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COVER: An American soldier advances across the battlefield while avoiding enemy fire.

THE *ASL* MAILING LIST

The *ASL* Mailing List is devoted to discussion of *Advanced Squad Leader*, and is run by Paul Ferraro via a listserv program at the University of Pittsburgh. To subscribe go to:
http://lists.aslml.net/listinfo.cgi/aslml-aslml.net.

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

PREP FIRE

I hate work! As has been so often in the past 12 months, a 100 mile daily commute and numerous occasions working away from home so much has led to yet another *VFTT* being late :-(Attending a couple of bike rallies and the local Caribbean Carnival over the past couple of weekends hasn't helped either! I've got a several articles lined up for the next issue, a couple of which just need a little bit of work to finish them off, which I hope to get them done early in September so the next issue will hopefully not be too late (famous last words!).

One thing I'd like everyone to do in the next couple of weeks is drop me a few words about their experiences at INTENSIVE FIRE. In case you haven't realised, this year's event is the 10th, and with that in mind I'm putting together an article looking back over the previous events, and I'd like to include stories from those who've been there. So drop me a few words at the usual addresses.

Double 1. My last, best hope for victory.

Pete Phillipps

INCOMING

MMP REPRINTS AHEAD

Both the *ASL Rulebook* and *Beyond Valor* are due to be reprinted soon. With the BV reprint MMP will begin re-issuing all the modules with un-mounted maps in the same style as those found in the *ASL Starter Kit*. As a result the new BV will contain maps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 20, 21, 22 and 23, as well as 20 counter-sheets and 20 scenarios, including many currently out of print scenarios. The retail price will be $95.00.

All the remaining mapboards will eventually be reprinted in the new style and made available for separate purchase.

The next *ASL Journal* is expected to be out in the autumn, while the layout of *Armies of Oblivion* should be done soon.

CRITICAL HITS GALORE

Out now from Critical Hit are several new scenario packs and two historical modules. *TIGERS TO THE FRONT!—Army Group North 1944* is a scenario pack covering the battles of Army Group North in Russia in the summer of 1944. It includes 10 new scenarios, a set of rules and a 22" x 34" map covering the Panther Line. *BATTLE OF THE BRACCHI HILLS—On the Road to Rome 1944* focuses on the battle for the Mount Bracchi Triangle during the battle for Rome. 10 scenarios are included, along with new rules and a 22" x 34" map of the Bracchi Hills region. Both cost $24.95.

BERLIN—Fall of the 3rd Reich is a detailed new historical module covering the battle for Berlin through 12 new scenarios. As well as two large linked mapsheets, the module includes two countersheets containing all the SMC, MMC, AFV and Gun counters needed for play, a total of 592 counters. As well as versions of the standard *ASL* counters there are also new counters for Red Banner squads, fanatic Hitler Youth, and Volksturm units. Also included is a rules booklet and Play Aid Card. The module costs $49.95.

Coming soon is *Finland at War Volume 1: JATKOSOTA* which contains 12 new scenarios depicting actions from the Continuation War offensive of 1941 through to the end of the war when Finland fought to eject German troops from their soil. Also included are two mounted 8" x 11" geomorphic maps which are geomorphic on three sides so they can be used together in numerous combinations for half-board scenarios or combined to form one complete 8" x 22" geomorphic board, a sheet of 106 color die-cut counters, providing AFVs, guns, SMC, MMC (including new 5-5-8 squads) and Finnish T-H Hero counters, and a special rules booklet. The pack costs $29.95.

NEW BUNKER NEARS COMPLETION

Dispatches From The Bunker 19 should begin shipping in September. 'Pursuing Kobayashi' sees a regular US Army company chase remnants of the Kobayashi Group in '45 Philippines, 'Point 247' covers the Grossdeutschland's first taste of combat as they try to take out positions on the Maginot Line, while 'Asking for Trouble' has an elite US Recon unit trying to hold a town hall from attacking Volksgrenadiers.

Four issue subscriptions are available for $13.00 ($15.00 outside the USA). Issue one is available free with a subscription or an SAE, while other back issues are $3.50 ($4.00 outside the USA). Payments should be payable to Vic Provost and sent to *Dispatches from the Bunker*, P.O. Box 1025, Hinsdale MA 01235. You can email them at **aslbunker@aol.com**.

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HEROIC GUN-PIT

Paul Case

Well kiddies, here we are again at sunny Blackpool, but this year, not fighting BERSERK, but instead as HEROES. That's got to be the biggest laugh of the century, you lot as heroes!!

Before I start with this years report, I am going to remind you lot of what I said in the first 'Gun-Pit'. That is, this writer totally despises all acts of terrorism, and those pieces of shit that carry them out. I am, of course, talking about the Madrid bombings, to which (belatedly) our deepest sympathies go to those who have lost relatives and friends. Let me remind you all of one thing, only spineless cowards do terrorism, not real men and women!

It is with great sadness that I have to report that there will be no more BERSERK, as Steve and Trev have decided not to carry on. The only bit of good news, is that next year, we will be having another HEROES event on the last weekend of March (I was present when the hippy booked it!). From every-one who knows Steve and Trev, especially those who have attended BERSERK, we will miss you guys, and wish you All The Best!

Now to continue, this year's Blackpool war is being carried out with some of it's usual disregard for any attempt at serious *ASL* play, just the way I like it. Those that know me, will know that I have **NO**

intention of playing this game seriously, life's too short for that! That includes playing Pete, whom I have never played seriously since I've known him (we play for what this game was designed to be played for, FUN!!!).

Thursday

Arrived at the hotel, and found that your hero was the Advance-Party yet again. No booze this time, as I have to settle my stomach a bit, bit of a tummy-ache (all together now, ahhhhh!). The next to arrive were Ian Pollard and Aaron Sibley, and being the sad bastards that they are, proceeded to actually play this stupid game. Their choice being the one and only Gun-Pit scenario review, 'J59 Friday The 13th'. Ian decided to go for the trophy, and started well, he lost.

Then your organiser turned up, and started dishing out the tournament-packs. Included in them was the latest *VFTT*. Well, time to get something to eat, I'm hungry. Never played a game, but saw a few others playing.

Friday

Breakfast at 0800hrs, as it is for Saturday and Sunday, followed by the usual total lack of first turn interest in starting a game. The hippy has announced that the 'Snakes and Boxcars' competition is on.

Neil Stevens (left) plays Will Roberts - the first time the original IF organisers have been seen together in years!

Snakes getting £2, and Boxcars getting £12. A tradition to be continued, I hope! (see later).

Game 1

News for you lot, is that last years finalists (for the final BERSERK wooden spoon) are playing in the first round. Yep, me and Ian Pollard are to face off in the first round (I'm glad I fancy women, he's bloody ugly!). Let's see if Ian can lose this time! The scenario was 'SP3 Duel At Reuler' with Ian taking those trespassers, the Americans. Of note was the following:- 1) My first shot at one of Ian's units (a ½ sqd) eliminated it, those MG's are useful for something. 2) Ian's first shot at me went as follows- I moved my motion PzIV into the LOS of his in-motion Sherman, he takes the shot needing a 6, which he gets (wdr 4, cdr 1) and for the effect DR, he promptly rolls a 12 (a Dud). 3) The one and only PAATC was a 12, rolled by Ian, nice work, boy. And finally 4) My PzIV, with 8-1AL, broke the 75L, and first chance, it repaired. On Turn 3, Ian showed his un-sportsmen like dice-rolling, by destroying my 3 remaining Panzers, with 3 consecutive kills (One by Bazooka, one by M10, and the other by M4), therefore, winning the game, and losing the chance to be the first 'HEROES Wooden Spoon holder. Overall, a good game, played the way I like them, not serious in the slightest. 0-1.

Game 2

The next person to try and beat the 'Gun-Pit' is Scottish *ASL* player, Tony Gibson, a first-timer on the UK tourney scene. We both chose to play 'OAF4 Firefight Before Breakfast', with me as the SS. Started off a bit slow, but things did happen. Turn 1, and I managed to take some of his guys prisoner (which Tony slowly killed off, obviously doesn't like his own guys surrendering!). Also on Turn 1, he got a CH with one of his M4(105)'s, 36FP - 3DRM, not nice on the receiving end, killing a 658 sqd,(also doing it on Turn 5, killing an 8-1 and 658 Fanatic SS Sqd, bastard!). On Turn 2, one of my Sd 251/1's, with 658 + LMG, was Shocked by a MMG, but turned out to be OK after being CC'ed. Also on Turn 2, his M10 malf it's MA. Turn 3, and a 348 goes Berserk, which one of his 667's surrenders to. They are promptly eliminated by Mr Berserker, who then goes back to normal, but No Quarter has now been declared by Hitler's finest. Turn 4, and I

A bemused Shaun Carter0 (left) involved in play-testing with your editor.

killed his 9-1 when he CC'ed my unloaded Sd 251/1. Turn 5, and I managed to create a 8-1 from a fanatic 658 in CC with a 346. My 9-1/658 got ATMM, and killed one of his M4(105). It all ended on the last CC, with him needing to kill my 9-1/658 boys, he got ambush. A 7 was needed, he rolled an 8. that's it , game over, and your hero wins a close contest. 1-1.

Saturday
Game 3

Battle recommences, with another opponent, this time it's Wayne Baumber (winner of the last prize at IF2003). The war has now gone to the Far East, and it's time for 'Johnny Ghurkha' to get his little knife (the world famous 'kukri') out, and put it to use. Well, on 'Rout Pak 2 The Glory Road', Wayne was the Ghurkhas and I was from Japan. This scenario was not one of my finest efforts at counting, as I had too little Firepower points south of the stream. In Turn 1, I managed to get one of my tanks blown-up on his mines, that basically was all that had happened on Turn 1. Turn 2 was just as exciting as well, my leader's tank promptly got itself immobilised while leaving the bamboo. Turn 3 was a bit more 'keep awake' mode, my other tank managed to get itself immobilised in Close Combat, while still in the stream. Turn 4, and now we have the excitement levels rising, with my 447 stuck on the wire, going (forgive me, Trev) berserk, having rolled a 2 on a MC. My 9-1 Ldr/3x 447 Platoon, while moving singly along the stream (I like getting wet, Don't), manages to get a complete squad of 14 soldiers killed (KIA), the other 2 squads did not do much better, being reduced. The 9-1

then decided to leave those un-heroic sons-of-Nippon behind, and proceeded though that bullet swept area as though nothing was there. Those two Reduced squads, in the DFPh went in different directions, one reduced further to a ½ sqd, and the other decided to improve themselves, now giving my 9-1 a Platoon consisting of a 348 Red sqd and a 137 ½ sqd. Wayne's blokes in the Foxhole with the Lt. Mtr broke, and the AT gun's crew died. Turn 5 sees Wayne killing my berserk guys in Close Combat, and yours truly, being the nice, kind generous person that I am, now decides to give-in (not enough FP on the south side of the stream, or enough of his blokes left to kill, most had run off).1-2.

Game 4

Sees me paired with Chris Milne,

another new guy to the UK tourney scene, and we play the first Journal scenario; 'J1 Urban Guerrillas', with me as the good communist. This game started as a disaster for your hero, with me rolling 8, yes 8, boxcars in the first turn (7 in my part of the turn!). 3 of them Morale Checks, one after the other, not a very good start to this Vienna battle! I think 3 of the others were MC's, as well. The only good to come out of this turn, was that Chris also rolled a boxcars, malfunctioning his Panther's MA, some consolation I suppose.

Turn 2, and things do look better (they couldn't be any worse!), I sent a T.34/85 on a fact finding mission to the other side of the canal (I like water!), he found Chris's 88L Flak, which missed him, and Malf, later in the game to be broken completely. I send another T.34 to join the marauding one, but he gets toasted by the Psk. Two SS ½ sqds were a right royal pain, and just would not break, blocking my glorious advance for Comrade Stalin. I think my 3rd T.34 malf his MA in this turn, as well. Turn 3, and on come the heavy mob, 2x JS2m's and 5x 628's, from the western part of Vienna. Don't achieve much this turn, but later they did, killing some of those Fascist pigs. Main thing of note this turn was that in the Nazis Rally Phase, I managed to lose a ½ sqd on another boxcars, while Chris rolls a snakes and gets a 8-1 Ldr, life just isn't fair for us soldiers from Mother Russia!

Turn 4, and one of the JS2m's gets his first kill, taking out the PzIVJ while the cowardly pig was half-hiding behind a wall, burning it, that will teach him! Continuing with my bad luck, Chris rolls another snakes, while rallying a 348, and gets a bloody hero! The Partisan help proved not much use (the 7-0 and 127 generated so far, were both killed

Ulric Schwela (left) giving given a lesson in playing ASL *in the final against Toby Pilling.*

in CC), but, I did get to kill that bloody hero and his Bodyguards (the 348) in a CC. Turn 5 proceeds not quite as planned, with me losing a 447 in CC, while he got another 8-1 Ldr to go with the murdering 348. That JS2m carries on doing good work by killing Mr AL and his Panther, while they were trying to reverse out of my way (trying to do the armour equivalent of sulking, that will teach them!). That crew gets the 'Order Of Lenin' for good shooting (plus a year's supply of Kremlin-standard vodka!). By this time, my last T.34 has left the field of battle with a poorly gun, the one by the 88L got toasted by a 'faust, and now burns away quite happily. Unfortunately, the other JS2m goes and gets himself a malf MA.

Turn 6, and the crew of the above mentioned JS2m decide, after drinking some Vodka in celebration of getting their pop gun working again, to go on a tour of the city. Crossing the bridge, they are reminded of the war by the sight of their dead friends T.34 burning away. Turning right after the bridge, they pass a house, and guess what, some horrible SS blokes come out and blow them up with their little 'fausties. Now deciding that I have no chance at all off winning, I concede the game.1-3. Chris said that after my atrocious luck on turn 1, I did far better than he thought I would. Just goes to show you, don't give up after a shit turn. Press on and see what comes your way, though I was unlucky this time, next time I just might get lucky.

Sunday
Game 5

Last game of the tournament, and it sees me pitted against Mike Standbridge in SP22 'Tod's Last Stand', with me on the attack again, as the boys from the Reeperbahn. I set up my HIP guys to try and catch Mike out, which they pretty much did. On Turn 1, Mike's ATR, in his Carrier, missed with it's first shot, so he IF'ed at the mobile piece of Krupp steel. After getting the required hit, he needed a 6 (5 to kill). What does Mike roll? A 7. Lo and behold, here comes Superman and his tank killing ATR. He does no better, hitting me but not killing me.

Turn 2, and out comes Mr 10-2 with a 247/LMG, who rolls a snakes, giving him a 2KIA, wasted as there is only a 467 in there. First boxcars goes to Mike on a NMC (457 to 237). A 1MC on the guys with the MMG, an 11 rolled and the 247 manning it drops to a 237. More bad luck for Mike when he Final Fired a 457, rolling boxcars and , because of Ammo Shortage, goes to being a 447. His 51 mtr goes and breaks my 8-1/467/LMG, with

the 467 now a 447. The Carrier-borne ATR kills one of my tanks with a shot in the backside (ouch! That hurt). His 9-1/237 Final Fire on my next-door 247 with a k/1, dead for the Fuhrer. This wakes up my Sniper, who kills the Hero. In CC, my 467 dies at the hands of his Pinned 447, he rolled a slippery snakes.

Turn 3, and one of my LMG's has some target practice, killing the Carrier. Out comes the fire-group, with a 16+1 attack on his 9-1/237 team, rolling a lovely 4. 9-1 ELR'ed and the ½ sqd broken. Turn 4, and now Mike decides to retreat to the VC area (in my view, a bit late). First off, the mtr fires Smoke into hex 43M6, but that was his last smoke round. I reveal my 8-0/467 HIPsters, breaking the 247/LMG boys, then reveal the 247 HIPsters, pinning the 10-2/457/MMG combo after Final Firing. A British 247 got himself in a mess, by going ahead and getting himself killed for Failure to Rout (nowhere to go, old chap). Turn 5, and Mike is hoping to snatch Victory from the jaws of Defeat. Lady Luck is not smiling on the BEF today, as his only MMC with any chance of reaching the VC buildings is pinned by my 9-1/467/LMG team. Mike then concedes, giving me an overall score of 2-3.

The winners are as follows:-
Champion - guess who? Toby Pilling. All he gets is a certificate though (*actually he got £75 as well – Pete*). Well done.
Wooden Spoon - Nigel Blair. He receives an *ASL* Starters Kit.
Snakes - Toby Pilling. He receives the £2 prize. That's in addition to the certificate mentioned above.
Boxcars - Paul Case. Yes, the writer of

this piece gets a prize. With a total of 15 boxcars, I think I deserve a prize!! As mentioned at the start, I receive £12. Along with a £2 coin, I got a Scottish £10 note, which was promptly exchanged at the bar.

After the prizes were given, everyone who was leaving on the Sunday went. This left Pete Phillipps, Nigel Blair, Bill Roberts and me. As Pete and I were going to the pub to watch the Arsenal / Manchester United match on their giant screen, both Nigel and Bill went as well. We even got to sit down and watch the game, as two blokes (obviously not footie fans) got up and left. It was a cracking game, end to end, finishing 1-1, giving Arsenal the record of most games in a season without defeat in the league. After having another beer, we went to a different pub which served FOOD. I got the blame for our slight detour, but we got there, and had a decent meal.

Now, I know this is going to shock the masses, but your editor, the Hippy, even managed to nearly fall asleep in the Pub. Now, how can he do that? (*Coz I'd been out clubbing 'til 2 in the morning Friday and Saturday!! – Pete*) Shame on you, Pete!! The usual 'last night game' with your editor did not materialise, due to the above mentioned dozing-off incident. IF2004 here I come!

Monday

Breakfast at 0900hrs, more like 0845hrs, then it was time to leave Blackpool for another year.

In closing, I would like to thank Pete, Dominic McGrath and Derek Tocher for this

Paul Case takes a break from playing ASL *to do something he is good at - write for* VFTT*!*

years event, to Roland and his staff for the use (and abuse!) of the hotel, to my opponents, and to everyone else who turned up.

I shall repeat what I keep saying, get off your asses and get to a tourney. Show your support for our idiotic past-time, and make new friends, you may even get a laugh or two (Guaranteed to if you play me!). The whole idea is to get the British *ASL* scene up to where the Yanks have theirs, and that needs your help. So, you closet *ASL* players, join in the fun at Bournemouth in October. You could meet a big named Yankie *ASL* player there. That's the rumour, anyway!!!

Andy Ashton turned up with his gaming circus on Saturday, and your hero decided to exchanged some money for important supplies (*ASL Journal 5*, *Schwerpunkt 9* and *Skirmisher 2* [yes folks, I do play other games, and just like *ASL*, not very well]).

See you at IF, and if you play me, you'll get a mention in my report for *VFTT*. I have to get opponents some how!!!

