland. This fairly swiftly overcame the Germans, including some excellent NOBA KIA results, and the forces raced up to try and take good positions before the German reinforcements arrived. They got a good hold in Le Guay after a struggle, but a parallel thrust to Le Manoir was stuck for some time (aided by the fire support from the south) until finally pushing the Germans across the road.

On the east flank, the US struggled to clear St Pierre du Mont, and were hit by a German counterattack, with the forces ultimately squaring off around O23 and with a German presence around R27. Good firefights then occurred on both right and left flanks, with reinforcements being thrown in as they arrived, and the Germans doing their best to infiltrate through the fields to the front to cause more nuisance. Ultimately the US reinforcements tipped the balance and the Germans were pushed aside.

The initial assault takes some time to refresh the rules, but is a good chance to try a small fairly unopposed amphibious landing, which I hadn’t done via other scenarios. The new fortifications seem to take up lots of rules for minimal use in the game (you could do far worse than treating them as 1+5+7 Pillboxes - at least it will get you starting the game quickly), and the French artillery is not worth getting excited about, wherever you put it. Then it settles down into a good scrap over familiar terrain, with both sides able to muster forces to attack.

CH also issued a version with scenarios (no CG) and a larger-hex, matt-printed map (but reduced overall area, no sea, cliffs or forward defences) as *Busting the Bocage*. This is a neat little package and again has some fierce local firefights in very close terrain.

Scotland the Brave

I played CG II of the 3 in the series, and enjoyed it more than I thought I would, given the level of armour (which isn’t usually to my taste). Also only having 3 Firefights means you can retry it again easily.

The Germans had an easy ride in the first FF due to British positions being not well placed, but there were plenty of talking points, and some interesting duels between FFE and vehicles. The Germans launched their attack to the right of Granville sur Odon, and were able to get infantry into the village by the end of the scenario. Once this had happened, the British force from there can get easily whittled down, so the British attempted a counterattack using the AA Crusaders (nice to try different vehicles), but botched it. This left the Germans a fairly easy task of rolling up the map and the British conceded.

The contents are good, and with various options for both sides - German attack possibilities, and a wide variety of forces to purchase, one that I will replay.

Hell’s Bridgehead

Appealed again, with relatively low counter density and some good variety with the river crossing, a few buildings/woods, and some excellent tank country.

I tried the first time to build up Soviet forces in reserve, but the Germans were able to make too good progress, cleared the village immediately, established themselves on the

heights and the Soviets conceded.

The second time I invested fully in fortified buildings and mines and held the village in Firefight 1. Firefight 2 saw additional reinforcement of the village with more defences and an on-map setup Company (sadly only 4-4-7 quality), with the intention of using it as a counterattack base. The Germans weren't sure for the night scenario whether to play idle, to reinforce with infantry the village attack, screen it and bypass the Soviet forces there, or make an armoured/haltrack thrust to capture good positions for the following day. In the end, they managed to surround various Soviet groups and force them out of the village, with heavy casualties. The delay gave the Soviets time to rush reinforcements onto the plateau, but by using Tiger frontal armour the Germans cleaned up and still won.

I need to play it again to see what will be better for the Soviets. There are few positions for concealed guns for flanking shots, and in a head-to-head confrontation the Germans have the edge. The map is excellent.

Dzerhezinsky Tractor Works and Valor of the 37th Guards

Valor of the 37th Guards covers the same subject as *DTW* and is much better. It has larger hexes and a smaller geographical area, which I think creates a better focus on the factory itself.

In my first game I let the Germans gain the west side buildings of the first 4 hexrows too easily, and they were then able to rush across the street and gain a foothold before I had strengthened the defenders. This then led to German on-map reinforcements appearing well forward without having to run the gamut of crossing exposed streets. So in game two I put more into row C, but even then only a few locations held out at the end of firefight 1. So next time there'll be even more defending up front.

The Germans have first to clear the west side of the main street, then get across it. Debris helps somewhat, but the distances to go are significant, and despite substantial fire support which the German can muster the lead elements can get cut off and picked apart. In the north, taking J8 is critical, then M6 can be pinched from there plus a left flanking attack from I4/K5. This allows domination of the northern end of the board. Alternatively, strike for J12 and then into the heart of Russian positions in the north in M10, which allows you to turn north or south.