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TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Here are the individual win/loss records for the tournament

POS.	PLAYER	P	W	L	CRUS
1	Toby Pilling	5	5	0	3040.0
2	Russell Gough	5	4	1	3143.8
3	David Schofield	5	4	1	3030.0
4	Martin Vicca	5	3	2	3193.3
5	Michael Davies	5	3	2	3046.7
6	Andy McMaster	5	3	2	2990.0
7	Ulric Schwela	5	3	2	2838.3
8	Brian Hooper	5	3	2	2808.3
9	Paul Legg	5	3	2	2713.3
10	Ian Percy	5	3	2	2708.3
11	Wayne Baumber	5	3	2	2558.3
12	Aaron Sibley	5	2	3	3120.0
13	Malcolm Hatfield	5	2	3	3057.5
14	Mark Warren	5	2	3	3012.5
15	Paul Kettlewell	5	2	3	2865.0
16	Paul Case	5	2	3	2807.5
17	Dominic McGrath	5	2	3	2807.5
18	Ian Pollard	5	2	3	2652.5
19	Ian Daglish	5	1	4	3025.0
20	Mike Standbridge	5	1	4	2685.0
21	Nigel Blair	5	0	5	No Wins
22	Steve Cook	4	3	1	2621.7
23	Chris Milne	4	2	2	2757.5
24	Tony Gibson	4	1	3	2790.0
25	William Roberts	4	1	3	2685.0
26	Graham Smith	4	0	4	No Wins
27	Neil Stevens	3	3	0	2833.3
28	Gary Lock	2	2	0	2742.5
29	Nigel Ashcroft	2	1	1	2515.0
30	Oliver Gray	2	0	2	No Wins

The Crus column is the average Crusader Ladder rating of the opponents beaten.

PLAYER RESULTS

Here are the individual win/loss records.

PLAYER	P	W	L	D
Nigel Ashcroft	3	1	2	0
Wayne Baumber	5	3	2	0
Nigel Blair	7	1	6	0
Paul Case	5	2	3	0
Steve Cook	4	3	1	0
Ian Daglish	6	2	4	0
Michael Davies	5	3	2	0
Tony Gibson	4	1	3	0
Russell Gough	6	5	1	0
Oliver Gray	2	0	2	0
Malcolm Hatfield	6	2	4	0
Brian Hooper	5	3	2	0
Paul Kettlewell	5	2	3	0
Paul Legg	5	3	2	0
Gary Lock	2	2	0	0
Dominic McGrath	5	2	3	0
Andy McMaster	6	3	3	0
Chris Milne	5	3	2	0
Ian Percy	6	3	3	0
Pete Phillipps	3	2	1	0
Toby Pilling	5	5	0	0
Ian Pollard	7	2	5	0
William Roberts	4	1	3	0
David Schofield	6	5	1	0
Ulric Schwela	6	4	2	0
Aaron Sibley	7	4	3	0
Graham Smith	4	0	4	0
Mike Standbridge	6	1	5	0
Neil Stevens	4	3	1	0
Martin Vicca	7	4	3	0
Mark Warren	5	2	3	0

THE SCENARIOS

Here is the table of Scenario Win/Loss records - remember draws are used in the tournament rules:

Scenario	Allied	Axis	Draw
A59 Death at Carentan (ATL2 redone)	3	4	0
A93 Faugh A'Ballagh	3	1	0
AP13 Shielding Moscow	0	1	0
CH6 Armored Probe	2	1	0
J1 Urban Guerillas	3	6	0
J41 By Ourselves	1	0	0
J59 Friday The 13th	1	0	0
J86 Frontal Assault	1	0	0
J88 Escape to Wiltz	1	0	0
NQNG1 Fuhrerbefehl	0	2	0
NQNG5 Chateau Nebelwerfer	0	1	0
OA2 Skirmish In Te Snow	1	0	0
OAF4 Firefight Before Breakfast	2	1	0
RP2 The Glory Road	2	2	0
S1 Retaking Vierville	1	0	0
S2 War Of The Rats	0	1	0
SP10 Bring Up the Boys	1	3	0
SP11 Pomeranian Tigers	3	2	0
SP22 Tod's Last Stand	1	3	0
SP3 Duel at Reuler	4	0	0
SP75 Taurus Pursuant	4	3	0
SP94 Out Of Oder	0	1	0
SP95 Burn Gurkha Burn!	8	1	0
W2 The front In Flames	2	1	0
TOTALS	78	44	34	0

Toby Pilling receives his Championship winnings (left), while Nigel Blair receives the Paul Case Booby Prize for the worse performance of the weekend.

Paul Case collects £12 for rolling the most box cars in a scenario.

The Crusaders Open *ASL* Tournament Ladder

HEROES! 2004 Update
Toby Pilling Marches On!

Derek Tocher

Despite the metamorphosis of BERSERK! into HEROES this year some things don't change - such as the fact that Toby Pilling wins in Blackpool AGAIN!

There have now been 1943 games played since the first INTENSIVE FIRE in 1995 which means the tenth anniversary INTENSIVE FIRE in October 2004 will see the 2000 games barrier broken (*maybe we should have a little prize for the players who post the 2000th game? – Pete*). For the first time we have players who have played more than 100 games in UK tournaments (Brian Hooper and Dave Schofield) There are now 68 players who have played 20+ games, 32 who have played 40+, 16 who have played 60+, and 7 who have played 80+ games. 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 inaugural HEROES tournament. He did however only gain 45 Crusaders Ladder points in the process leaving him frustratingly on 3995 points. The biggest points loss of the weekend was displayed by Nigel Blair who dropped a whopping 365 points, though a single win did prevent him picking up the tail-end Charlie prize. Other big losers over the weekend were Ian Daglish (-290 pts), Graeme Smith (-210 pts) and Mike Standbridge (-210 pts). Mike's loss combined with two wins by Paul Case lifts Paul of the bottom of the list for almost the first time in living memory and Mike replaces him at the foot of the table. Wayne Baumber was a big winner over the weekend, having previously been a big loser at INTENSIVE FIRE '03, gaining 215 points, though this still leaves him within twenty places of the foot of the table. However the biggest gain of the weekend went to Russell Gough who notched up 365 points and put himself in 14th place. Of the tournament newbies present the best performance was shown by Martin Vicca whose 4-2 winning record notched up 190 points and sees him enter the ladder in 43rd place.

Without further ado here is the ladder as of 20 April 2004.

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Rank	Player	Played	W—D—L	Points
1	Toby Pilling	65	58—2—5	3995
2	Steve Thomas	42	32—1—9	3755
3	Simon Strevens	73	47—1—24	3670
4	Mike Rudd	38	32—1—5	3660
5	Fermin Retamero	13	11—0—2	3650
6	Michael Hastrup-Leth	45	31—1—13	3615
7	Derek Tocher	93	68—2—22	3595
8	Aaron Cleavin	6	6—0—0	3565
9=	Peter Bennett	14	12—1—1	3560
9=	Bjarne Marell	36	26—0—10	3560
11	Dave Schofield	101	70—0—31	3530
12	Carl Sizmur	16	11—0—5	3515
13	Jes Touvdal	24	16—0—8	3475
14	Russell Gough	61	34—4—23	3430
15	Lars Klysner	11	8—0—3	3400
16=	Trevor Edwards	74	38—1—35	3380
16=	David Tye	39	18—0—21	3380
18	Ran Shiloah	11	7—0—4	3370
19	Bernt Ribom	5	5—0—0	3350
20	Phil Draper	20	13—1—6	3320
21=	Joe Arthur	21	13—0—8	3305
21=	Dominic Mcgrath	97	49—2—42	3305
23	Frank Tinschert	15	10—0—5	3295
24=	Philippe Leonard	9	7—1—1	3285
24=	Steve Linton	11	8—0—3	3285
26=	Will Fleming	3	3—0—0	3280
26=	Ralf Krusat	6	5—0—1	3280
26=	Alan Smee	4	4—0—0	3280
29=	Dave Booth	7	5—0—2	3270
29=	Peter Struijf	5	4—0—1	3270
31	Daniel Kalman	11	8—0—3	3245
32	Aaron Sibley	50	30—0—20	3240
33=	Daniel Batey	4	4—0—0	3235
33=	Paul Saunders	19	10—0—9	3235
35	Ray Woloszyn	31	18—1—12	3225
36	Christain Koppmeyer	15	8—0—7	3220
37	Tom Slizewski	5	4—0—1	3215
38=	Michael Davies	21	14—0—12	3210
38=	Klaus Malmstrom	4	3—1—0	3210
38=	Nils-Gunner Nilsson	5	4—0—1	3210
38=	Yves Tielemans	3	3—0—0	3210
42	Francois Boudrenghien	3	3—0—0	3205
43=	Jean Devaux	3	3—0—0	3190
43=	Martin Vicca	6	4—0—2	3190
45	Armin Deppe	13	7—1—5	3185
46=	Bill Durrant	5	4—0—1	3180
46=	Bob Eburne	48	27—0—21	3180
48=	Steve Crowley	47	21—1—25	3175
48=	Jonathan Pickles	8	5—0—3	3175
50=	Grant Pettit	7	4—1—2	3170
50=	Bruno Tielemans	3	3—0—0	3170
52=	Rodney Callen	6	4—0—2	3160
52=	Mel Falk	9	5—0—4	3160
54	Jeremy Copley	9	6—0—3	3150
55	Nick Edelsten	22	14—1—7	3145
56=	Keith Bristow	42	24—1—17	3135
56=	Paul Haesler	10	4—2—4	3135
56=	Paul O'donald	72	44—1—27	3135
56=	Frenk Van Der Mey	4	3—0—1	3135
60	Chris Courtier	13	7—2—4	3130
61	Paul Sanderson	41	21—0—20	3125
62=	Lee Brimmicombe-Wood	12	8—0—4	3120
62=	Stephen Burleigh	14	6—1—7	3120
62=	William Hanson	19	11—0—7	3120
62=	Paul Ryde-Weller	10	5—1—4	3120
66=	Georges Tournemire	3	2—1—0	3115
66=	Mark Walley	4	3—0—1	3115
68=	Luis Calcada	43	21—1—21	3110
68=	Luc Schonkerren	5	3—0—2	3110
70=	Andrew Dando	44	23—2—19	3105
70=	Simon Morris	11	6—0—5	3105
70=	Stewart Thain	15	8—0—7	3105
73	Russ Curry	6	4—0—2	3100
74=	Nigel Brown	26	11—0—15	3095
74=	Mikael Siemsen	6	3—0—3	3095

Rank	Name				Rank	Name			
76=	Kevin Beard	13	9—1—3	3090	148=	Jakob Norgaard	6	1—1—4	2885
76=	Steve Cook	4	3—0—1	3090	148=	Bernard Savage	21	9—1—11	2885
76=	Gary Lock	2	2—0—0	3090	148=	Neil Stevens	57	23—2—32	2885
76=	Iain Mackay	43	22—0—21	3090	151	Sam Belcher	8	3—0—5	2880
76=	Peter Michels	3	2—0—1	3090	152	David Kalman	5	2—0—3	2870
81	Paulo Alessi	6	4-0-2	3085	153=	Paul Kettlewell	60	25—0—35	2860
82	Dirk Beijaard	5	3—0—2	3080	153=	Peter Ladwein	21	9—0—12	2860
83=	Robin Langston	9	4—2—3	3075	153=	Pete Phillipps	84	36—0—48	2860
83=	Chris Milne	5	3—0—2	3075	153=	Lutz Pietschker	4	1—0—3	2860
85=	Jean-Luc Baas	3	2—0—1	3070	153=	Neil Piggot	4	1—0—3	2860
85=	Serge Bettencourt	3	2—0—1	3070	158	Nick Angelopoulos	5	1—0—4	2850
85=	Robert Schaaf	3	2—0—1	3070	159	Bill Eaton	21	8—3—10	2840
88=	Alexander Rousse-Lacordaire	4	2—1—1	3065	160	Dave Otway	5	1—0—4	2835
88=	Bob Runnicles	3	2—0—1	3065	161	Sam Prior	12	4—0—8	2830
90	Patrik Manlig	16	9—0—7	3060	162=	Ian Daglish	90	43—1—46	2825
91	Andy Mcmaster	6	3—0—3	3055	162=	Mike Daniel	5	2—0—3	2825
92=	Shaun Carter	61	27—1—33	3050	164=	Mark Chapman	6	2—0—4	2820
92=	Stefan Jacobi	11	5—0—6	3050	164=	Paul Legg	67	25—1—41	2820
92=	Ben Jones	39	17—0—22	3050	166	Michael Robertson	4	1—0—3	2810
92=	Bo Siemsen	4	2—0—2	3050	167	Clive Haden	5	2—0—3	2800
96=	Scott Greenman	8	3—1—4	3045	168=	Alistair Fairbairn	3	0—0—3	2790
96=	Ulrich Schwela	40	17—1—22	3045	168=	Nick Ranson	5	1—0—4	2790
98	Steve Pleva	6	3—0—3	3035	168=	Nick Sionskyj	8	3—0—5	2790
99=	Daniele Dal Bello	4	1-0-3	3025	171	Chris Littlejohn	14	3—2—9	2780
99=	Peter Hofland	4	2—0—2	3025	172	Graham Worsfold	3	0—0—3	2775
101=	Vincent Kamer	4	2—0—2	3015	173=	Lee Bray	14	3—0—11	2770
101=	Ian Percy	6	3—1—2	3015	173=	Richard Kirby	7	2—0—5	2770
103=	Colin Graham	5	3—0—2	3010	175	Bill Hensby	31	10—0—21	2765
103=	Andrew Saunders	33	15—1—17	3010	176=	Andrew Hershey	10	4—0—6	2760
103=	Mark Warren	10	6—0—4	3010	176=	Flemming Scott-Christensen	6	1—0—5	2760
106=	Nick Brown	3	1—1—1	3000	178	James Crosfield	11	5—0—6	2755
106=	Steve Grainger	8	4—0—4	3000	179	Peter Neale	3	0—0—3	2750
106=	Martin Hubley	4	3—0—1	3000	180=	Burnham Fox	23	10—0—13	2740
106=	Ian Kenney	4	2—0—2	3000	180=	Tony Gibson	5	1—0—4	2740
106=	Phil Nobo	11	6—0—5	3000	180=	Tim Macaire	38	17—0—21	2740
106=	Duncan Spencer	4	2—0—2	3000	183=	Rupert Featherby	3	0—0—3	2735
112=	Michael Essex	23	12—0—11	2995	183=	Nick Quinn	14	5—0—9	2735
112=	Ivor Gardiner	2	1—0—1	2995	185=	Gareth Evans	4	0—0—4	2730
112=	Gilles Hakim	5	2—0—3	2995	185=	Oliver Gray	5	1—0—4	2730
115	Kevin Croskery	3	2—0—1	2990	187=	Steve Cocks	4	0—0—4	2720
116	Eric Baker	2	1—0—1	2985	187=	Marc Horton	6	1—0—5	2720
117=	David Farr	4	2—0—2	2980	189	Chris Netherton	20	7—2—11	2715
117=	Malcolm Rutledge	3	1—0—2	2980	190	Brian Hooper	102	32—1—69	2710
119	Sergio Puzziello	5	1—0—4	2975	191	Simon Hoare	4	0—0—4	2690
120	Simon Croome	29	15—0—14	2970	192	Jeff Howarden	7	2—0—5	2685
121	Michael Maus	7	3—0—4	2955	193	Christain Speis	5	1—0—4	2680
122=	Raurigh Dale	19	10—0—9	2945	194=	Jackie Eves	22	7—0—15	2675
122=	Laurent Forest	3	0—0—3	2945	194=	William Roberts	7	0—0—6	2675
122=	Alex Ganna	2	0—1—1	2945	196	Nigel Blair	30	12—0—18	2660
122=	David Murry	5	2—1—2	2945	197	Pedro Barradas	7	1—0—6	2655
122=	Pedro Ramis	6	3—0—3	2945	198	Wayne Baumber	38	16—0—22	2645
127=	Paulo Ferreira	9	4—0—5	2940	199	Malcolm Hatfield	33	1—0—22	2640
127=	Bob Nugent	3	2—0—1	2940	200	Nick Carter	6	1—0—5	2635
127=	Jon Williams	14	6—0—8	2940	201	Adrian Catchpole	11	2—0—9	2625
130=	Derek Briscoe	1	0—0—1	2935	202=	Neil Brunger	20	8—0—12	2615
130=	Martin Bryan	19	8—0—11	2935	202=	Arthur Garlick	21	2—5—14	2615
130=	Martin Mayers	15	5—0—10	2935	204	Bryan Brinkman	9	1—0—8	2610
133=	Andrea Marchino	1	0—0—1	2930	205	Ian Pollard	64	25—0—39	2590
133=	Andy Price	3	1—0—2	2930	206	John Fletcher	6	0—0—6	2585
135=	Paul Boyle	5	2—0—3	2925	207	Chris Ager	12	3—0—9	2575
135=	John Sharp	8	3—0—5	2925	208=	Nigel Ashcroft	49	18—1—30	2570
137=	Steve Allen	6	1—1—4	2920	208=	Justin Key	40	14—1—24	2570
137=	Tim Collier	17	7—0—10	2920	210	Michael Rhodes	43	10—0—33	2545
139	Edo Giaroni	3	1—0—2	2915	211	Paul Case	86	21—1—64	2490
140=	Joel Berridge	3	1—0—2	2910	212	Graham Smith	24	7—0—17	2475
140=	Tim Bunce	14	7—0—7	2910	213	Roger Cook	28	8—2—18	2460
140=	Brian Martuzas	5	2—0—3	2910	214	David Ramsey	9	1—0—8	2435
140=	Andy Smith	4	0—0—4	2910	215	John Kennedy	24	5—0—19	2415
144=	Patrick Dale	22	8—1—13	2905	216	Mike Stanbridge	42	11—1—30	2405
144=	Phil Ward	5	2—0—3	2905					
146	Josh Kalman	10	5—0—5	2900					
147	Martin Kristensen	6	2—0—4	2895					

A Random Selection Reminder

Bob Smith

One of the rules which I regularly failed to apply as a newbie is Random Selection (A.9). It's fairly easy to remember to use RS when resolving a K/# or #KIA result on the (I)IFT, but there are many other instances in which RS applies. You may save yourself some heartache by remembering to use random selection when a group of units must suffer some effect, rather than affecting the whole group of units. I have attempted to list as many of the uses of Random Selection as I could below, along with any special rules which may apply. If I have neglected some cases or made mistakes, please let me know. My thanks to Patrik Manlig for suggesting some of the uses listed.

Fire Attacks

Use RS to select victims of #KIA (A7.301). Although the rules are not explicit on how to do this, a single RS dr is made for each unit. The units with the highest n dr's are affected, where n is the number of units to be KIA'd. More than n units may be affected if there is a tie for the nth highest RS dr. Use RS to select which units are reduced by a K/# result (A7.302). Note that when a squad is chosen by RS and reduced, the resulting HS must take the #MC. However, if an SMC is selected by RS and survives the wound severity check, it does not take the following #MC.

Critical Hits

When a CH (C3.74) is scored against multiple units, RS is used to determine which units are affected by the CH. If the attack scoring a CH affects more than one location, RS is used to determine which location is affected.

Cowering

When a Fire Group cowers (A7.9) by rolling doubles on an (I)IFT or To Hit attack, RS is used to determine which units cower. If a unit cowers it and all of its SW are marked with Final Fire/Prep Fire as appropriate. Units immune from cowering (SMC, Finnish, berserk, heroic, etc.) are not included in the RS process.

Malfunction

If multiple weapons malfunction (A9.71) while in a FG in which the IFT DR exceeds the B#/X#s of multiple SW, use RS to determine which SW are malfunctioned or eliminated.

Ammunition Shortage

When a FG suffering Ammunition Shortage (A19.131) rolls boxcars, use RS to pick who is replaced. Note that only MMCs are affected and selected units which can not reduce are broken. Units which roll boxcars on a To Hit attempt are not reduced.

FPF

Units using Final Protective Fire (A8.31) are subject to both Heat of Battle and Casualty MC results. When a FG uses FPF and rolls either a 2 or 12, RS is used to determine which units are affected. This usage of RS is specified somewhere in Q&A.

Sniper Attack

A non-standard form of RS is used to determine which units in a location are attacked by a sniper (A14.2). Unlike other uses of RS, if multiple units are selected not all are automatically affected. When RS selects multiple units, the sniper may choose which one to attack. For each of the other selected units a new sniper dr is made and resolved. Also, the sniper may choose to bypass the RS roll and instead target the enemy sniper, a vulnerable inherent crew, or an unarmored vehicle.

Revealing Concealment

When a unit must be revealed from a concealed stack (A12.15), roll RS for each "counter" (A.9) under the top "?", including SW and Dummy counters. If a SW is chosen, select the squad possessing it. If a dummy is chosen, remove it and choose the counter associated with the next lower dr in the RS.

Booby Traps

If Booby Traps (B28.9) are activated by a unit taking a task check then RS is used to determine which units in the location suffer Casualty Reduction. Notice as an aside that when Booby Traps are in affect, even units which are immune to pins must roll for Booby Trap activation when subjected to a PTC.

Search Casualties

When units attempt Searching/Mopping Up suffer Search Casualties (A12.154), RS is used to determine which are reduced.

Panzerfausts

When a Panzerfaust (C13.31) is used versus Cavalry/Infantry (C8.31) and attacks multiple units in a location, only units selected by RS are affected. The ATTACKER may bypass the RS and choose to attack an MMC which is Known and manning a SW or Gun.

Platoon Movement

When vehicles are using platoon movement (D14.21) and multiple units become subject to bog a single bog DR is made. If the bog check fails RS is used to determine which units actually bog. The same procedure is used for multiple units in a platoon which are subject to mechanical reliability or stalling.

Vehicular Overstacking

If a hit is scored on an alternate vehicular target due to vehicular overstacking (A5.132) then RS is used to determine which alternate targets are hit. In this case a drm is applied to the RS dr for each vehicle equal to the vehicle size to hit modifier.

There is only one case I can think of in which some people have mistakenly used RS. During Field Promotion (during CC, A18.12), RS is not used. The highest quality MMC is the one that creates the leader.

Ω

INTENSIVE FIRE 2004

29 – 31 October 2004

INTENSIVE FIRE is the UK's longest running tournament dedicated to the play of *Advanced Squad Leader*. 2004 is our tenth anniversary 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-tourneys offer the chance for glory in more specialised fields of warfare. There will also be a Training Camp for inexperienced players.
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 (£35 per night for a single room or £30 for a double room). Players wishing to stay on Thursday evening should book early as there is Soroptimists conference close by on the same weekend and and rooms may be let out to them. 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, 24 Huggett Close, Leicester, England, LE4 7PY. Telephone (0116) 210 1798 (+44 116 210 1798 from outside the UK) or email if@vftt.co.uk.

The Rats of Hamich

Michael Davies

At INTENSIVE FIRE last year I got hold of the *Melee Pack*, a scenario pack produced by the Southern California *ASL* Club. The pack contains six scenarios each with a cheat sheet outlining the qualities of the vehicles and guns in play. Each scenario features a small graphic of the board or boards in play and full colour art work for the forces involved. The overall effect is very attractive and the scenarios contained are generally good. One, "The Wolves Last Tooth" is a personal favourite, even though I've lost it playing either side! This write up focuses on "The Rats of Hamich" however, as I'm drawn to it as it features a small OB, play is limited to half a board and the big attraction both sides make choices from a variable OB.

The wide range of units available make "The Rats of Hamich" a difficult choice for tournament play and not ideal for a quick friendly game. That said the selection process makes the scenario difficult to analyse and a good choice when facing players who are strong planners.

Common Elements

Both sides are faced with the same victory conditions, terrain and are subject to the same time constraints, the main differences being the forces they can select and the tactics they try to employ.

The mission allows two possible victories. At the game end the Americans win if they Control nine of the ten stone ground level building or rubble hexes in play. Alternatively the Germans win if they Control two or more. As the American this suggests you should aim to capture at least two a turn on average or if you are the Germans limit losses to less than two per turn.

An immediate victory is awarded of both German guns are eliminated. This could happen in several ways, guns malfunctioning and subsequently disabling, gun destruction by fire combat, overrun or after capture or recovery. This should have an impact on play. German players should think very carefully before taking intensive fire shots with the guns, making repair rolls or placing them in harm way. Some offensive action by the guns is needed and it would be a mistake to remove the guns from the German order of battle to limit the risk of their random destruction. Their fire strength is needed. The sudden death victory condition will very

occasionally support a desperate or determined American attack against the guns. Both sides should be aware of this possibility.

Board 42 is one of my favourite boards. It could be described as a sprawling village next to a large woods. Special rules transform Orchards into Shellholes removing line of sight hindrances, offset by +1 TEM terrain for troops. With Mud in effect movement is slowed for all units, vehicles can even bog. Entrenching is more difficult and HE attacks in open ground are modified by a +1 TEM . It is harder for fires to spread.

About half of all the buildings in play will be rubbled under SSR3. With the rubbling of buildings being controlled by a dr there is scope for some variation . Intact buildings have cellars. A cellar provides a strong position for defence, are treated as fortified so hard to capture and can trap tanks entering a building hex. Rubble removes the cellar location, increases movement costs and creates a half level hindrance. The latter is important if sighting to or from the C3 Hill area.

Both players should assess the approaches to the village. The American attack can come from the east or southern edges. In the east entry south on or south of P5 is moving through woods only the edge of which are visible to the defenders. A fast(ish) way west is along the K8 to P8 Path. North of the woods, entry is helped greatly by the hedge from L1 to M4, which covers advance over open ground. The Pond in M1 is a bit of a problem for the attacker limiting any entering units to forming a skirmish line in M2, N2 and N3, all hexes crying out for bore sighting! This line of approach gets very nasty if several buildings are rubbled to create a line of sight to the eastern edge from the hill. Several German fortifications are in play but will be dealt with later.

Game duration is limited to four and a half turns, which is tough on the Americans as movement costs during mud are greater. Time is always neutral but there is slightly more onus on the Americans to drive forward at speed. Any US troops entering from the Southern Board edge are closer to the German back field offset against their late arrival.

American OB Selection

Selecting your OB requires three

choices, specifically a force bonus, four infantry platoons and finally one armour group. The infantry choice provides the backbone to your attack and is the most important. You are free to pick four out of six platoons. Start by backing your own preferences; if you enjoy flamethrowers and .50 HMGs platoons five and six are a sweet choice. If you can pick your entire OB that way you can be confident you are fighting with the troops you are most comfortable with.

If you want to be more scientific looking at points values can help. A 6-6-6 squad is worth eleven points, a 6-6-7 fourteen, and a crew just seven points. This would make picking the 4th and 5th Platoons preferable as they contain elite squads, followed by the 1st Platoon and a choice between the 2nd and 3rd. This method gives no value to the support weapons and must under value the Heavy Weapons Platoon.

My own choice would probably be the 4th and 5th Platoons to pick up the elite squads, demolition charges and flamethrower, plus the 3rd Platoon for the Bazooka, backed up by either of the MMG platoons or more likely the Heavy Weapons Platoon for the crews and Browning .50. Although this is an important chunk of your troops the game will not be over before you start just because you picked one platoon in preference to another.

If the balance is in play the 1st and 2nd Platoon are stronger, building a case for picking both of them plus two others. It seems a bit crazy to ask for the balance then pick something else!

Next up choose your armour group. If you have taken the flamethrower or bazooka platoons or both you already have some anti tank capability. At short range all platoons have close combat to fight armour and the demolition charges can also ice a tank or assault gun. If your infantry anti tank assets are weak the armour group containing the M4A3 (76)W and M10GMC TD is an excellent choice. If you want a mix of potent anti tank weaponry and hard hitting main armament well the group with the M4A3 (105) and m10 GMC gives it in spades. For a balanced tank force that is effective against a wide range of units two M4A3s is just a bit weaker against armour, partially offset by multiple hits on doubles. The last choice to consider is the three M5A1 light tanks. The most obvious gains are the extra vehicle,

respectable odds of Canister rounds, small target size and speed. Against guns the M5A1s low armour offers little protection if hit. Struck by a Panzerfaust or Panzerschreck a burning wreck is the likely consequence, the only defences are small target size, motion and fate.

Looking at points a M5A1 is worth forty six, M4A3(105) seventy three, M4A3 seventy, M4A3(76)W seventy seven and an M10 GMC sixty five. On points alone the M4A3 (76)W and M10 GMC team are worth the most points, the three light tanks the least. There isn't much in it though!

If really stuck the M4A3s are a solid choice, personally I like the M10 GMC and M4A3 (105) mainly for the big gun. Crying shame you can't get canister for the 105mm in ETO games.

The last choice is a force bonus, between battle hardening a leader, two squads or adding an 8-1 Armour Leader. If you like the idea of a 9-2, bumping the 8-1 up to a 9-1 or improving the 8-0 Leader go for it. A 9-2 directing the Browning HMG has an appeal with potential for great destruction.

Battle Hardening a couple of squads is an alternative. There is scope to make your entire infantry force elite. The points picture is a little confused. Battle hardening a 6-6-6 squad increases points value from eleven to fourteen, a 2-2-7 becomes a 2-2-8 for a one point gain, and an elite 6-6-7 goes up from fourteen to about sixteen points. I do think the battle hardening option is the best selection, I'd favour hardening first line squads but appreciate the strength of Fanatic elite squads with demolition charges and/or a flame-thrower.

An Armour Leader is worthwhile if tanks' are key to your plans. A worrying thought is losing an AFV and Armour Leader early in the game. Unless you gain some-thing when this happens you are down one third to one half of your armour and your force bonus.

Two parting thoughts. Remember to roll for Gyrostabilisers, they really are neat. A moving Tank is harder to hit and if your return fire is better you gain another tactical option. More important read the relevant Chapter H notes, read the chapter E notes on Mud, and all the rules for special ammunition. if pressed for time just read the notes for the vehicles you select, if you can look at the notes for German Vehicles and guns they are useful.

German OB Selection and Set Up

Before selecting your forces you make a die roll for every building hex. This will almost certainly result in about five or six rubbled buildings, occasionally a few more, or a few less. In most cases an intact building is more useful for you. There are exceptions. There is some gain from outlying buildings like J7, B7 or J6 being rubbled as they slow movement of both infantry and tanks moving through them or trying to bypass those locations. Rubble is important for line of sight. If say D5 collapses a unit in hill hex D3 can see all the way to the D9 woods. If F3 goes, hill hexes are able to engage units in the east more easily. Given there are several hundred possible rubble configurations we can't discuss them all but keep in mind rubble effects both line of sight and movement.

Set up always requires some assessment of enemy strength and intentions. Variable OB presents choices to the Americans which you cannot predict with certainty. That said you know he must have three Leaders, eleven or twelve squad equivalents and two or three AFVs. ELR of four is fixed and rather high for US units. One optional force bonus is Battle Hardening of two platoons. The Americans may choose a force of twelve elite squads, or go for up to six Fanatic elite squads plus six 1st line ones. The mix of available sup-port weapons is impressive, you can reasonably expect to be attacked by two or more MGs, and probably a flamethrower, bazooka or pair of demolition charges. Every American squad has a range of six which is equal to your own and an inherent fire power of six; helpful in fire combat and very deadly in close combat or melee.

Supporting the US Infantry are a small group of tanks. This can range from three
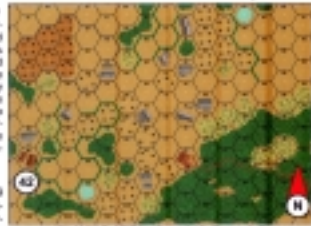
M5, through a pair of Shermans to a Sherman and M10 GMC. These units all have strengths and weaknesses. For example the M5s are strong against infantry, as small moving targets are hard to hit with PF shots. On the downside their armour is thinner than other tanks, their gun is feeble against armour not terribly effective against Infantry in buildings. The other groups also have interesting features. M10 GMCs have high rate of fire and powerful 76L guns, partially offset by open turrets leaving their crews vulnerable to some small arms shots or that sometimes forgotten anti tank weapon the Sniper!

German forces start with some core troops to which other selections are added. Three Leaders and seven squads with three MGs, a demolition charge and a Panzerschreck is a strong foundation. Five of the squads are elite and enjoy ELR 3, plus a SAN of four. All these units can start concealed. Additionally eight concealment counters are provided to add to the fog of war. SSR5 adds a pair of tunnels to your OB. Tunnels are extremely useful. They can connect two tunnel entrances in Woods, Brush, Buildings or Rubble within a distance of three hexes allowing movement with total protection from enemy fire. This allows rapid movement between sectors and creates a safe rout path for broken units. Have a good look at the rules for Tunnels in the *ASLRB* and spend some time finding a use for them. They will not always be crucial to play, accept saving one or more routing units as a tactical success.

Other fortifications should also be selected. Pick between two flavours of Mines, Wire, Trenches and a single fortified building hex. If you think inherent Panzerfausts, the PSK, AFV gun and Ordnance pair are sufficient anti tank protection, the four AT mines may be less favoured. If you are weak against armour after selecting anti personnel weapons go for the AT mines. The Fortified Building will have its fans creating a +4 TEM location highly resistant to enemy attack. Join this up with a Tunnel or two and you have a serious strongpoint. The best counters to a fortified building are the flamethrower and 105mm armed Sherman. With the AT mines and possibly the Wire the woods around D9 can become very tricky for Yank units entering on turn two from the south edge. A concealed half squad or squad, even a dummy flanked by Wire and mines can cause havoc as any enemy troops enter. The obvious downside if the southern flank is ignored the enemy can have an easier time elsewhere. If a woods-based Ambush doesn't appeal the Wire and mines can help elsewhere. A German unit can rout through a Tunnel to avoid Wire or mines, American infantry will

occupy the building but will later need to advance through fortifications. Wire is funny stuff. Its effects against infantry can vary from one turn to the next. Armour can remove it at the first attempt or even get hung up on it! Once a tank is on Wire a fair idea is to change VCA, risking Bog but rolling to remove Wire at the same time. The Trenches are fair gun positions, excellent on the hill if rubble in front of them gives a clear line of sight. Alternatively they can link buildings with other defensive outposts, provide a feeble obstacle to tanks or a hull down tank position. Choose carefully which fortifications you want then incorporate them to your plans.

The German armour group is limited to a single vehicle, either a PzKpfw IVH or IVJ, or a StuG 42 (L). The PzKpfws are pretty similar, the J has a Nahverteidigungswaffe for close defence, the H has a faster turret traverse. My own preference is for the J but there isn't much difference between them. Both cost seventy three points. The StuG 42 (L), is a lower points value of sixty four but a very potent weapon against infantry with H9 HEAT rounds for tanks. An Armour Leader commands the StuG making it at least equivalent in value to the PzKpfw IVs on offer. My gut feeling is the PzKpfw IVH is the best choice but I'd respect anyone choosing either of the other two vehicles.

The AFV machine guns are primarily for use against infantry. To take on armour the PzKpfw IV have powerful 75L guns with a basic to kill of 17, adequate against light tank armour of six factors and just about deadly vs. Sherman or M10 GMC with an 8 AF. A few hits will struggle a bit against the 11 AF on the M4A3 (76)W or (105) but will eventually do the job. If you are an optimist the tank guns boast A3 for 1944 and a to kill of 20 moving us into the realms of burning wrecks.

The StuG has no armour piercing ammunition. The 105 can fire HEAT with a basic To Kill of 15, and H9 depletion. Not strong against armour, the StuG is more suitable to fire at Infantry or Buildings. Rubble is unlikely, but casualties from 20 IFT direct fire attacks are almost inevitable.

Roll for Schuerzen before play starts, a dr of five or less gives you extra protection against HEAT rounds. If you enter woods, buildings or rubble the Schuerzen will be lost. If you are a good

sport remind your opponent to roll for Gyrostabilisers, they give the American Armour more options but make the game more interesting.

In addition to the AFV you are free to select one of three Ordnance pairs. The best selection against infantry targets is a 105 Artillery piece (thirty eight points) and 75* Gun (thirty four points). For anti tank work another 105 is teamed with a 50L ATG (thirty seven points). For mixed targets a 75mm Gun (thirty one points) is teamed with a 75L ATG (forty three points).

On points alone the pair of 75mm guns is the "best" choice but think carefully about your game plan before you decide. The 75mm Artillery piece has a low breakdown number B11 which is worrying in a game which features a sudden death victory triggered by gun destruction.

After careful thought you will have an OB comprising two or three infantry platoons, several fortifications, a pair of guns and a tank or assault gun. Next you need to plan your defences. The objective is to end the game with two or more stone buildings (or Rubble) Controlled and at least one gun on the board. Both guns must be eliminated to trigger an immediate American victory. A captured gun is not strictly speaking eliminated but if the last gun in play is American controlled you should expect its destruction, even against a newbie you should concede! The toughest buildings for the Yanks to take are furthest away from the entry edges. F3, B6, D5 are fairly remote, most of the others are "easily" taken in the time available. Your defence can seek to destroy the Americans as they arrive or trade space and casualties for time seeking to win before the enemy can seize the last building required or destroy the second gun late in the game.

Begin by organising your defence around the leaders, forming two or three platoons maybe with a heavy weapons section. The Heavy Weapons section is a grandiose name for a deployed squad manning the

MMG and Panzerschreck. The PSK team can start in woods or brush or even behind a hedge. A building or Rubble is less favoured but just about practical. If the PSK team is alone and presented with a good shot eat back blast if the risk of damage to an enemy tank is worth a half squad. A similar acceptance of risk applies to PF shots; you can trade half a squad for a Sherman and still win. Of course don't go for backblast when better shots are available!