The northern area can be linked to the central area, where buildings C17 and B19 can be used to keep the Soviets under fire. G22 is tempting for a Soviet player as it has good fire lanes, but can be dominated from several buildings and is too exposed for reinforcement, so expect people there to fight gloriously to their death. However, without it, Soviet defences can easily be too far refused at row M.

The south, particularly for the Germans, is cut off from the other areas and must stand or fall on what initial forces and purchased reinforcements are sent there. At its northern end, the rush to the wall in row F, followed by a move to H26 area can be used. Further south, the choice

for assaulting the factory in N34 is whether to go for the mad dash behind smoke or slowly pick your way through the debris and utilise armoured assault.

The Russians have a tough time, as the front can be stretched thin by the Germans. It can be difficult to move forces from one threatened area to another in the face of German fire superiority, so good placement of foxholes, trenches, vehicles (wrecks!) etc is important. Also, reading *RB* articles gives good ideas for use here (Sov 60 Mortars on rooftops).

Whilst my preference is for *37th Guards* over *DTW*, it does require some interpretation of applying *RB* to the CG, and in fact I prefer to use game info from the original *DTW* CGs. A shame that it was nearly excellent, but just fell short. However, there is no difficulty in retro-fitting as you see fit.

The Grain Elevator

This mini-CG came in a Critical Hit special issue, and is a great little city training CG. You get the Refit Phase aspects of buying reinforcements (which I enjoy - if only all the plans made then came to fruition!) together with small scenarios. I made an additional map to attach to the western side, as I found it a bit strange to have the Soviets set up on the very edge hexrow onto which the Germans must enter. It allows you to experiment with the best placement of fortified locations, defending the exposed front of buildings, or the rear, although the Soviets do have a tough time. The Grain Elevator itself is easily neutralised through Smoke or direct fire weapons, and isn't any special prize under the victory conditions, so I'm not sure it really reflects the historical situation but who cares, a fun game!

There are two phases of play - firstly the Germans getting established on the map, and then pushing down their chosen flank to clear the board (the central approach to the Grain Elevator is too open to stand much of a chance). G14 is a key building for the Soviets, but is easy to soak up too much resource. J11 is also a key location that is frequently Fortified. F3 can be a useful alternate building for a stand (and field phone), as it can restrict German pressure on that flank.

Berlin Red Vengeance

I've not yet played the revised version (with bigger hexes), but this was fun driving "Big Red" over nasty Nazis. There are some interesting late war vehicles and a city with some tricky open spaces to cross. The Soviets got on board well and were able to concentrate their fire on buildings protecting the H9 bridge, from E9 and heavy artillery and their JS tanks (despite low ammo restrictions). Infantry crossed and entered buildings to both right and left. This left the Germans isolated in M10, N8 and M14.

Meanwhile, the Germans had managed to place 2 DCs on the EE16 bridge, but only one caused damage. Coupled with a fallback defence from in front of the bridge, this side was well held throughout the game and proved very important in causing the Russians to have to attack the Reichstag from the open ground.

The third bridge (W10) also fell to a

Smoke-covered attack, but after a tough fight. The Russians then holed up in T10 under fire and even after linking up with the H9 forces struggled to make progress against the Reichstag at the same time as having the German pocket holed up between them and the river.

More and more artillery and tank firepower was required, and this build up took time, which ultimately resulted in the assault being too late to meet the historical end date, although German survival would have not lasted much longer.

This is certainly a different game from *RB* although still in a city environment. I particularly liked the options available to each player, and the contrasting flow of the game from quick advance through areas where the enemy had vacated to brisk firefights over key buildings. For the Germans, delaying and hitting the enemy, and knowing when to pull out and preserve forces or to dig in and extract a high price for clearing that last unit are important decisions.

Conclusion

I hope this was of some interest to players, and apologies if it was a bit incomprehensible to anyone who hasn't got the CGs. As I said earlier, other experiences of CGs I would be interested to hear about.

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GUN PIT'S TRIP UP NORTH

Continued from page 5

had the last laugh! And talk about getting revenge for all those defeats I had suffered at his hands, in our 'after tourney games' that we play, this time I WON!!

I leave Blackpool with a Tourney record of 0-5, and a game record of 1-6. Seven games played, and all of them were enjoyed by my opponent and me. So, for those who could not make it to Berserk, you missed out, but I hope that this piece has made you determined to be here next year. If you have not been to a Tourney before, get yourself to one very quickly, they are FUN!!! That is what we are here for, after all.

Just before I go, I would like to thank; first, my opponents; second, every-one else who turned up; third, the hotel staff who put up with us lot of degenerates; and finally, to Trev 'not quite hull-down' Edwards and his partner in crime Steve 'can't take a photo' Thomas for a great weekend. Thanks guys!

PS. You may be wondering what I mean by a 'Giggysy'? If you had watched the Man Utd v. Arsenal FA Cup tie, you would have seen Ryan Giggs miss a completely open goal from 18yds. Somehow, he managed to kick the ball over the cross-bar. (*He made amends for it scoring the equaliser against them in the league a few weeks later on our way to becoming Champions :-)* – Pete).

So, until later, Gun-Pit fans, carry on losing and having fun.

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"THIS IS THE CALL TO ARMS!"

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

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

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Michael Essex, 1 Manchester Court, Garvary Road, London, E16 3GZ
Michael Chantler, Flat 7, Pickwick House, 100-102 Goswell Road, London, EC1V 7DH
Mike Elan, 26 King Edward Street, St. Davids, Exeter, Devon, EX4 4NY
Andrew Saunders, 3 Torbay Court, 221 Devonshire Road, Blackpool, Lancs., FY2 0TJ
Nigel Brown, 3 Chopstow Road, Blackpool, Lancs., FY3 7NN
Arthur Garlick, 23 St. Annes Road East, Lytham St. Annes, Lancs., FY8 1TA
Michael Davies, 36 Heyhouses Court, Heyhouses Lane, Lytham St Annes, Lancs., FY8 3RF
Russell Gough, 4 Berrells Road, Tetbury, GL8 8ED
Chris Netherton, 16 Quintrell Close, Woking, Surrey, GU21 3BT
Tim Bunce, 3 Wren Close, Yateley, Hants., GU46 6NZ
Jeff Cansell, 24s Upper Queen Street, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1DQ
Giulio Manganoni, 111 Kings Road, Godalming, Farncombe, Surrey, GU7 3EU
Simon Crome, 1 Dowling Parade, Bridgewater Road, Wembley, Middx., HA0 1AJ
Jackie Eves, 1 Dowling Parade, Bridgewater Road, Wembley, Middx., HA0 1AJ
Kevin Beard, 36 Oxford Road, Harrow, Middx., HA1 4JQ
Malcolm Hatfield, 336B Alexandra Ave, South Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 9DB
Chris Littlejohn, 214A Field End Road, Eastcote, Pinner, Middx., HA5 1RD
Bob Runnicles, 34 Albury Drive, Pinner, Middx., HA5 3RE
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Nick Edelsten, 139 Hivings Hill, Chessham, Bucks., HP5 2PN
Ivor Gardiner, PO Box 62, Hereford, HR2 6YL
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Malcolm Holland, 57 Westfield Rise, Barrow Lane, Hessele, Humberside, HU13 0NA
Steve Balcam, 1 Cornwall Street, Cottingham, N. Humberside, HU16 4NB
Ruairigh Dale, 13 Swinemoor Lane, Beverley, Humberside, HU17 0JU
Tony Maryou, 41 Benton Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 4AU
Kevin Gookey, 95 Willingdale Road, Loughton, Essex, IG10 2DD
Neil Clark, EAATM, Badingham, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP13 8LA
David Austin, 86 Lindsey Way, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 2PD
Paul Legg, 21 Grimsey Road, Leiston, Suffolk, IP16 4BW
Andy Smith, 31 Egerton Road, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4AP
Ben Jones, 72 Church Road, Hale, Liverpool, Merseyside, L24 4BA