On turn one consider defending a perimeter with areas of defence around the cluster of buildings around the J2 woods, a little further south around J5 and some forces around H6 and B6/B7. The greatest concentration of force should face units entering from the east. From J3 the L1 to N3 hedge can be covered with rifle and MG fire and bore sighting N2 or N3 may pay off. Some anti tank defence for this sector is needed. A PSK in the J2 woods is sensible. A gun so far forward is a bit of a gamble. If you are confident try it but keep the other gun way back to avoid an early American Victory or a very pressured game after the first gun goes. Keep your armour mobile, admittedly Mud may lead to bog or mire and ultimately immobilisation but the risk is finite. From E4 you are hull down with shots at units south of the hedge. This puts the vehicle in a good position to help defend F3 and D5 later in the game. Armour could start in a building or rubble. J1 is fair, J3 not too bad, the J0 and J2 woods tempting. If an early American attack aims for the buildings around J2 an AFV there makes the combat intense. If you have AT mines use them to cover approaches blind to your guns or out of range of credible PF or PSK shots. AP mines can slow an attack from the south by being placed in say the B9 and E10 woods or make the path through the woods harder to traverse, K7 begs for mines.

On turn one you will get an idea if the Americans will commit some forces to the south. If he hasn't you face an attack from just one direction. Although this will feel difficult it is easier to face than an assault from two directions. If some or most units are attacking from the south that move will need units in front of it. You can shift troops laterally if the sector will be heavily hit. Use tunnels for this if you have them. It not only protects your troops it suggests to the enemy you anticipated the direction of his attack and set up to exploit this.

Spotting the guns is crucial. Too far forward and the Yanks will suffer heavy casualties early in the game but can ice both guns with moderate luck. Too far away from the fighting and the Rats of Hamich will miss their fire power. I'm tempted to site a gun in Building/rubble F3, with another in a trench

maybe on the hill, say C3/D3. Other set ups can work, a gun up front can be very destructive, capable of inflicting enough damage to stall an attack. Two guns in the front line is more of a gamble, hoping for serious casualties as the enemy enters. Don't forget guns can move even in Mud. Trying to repair malfunctioned guns is a gamble perhaps not worth the risk. Intensive fire is another action to carefully consider before taking that extra shot. A bit reckless with the B11 75mm Gun, not so crazy when in danger of immediate loss in any event.

Panzerfausts are valuable short range anti tank weapons. With seven squads in play you qualify for ten which should be enough for two or even three tanks. Shermans are large targets making them easier to hit. At two hex range a moving target is a tough shot if you have moved or are avoiding backblast. Be patient. Wait for tanks to stop or get closer.

Odd things help. Fortifications out of line of sight remain hidden. mine are hidden all the time. One of the mistakes you can make in *ASL* is to forget the location of mines, a fortified building or other hidden unit until after the point it is useful. If you are prone to this place the units on the map either at the start of the game or at a convenient point. This allows a crafty use of mines. A mine counter could be AP mines, AT mines or a mixed field of both. Hidden they are a nasty surprise; placed on board expect them to channel enemy movement.

With a small OB you need to fall back before the enemy can concentrate for an attack on your first line of defence. If you have been lucky or the attack has been poorly executed think about staying to fight one more turn.

The small size of your force is worrying. If you are drawn into a protracted firefight you should "win" or rather kill more units. Unfortunately if you are exchanging favourably say almost two squads for one your defence will collapse when you are reduced to two or three squads. In the closing turn this is where you expect to be, but if it is only turn three or the start of turn four you need to worry a bit!

The variable OB makes this one interesting. You know you are going to be attacked by four platoons of infantry and some armour. You can never be sure exactly what with and from where the attack will develop. Some American choices are slightly better than others, just as your own force selection is important, but I think the advantage of some groups over others is slight and could easily be offset by a single good DR. To win you need to out fight the Yanks, and make fewer mistakes than your opponent.

American Set up and Attack

Building or rubble control is likely to be the way you win this scenario. Occasionally you may be able to win as a result of gun elimination either through luck or skilful play. Generally the Germans will take some chances with one gun but keep the other safe in the tenth building or even further back. Accept a lucky win if you destroy the second gun during an otherwise stalled attack, and acknowledge your debt to chance. Most games will require greater effort. Aim for a swift entry onto the board in the opening turns followed by the gradual accumulation of victory locations.

Enemy forces are selected from a variable Order of Battle. The infantry force is fixed at five elite squads, two 1st line and three leaders plus a small assortment of support weapons. Of the latter two are very worrying. A MMG has considerable range, rate of fire and if directed by the best German Leader a -1 modifier. Buttoned up tanks should not be overly concerned, infantry and open topped tank destroyers or tanks with exposed crews are vulnerable. The Panzerschreck commands respect. Until its location is known any Infantry stack may contain a weapon capable of destroying any vehicle you possess out to four hexes range. A moving M5 is fairly safe at long range needing an improbable hit or Leader direction for a hit, Shermans due to large target size are easier prey. Once the PSK is detected its threat to armour is reduced but you may already have lost 50% of your AFV support.

At closer range, up to two hexes Panzerfausts are threatening. With seven squads in play the Krauts have a maximum of ten, in practice a lot less are likely. If not fired at armour SCW are effective against your infantry behind walls, in buildings or rubble.

Part way through the game expect to be hit by a demolition charge. With three leaders and just seven squads the Germans may gift the DC to the 8-0 or 7-0 Leader who will be relatively happy to throw or place it on your troops.

German armour is limited to a single Panzer IV or StuG. Although outnumbered by your Armour it can be expected to do serious damage. Half expect to lose a vehicle taking out the enemy AFV. If you can do the job with a bazooka, flame-thrower, demolition charge, infantry attack or lucky malfunction so much the better. Generally winkling out the tank with armour should be avoided.

Expect to see at least three stacks

topped with ¾" counters. More than that and at least one is a dummy. One is an AFV and two stacks will contain German guns. The enemy has three basic choices ranging from a pair of 75mm guns though a field gun and AT gun to a 105mm and 75* Infantry Gun. You will not know what you face until one gun opens fire or is revealed by your attacks. With a gun known you should be able to determine which group you face. The best defence is line of sight, but if you must go in harms way a rough idea of the potential strength of German attacks is helpful. In an M5 your best armour is six factors, in some Shermans this rises to eleven but for both the M10 Tank destroyers and Shermans can expect to take a few hits on eight factor armour.

The deadliest threat is 75L APCR at short range with a basic to kill of 20. Barring a dud this is near certain death. A hull hit might just survive if you are lucky. This shouldn't happen too often as A3 for ammunition availability is a tough roll. Regular 75L shots are 17 To Kills with a credible chance of destruction. The 75mm Artillery gun has an unusual HEAT round with less penetrative power than AP, maybe worth the shot if the To Hit roll is exactly 5 or if your armour is stacked with infantry. The 75mm Infantry gun will use HEAT, a 13 To Kill is strong against M5s but less than ideal against anything else. Any 105mm Guns can also roll for HEAT, a 15 Tto Kill is threatening. More laughable are HE attacks; a To Kill of 10 shouldn't do much damage. Although the StuH 42 has no armour piercing rounds any 105mm Guns taken do have HE with a to kill of 15 which is a whisker better than HEAT. Expect the first shot to be HEAT then HE if playing an alert opponent. The 50L AT gun has an excellent rate of fire. APCR is available (A4), but more often expect AP with To Kill of 13. The PaK 38 is very mobile and may take some shots then relocate to a safer part of the board.

A cheat sheet is provided with the *Melee Pack* detailing all the guns and tanks available including To Kill numbers and ammunition availability and it is well worth referring to during play. As always reading chapter H for everything that might be used in action is a good idea.

The enemy's big weakness is numbers, roughly around half your strength. This is helped by solid terrain, with the advantage weakening as you gain your first stone buildings. Fortifications keep your opponent in the game. Two Tunnels are automatically received. If these allow the enemy to laterally move troops to points of danger and/or allow broken units to rout to safety your game becomes harder. In addition the defenders can pick three types of fortifications from a selection of five. All the choices are valuable, though used in different ways. AP mines do what they say on the box. Being hidden you have no idea where they might be until you find them. My greatest fear would be to find them in the C10 and E10 woods as I entered from the southern edge on turn two. Other options are open to the Germans. Another ploy could use mines behind a building, the Jerries run from the building using a tunnel, you develop your attack and assault move on top of a minefield. Keep this in perspective the mines cannot be everywhere, in some games you will not find them! AT mines are another good choice. No threat to infantry they will kill or immobilise any tank that finds them. For low factor fields you can balls your way through, if the tank is on a minefield but in a good spot consider stopping and fighting from where you are. Wire isn't too likely and avoidable when known. It can bog tanks or disappear the first time an AFV enters it. I wouldn't expect to see Wire. Trenches are possible. They are a good way to link buildings, provide god cover and act as a feeble obstacle to tanks. If building F3 is rubble a hilltop Trench has a good field of fire, this becomes very useful if the I3 and J3 buildings are also rubble. The last German option is a fortified building. This can create a strong position for a gun or MG next and is not too shabby a home for a tank. With cellars in play Buildings do offer some fortified locations but some opponents will still want the fortified building. It is a good choice if it stops you getting that last building. Remember you can drive a close topped vehicle into a fortified building if it is desperate.

So much for the enemy, your own troops you selected even before the terrain was decided. Although you can't change your selection, the variable terrain in play should make you consider how you use them. The most extreme example of this is the effect of rubble on line of sight from the level one hill.

THE RATS OF HAMICH [MP5]

If the Germans can see over the L1 to M4 hedge this should have a big impact on how you enter. After looking at the map and German set up you should start to estimate where the German is concentrated. With eight dummy counters in play and every unit in the OB concealed this has to include some guesswork. Even so you should have a rough idea of the guns and tank location. True you can't tell the difference between a concealed StuG or Panzer IV, or precisely which gun is in a location but you can tell where they are not. You can apply some guess work but be careful. The better your opponent is at the game the more deceptive his set up will be! Really crafty Huns may add a concealment counter to an AFV to make it look like a gun, tempt you onto a minefield or even draw sniper fire. The much less able might cover a swathe of their defences with obvious dummy stacks. In all cases be careful. Assess the enemy's strength and gamble a bit but don't decide a stack is definitely dummy and charge it with a stack of units.

An early decision must be the strength of any force committed to the southern flank. At least a platoon is a fair idea, with a leader to add movement and rally broken units. Be careful how you enter. With mines and Wire in play you could charge into a mess of German fortifications. If you do this carefully by leading with half squads this might not be a total disaster. As long as you gain information about the German's strength and location in exchange for slight losses you are still in the game.

Committing armour to the southern flank is scary. A few AT mines or Panzerfaust teams could stall entry and inflict casualties. A single M5 light tank is a fairly small force which could have an impact if unopposed, and isn't greatly missed if it finds mines or strong AT defences.

Moving down the P8 to K8 path is swift and almost totally immune to enemy fire. A platoon down this line appeals but it is not mandatory. Most of the rest will enter along the eastern board edge, using the cover provided by woods and hedges, or perhaps Armoured Assault. Riders are an option, not the best idea in the opening turn, potentially more useful if the Germans are collapsing and you need to cover ground quickly.

Develop the attack using planned routes across the board, with positions to be reached at the end of each turn. For example a platoon might enter on the southern board edge on turn two, aiming for the C9 woods, then towards B6/B7 buildings, through D5 to F3 on turn five. Good idea but more difficult against opposition. You need similar plans for troops entering along the wooded Path or from the eastern edge.

Although basic plans are important,

the enemy will soon have some influence on your progress. Allow some flexibility. If a lucky shot destroys a tank or breaks a stack your plans may accelerate gaining ground or inflicting loss on the enemy faster. Conversely if the attack is met by masses of relocating German troops accept slower progress.

The worst way to lose this scenario is to lose sight of the mission. I've a bad habit of keeping my casualties low, here that doesn't matter. You can lose your entire OB as long as the last man down dies hard and takes the second gun with him. Expect to lose the armour support, with so many guns, anti tank rockets and maybe a few mines around this is near certain and not critical. Be more worried when you lose a leader, you only start with three and they are all precious.

The real problem in this attack is time. Double the number of turns and the Yanks would win most of the time, a turn less and the Germans would prevail more often. The attack really must go in fast, that means more casualties, more broken units and even KIAd ones. As long as the Germans are losing some units you can tolerate losses of about a squad per turn on average and still have some force to achieve victory.

Conclusion

Playing the attacker in this scenario is challenging. The Americans will need to be fast and aggressive to win, trading casualties for terrain. In defence the Germans have a lot going for them, plenty of tools to use against armour, fortifications, mud, concealment and depth. The biggest worry is strength, the Americans have the edge in numbers, with the extra firepower factors deadly at short range or in close combat.

Both sides can expect a few surprises. For the Americans this may be mines, finding a building is fortified as you advance into it, or concealed units. For the Germans the direction of the Yanks assault and the units he uses can not be predicted.

Certainly this is a balanced scenario. The variable OB options make force selection and planning interesting. I do not believe there is a perfect choice of forces for either side that guarantees a win, but trying to pick the best you can from the choices available is certainly enjoyable. Replay value probably isn't a factor but any scenario like this that makes planning difficult appeals to me!

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SPECIAL AMMO

Scott Jackson

Start with C8.9 (the most important rule) and then read the rest of this section.

Note that, basically, the attempted use of Special Ammunition is in reality a "FREE" shot! Well, almost. Since most Depletion numbers are down in the 4-5 range (with a couple of 3, 6, and 7's), that usually means that an attempt to use that Special Ammo will either result in a Hit or in "no special ammo"; and "no special ammo" means that, other than possible Gun Malfunction (and Low Ammo, by errata), there was *NO SHOT*!

Also, note that if there was no shot, then there was usually also no CA change... So, in that case, you can reconsider your options— do you want to shoot again with regular ammo or do you want to pop smoke and go motion instead? Or you could simply fire at a different target!

Another small but vital rule is embedded in C8.2 which states that Elite units of any nationality increase their Depletion Number by one. Note that there is errata that defines "elite" as German SS or Russian Guards Formations; and units defined as such by SSR. The errata also clarifies that all Depletion Numbers of elite units [and not just AFV] are increased by one.

The third important rule is C8.31, where it goes into HE Equivalency. Basically, this means that Guns/SCW can fire HEAT at non-vehicular/Gun targets and affect them (though the use of HE would have more impact). This table only applies if you fired AP or HEAT, but it is important because it allows you to use your PF/PSK/BAZ/Piat against Infantry targets (but only if they are receiving wall/building/rubble/pillbox TEM).

C8.4 Cannister is an interesting section—though it's use is more often found in the PTO than elsewhere. With the errata that allows ROF, Cannister has become a major anti-personnel tool, especially for clearing out suspected enemy locations! Since it affects 4-5 hexes on each shot (don't forget C8.41, which allows an Area Fire attack at adj. LOF hexes in addition to the 3 target hexes!), you can often find out far more using it to Recon-By-Fire than by attempted Searching (which is almost useless in the PTO jungles). Theoretically, Cannister should also be useful for building recon/clearing since it can attack 3 levels of a building—though I have never used it for such.

For C8.5 and C8.6 (SMOKE and WP), the important thing to remember is that it must be fired before any other friendly unit fires non-SMOKE. So, SMOKE(/WP) first, then shoot to kill. Of course, this may mean that the SMOKE/WP you just put down may hinder your later shots... You also want to remember C8.52 - always place SMOKE at ground level in the target hex, and a Gun cannot place SMOKE in its own hex.

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ASL STARTER KIT

George Bates

After the *ASL Starter Kit* arrived I spent two days wading through it. I fell behind on two projects, my chores at home, AARs from the previous weekend and my PBeM games. I did remember to shower. To have something to show for this "wasted time", as my wife calls it, I thought I'd share what I found with those of you who have held back from acquiring it yet.

Let me give you the overall grade first: A-

This product succeeds at doing what has needed to be done since the curtain came down on the Avalon Hill Game Company in 1998. We now have a self-contained introduction to the hobby that the current generation of pimply-faced nerds and geeks born during the 80s can both afford and understand. The chrome is off, the rules are bite-sized and we're back to a "beer and pretzels" (Diet Coke and Doritos?) game that can be learned and played (twice!) in an afternoon. This is more fun than a barrel o' monkeys for less than US$25. Then, if the crowd is hungry for more, they can dive deeper into the *ASL* canon.

I'll follow the handy parts list MMP sticks in their products these days to give you the details.

BOX

This is serviceable and attractive, same construction as the recent historical studies. What I like best is this simple sentence on the front: "This game contains everything you need to begin playing Advanced Squad Leader." 'Nuff said.

MAPBOARDS

Cardstock is the wave of the future; the obvious middle ground between cost and sturdiness. I took the boards to Kinko's and they laminated as well as I expected. Although nearly as light as un-mounted maps, they are much sturdier and don't curl or flop around when laminated. From both cost and quality perspectives, I think this is the gamer's best choice for a board surface. Just don't roll boxcars and find the laminate rollers have eaten them!!!

I'm a little disturbed that my boards were trimmed a bit off centre, with the top of number 1 hex grid lines being shaved off while there is a little surplus on the end of

the number 10 hexes. But this is a matter of +/-1mm, and I can live with it. Another interesting touch is the use of reverse typeface for the hex grid co-ordinates printed on dark areas, making them much more legible - nice move!

Besides buildings, terrain are roads (paved and unpaved), woods (and woods road), orchard and grain. All are level 0. The *ASL SK* world is flatter than a classroom full of middle school girls in Kobe.

Tom Repetti's voice of concern on the *ASLML* about the use of cookie-cutter clip art buildings need to be answered. A quick examination shows that yD8 and yO10 are perfect clones, while zF5 appears to be a "Mini Me" of yM4. I have to call this chintzy, too, in spite of the need to keep costs under control. The vast majority of buildings are stone, so our newbies will be getting over-used to +3 modifiers. By the way, there are no 10-3 leaders in the counter mix.

COUNTER SHEET

The counter sheet is of the same standard we have seen in the historical studies and in *For King and Country*. I love these sheets because MMP has finally found a printer with sharp, accurate dies. The cuts are centre-on and clean. No more stubble on the counter sides, either. All "hanging chads" have been relegated to the corners, which our flocks of newbies will soon learn to trim. I can hear the hazing at Dubuque Cornfield Wars 2004 now, "Hey, Meat, you've got sloppy counters. When you're on the victory podium at ASLOK, you can keep your counters any way you like. Until then, you're just a slob, so pick up a nail cutter at 7/11 and get to work."

Last year Will Fleming raised a question on the *ASLML* about spray-on fixative smearing the counter ink. I don't know if he ever got an answer to his concerns, and I don't use the stuff myself. Still it appears to be fairly common in the community, so it might be helpful to see some follow-up.

As to counter content, Germans are in the majority, probably because they have the greatest variety of squad types. All but the 838 ubermenschen are represented. This makes the US 747 top dog on the *ASL SK* street. Although there is only one 667, there are 1st and 2nd line rifle and even greenies in good numbers. I was looking forward to seeing more Russian 447s and 426s to fill gaps

in my swarming Soviet masses, but there are only 5 and 6 of them, respectively. In addition, Ivan gets 14 (!) x458 and 3x527, with no 628s in the mix. Ah, well... SW are limited to MGs, FTs and DCs. The Soviets (naturally) come out on the short end of the stick; no HMG, .50cal or FT, and just one of those overweight, cantankerous Maxim guns plus 3 LMG. Fritz get a liberal supply of LMGs with 2 MMGs and an HMG. Joe is blessed with 2 MMGs and a .50 cal, but no water-cooled HMGs.