Andy Ashton, 62 Earlston Drive, Wallasey, The Wirral, Merseyside, L45 5DZ
Gareth Evans, 29 Hillfield Road, Little Sutton, South Wirral, Merseyside, L66 1JA
Patrick Dale, 28 Bancroft Road, Cottingham, Market Harborough, Leics., LE16 8XA
Nick Brown, 53 Henley Crescent, Braunstone, Leicester, Leics., LE3 2SA
Pete Philipps, 23 Jean Drive, Leicester, Leics., LE4 0GB
Karl Bowen, The Games Store, The Manor House, Lincoln, Lincs., LN6 9DG
John Elwen, Vine Cottage, Main Street, Walton, Nr. Wetherby, W. Yorks., LS23 7DJ
Ben Kellington, Flat 3, 13 Broomfield Crescent, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 3DD
John Truscott, 28 Bracken Edge, Leeds, W. Yorks, LS8 4EE
John Overton, 68 Brantingham Road, Whalley Range, Manchester, M18 8QH
Bernard Savage, 73 Penrhyn Avenue, Middleton, Manchester, M24 1FP
Simon Sayers, 21 Barlea Avenue, New Moston, Manchester, M40 3WL
Bob Eburne, 33 Whittow Way, Newport Pagnell, Bucks., MK16 0PR
Norman Melvin, 11 Jerome Court, 59 The Limes Avenue, London, N11 1RF
Jamie Sewell, 115 Crescent Road, Alexandra Palace, London, N22 4RU
Michael Rudd, 2 Blaeberry Hill, Rothbury, Northumberland, NE65 7YJ
Geoff Geddes, 30 Sheepwalk Lane, Ravenshead, Nottingham, Notts., NG15 9FD
Ian Willey, 17 Strawberry Bank, Huthwaite, Sutton-In-Ashfield, Notts., NG17 2QG
George Jaycock, 51 Burleigh Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, Notts., NG2 6FQ
Chris Gower, 7 Boxley Drive, West Bridgford, Nottingham, Notts., NG2 7GQ
L. Othacehe, 17 Russel Drive, Wollaston, Notts., NG8 2BA
Duncan Spencer, 33 St Anthonys Road, Kettering, Northants, NN15 5HT
A. Kendall, 12 Hunsbury Close, West Hunsbury, Northampton, NN4 9UE
Nigel Ashcroft, 5 Gramere Way, Thornwell, Chestow, Gwent, NP16 5SS
Clive Haden, 2 The Drove, Taverham, Norwich, NR8 6FT
Steve Joyce, 23 South End Close, London, NW3 2RB
Peter Fraser, 66 Salcombe Gardens, Millhill, London, NW7 2NT
Nick Hughes, 15 Layfield Road, Hendon, London, NW9 3UH
Martin Mayers, 41 Frank Fold, Heywood, Lancs., OL10 4FF
Toby Pilling, 51 Wensum Drive, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 7RJ
Grant Hewitt, 44 Waltham Gardens, Banbury, Oxon, OX16 8FD
John Sharp, 3 Union Street, Oxford, Oxon, OX4 1JP
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Simon Hunt, 26 Inhurst Avenue, Waterlooville, Portsmouth, PO7 7QR
Keith Bristow, 11 Coltsfoot Drive, Waterlooville, Hampshire, PO7 8DF
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Steve Thomas, 19 Derwent House, Samuel Street, Preston, Lancs., PR1 4YL
Phil Draper, 8 Chesterman Street, Reading, Berks., RG1 2PR
Paul Sanderson, Flat 4, Russell Street, Reading, Berks., RG1 7XD
Michael Strefford, 3 Walton Way, Shaw, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2LL
Roger Cook, 24 Fifth Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 6DL
Dominic McGrath, 19 George Street, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 7RN
Stewart Thain, 55 Lysander Close, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire, RG5 4ND
Kevin Croskery, 4 Beechey Way, Cophorne, W. Sussex, RH10 3LT
Bill Hensby, 32 The Vineries, Burgess Hill, W. Sussex, RH15 0NF
John Barton, 194 Chanctonbury Road, Burgess Hill, W. Sussex, RH15 9HN
Keith Graves, 51 Humbar Avenue, South Ockenden, Essex, RM15 5JL
David Higginbotham, 18 Westfield Garden, Brampton, Chesterfield, S40 3SN
Andy Osborne, 42 Atlantis Close, Lee, London, SE12 8RE
Simon Horspool, 28 Crown Court, Horne Park Lane, Lee, London, SE12 9AA
Martin Edwards, 127 Pepsys Road, London, SE14 5SE
David Ramsey, 41 Twin Foxes, Woolmer Green, Knebworth, Herts, SG3 6QT
Chris Milne, 19 Redoubt Close, Hitchin, Herts., SG4 0FP
Roger Underwood, 34 Woodside Lane, Poynton, Cheshire, SK12 1BB
Andrew Dando, 26 Constable Drive, Marple Bridge, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 5BG
Graham Forster, 1 Dalston Drive, Bramhill, Stockport, Manchester, SK7 1DW
Ian Daglish, 5 Swiss Hill Mews, Alderley Edge, Cheshire, SK9 7DP
Steve Crowley, 2 Mossy Vale, Maidenhead, Berks., SL6 7RX
Adrian Catchpole, The Malting Barn, Top Lane, Whitley, Melksham, Wilts., SN12 8QJ
Neil Stevens, 26 Larch Road, North Colerne, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 8QG
Jon Williams, 17 Larch Road, Colerne, Chippenham, Wilts., SN14 8QG
Bill Gunning, 14 Eagles, Faringdon, Oxon, SN7 7DT
Chris Riches, 3 Bernwood Grove, Blackfield, Southampton, Hants., SO45 1ZW
James Crosfield, Hughcroft, Church Hill, Buckhorn Weston, Gillingham, Dorset, SP8 5HS
John Fletcher, 191 Trent Valley Road, Stoke-On-Trent, Staffordshire, ST4 5LE
Ronnie Tan, 250 Hydehorpe Road, Balham, London, SW12 0JH
Julian Blakeney-Edwards, 1 Elmbourne Road, London, SW17 8JS
Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, 49 Edgcombe House, Whitlock Drive, Southfields, London, SW19 6SL
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Jonathan Pickles, 115 Wavertree Road, Streatham Hill, London, SW2 3SN
David Tye, 35 Redburn Street, London, SW3 4DA
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Jean-Pascal Paoli, 51-60 Evelyn Gardens, London, SW7 3BH
Chris Courtier, 17b Hargwyne Street, London, SW9 9RQ
Paul Case, 12 Park Street, Dunster, Minhead, Somerset, TA24 6SR
Carl Bedson, 5 Allerton Meadow, Shawbirch, Telford, Salop, TF5 0NW
Nick Law, Flat 4, 12 Boyne Park, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 8ET
Mike Batley, 2 The Gables, Argos Hill, East Sussex, TN6 3QJ
Bill Eaton, Dart House, 20 Bridgetown, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5BA
Phil Nobo, 6 Milton Road, Ickenham, Middx., UB10 8NQ
Nick Quinn, 7 Woodgrange Avenue, Ealing, London, W5 3NY
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Sandy Goh, 12 Mornington Road, Radlett, Herts., WD7 7BL