RULEBOOK

This is 12 pages of easy-to-read typeface with plenty of clear colour illustrations and examples. Rules are explained according to their order in the Sequence of Play, for the most part. I like these rules in that they tell players **what to do**, as opposed to the *ASLRB*, which defines terms and establishes the parameters of each rule. In this sense, the *ASL SK* rulebook is clearer and more understandable than its counterpart sections of Chapter A and B. The *ASL SKs* together may end up making the *ASLRB* more of a "reference guide."

Some have suggested that the *ASL SK* is not programmed instruction, but I would offer that it is in a very broad sense. Although new rules are not added each scenario, what is presented to novices here is a very limited amount of Chapters A and B that should penetrate the noggin by the time the 6 scenarios have concluded. With any luck the Starter Kit #2 will be along soon and our initiates will get a second dose of infantry rules and new terrain plus EC. Then there'll be #3 with another step. Looks like PI to me, but you can call it what you wish, it's still good for the hobby.

What's left out for next time? Here's an unofficial, incomplete list from Chapters A and B: spraying fire, snipers, underlined ELR, fire lanes, concealment, HtH CC, cavalry, fires, EC and wind, bypass, HOB, prisoners, dm MGs and much, much more. How many of us will instinctively roll for Wind Change at first and watch our new students of the game say, "Huh?"

Adding another A3 or 11x17 sheet would create four additional pages of text. Or, if you shrank the cover illustration, credits, MMP ad and a few other places you might get back two columns. If you were MMP, what would you include in the extra space? More on that in a moment.

SCENARIOS

Sam Belcher did a great job of summarising the scenario content, so I'll bow to him here:

S1 - Retaking Vierville - 7 June 1944 (Vierville, France)

11 US squads, with a 9-2, two 8-1's and an 8-0

11 German squads, with two 9-1's, an 8-1 and 8-0

No support weapons. Village board, 5 turns.

Americans win if there are no good order German MMC in four specified buildings.

The Americans start with three squads on board. In the first three turns both sides' forces trickle in two or three squads at a time.

S2 - War of the Rats - 26 Sep 1942 (Stalingrad)

13 Russian squads with a MMG and 3 LMG. Lead by a 9-2, 8-1 and 8-0.

11 German squads with a MMG, 3 LMG, FT and 2 DC. Lead by a 9-2, 9-1 and 8-1.

City Board, 6 turns.

Germans win if they control three specific buildings.

S3 - Simple Equation - 12 Oct 1944 (Aachen, Germany)

12 German second line and conscripts, HMG, 3 LMG, 8-1, 8-0, and two 7-0

14 and a half US squads, 2 MMG, FT, 9-2, 9-1, and two 8-0.

Two half boards - city/village, 6 and a half turns.

US wins immediately when they control at least 25 building hexes.

S4 - Welcome Back - 16 Dec 1944 (Bosingen, Luxembourg)

8 mixed quality US squads, .50 cal, 2 MMG, 2 FT, 10-2, 8-1, 8-0

15 second line German squads, 2MMG, 3 LMG, 9-1, two 8-1, two 7-0

Village board, 5 and a half turns.

Germans win by exiting 10 VP.

S5 - Clearing Colleville - 6 June 1944 (Colleville, Normandy)

10 German squads, HMG, MMG, LMG, 8-1, 8-0, 6+1

12+ US squads, 3 MMG, 9-2, 9-1, 8-1, 8-0

Village board, 5 turns.

US Wins if there are no good order Germans MMC in stone buildings within victory area.

S6 - Released from the East - 11 Dec 1941 (Istra, Russia)

9 Elite Germans squads, MMG, 3 LMG, 9-2, 8-1, 8-0

14 Elite Russian squads, MMG, 2 LMG, DC, 9-1, 8-1, 8-0

City board, 5 and a half turns

Russians win if they control at least two of three specified buildings.

Can these scenarios be played fairly and enjoyably with all Chapter A rules? Hard to say yet, but there's nothing wrong with trying. I can't imagine it would make that much difference. We'll find out after they've been played for a while.

A quick interlude here on the text in the module. I believe I still see far too many easily preventable errors for a commercial product like this. For example:

There is a glaring error involving DM removal in the Rally Example (pointed out on the *ASLML*, I believe). Bound to create newbie confusion.

Unnecessary use of passive voice abounds.

Easy ones like, "... the grenadiers ... haved to face ..." in a scenario aftermath. If my English Composition teacher were still alive, we'd be ducking thrown chalk.

My suggestion, hard though it may be on the bottom line, is that MMP's proof-reading and editing cadre is not up to the task. A project co-ordinator/editor is needed on every project to keep all text at an acceptable level of quality. I wouldn't put up with this in a product manual or a presentation, and I think this is an equivalent case. This is the hardest thing I have to say about a product I like very, very much. I hope it will be taken in the spirit intended.

QUICK REFERENCE DATA CARD

When this acronym pops up, I *really* feel like we're back in *SL*. The QRDC is on one 8.5x11, too. I see our tender young minds will be getting fed the orthodox line as only the IFT is shown. The addition of the MF/PP chart from the article by Steve Petersen in the *'96 Annual* is a nice touch.

DICE

For some reason the coloured die is a

few mm smaller across each side. Probably doesn't matter statistically, but it feels odd. Was somebody trying to get rid of inventory?

WHAT TO LEAVE OUT?

Overall, it's hard to argue with the choices that MMP has made for what should constitute the "basic" infantry game. Spraying fire or Snipers wouldn't have been that hard to include, but they are definitely not core. Still, I don't want to start seeing a lot of new guys get into the bad habit of not consciously looking for a possible SAN on every dice roll. Bypass and fire lanes definitely belong in an "intermediate" game. So does concealment, although it is critical to successful play. I think my vote would go to a modified HOB without surrender. Heroes, battle hardening and berserk add a lot of spice to the game. But perhaps that's too much counter sheet and rulebook space after all. Sigh...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It looks like Ken Dunn and Pete Phillips in particular were big contributors to MMP's effort to create this product. Goes without saying that without MMP and the playtest crews nothing would have happened. I'm also curious if Robert Wolkey's *iASL* initiative from a while ago was part of what helped get this off the ground. I understand he had to abandon his effort for lack of time, but if he was part of the inspiration, I hope he gets some recognition. Wolkster has always been very vocal about bringing new blood into the hobby.

To summarise, this feels a lot like going back to *Squad Leader* again, and I'm very happy to have it. Personally, I made a very strange jump into *ASL*, having owned the rulebook but nothing else for many years and with only a few *SL* series experiences under my belt. Then, I got lost in my career for 10 years. I came back into it solitaire in '99 and found the smoke rising from the ruins of AHGC. Since then, with the generous help of Will Fleming and Malcolm Rutledge, I've gradually found my legs, but many things still don't come naturally to me. This product may help me finally get the kinks out of my basic game and start playing in a more fast-paced, coherent manner. I think my next six scenarios have just been picked!

Ω

Everything about Stats for ASL

Sam Belcher

Everything you ever wanted to know about stats for *ASL*.

Column A = Chance to roll EXACTLY that number
e.g. 14% chance to roll a 6
Column B = Delta for exact match
e.g. The % difference between 6 and 7 is 3%
Column C = Chance to roll Less than or Equal to
Column D = Chance to roll Greater than or Equal to
Column E = Delta for <=, >= DRs
e.g. The % difference between <=6 and <=7 is 17%

			Column		
	A	B	C	D	E
DR					
2	3%	N/A	3%	100%	N/A
3	6%	3%	8%	97%	6%
4	8%	3%	17%	92%	8%
5	11%	3%	28%	83%	11%
6	14%	3%	42%	72%	14%
7	17%	3%	58%	58%	17%
8	14%	3%	72%	42%	14%
9	11%	3%	83%	28%	11%
10	8%	3%	92%	17%	8%
11	6%	3%	97%	8%	6%
12	3%	3%	100%	3%	3%

Of particular interest for *ASL*, column C shows the probability of rolling less than or equal to a specific DR. So, if a 7 will cause at least a Morale Check, you should get a MC or better 58% of the time.

Look at the jump from a DR of 6 to a DR of 7! This makes it clear that oneDRM can increase / decrease your odds of success by as much as 17%! (Think long and hard before you include a CX unit in a Fire Group to bump your attack up to another column.) Another obvious application is a leader with a negative DRM - it almost never pays to include him in a fire group if it means his DRM will not be used.

A Close Combat example. Vs an AFV, a squad has a CC value of 5. This means there is an 11% chance that AFV will be Immobilized (Col A, DR 5), and a 17% chance that the AFV will be destroyed (Col C, DR 4 or less). Of course, this also means that there is a 72% chance (Col D, DR 6 or more) that the AFV will survive (and be mobile) to conduct it's CC attack.

Once you've seen the relationship in columns B and E, they can be deleted. The table becomes:

DR	=	<=	>=	DR
2	3%	3%	100%	2
3	6%	8%	97%	3
4	8%	17%	92%	4
5	11%	28%	83%	5
6	14%	42%	72%	6
7	17%	58%	58%	7
8	14%	72%	42%	8
9	11%	83%	28%	9
10	8%	92%	17%	10
11	6%	97%	8%	11
12	3%	100%	3%	12

I round off these numbers in column C (<=) to memorize the stats for this column. (Comes in handy when you're trying to estimate the likelihood that an attack will be successful - and lets face it, plus minus 5% is close enough!)

DR	Probability
2	5
3	10
4	20
5	30
6	40
7	60
8	70
9	80
10	90
11	95
12	5

Of course, you can get even weirder with stats, but for most *ASL* purposes, the "Less than or Equal to" approximation is close enough.

At least, the way I play - its close enough. :)

Ω

A Closer Look at Concealment

Christian Koppmeyer

Concealment is probably one of the most often ignored or overseen blessings of the game. I exactly remember that when I start playing *ASL* a lot of years ago, I had to learn (and memorize) so many rules, that this Concealment thing became such a little problem beside many other that I tended to ignore it. Oh, not that you think I hadn't known about the protective effect of being concealed (halved IFT FP against concealed units), but I most often thought that gaining Concealment is not necessary because the units will lose Concealment as soon as they take their next action. Sometimes I even was too lazy to put the Concealment counter on top of some units which where obviously not in immediate danger (EX: A leader behind the lines).

So let's look a little bit closer at this Concealment thing which is today in my eyes the probably most important game feature to help you on your way to victory (of course beside rolling low and playing the favourite side according to ROAR). Naturally I cannot come up with all rules concerning to Concealment. But I want to try to give you a feel for when it should be useful to think twice before making your decisions. It is also clear that there will always be situations when the suggested tactics will not work. But at least you should be aware of those differences. Say, for example, in games with a lot of open ground (e.g., Desert). It will be very difficult for the ATTACKER to stay concealed if he must cross Open Ground. But at least you should know then that you're more vulnerable and try to look for other possibilities to receive the extra cover given to you by those Concealment counters. And then probably for the first time you will recognize how useful Concealment really is.

Some Orders of Battle provide the Defender already with an amount of Concealment counters. Use them wisely in your initial Setup, but notice that the Defender can always conceal ALL of his units after his Setup if all of the Attacker's forces enter from offboard. More important, the Attacker is not allowed to inspect your counters before he make his set-up, or - if he come from offboard – until all Defender units are concealed. If the Attacker sets up onboard too, then only those Defender units gain Concealment which are completely out of LOS of all enemy units or at least 16 hexes away

from a unit with LOS to it. It doesn't matter whether they are in Concealment terrain or not. But remember that only those stacks which do not already have an OoB-given one in its stack can grow a Concealment counter. Beside the OoB-given Concealment all this is true for the Attacker too. So every unit can be set-up offboard concealed. One of the tricks in the DEFENDER's repertoire is to use those OoB given Concealment counters to create Dummy stacks. A Dummy looks like a concealed unit and acts like one. Note that Dummies *must* setup in Concealment terrain.

Beside the chance to conceal your units during/after setup, the ATTACKER can conceal every Good Order unit which is in concealment terrain and out of LOS of all enemy „Good Order units at the end of the CCPh. A unit completely out of LOS but not in concealment terrain can make a dr which must be ≤ 5 but add its USMC. There are several dr modifiers for this action.

A good Defender will already in his setup use every trick to make his opponent unsure about units and positions. One very important thing is to study the terrain and try to have a LOS to every enemy approach route. This will at least strip Concealment from the attacking units. And believe me, that is more often than you think a consideration for a good Attacker. Of course many scenarios have obvious spots for HMG's and MMG's, but isn't the fear of the opponent often enough. Must there really be a "real" unit? A stack of '?+3' (three counter under the Concealment counter) looks like a leader stacked with a MG equipped squad/HS. Makes you think twice as the Attacker. The fear will often prevent your opponent from taking the "MG-covered route". He probably will switch to the more secure looking route. This is most often also the slower route and so you have reached already one goal: to slow him down. Now you can use that spare MG to make this route as costly as possible.

If you have AFV in your initial force you can conceal them like Infantry. But note that they – unlike Infantry – immediately lose Concealment whenever an enemy unit within 16 hexes has a LOS to them and they are not in Concealment terrain. Convert freely some small OoB-given Concealment counter into big ones and create Dummy AFV.

Here again you *must* set them up in Concealment terrain. Your opponent now can not easy say where your real AFV's are. This can give you a significant advantage. This is even more true if it is a late war scenario where every hit will probably be a Kill too.

You see that Concealment is very useful in hiding your defence. Your opponent is not allowed to inspect concealed counters. This is obvious, but think about those counter intense games. There you cannot track every unit you have already 'seen' during the course of the game. So it makes a difference whether your units are concealed or not.

Now, say you made your Setup and your opponent starts his MPh. Are you one of those guys who shoots on the first opportunity? Why? Better hold your fire and make your opponent unsure about your defensive positions. Nothing is better for the defender then an opponent who doesn't know about the defence. And have you ever seen the mouth of an opponent wide open in astonishment, when that surely Dummy stack suddenly opens up fire while it had let pass several other opportunities before?

Now, if it is your turn of moving, then don't Prep Fire with concealed units, unless it is one of your best weapons with ROF capability. They are in play to inflict casualties, so use them. The other units should better skulk/move. Even the best concealment isn't secure against heavy enemy fire. So one of the highly recommended tactics – even used by real infantrymen, in real combat – is to avoid enemy fire. Don't stay in dangerous locations. Try to move out of LOS of all enemy units. That also helps to speed up the game because the DFPh will then become very short! Remember that even a Dummy unit can deny your Opponent Concealment gain, if it is in his LOS. So it is always worth a thought to move/place a single concealed HS or even a dummy stack on a good observation spot. This denies Concealment gain for the attacking units and hopefully draws also some of the attacker's attention.

Speaking of denying the enemy some fire possibilities and knowing that this will not be possible for the duration of a whole game, we come to the obvious and probably most remarkable effect of being concealed. You immediately become half vulnerable.

That is as if the TEM of the terrain you're into is suddenly doubled. Don't hold e to this because I'm no mathematician, but you get the picture. The incoming FP is halved. That very often is the difference in becoming broken rather then Kia'd. Don't speak about ELR. Then again there is the psychological effect which has such an great impact on this game. Of course I would Prep Fire with an 8FP +1 shot against an enemy key position. The average '7' DR would gain me at least a NMC. Against a concealed unit I would become unsure because I would have to trade now my movement capability against a very unsure 'PTC-or-worse-result'. One piece of advice is "Let your Opponent make the difficult decisions. Don't make them too often by yourself in a game. The chance that you'll be wrong more often then being right is high and that can make the difference".

How often has your best leader become killed by a sniper? How many times he could be still alive if there had been a Dummy (or a lonely HS) adjacent to him? Too far away you say? No problem, CX your dummy stack and move him up to 6 MF. You even can claim Road bonus. Sure enough all movement must be outside of enemies units LOS. Remember that you can split a ?+2 stack which holds a Dummy and a real unit into two ?+1 stacks. This is the only situation that allows you to create a complete Dummy stack during the course of the game. The Attacker's confusion is raised, while it also doubles your leaders chances of escaping the dreaded enemy sniper.

Then there is also a great psychological impact on a player who sees a lot of concealed enemy units. It is the principle of "Showing strength where weakness rules". This principle is based on the visual impact on psychology. Seeing something is the first impression we get. If we see a lot of counter we begin feeling bad. Of course we only must have a look at the OB of the scenario to see that half of this mass of counter must be dummies, but this is often not the case. Even if I know this fact my first visual impression led me often become being to cautious.

OK. The enemy is near now. What to do. How often did you move up your defending unconcealed squad into the position where it could Defensive Fire against moving (probably in the Open) enemy units? Unfortunately were most of this positions also in the LOS of enemy units, thus preventing you from gaining Concealment? If you're already concealed then this could be a sign for you being a good player. Then of course it could be wise to move into those positions. But if you're not concealed then

you now are not only more vulnerable to enemy Prep Fire, you also give him the chance of using Assault movement to come adjacent to you. This combined with some SMOKE can make your situation very bad. Could it be a better option to stay one hex behind? The drawback is that if the enemy now moves adjacent, he (probably) can claim TEM. But if he is still concealed you only must temporarily reveal a Good Order unit to strip his Concealment (unless he Assault moved in non-Open Ground). Even now - with a Point Blank Fire opportunity - it could be wise to hold your fire. His AFPH fire is halved (even while he is adjacent). If you stand this your opponent again must make the difficult decision whether to go into CC or not. The ambush dr will give you a significant advantage and even without this is CC an always risky situation. Ah, Ambush!!! A concealed unit can deduct 2 from its ambush dr. Remember that even ONE still concealed unit in a stack is enough to qualify your whole force for this –2 ambush dr. So if your squad is stacked with a leader, the leader should opt to stay concealed if the squad decide to fire. Do I hear cowering? Of course is this again a consideration.

So far we discussed some points for the defending forces. Now let's think about some tactics for the player who has the burden of attacking. Usually the attacker has the task to close up with the defender and then take some buildings, make CVP's or exit units. On the way to this goal the attacking infantry is running more or less through the defender's firepower. An old rule says that "fire will burn you", which means that you sooner or later you begin to take casualties A good Attacker will be able to delay this point until far to the end of the game. Why is this so? I mean, when I fire 8 flat shots then there is no difference between a good or a bad player. The chances of failing the required MC's are equal. Reality is, that the good player will take less (probably no) 8 flat shots, thus giving him a better chance of surviving. How does he do this? He also must close in with the Defender. Yes, but he will try to move and stay concealed so long until his chances of inflicting casualties (breaking enemy units) are at its maximum.

It took me a very long time until I understood that there is no need to move my squads into positions where they are able to use the AFPh to fire with halved FP against defending units in high-TEM terrain. Much better is the option to move out of LOS of the enemy, stay concealed and then advance into the LOS of the enemy. This combined with chains of possible Firegroups will make the DEFENDER think twice, because now

the effect described in the 'Defending-section' comes into effect. You probably see a withdrawing or skulking DEFENDER.

In your next MPh you may probably be able to first lay SMOKE and then Assault Move into the SMOKE adjacent to the enemy. For using his tactic to its best effect you'll need two squads. One will throw the smoke grenade (and lose concealment if in LOS of an enemy unit – but at least the opponent must show you a real unit), while the other Assault moves concealed into the now (hopefully) smoke-filled hex. This is a good tactic to retain Concealment even if crossing Open, because infantry – unlike an AFV – won't lose Concealment if in Open Ground and an enemy unit has a LOS to it. Of course is this only an option if you have smoke available. Here the US squads have an great advantage with their '3' smoke exponent. That's also why AFV's which often have SMOKE capabilities are so important.

Perhaps you have a nasty DEFENDER fully aware of the things I described some paragraphs before. This 'bastard' stays concealed. OK, then it will be time to strip his Concealment. Some ways you can do this as the ATTACKER are:
Moving into his location. This immediately forces the DEFENDER to drop Concealment from at least one unit, to prove there is a Good Order unit which can force the ATTACKER back. If there are only Dummies then you can go on otherwise you're forced back and this units MPh ends immediately. You cannot do this with own Dummies, because the ATTACKER must prove first, that he has at least one real unit in his stack. Drawback is that the now unconcealed DEFENDER probably will opt to fire at your unit. This is then Point Blank Fire and will leave Residual Firepower. I'll spare telling you about all possibilities available to you if you have AFV's in your force too..
Searching. By searching a hex all its contents will become revealed, even if the location is not accessible to the searching unit. Example? Ok, you managed to move your 8-1 lead 747 concealed adjacent to the last German unit which is also concealed on level 2 of a building. You then move a HS on the ground floor under the German squad. Now you declare a search. Even if you roll a six you can search at least one hex which can of course be the own hex. This will immediately strip Concealment from the German squad on level 2 even if no stairwell is in this hex. Now your 8-1 and 747 get a -3 ambush drm (-2 concealed, -1 leader) which gave them a much better chance ambushing the German squad. A drawback of Searching is the Searching Casualty dr you must make after finding/

revealing an enemy unit/mines.

Firing. Last but not least you have the option to strip the Concealment by brute force. Fire at the concealed enemy and achieve at least a PTC. The drawback here is that you lose your Movement capability (in case of the PFPh) or have only low odd shots (in case of the AFPh) which tend to activate the enemy sniper more often then they will have some effect on the concealed enemy. A probably more elegant way (at least for the US) is to Fire WP or throw a WP SMOKE grenade into the concealed enemies hex. Due to the NMC the enemy immediately loses Concealment. There is no major drawback for AFV's. Infantry have to be adjacent to do so.

Let's say you have broken an enemy squad which is now under DM and must rout. They rout and you advance. The broken unit – unlike a dummy unit – cannot prevent you from gaining Concealment. If your opponent doesn't rally his brokies you should try to move adjacent with a concealed unit. Note that you don't lose Concealment because only Good Order units can strip Concealment. Oops what's that. Now you have a concealed unit adjacent to an broken enemy squad. Can the brokie rout? Of course not, because it is not under DM. Notice that only a Known enemy unit can inflict DM on broken units. The upcoming CC will probably be the immediate end of the brokie. The ambush dr is with a +2 for the brokie and (at least) a –2 for the concealed unit. The CC then will see the attack against the brokie with a –3 DRM (-2 against broken units, -1 ambush) with no chance of return attack. If the brokie wants to withdraw – what is not mandatory during the initial CC – there is another –2 DRM. Good chances to eliminate/capture them and then still advance concealed (you retain Concealment even in CC if you ambush and eliminate the enemy) another hex. If that's not a good deal I don't know what. Concerning broken units you should be aware that you can fire at them and still retain Concealment if no other unbroken enemy unit can see the firing unit, but of course this brings the broken unit under DM.

Ok all theses things end at some point in the game. Both forces are now involved into heavy close in fighting where only rare possibilities for gaining Concealment will arise. Now other skills are required. But hold in mind that even now every chance for gaining/stripping Concealment should be used.

Ω

Set-Up Pointers

People often think long and hard about the tactical considerations when setting up. But you should also remember some of the things the game allows you to do at set up, hence the following list. Note that this list probably doesn't include everything.

HIP Japanese

Japanese troops get an automatic 10% HIP capability *in addition to* any SSR capability for daytime scenarios and 25% at night. (G1.631)

Deploying

Nationalities which may deploy can get free deployment for 10% of their OB prior to the start of play. (A2.9)

Bore-Sighting

If you're the Scenario Defender, have you bore-sighted any weapons that qualify? Did you remember that all MMG, HMG and SW MTRs can bore-sight? (C6.41)

Speaking of which, were you aware that you get free LOS checks during bore-sighting for the purpose of determining eligible hexes? (C6.42, A2.9 Q&A)

HIP Fortifications

Did you remember that fortifications which set up in concealment terrain are set up HIP? (A12.33)

And that fortification that don't set-up in concealment terrain are considered in concealment terrain for set-up purpose (i.e. set-up HIP), but lose their HIP status easier.

Foxholes

Have you remembered that if a scenario card gives you 9 Foxhole counters, that what it is really giving you is any combination of Foxhole counters that can hold up to 9 squads? (So you can take 9 1S counters, 3 3S counters, etc.) (B27.1)

Terrain Limitations

You can't set up overstacked ... but you can set up a vehicle in Bog terrain without rolling for Bog/Immobilization (A2.9).

Vehicle Motion Status

Unless specified by SSR, on-board vehicles may not set up in Motion (A2.52)

However, vehicles which enter from off-board are always assumed to be in Motion (A2.52)

Hull-Down

You can make HD attempts.

Read the appropriate Chapter H Notes

Note any special abilities of your ordnance and vehicles have (roll for gyros, write down the TK #'s, smoke #'s). A *75 Sherman is not a 75* Sherman. The former denotes that you should look up the ordnance listing, the latter has a lower TK#.

HIP Guns

Emplaced guns set-up HIP.

This list isn't all-inclusive. However, it does touch on some points that new players invariably forget about as they focus on a "good" setup from a tactical and strategic sense. But sound tactics can be made even better if you remember these things, some of which may enhance your setup.

Ω

ROUTING 101

David Ripton

Of the eight phases of a Player Turn, seven have brave and powerful names. Moving, firing, advancing, and rallying are the stuff of which late-night war movies are made. But routing is, well, wimpy. An afterthought. Something you hope happens to the other guy while you grab some nachos. And the rout rules do nothing to change this perception. They're longwinded yet sometimes imprecise, and they allow the usually omnipotent commander far less control than normal over his units.

Yet the rout rules do allow options, and a player with a firm grasp of them can legally do things that will make his opponent (and probably his own broken units) howl in disbelief. Just as importantly, a player without a good feeling for the mechanics of routing will miss opportunities and possibly let his opponent get away with things he shouldn't.

RULES SECTIONS DEALING WITH ROUTING

A10 Morale
A20.21 RtPh Surrender, Encirclement
C1.51 OBA effects
E1.54 Routing at Night
E4.33 Wearing Skis
E9.5 NA for Paratroops
F.1C Desert
G11.77 Caves
G14.41 LC/Amphibian during Evacuation

ROUTING IN A NUTSHELL

Only broken, DM units, and leaders stacked with them, may rout. All routing units have 6 MF. Light stuff (<=IPC) must be portaged; heavy stuff must be dropped. Only broken units in a Blaze, in an Open Ground hex in the LOS and Normal Range of a Known enemy unit (in the desert, also within six hexes), or ADJACENT to an unbroken, armed, Known enemy unit must rout. Such units become DM if they're not already.

Once it is determined that a unit will rout, it must establish a target hex. The initial target is the closest (in MF) woods/ building/ pillbox(/cave at the unit's option) hex. A hex must be eliminated from consideration if it's (1) ADJACENT to a Known enemy unit (unless the routing unit is leaving that unit's

hex) or (2) Closer to a Known enemy unit than the current hex. A hex may be eliminated from consideration if it contains an FFE or a Known minefield, or is (1) equidistant to a Known enemy unit from the current hex, (2) on the other side of a Blaze or unbridged water, (3) part of the same building in which the unit began the RtPh, (4) more than 6 MF away (not counting entrenchments/ pillboxes), or (5) equidistant (in MF) to a target that the routing player prefers. Once the target is selected, the routing unit must rout toward it, i.e., it must end the RtPh closer to the target than it started, and at no time may it increase the distance between itself and its target.

Certain things may influence the rout once the target is determined. An enemy unit that becomes Known to the routing unit enables it to avoid hexes equidistant to the Known enemy unit and forces the routing unit to avoid hexes ADJACENT or closer to the Known enemy unit. Entering entrenchments along the rout path will reduce the MF remaining to the unit from what was originally calculated. A Low Crawl allows the unit to stop its rout after one hex and to forego Interdiction. Otherwise, if the unit has a required target hex, it must attempt to reach it in one RtPh. It is not required, however, to take the quickest path; any path that will get the unit to the target hex in 6 MF or less is acceptable, as long as the unit never increases the range to its target hex on its way there. Once the unit reaches its target, it may continue only directly to other building/woods/pillbox hexes (EXC: A unit in a cave complex can't leave it).

Routing through Open Ground within the LOS and Normal Range of an enemy unit that could (if it were the MPh) apply a FFMO shot at full FP with no positive DRM causes the routing unit to suffer Interdiction and take an Interdiction MC. Any voluntarily-routing GO leader dies if the unit stacked below him fails an Interdiction MC.

If No Quarter is not in effect, then a broken unit ADJACENT to a GO Known armed enemy Infantry/Cavalry unit must surrender, unless it can rout away without risking Interdiction or using Low Crawl. (Disrupted or Encircled units will surrender even if they do have a safe rout path.) Certain he-man-class units never surrender by the RtPh method: Fanatics, Japanese, Gurkhas, Commissars, Partisans, and SS vs. Russians. They get to Low Crawl or risk Interdiction,

and die if that fails. If No Quarter is in effect, then any unit (even a Disrupted or Encircled one) can rout away, risking Interdiction or Low Crawling to its heart's content.

A lot of attention has been paid to the ASL Annual 93a rule change involving voluntary break. It's no longer legal to break voluntarily unless ADJACENT to an unbroken enemy unit or within LOS and Normal Range of an armed and unbroken enemy. So you can't voluntarily break units far from the enemy, rout them forward, and rally them. Voluntary Break is, however, still quite legal and useful for its intended purpose: getting doomed units out of harm's way.

At Night, everything changes. Nobody surrenders in the RtPh, nobody is eliminated for Failure to Rout, and a DM unit can Low Crawl (only) anywhere it wants as long as it doesn't move toward a Known (keeping Night LOS in mind) enemy unit. Staying ADJACENT to a Known enemy unit is legal. A DM unit cannot lose its DM until it makes an Original Rally DR <= its printed morale.

BASIC ROUT PHILOSOPHIES

The idea behind the RtPh is that broken units need to run away from the scary enemy and toward cover, where they can regroup, rally, and return to the fray. This is what your broken units want (as represented by the lack of total control of their movement during the RtPh) and usually what you want

as well. In simplest terms, broken units rout away from the enemy, and toward woods or buildings. Both of these are beneficial to their survival, since being further away from the enemy reduces the chance of being harmed, and since woods and buildings provide both cover and rally bonuses.

Ideally, you want to rout into a woods or building hex that is out of the LOS of all enemy units, and near a friendly leader. This maximises rallying chances in two ways. Most units will usually have difficulty rallying under DM, and a unit out of enemy LOS cannot be placed under continual DM by potshots. A leader allows rally attempts every Player Turn (as opposed to the one self-rally attempt per side per Game Turn). Furthermore, such rallies will not have the +1 self-rally DRM and may have a further helpful DRM if the leader has a negative modifier. Unfortunately, a player often has many more broken units than leaders, so some planning is important.

Your units will break. It's an unfortunate fact of life. The key is keeping the broken units alive and returning them to the fight. That means planning rout paths as part of an attack or defence. For the defender, an important factor is checking out the rearward woods and building hexes that can provide rallying points. Large expanses of woods or multi-hex buildings are good because a broken unit can keep routing backwards to the limit of its 6 MF, and the terrain in the intervening hexes will often block LOS. One-hex clumps of woods or Single Story Houses often indicate bad routing terrain, because a unit may be forced to rout to such a hex and then not allowed to move farther from the enemy until it's DM'ed again on a subsequent Player Turn. It may be useful for lesser leaders (or Commissars, if one is lucky enough to have one) to be stationed behind the lines if a hex looks like a definite rally point. Ideally, such a point should be screened from the likely direction of enemy advance by several friendly units and some nice LOS-blocking terrain, so that a single leader can rally a bunch of units without risking a mega-DM from a single 1-FP shot.

For the attacker, rout paths are also important, but since his forces are in motion they're less predictable. The key is to avoid sending in isolated units to spots where they're doomed if they break. So avoid "surrender or die" situations such as those where your unit will be surrounded on all sides if it breaks or, if No Quarter is not in effect, where your unit can't rout without incurring Interdiction or resorting to Low Crawl. Maintaining a couple Good Order units near your broken guys is helpful to avoid a prisoner seeking counterattack, and

often easier for the (usually numerically superior) attacker than for the defender. Unfortunately for the attacker, his units are usually routing the wrong way, while the defender's broken units often fall back just behind his Good Order units. The attacker must balance speed versus safety; voluntarily routing a unit and a leader 6 MF back to a safe rally point may be a good idea near the beginning of a longer scenario, but it's rarely worth it near the end, when it has little chance to get back to the front. Sometimes you have the chance of Low Crawling or risking Interdiction to get to a safer spot. There's no absolute rule of which to choose. Obviously, you don't want to risk giving your opponent his winning CVP by blowing an Interdiction roll that you weren't required to take. But an over-conservative Low Crawl can be more dangerous than a bold run for freedom sometimes, especially in your own Player Turn. In that case, your unit will get no Self-Rally attempt (unless it's a leader or crew, of course) and may well be surrounded during your opponent's MPh without a fight. Better to risk Interdiction than to be faced with certain death or (sometimes worse) surrender. Consider the chance of making the Interdiction MC, the consequences (including those to any leaders along for the ride), and the relative positional advantage gained by the extra hex(es) of movement if you avoid Low Crawling. Balance the gain against the risk, and hope for the best if you decide to risk it. Remember the most commonly successful rout/rally pattern: rout away out of LOS, fail to rally under DM, lose DM, rally successfully without DM. This requires that the unit first manage to rout totally out of enemy LOS or range, and then that the enemy can't get there during the next Player Turn. Note that a unit that breaks and routs out of LOS during the enemy Player Turn will almost certainly get a rally attempt without DM, since the enemy can't move into LOS during the friendly Player Turn. (The sole exceptions are routing or Withdrawal from Melee; note that DMing a "safe" unit can be one of the most dastardly uses of a sleaze-rout.) Units that break during their own Player Turn should try to get to a position not only out of current enemy LOS, but out of LOS of likely enemy positions after the next MPh and APh. Having large buildings or expanses of woods is helpful here, as is having Good Order units nearby to thwart enemy counterattacks seeking to DM or capture important (albeit temporarily) broken units.

USING THE ROUT RULES TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

For starters, remember that although the usual purpose of routing is to get broken units away from danger to a spot where they can rally, that's not all it can be used for.

In the last few turns of a scenario, broken units without leaders nearby don't have much of a chance to run away, rally, and come back. So rout them to a legal Location where they can block enemy movement, or leave them where they are if they're doing a good job. A broken (but non-disrupted) HS sitting on a crucial hex will stop the enemy from going through it for the turn—which may win a scenario that requires your opponent to exit through a particular hex. Or sometimes there's only one good path around wire, mines, or bamboo. A stubborn broken unit who refuses to budge from that spot until forced to do so may hold up the enemy advance for another crucial turn.

In the cases where a routing unit ends its MPh in Open Ground and has the option of retaining DM, it's generally a bad idea to do so if the chance of rallying right there is high. Also, such a unit can regain DM to rout again if within LOS and Normal Range of an armed enemy unit, so in cases where the enemy has a MG position with limitless LOS you know you'll be able to regain the DM after a failed rally attempt, so there's no point in keeping it. On the other hand, a unit doesn't want to be stuck in the open, without future routing possibilities, just a few hexes away from a friendly leader in better rally terrain. It's important to balance the better chance of immediate rally without DM with the benefits of being guaranteed another chance to rout next Player Turn. If the unit isn't stacked with a leader, and it either surely isn't the best one on which to use the one Self-Rally attempt or the next turn is the opponent's, then the DM counter really doesn't hurt.

When your opponent has a vast CC advantage coming up, especially if he has good Ambush odds, don't forget your opportunity to voluntarily break and rout. Unless the beleaguered unit defends a key victory hex, such a move is smart for two reasons: it keeps the unit alive (albeit broken), and it prevents your opponent from executing an Ambush Withdrawal for a free hex of movement. But check for a legal rout path before breaking the unit; it's illegal to Voluntarily Break if that would cause immediate elimination or reduction. The corollary is not to leave your opponent's units almost-surrounded, with a way to squeak out. Consider his rout paths away from CC, and try to send somebody around the flanks to deny them. Also, voluntary rout

is sometimes a good idea for the extra strategic movement, though its use for such has been restricted by errata to cases where there's an enemy nearby. Don't do it unless the rallying odds are very favourable or the unit is useless where it is, and check the rout paths carefully; once the unit is broken it will stay broken even if it can't legally go where you wanted to send it. Also, remember the implications of voluntarily breaking for Japanese units: a squad becomes two broken HS if full-strength and only one if reduced-strength, a crew becomes a broken vehicle crew, and a leader has no way to break at all. These factors, combined with their extra prowess in CC, make voluntary break a rarer choice for the Japanese than for other nationalities.

A broken, DM, low-morale HS without a leader nearby just isn't likely to rally soon. Wouldn't it be nice to inflict the same status on the enemy's nearby non-DM stack of higher-quality broken units? If they're out of LOS, try to find a legal way to rout ADJACENT to them, inflict DM, then rout away. (Oops! Didn't see those guys.) Remember: Find out where you want to rout, find all closer target hexes, and then find enemy units that will allow you to disqualify each of them. It works more often than you'd expect.

Let's say you're gunning for CVP, and your concealed unit runs up ADJACENT to an isolated non-DM broken unit. You could shoot it in the AFPh without losing concealment (assuming no nearby GO witnesses), but why give the unit a free DM counter and an excuse to rout away if you fail to eliminate it? Instead, refuse to give your opponent an opportunity to rout, and

then move in for CC. The -2 vs. a broken unit helps a lot, and the ambush odds are decidedly in your favour (-2 for your concealed unit, +1 for his broken one). If you miss, you get another chance in your opponent's turn, with an extra -2 CC DRM since the broken unit will be forced to withdraw from Melee. Heck, you might even feel confident enough to try to capture the broken guys rather than killing them.