Ulric Schwela, 19 Siddow Common, Leigh, Lancs., WN7 3EN
Michael Murray, 34 Bell Road, Walsall, West Mids., WS5 3JW
Ian Price, 19 Upper Green, Yettenhall, Wolverhampton, W. Mids., WV6 8QN
Michael Clark, Wold View, East Heslerton, Malton, N. Yorks, YO17 8RN
David Murray, 29 Middle Street, Nafferton, Driffield, S. Yorks, YO25 4JS
Wayne Baumber, 1 Crabbill Close, Easingwold, N. Yorks, YO61 3BX

SCOTLAND

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Martin Vicca, 37 Dean Gardens, Westhill, Aberdeen
Ian Percy, 1 Polmuir Road, Aberdeen, AB11 7SP
Steven Trease, 2 Charlestown Circle, Cove, Aberdeen, AB12 3EY
Paul Saunders, 59 Grampian Gardens, Arbroath, Angus, DD1 4AQ
Michael Green, 27 Rothell Park, Dumfries, DG2 7RH
Mark Chapman, Flat 7, 265 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh, EH11 1TX
Garry Ferguson, 30Y Forrester Park Avenue, Edinburgh, EH12 9AW
Bill Finlayson, 19 Taymouth Road, Polmont, Falkirk, Stirlingshire, FK2 0PF
Andrew Kassian, Flat 14/2, 20 Petershill Court, Glasgow, G21 4QA
Ellis Simpson, 4 Langtree Avenue, Whitecraigs, Glasgow, G46 7LW
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C. Jones, Deer Park Lodge, Stepside, Narbeth, Pembrokeshire, SA67 8JL
Emyr Phillips, 2 Cysgod Y Bryn, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 4LR

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

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VIEW FROM

ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL

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

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

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

MAY

2003 MONTREAL ASL FESTIVAL

When: 17 – 18 May.