Sometimes your enemy's broken units can help you out quite a bit. If your skulking opponent has a big concealed stack nearby, forcing one of his broken units to rout that way will take care of that concealment without firing a shot, through the magic of overstacking. Even without forcing an overstack, any acquisition on the broken unit will follow it to the hex-full of his concealed buddies.

As the Scenario Attacker in a Night scenario, your broken guys may be DM for quite a while. But that also means they get almost-free one-hex routs every turn. Don't stop moving forward just because you're broken—keep moving at a steady two hexes per turn, and let the leaders catch up to do their RPh magic.

Got an obnoxious broken enemy unit still hanging on in the upper level of a victory building? Stick a unit on the staircase(s) below it. Instant Encirclement. Now move anybody ADJACENT, and you have a prisoner. Conversely, do not put your broken units in upper-level buildings in staircase hexes, since an enemy can Encircle them and be ADJACENT for the capture in one fell swoop. Broken units in rowhouses are particularly susceptible to this move so don't

rout upstairs in a rowhouse unless you have absolutely no other choice or you are confident your opponent's forward progress (especially his progress towards the ground level of that rowhouse) can be checked for several turns by covering units.

Don't invoke No Quarter without a good reason. Prisoners with a total US# <= that of their Guard aren't much of a burden and allow instant Deployment, even to Russians and other nationalities that ordinarily cannot deploy. Moreover, once No Quarter is in effect your enemy's scared squads can Low Crawl their way out of traps and risk Interdiction to avoid your barbaric troops. And, of course, you lose any VP or Interrogation advantages to taking prisoners.

CONCLUSION

The rout rules are dense, tricky, and pretty boring. But at least they're short, and they're consistent. Most ASL players know the basic ideas presented here, but it's entirely possible to play for years without getting all of the technicalities right. What's even more important than knowing the rout rules, though, is planning for the safety of your broken units before they break. Don't put your units where breaking equates to certain death, at least without a really good reason. Planning your rout paths during setup allows a masterful fallback defence where broken and unbroken units move together, rallying to support one another. Spreading your leaders and using the terrain correctly on the attack means that an entire flank won't stop cold for want of a 7-0 leader to rally three squads, or because all of the broken squads can't link up with a single leader. Since what happens during the rout phase is so regular and predictable, it's possible (indeed necessary) to plan for it ahead of time. The dice can thwart most of your plans most of the time, but a clean rout to a safe rally point is the next best thing to not breaking.

Ω

ATS
ATL
ASL

Converting from ATS to ASL
Chris Riches

I recently bought Critical Hit's *Advanced Tobruk System* (*ATS*) module *Santa Maria Infante* (*SMI*), about the US 351st Regiment of the 88th Division and its attack toward the village of Santa Maria Infante in Italy. Not that I wanted to play *ATS*, but the subject was interesting and I felt sure I could convert it to *ASL*. What follows are my attempts to rework it, but I would appreciate any comments from anyone else has who has taken an *ATS* module and tried to do the same thing. Note that I don't have any other *ATS* modules (which might provide a better insight into some of the choices I have made).

SMI

The game itself has one large map, with large hexes. The US are attacking along a ridge, with flank positions available to the German defenders on some spurs and minor hills. There are few buildings and limited other cover, but the hillsides are terraced so troops can use this to approach out of LOS. The map was posted on CH's website (which I know is being revamped) but isn't as garish in real life as it appeared on the web.

There are 12 scenarios; many of which are quite small with around 3 to 10 squads a side, and one larger with 20+. There are a few vehicles and the odd gun or mortar. The scenarios follow the action up (and back and start over again) the ridge, and cover action from what are effectively 8 CG periods 11th N, 12th AM/PM/N, 13th AM/PM/N, and 14th AM.

The German player is defending in most missions, and usually has a selection of mines, pillboxes, wire etc. With the terrain as it is, it shows why night assault was appropriate for some of the actions, but then units got stranded at daybreak when they didn't clear the whole area, and suffered from the inevitable German counterattack.

The game obviously comes with *ATS* counters, but none as yet I've felt a need to use. Potentially the markers come in useful for various things.

Conversion

The conversion wasn't too difficult to do, and some things fell into place more naturally than others. My aim was to do an 80/20 job and get on with playing, rather than spend a long time analysing each element. The key areas addressed were:

- Leaders
- Squad Type
- SW and Crews
- Guns & Vehicles
- Fortifications
- Others

There was no need to do anything special as regards terrain, and the map includes no special non-*ASL* features.

Leaders

ATS leaders come in 2 flavours only, and the number of leaders in a scenario is higher than in *ASL*. To determine the type and quantity of *ASL* leaders, I did 2 things:

a) Establish a ratio between *ATS* and *ASL* leader quantity, and thus the correct the number of Leaders in the scenario to an *ASL* basis.

b) Select specific Leader types.

To do this, I took around 70 official *ASL* scenarios for each side and worked out the average scenario leader ratio for each nationality. This equated to 0.3357 Leaders per Squad for the Germans, and 0.2962 for the US.

I then compared this with a similar parameter for the *ATS* scenarios, which had ratios of 0.52 for Germans and 0.48 for US. I was then able to determine a conversion factor:

ASL Leaders
= 0.645 x *ATS* Leaders (Ger)
= 0.615 x *ATS* Leaders (US)

Thus this generated the equivalent number of *ASL* leaders for each scenario as shown in table1.

To address quality, I considered 3 options:

1. Allow the player to roll for leader quality like in a campaign game.

2. Allocate Leaders per the DYO rules.

3. Allocate Leaders based on mirroring Leader distribution in other *ASL* scenarios.

I chose option 3, even though it was more work, because option 1 could lead to too high variability (especially in these small scenarios), and option 2 again is better with larger force sizes. I also wanted to pre-define the Leaders and put them on the scenario cards.

Therefore I used the data from my *ASL* Leader Spreadsheet to pick appropriate Leader groups for the numbers needed. Where the US need came out at 2.4 for example, I

picked a 2 Leader group from the US start point. I looked at the actual Leaders in *ATS* (1-1-8 or 1-1-7) to choose a group with the same feel in terms of Leadership as I thought the scenario designer intended.

My list of leaders for the *SMI* scenarios is therefore shown in table 2.

I chose no 9-2s as I didn't think it appropriate from the Small Unit History available for this action from the internet.

Squad Type

Here, the issue was different - how to correlate the *ATS* squad types with *ASL* types. So for Germans the *ATS* hierarchy is (in familiar FP-Range-Morale format):

7-5-8
6-5-6
5-4-5
4-5-4

This shows, with increasing quality, both increases in firepower and morale, but not in range. Compare to the *ASL* hierarchy:

4-6-8
4-6-7
4-4-7
4-3-6

which isn't far out on morale, but has flat FP and increasing range. Even the 5-4-8 and 8-3-8 don't fit a better pattern, and besides there was nothing in *SMI* to indicate the presence of Engineers.

Similarly, how to assess the effect of *ATS* having US morale at 7 (for the majority squad type) and the Germans at 6. The data shows that during the conversion, 87% of the time the Germans improve morale by at least 1, whereas the US worsen by at least 1 82% of the time.

Suffice to say, I chose the following

Scenario	Equivalent Number of *ASL* Leaders	
	Ger	**US**
1	0.6	1.2
2	2.6	2.4 & 2.4 *
3	1.3	1.8
4	1.3	2.4
5	3.9	3.7
6	1.9	1.2
7	5.8	3 & 3 *
8	1.9	3
9	1.9	2.4
10	1.3	1.2
11	0.6	2.4
12	3.2	3.7

* These each had two significant separate US forces.

Table1 Leader Comparison

representation for the various squad types, and ignored the US BAR gunner (although those of you with *Point du Hoc* can use the BAR counters from there if you wish).

Nationality	*ATS*	*ASL*
Ger	7-5-8	4-6-8
	6-5-6	4-6-7
	5-4-5	4-4-7
	4-5-4	4-3-6
US	8-5-9	6-6-7
	7-6-7	6-6-6
	6-5-6	5-4-6

SW and Crews

For SW, *ATS* has no German LMG, but lots of MMG and HMG.

Nationality	Weapon	*ATS*	*ASL*
Ger	HMG	8-14	7-14
	MMG	5-8	5-12
US	.50 cal	14-20	8-20
	HMG	8-14	6-14
	MMG	5-8	4-10

I chose to reduce the Germans to a maximum 1 HMG and 2 MMG per scenario (apart from scenario 7, which is large enough to warrant double quantities of each) – or per group where these set up separately. Those deleted were replaced with an equivalent number of LMG. The US I left untouched, as the *ATS* to *ASL* firepower reduction for these weapons was enough in its own right (and the unit histories talk specifically of the machine gun support used in this attack).

ATS has HMG with inherent crews, and since I prefer to do this, I added one Inf crew per HMG & MMG. However, add one HS if you prefer. Given the small number of squads in the scenarios, I do recommend adding something.

Some *ATS* scenarios added crews to US light mortars. I recommend a vehicular crew (as a Support Weapon Team) with every

light mortar, or tough luck and you have to crew it from within the OB.

Other SW - flamethrowers, PF etc are no issue.

As a comparison, here is the ratio of US:German firepower (Squad and MG normal FP) per scenario, showing the relative comparison of *ASL* to *ATS*. I am happy to accept the relative increase in US firepower as their morale suffers in the transition. Given the ROF of MGs, these numbers would increase marginally in the US favour.

Scenario	ATS US:Ger Ratio	ASL US:Ger Ratio	Comparison ASL/ATS
1	1.65	1.75	1.06
2	1.67	1.94	1.16
3	1.29	1.24	0.96
4	1.76	1.93	1.10
5	1.58	1.67	1.06
6	1.19	1.18	0.99
7	1.47	1.57	1.07
8	0.65	0.77	1.19
9	1.73	1.82	1.05
10	1.48	1.58	1.07
11	2.91	2.94	1.01
12	1.91	2.13	1.11

Guns and Vehicles

Guns translate easily, and as normal each should be given its own Infantry Crew.

Vehicles need no changing, and are all available in *ASL*.

Others

A few things need to be considered:

OBA - module size is not an issue. *ATS* allows an additional observer for each module. Thus either add a FOO team (ie like a SFCP) - my preferred choice - or an additional leader (8-0 or 7-0 to avoid unbalancing it).

SAN - I made a judgement in the terrain to have the Germans with SAN 4 (having

Scenario	Ger	US
1	7-0	8-1
2	8-0, 8-1, 9-1	8-0, 9-1; 7-0, 8-0, 9-1
3	8-0	8-0, 9-1
4	8-1	8-0, 9-1
5	7-0, 8-0, 8-1, 9-1	7-0, 8-0, 8-1, 9-1
6	8-0, 8-1	8-1
7	7-0, 2x 8-0, 2x 8-1, 9-1	7-0, 8-0, 9-1; 7-0, 8-0, 9-1
8	8-0, 9-1	7-0, 8-1, 9-1
9	8-0, 9-1	8-0, 9-1
10	8-1	8-1
11	7-0	8-0, 9-1
12	7-0, 8-0, 8-1	7-0, 8-0, 8-1, 9-1

Table2 Leader Conversion

Scenario	German Forces (ASL)	US Forces (ASL)
1	1x 4-6-7, 1x 4-3-6, 7-0 1x MMG, 1x LMG, 1 Crew 1+3+5 Pillbox, 1 Wire, 12 AP mine factors.	4x 6-6-6, 8-1 1x MMG, 1x 44 Baz, 1 Crew Require 5 VP.
2	10x 4-6-7 8-0, 8-1, 9-1 1x HMG, 2x MMG, 2x LMG, 1x 81 Mtr, 1x 50 Mtr, 4 Crew, 1 SWT. 2x 1+3+5 Pillbox, 4 wire, 28 AP mine factors.	Group 1: 2x 6-6-7, 4x 6-6-6, 2x 5-4-6, 8-0, 9-1. 2x MMG, 1x .50 cal, 1x Lt Mtr, 3 Crew, 1 SWT. Group 2: 1x 6-6-7, 6x 6-6-6, 2x 5-4-6, 7-0, 8-0, 9-1. 2x MMG, 1x Lt Mtr, 2 Crew, 1 SWT Require 8 VP.
3	Group 1: 1 Observer, 1x HMG, 1x 81 Mtr, 2 Crew. Group 2: 1x 4-6-7, 1x MMG, 1 Crew. Group 3: 1x 4-6-7, 1x 4-3-6, 8-0, 1x MMG, 1x 81 Mtr, 2 Crew. 1x 1+3+5 Pillbox, 2 Wire, 24 AP mine factors.	Group 1: 1x 6-6-6, 9-1. Group 2: 2x 6-6-6, 8-0, 1x HMG, 3x MMG, 3x Lt Mtr, 4 Crew, 3 SWT. Require 2 VP.
4	4x 4-6-7, 8-1 1x HMG, 1x MMG, 1x 75* Inf, 3 Crew 1x 1+3+5 Pillbox, 1x Trench, 1x wire, 12 AP mine factors.	1x 6-6-7, 5x 6-6-6, 2x 5-4-6, 8-0, 9-1 2x MMG, 1x Lt Mtr, 1x Baz 44, 1x 37L AT, 3 Crew. Require 8 VP.
5	Group 1: 1x HMG, 1x 81 Mtr, 1x 75* Inf, 3 Crew. Group 2: 6x 4-6-7, 2x 4-4-7 7-0, 8-0, 8-1, 9-1. Make one random selection roll and the highest rolling Leader(s) are wounded. 2x MMG, 2x 81 Mtr, 1x LMG, 4 Crew. Fort: 3x 1+3+5 Pillbox, 3x Trench, 4x Wire, 32 AP mine factors. Rnf: 1x StuG IIIG	3x 6-6-7, 7x 6-6-6, 3x 5-4-6 7-0, 8-0, 8-1, 9-1. 1x Observer. 3x MMG, 3x Lt Mtr, 2x Baz 44, 3 Crew, 3 SWT. Require 11 VP.
6	2x 4-6-7, 1x 4-4-7, 8-0, 8-1 2x MMG, 1x 75L AT, 3 Crew 1x 1+3+5 Pillbox, 1x Trench, 2x AT mine factors	2x 6-6-6, 2x 5-4-6, 8-1 1x MMG, 1x Baz 44, 1 Crew 5x M4A1 MT
7	Group 1: 1x HMG, 1x 50L AT, 2 Crew. Group 2: 6x 4-6-8, 10x 4-6-7, 8x 4-4-7, 7-0, 2x 8-0, 2x 8-1, 9-1, 4x MMG, 2x HMG, 3x LMG, 1x PSK, 6 Crew. Support: 1x Observer, 2x 75L AT, 1x StuG IIIG, 6x 1+3+5 Pillbox, 8x Trench, 7x Wire, 64 AP mine factors. Rnf: 2x StuG IIIG.	Group 1: 8x 6-6-6, 9x 5-4-6, 7-0, 8-0, 9-1, 3x MMG, 1x Baz 44, 3 Crew, 2x Observer. Group 2: 9x 6-6-7, 4x 6-6-6, 7-0, 8-0, 9-1, 3x MMG, 3x Baz 44, 3x Lt Mtr, 3x HMG, 2x .50 cal, 3 SWT, 8 Crew. Rnf: 7x M4A1 MT.
8	6x 4-6-8, 10x 4-6-7, 8-0, 9-1 1x HMG, 2x MMG, 2x LMG, 3 Crew. Rnf: 1x Pz IVH Require 16 VP.	2x 6-6-7, 4x 6-6-6, 3x 5-4-6, 7-0, 8-1, 9-1 2x MMG, 1x .50 cal, 1x Baz 44, 3 Crew 6x Foxhole
9	6x 4-6-7, 8-0, 9-1 1x HMG, 2x MMG, 1x LMG, 1x 50L AT, 4 Crew 2x 1+3+5 Pillbox, 3x Trench, 3x Wire, 32x AP mine factors.	3x 6-6-7, 7x 6-6-6, 8-0, 9-1, 1x Observer 3x MMG, 1x .50 cal, 1x 81 Mtr, 5 Crew 5x foxholes
10	3x 4-6-7, 8-1 1x HMG, 1x MMG, 1x 50L AT, 3 Crew 1x 1+3+5 Pillbox, 1x Trench, 1x Wire, 2 AT mine factors.	1x 6-6-7, 4x 6-6-6, 8-1 2x MMG, 1x 81 Mtr, 3 Crew 2 Foxholes. 2x M10 TD Require 8 VP (each Trench or Pillbox = 3 VP).
11	5x 4-6-7, 7-0 1x HMG, 1x MMG, 1x 20L (6), 3 Crew 1x 1+3+5 Pillbox, 1x Weapon Pit (if used), 5x Trench, 2x Wire, 8 AP mine factors.	3x 6-6-7, 6x 6-6-6, 8-0, 9-1 3x MMG, 2x .50 cal, 2x HMG, 7 Crew
12	10x 4-6-7, 7-0, 8-0, 8-1 1x HMG, 2x MMG, 2x LMG, 1x FT, 2x 50L AT, 5 Crew 1x SdKfz 234/2 3x 1+3+5 Pillbox, 6x Trench, 8x Wire, 64x AP mine factors, 2x AT factors	7x 6-6-7, 10x 6-6-6, 7-0, 8-0, 8-1, 9-1, 1 Observer 4x MMG, 2x .50 cal, 2x Baz 44, 1x FT, 1x 37LL AT, 7 Crew 1x M3 ht Rnf: 3x M8 HMC Require 10 VP

Table 3 ASL forces in the converted scenarios

had time in a prepared position with good fields of fire), and the US with a 2 (advancing across open terrain).

ELR I took straight from the DYO tables - a 3 for each side. The US 88th Division wasn't a combat hardened unit so this is fine.

VC - this was one area where I nearly came unstuck, having got stuck into the first scenario and then realised that *ATS* counts VPs differently to *ASL*. Squads are worth 3 VP, whereas other units are more comparable with *ASL*. Luckily in *SMI* the vehicle count is low, and VP requirements can be reduced by 1/3 (apart from scenario 12, where I have only reduced it marginally).

Fortifications

These are pretty straightforward as follows:

Bunker

ATS has a capacity of 1 but 360º fire. Use a 1+3+5 Pillbox representing the kind of bunkers likely to have been constructed by the Germans in this locality.

Wire

1 for 1

AP Mine

There are very few mine factors used in *SMI* - too few to make sense in *ASL* (eg 1, or 3). I thought I might have misunderstood the *ATS* system, but in the end opted to multiply the *ATS* factors by 4 and then they can be used in *ASL* in whatever strength desired per hex. In some of the larger scenarios, one might argue that 64 factors is too many, but hey we didn't ask you to attack here!

AT Mine

A few AT mines are available (and were used historically on the main road up the ridge). Here, a straight 1:1 conversion felt better, but on both types on mines a second opinion would be helpful.