Where: Days Inn Montreal Metro Center, 1005 Guy Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3H 2K4. Phone 1-800-567-0880 toll free or (514) 938-4611 for rates and reservations. There is a special \$99.95/day if you reserve before April 9; mention Michelle Jodoin. Most rooms have 2 double beds. All rooms are air-conditioned and have color television. The hotel has a restaurant and is near a variety of restaurants, as well as shops and nightclubs. Indoor and outdoor parking available (charges apply for both).

Fee: \$17.00 (US) or \$25.00 (Canadian). Single day entry is half the full fee. Pre-registrants will receive tournament information and scenarios around mid-March.

Format: 5 time-limited rounds of action starting on Saturday at 8:30 a.m. Each round will have a choice of three scenarios, with scenario substitution possible by mutual player consent and TD approval.

Contact: Bruno L'Archeveque, Montreal ASL Festival, 2294 Fauteux, Laval, Quebec, H7T 2S6. Email blarcheveque@aircanada.ca.

LOGCON SWEDISH ASL TOURNAMENT

When: 29 May – 1 June.

Where: Tornadoskolan, Skarpnäck, Stockholm, Sweden. There is room at the site to sleep (bring a sleeping bag!) or there are plenty of local hotels (900SKR / *100 per night) and hostels (250SKR / *25 per night).

Fee: 200SKR / *25.

Format: 5 round Swiss format with three scenarios (and ABS) to select in each round. Thursday is available for free gaming with the tournament starting late Friday morning.

Contact: Peter Rognholt, c/o Svedin, Rotevagen 4, 74696 Skokloster, Sweden. Email him at rognholt@algonet.se. The latest information can be found at www.algonet.se/~rognholt/logcon.htm.

JUNE

AUSTIN ASL TEAM TOURNAMENT

When: 19 – 22 June.

Where: La Quinta Inn Round Rock 2004 North I-35 Round Rock, Texas. Tel 512-255-6666. When reserving rooms mention you are with the Central Texas ASL Club and you will get a discounted rate of \$65.99 plus tax per room. This rate is good until June 6th, 2003.

Fee: \$27.50 prior to 1 June, \$35.00 thereafter.

Format: The "Team" Tournament is really two tournaments in one. The main tournament has two person teams of all skill levels compete – teams will be randomly assigned at the beginning of the tournament. You must register by 1 June to be eligible. The tournament inside the tournament has players challenging for the coveted 10-3 Award, which goes to the individual who perseveres throughout the weekend and bests all comers. For those on a tight schedule there will be a Saturday only "Texas Heat" mini-Tournament starting at 9AM – entry for this is only \$17.50.

Contact: Mike Senigen at mikes@intrinsity.com. Check the web site at <http://www.angelfire.com/tx2/senigen> for the latest details.

SEPTEMBER

A BRIDGE TOO FAR - ARNHEM ASL TOURNAMENT

When: 12 – 14 September.

Where: Arnhem Stayokay Hostel, Diepenbroeklaan 27, 6815 AH, Arnhem. Next to an excellent gaming room, the Hostel offers its own restaurant, bar and various amenities. Accommodation is offered on a full board basis, which includes breakfast, packed lunch and dinner. The rooms accommodate 6 or 7 people and have their own shower and toilet facilities. The rates are *105 for Thursday to Sunday or *80 for Friday to Sunday. Please make your reservations for accommodation as early as possible with the organisers. The down payment is *60 (*50 for Friday to Sunday). Bank transfers and Paypal are our suggested means of payment - please contact the organisers for details. For those who prefer to stay in a nearby B&B or unable to get a room at the hostel the organisers will be happy to assist in finding alternative accommodation near the venue.

Fee: *20.00.

Format: Five round Swiss style tournament with three scenarios to pick from in each round. There are two rounds on Friday and Saturday and one round on Sunday. The gaming room will be open from Thursday afternoon for friendly games.

Notes: On Thursday, September 11th, interested participants are invited to join a Battlefield Tour, which will cover the Oosterbeek Airborne Museum, Drop Zones, War Cemetery, and of course the famous Arnhem Road Bridge. The costs for the Battlefield Tour will be shared among participants, so please advise the organisers well in advance to organise this.

Contact: Peter Struijff at pastruijff@hotmail.com. For more information you can also visit the website at <http://www.xs4all.nl/hennies/>.

OCTOBER

INTENSIVE FIRE 2003

When: 24 – 26 October.

Where: The Kiwi Hotel, West Hill Road, Bournemouth, England, BH2 5EG. Telephone (01202) 555 889 or fax (01202) 789 567 to arrange accommodation.

Fee: £6.00. Players pre-registering will receive a tournament program in September.

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

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 Phillips, 23 Jean Drive, Leicester, LE4 0GB. Phone (0116) 233 5896 (evenings only) or email if@vft.co.uk.

NOVEMBER

GRENADIER 03

When: 6 – 9 November.

Where: Oberbettingen, a little town in the German part of the Ardennes. There is a railway station in the village and a train to Cologne every hour (travel time about 50 minutes). The location offers sleeping rooms for 45 persons, a huge kitchen (where our Marketenderin Andrea will continue her cooking business for us), a big playing area and an additional separate big room which we will use for eating. Rooms are mostly three and four bed rooms with shower. Bed and breakfast is *30 per night.

Fee: *5 per day (*2 for Sunday).

Format: The tournament will be again a Swiss style five Round tournament. We will offer again an event for players who don't want to participate in the tournament.

Contact: Christian Koppmeyer, Hagebuttenweg 9, 41564 Kaarst, Germany. You can email him at Christian.Koppmeyer@freenet.de. Check out the Grenadier web site at <http://www.asl-grenadier.de> for up to date information.

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DIEN BIEN PHU PART DEUX

Continued from page 15

attack is blessed with a shellhole. When trying to place your own shell holes enemy trench and foxholes are valuable targets. Accuracy is limited to a DR of 1, selecting an initial hex surrounded and containing the maximum useful spots for a shell hole is sensible. Stripping G13/G14 of cover would be nice, but settle for less than this.

With only five turns to develop an attack you must maintain a good pace to your attack. Accept higher casualties by driving hard with your troops to gain terrain or kill PAVN, risk the tanks a bit, go CX when their is a potential for gain. You should not be reckless with every unit, every turn, it should be enough to do one or two risky things a turn, building to a mad minute on turns four and five.

French firepower, and Leadership, backed by Armour will provide the basis for your attack. A plan of how you will move onto Elaine 1 will help. If you can maintain the momentum of your attack, and carefully judge what risks and casualties are acceptable you should win.

Conclusion

This is the first use of the Champs Elysees Map, with the action more like a medieval siege, than a 20th Century Conflict.

A gruelling slug fest for both players. The French must push hard and fast after some fierce prep fire. The PAVN must endure numerous IFT attacks, round up broken squads and try to maintain a presence on the Hill. At times a key hex will become the focus of the action, especially in the closing turns. Set up is important for both sides, later on staying focused and outfighting your opponent will lead to Victory. If you enjoy close range combat and/or Melee with a high body count you will like "All in Vain" a lot.

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INTENSIVE FIRE 2003

24 - 26 OCTOBER 2003



INTENSIVE FIRE is the UK's longest running tournament dedicated to the play of *Advanced Squad Leader*. This year sees the 9th INTENSIVE FIRE and players of all standards are invited to attend.

FORMAT

The well-established Fire Team Tournament is the main event and offers the chance for competitive play on the Saturday and Sunday. In addition, the Friday mini-tournaments offer the chance for glory in more specialised fields of warfare. Likely topics for this year include Stalingrad street fighting, 'Fog of War' and, especially for the inexperienced player, the Training Camp.

For those not interested in tournament play, or not able to make it for the whole weekend, there is always room for pick-up games and friendly play.

VENUE

The Kiwi Hotel, centrally located in Bournemouth, offers both excellent gaming facilities and reduced accommodation rates (£31 per night for a single room or £26 for a double room). The hotel is within a short taxi-ride of Bournemouth rail station and ample parking is available. To book contact the hotel on (01202) 555 889 (+44 1202 555 889 from outside the UK). You can also book online at www.kiwihotel.co.uk.

For foreign visitors, lifts can often be pre-arranged to and from major airports. For those contemplating an extended stay, Bournemouth offers an excellent base for the military historian, being within easy reach of important military museums at Bovington Camp, Winchester, Portsmouth and Aldershot.

COST

Weekend registration for the tournament costs just £7. The tournament program listing the weekend's scenarios and events is available from late September to anyone registering in advance.

FURTHER DETAILS / REGISTRATION

Contact Pete Phillipps, 23 Jean Drive, Leicester, England, LE4 0GB. Telephone (0116) 233 5896 (+44 116 233 5896 from outside the UK) or email if@vftt.co.uk.