Foxhole

1 for 1

Weapon Pit

This is easily represented as a Dug In AFV and a normal Emplaced Gun. If you wanted you could use a Weapon Pit (and rules) from *Pointe du Hoc* by CH.

Hedgehog

Use a Trench

Scenario Summary

So wrapping it all up (but apologies if in the playing about with stuff I've left glitches in it – there can always be an errata sheet to follow!), table 3 shows my reworked scenario OB list.

For all scenarios both sides have an ELR of 3. As far as SAN goes the German SAN is 4 and the US SAN is 2.

Summary

So, with a bit of analysis and some guesswork it's not too difficult to convert *ATS* to *ASL*. And with the CH publishing schedule showing some interesting products (*Oosterbeek Perimeter* appeals), hopefully it will be a bit easier next time.

Meanwhile, back at *SMI*, I'm trying to knock up a campaign game. With the 8 periods for the US to capture the village, and the opportunity for the Germans to defend each tactical bound of terrain and then fall back, it ought to work out well. Give me a shout if you've done it already.......!

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DELIBERATE IMMOBILISATION

Russ Bunten

Here are some non-egghead numbers for you. Some of the "real" math guys may want to elaborate but I have tried to make this as brief as I can. The numbers listed is that Final TK# that will generate an effect on the vehicle (including a Possible Shock) from Direct Fire AP at least as often as a DI Attempt will hit and immobilise the target. HE Ammo is a bit different and is not included here. No final TK # of >6 were included. I figure that if the Final TK is 7 or greater, then you'll probably not be too interested in immobilising it. The percentages are the actual numbers that will cause the effects at the listed DRM and Final TK#.

Assumptions:
Final Modified TH# = 10
Total TH DRM = +7/+6/+5/+4/+3/+2/+1 (these are the most common total DRM including Moving Target DRM, Target Size, Leadership, Range, etc)

The TH and TK DR's are taken as a sequence (i.e. they cannot be separated and examined as individual events)

The Total TH DRM from the non-DI TH Attempt is 5 less than the DI Attempt TH DRM (i.e. if the DI TH DRM = +6, then the non-DI attempt is +1). This will not necessarily hold true for all cases (particularly LATW) but is sufficient for this analysis.

Total DI TH DRM	TK #	DI %	TK %
+7	2	5.6	6.0
+6	3	11.1	13.9
+5	4	16.7	25.6
+4	5	27.8	40.5
+3	6	33.3	41.0
+2	6	41.7	47.3
+1	6	47.2	47.3

As you can see, a Final TK or 4 or more makes DI almost a waste of time unless you are able to reduce the TH DRM in some way. Leaders can really swing this in your favour though. Look at the numbers for a +5 DI attempt and a +3 DI Attempt. That 9-2 can really give you an edge to at least stop that tank from moving. Hopefully these numbers hold water (though not all factors have been taken into account). Bottom line is that if your Final TK# is 4 or higher, shoot to kill unless you can get the TH DRM below +4.

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VIEW FROM

The Pain and Joy of Off-Board Artillery

Mike Licari

OBA. How many times have you and your opponent looked at a scenario, seen that acronym, and then steered clear? OBA is indeed a difficult thing to master, both in terms of rules and in terms of using it effectively. For many people, there are enough good scenarios without OBA that it isn't worth learning. OBA, however, is difficult to avoid in *ASL*. By never playing scenarios with it, you seriously limit the choices you have, particularly among larger scenarios. Most seriously, you can't play Campaign Games (CGs) without it. Since the introduction of the OBA Flowchart in Action Pack 1, many more people have started to play scenarios with OBA. This article will hopefully help those looking to improve their OBA tactics, now that they have the rules down.

THE JOY

First things first: OBA can be an incredibly powerful addition to your OB. OBA modules of 80+mm, 100+mm, and 120+mm are pretty common. These represent 16FP, 20FP, and 24FP attacks. Not bad! And since an OBA concentration affects 7 hexes, or 19 hexes with harassing fire (more on this later) you can really do some damage. This means your opponent will probably be afraid of it, and will have to adjust his tactics accordingly. Large OBA can be pretty effective in causing buildings to rubble and starting fires as well. All of this gives you the ability to deny parts of the map to your opponent. This goes a long way toward helping you win.

THE PAIN

The use of OBA certainly has its downsides. One is frequently overlooked: having an on-board observer means one less leader to rally troops, direct fire, or help troops move. This is particularly problematic when you don't have too many leaders to start with (e.g. Russians), or if you have some of your leaders KIA (e.g. when facing a high SAN).

Another downside is that OBA is often inaccurate. Although there are some ways to improve accuracy or reduce the problems of inaccuracy, the fact remains that sometimes you just can't get the SR or FFE to land where you need it. With the high probability that LOS between the observer and the AR/SR/FFE will be hindered, accuracy is often impossible.

Finally, gaining/maintaining radio contact and battery access can be a maddening experience. The process is sufficiently random that you should never plan an attack or defense that will be dependent upon key OBA missions. I've seen two OBA batteries in one scenario go out the window on the very first game turn. Four consecutive "red chit" draws, two for each module, and suddenly my opponent was missing what turned out to be a key element of his defense.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

There are several tricks to employ OBA effectively. Not all of these will apply in every situation, but these tips are general enough that you can use them frequently.

Target Areas

Aim for choke-points and enemy troop concentrations: Using OBA on the defense can be a key asset, particularly if you can channel the enemy to use a certain path, then interdict that path with OBA. This obviously works best when you have fortifications like mines and wire, but any defense should be able to channel the enemy. This maximizes the killing opportunity for your OBA, since it will hopefully force your opponent to bunch up his troops more than he otherwise would (particularly if the path you're interdicting is narrow).

This leads to the second part of this tip: aim for concentrations of troops. Since an OBA concentration covers 7 hexes, you have the potential hit a large number of enemy units. Aiming for concentrations of troops also minimizes the effects of an inaccurate FFE; try to place your SR correction in a place that will nail the enemy no matter where it drifts.

If the enemy units are primarily infantry moving in the open or in woods, consider a Harassing Fire mission. It will cut your firepower by quite a bit, but even a small 12FP 70mm OBA harassing mission has 4FP. I know I would think twice about charging through some open ground hexes in that FFE and exposing myself to a series of 4FP(-2) attacks! If the enemy is the defender, aiming for concentrations of troops will likely also be the equivalent of aiming for the lynchpin of the defense. One fire mission may just be able to destroy a significant chunk of the defensive line, if your opponent has not spread out. This Hint can be particularly effective with Rocket OBA and a pre-registered hex. If you know where your opponent will defend or attack, one of these nasty surprises can really help you out. This is most effective in Campaign Games, as the opportunity to use Rocket OBA with pre-registered fire is rare in scenarios.

OBA vs AFV

Don't forget that OBA can be reasonably effective against AFV, even heavily armored ones. Sometimes your OBA module represents the best anti-tank weapon in your OB. For example, let's say you're the Americans with a 105mm OBA module facing a German Panther. Drop an OBA FFE concentration on that tank, and you'll shock or immobilize it on an IFT DR of 5 or 4 and kill it on a 3 or 2. Not great odds, but the odds of you getting that tank from the front with a Sherman's puny gun are far worse. If that Panther is in woods (even in bypass), you get a -1 to that IFT DR which greatly improves your chances of an effect. OBA against lightly armored and/or open-topped AFV is even more powerful. Consider the 105mm OBA module again, this time vs. a German SPW 251/1 halftrack in the open. You'll shock or immobilize it on an IFT DR of 7 or 6 and kill it on a 5 or less.

OBA vs Terrain

Large OBA missions can really rearrange the map. 120mm and 150mm OBA missions can wreck havoc on your opponent: they can generate some tough MCs and they can rubble buildings and create fires.

This is an important tactic to remember in CGs, where you'll be fighting over the same terrain for several scenarios. By creating rubble and fires, you can deny key locations to your opponent and maybe eliminate a few of his squads in the rubble.

Field Phones

If you're on the defensive, consider exchanging your radio for a field phone. These things are great since only boxcars will deny radio contact, and your OBA will stay in play more consistently. Furthermore, observers with Field Phones always get to set up HIP if in concealment terrain. The catch is that these things can't move, so you need to plan your observer's position very carefully. Make sure your opponent doesn't surprise you with an unexpected line of attack that you can't see. Also, there are times when your phone lines may be cut by enemy attacks in the phone's security area. Phone lines can also be cut by enemy OBA FFEs, so field phones are less useful when the attacker also has OBA.

SMOKE

SMOKE is perhaps my favorite OBA mission. Often, OBA is given the task of trying to blast enemy infantry that are in good positions, such as entrenchments or stone buildings. This is fine if the OBA mission is a big one, like 120mm or 150mm. But if you're trying to break or kill these troops with 70mm or 80mm OBA you just aren't going to have much success. Sure, you might get a lucky low IFT roll on somebody sitting in a foxhole, but more than likely you will leave your opponent unscathed. Think about it: 80mm OBA is 16FP; vs. infantry in a foxhole, the DRM is +4; since the average and most likely IFT DR is 7, this is modified to an 11 or a measly PTC. So in this case, you'll get just a PTC or no effect at all more than half the time. This same effect applies to enemy infantry in a stone building with one level above them. Against enemy troops with 8 morale, you're even less likely to get any joy from that OBA. Instead, SMOKE those positions! Although obviously not as destructive as HE (although WP can be nasty sometimes), SMOKE will guarantee that the enemy positions will be ineffective in the near future. I always say "blind is as good as dead". This also means you have good cover to move up for some DC attacks or CC, and it forces your opponent to vacate the locations if he wants to use his smoked-out guys effectively. Remember that SMOKE missions can not be fired using Harassing Fire.

WP

I mentioned WP above, but it warrants its own treatment. This stuff is great, if you have it; typically the US will be most likely to employ WP via OBA, although the British have it occasionally as well. OBA WP has all the same effects as WP grenades or ordnance-fired WP, plus some extra benefits. A WP OBA mission is a great way to cause some problems for you opponent, because unlike WP grenades or ordnance-fired WP, OBA WP causes a morale check when it is placed and when infantry/vulnerable PRC enter a WP FFE location. A WP OBA mission is also a great way to potentially burn a lot of terrain fast; many players forget that WP placement also can cause a flame in burnable terrain when the EC are dry. If you hit seven burnable hexes with your WP FFE, get out that kindling chart! Given the usefulness of OBA SMOKE outlined above, WP is great…blind your opponent and maybe break him or burn him out!

The "SR Threat"

Often times, just placing an SR on the map will cause your opponent to have fits. With an SR on the map, you are telling your opponent that in the next player turn you could drop OBA just about anywhere (although perhaps most likely somewhere within 3 hexes of the SR due to the reduced extent of error if inaccurate). Since your opponent should be concerned with the "correct and convert to FFE" threat, he'll have to alter his tactics. This may cause him to spread out a bit, maybe denying him the opportunity to set up a good multi-location firegroup. Or it may cause him to evacuate/avoid a patch of woods. Or it may force him to use a slower, but safer, way of moving across the map. The point is that a simple SR counter can do all that because you can correct it many hexes and still convert it to a FFE. Once converted however, further correction is limited to a mere 3 hexes. This creates zones on the map that will be immune to potential OBA attack in the next player turn or game turn, and your opponent can switch back to his original tactics. With the "SR Threat" however, there are very few of these immune zones.

Concealment

One way to reduce the effectiveness of your opponent's OBA is to retain concealment as much as possible. This is a tactic that you should always use when playing anyway, but its value is pronounced when you're facing OBA. If your opponent is trying to land his AR or corrected SR/FFE on a hex and can only see units that aren't known to the observer, then he has to make another battery access draw. This can be a killer, as a red draw at this point voids the mission and the AR/SR/FFE is removed from the map. If your opponent is constantly faced with con-

cealed units in and around his target area, this will likely delay or interrupt the employment of his OBA. This tactic is particularly effective when facing an OBA module that has already drawn several black cards (thus increasing the Red:Black ratio) or a module that starts the scenario with a high Red:Black ratio such as Russian OBA.

Stacking and Dispersion

The reverse of Hint #1 is to not allow your opponent to clobber much of your force with OBA at any one time. This can be done by reducing the amount of stacking you do (stacking generally is not a great idea anyway). Less stacking means less of a chance that your 10-2 and three 838s will go down to one IFT DR that rubbles the building they're in. Instead you might lose your 10-2 and one 838 which is still a bad thing, but not nearly as disastrous. Through dispersing your force, you can also reduce the amount of your troops that get hit by the FFE. By placing units/stacks in every other hex, rather than in adjacent hexes, you ensure that your opponent will have to use less-effective Harassing Fire to get more than a couple occupied hexes in the FFE. This also nullifies somewhat the use of SMOKE, outlined in Hints #5 and #6.

Location, Location, Location

Somewhat obvious, but worth mentioning. The effectiveness of OBA depends largely on terrain. If you can pile up positive IFT DRM, you will survive much longer in an FFE. You can get some pretty high modifiers pretty quickly, too. A squad on ground level of a two-story stone building gets a +4 DRM, which is probably enough to fend off 80mm or smaller OBA. If that's a multi-story building he's in then that DRM is +5 (+3 TEM, +1 for each full level above). Since both of these buildings aren't terribly rare, it's quite easy to rack up a +4 or +5 DRM. Foxholes and trenches are just as good, giving +4 TEM against OBA attacks. In Campaign Games such as Red Barricades, those fortified Cellars really do the trick: they give a final DRM of at least +6; it's +7 for a multi-story building (!), which is enough to even fend off 150mm OBA. Stay away from

woods hexes, with their -1 DRM for airbursts.

Find and Neutralize the Observer

One of your first goals should be to find where your opponent's OBA observer is, either on the board, or what hex he's "in" for off-board observer LOS purposes. Once you've done this there are several ways you can neutralize him. First, you can try to eliminate him; on-board observers obviously have to have LOS to your units, so if it's feasible, fire back! A good player, however, will make sure that the only shots you get on him will be crummy ones. So, a second way to neutralize that observer is to blind him with hindrances. Fire or place (e.g. via AFV smoke dischargers) SMOKE in his hex and/or along his LOS. Without LOS, he can't place ARs/SRs or correct SRs/FFEs. A third way is to leave the observer with few targets in LOS. While this isn't always practical since it can involve some serious shifting of units, there are times when you can leave only a squad or two in LOS of the observer. Then your opponent has to decide risking an access draw and using up a black chit just to pound a small part of your force. If he does, you also now have a large OBA-free zone (see Hint #7).

CONCLUSION

Although these hints will help your OBA tactics, they do not take out all the uncertainty. OBA will always be fickle. Murphy's law applies ruthlessly to OBA: it will drift when you absolutely need it to be accurate; worse, it will sometimes drift onto your own troops; you will still draw those red chits at the most inopportune times; you will rubble empty buildings, but roll boxcars on the IFT for occupied hexes; your radio will conk out. But this is *ASL*. If you can't stand these things happening every once in a while, you shouldn't be playing this game! The hints outlined above will reduce the pain and increase the joy of OBA through good tactics…luck still depends on that Battery

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UNIT CAPABILITIES

Roy W. Connelly

I was playing a game the other night at our club meeting against a newb with about 10 games on his resume. The scenario called for a numerically superior force of American 747 units to assault a hill against rather weak opposition who would be receiving reinforcements on Turn 3. The scenario did not go well for my opponent and I'm afraid he may have come away with a bad experience. Much of the blame falls at my feet, I did not take into consideration that he lacked an understanding of how to make the most of the American forces at his disposal. As a Teacher in this instance I should have gone over the unique capabilities of his units and given him some ideas regarding his options.

Different units have different capabilities and each requires experience to understand how to get the most out of them. Over the next five weeks (including this one) I hope to give newbs a better understanding of how a type of unit can be utilised. I have no desire to cover each unit, that would take forever, so for now I will just look at the 'Big Hitters', and some of the specialist units. If I find time I might look at Line and lesser Elite units and the weak units. I am hoping I may be able to talk my buddy Mike into writing about the Japanese as he is more experienced in the PTO than I am.

Disclaimer- In this discussion I will be covering SS, French, and Italian units as they are used in *ASL*. I have no desire to discuss political or personal opinions regarding the morality or brutalness of the SS or the historical fighting abilities of the French and Italians in W.W.II. I am hoping that this newbie tip will bring good discussion to the mailing list. If I receive e-mail regarding political or personal feelings regarding these units historically, they will go unanswered.

Now, let's have a look at the Big Hitters in *ASL*. Grogs could probably skip this part if you feel the need.

The Big Hitters

Big Hitters I will define as an excellent unit from top to bottom. They have excellent numbers in Firepower, Range and Morale, and at least two of these factors are underlined. Most generally they come with

a decent Smoke exponent or have a special ability and at times have both. Some examples of units that fall into this category are the British 648, the German 658 SS, the American Marine 768 and the powerful yet sometimes difficult to play American 747. These are the ones I will look at.

British 648

What's not to like? This unit comes equipped with an underlined 6 for Firepower and a nice little smoke # of 2. The Range is average but underscored allowing spraying fire and the 8 Morale (underlined also) will keep him in the game and at strength due to ELR 5. The British usually play with a nice assortment of Support Weapons which makes these units even more powerful.

In those up-close-and-personal PTO situations where you're firing at point blank range, a 648 with any kind of British MG can dish out some serious firepower, enough to make you start expecting those IJA to step-reduce with every shot. Just make sure you don't lose them in CC and the 648's can do you good.

German 658 SS

The 658 is, in my opinion, the best all around infantry playing piece in the game, able to dish it out and take it. The 6FP is good but lacks the assault fire bonus (except in 44/45 scenarios), Smoke is 2. The above average underlined 5 Range allows you to hit at a distance and utilise spraying fire. The underscored morale of 8 makes it a tough customer to knock down. But the thing that puts these units over the top is the broken side 9 Morale. A DM 658 in rally terrain with an 8-1 leader rallies on a 7 or better, after losing DM this same unit in the same situation rallies on 11 or less! These units are usually not down long. They're particularly tough on defence because they can self-break and rout away from danger, then have a great chance of popping right back up. The only thing tougher is a Russian

with a Comissar.

A SS 348 half squad is nothing to sneeze a either.

Marine 768

This unit could get my "Best to Play" distinction (yeah, like that means anything) if it were used more often. The German 658 is seen with much more frequency but you can't go wrong with the 768. A 7(!) FP to go along with 6 Range and 8 Morale makes this unit a very Big Hitter. All three numbers are underscored and it comes with a 3 Smoke exponent. Broken side 8 Morale will get him back in the fight and the Marines usually come equipped with a formidable array of MGs, FTs, DCs and the like. But you'll usually need it all to dig the wily Japanese from their fortified holes.

We'll get to the 747's in a moment.

Sure, all this information is on the counter. So why did I bother? Well, more often than not, newbs fail to utilise the small stuff that their units offer. Smoke and spraying fire are often forgotten in the heat of battle and are just as important if not more so than a FP factor of 7.

The reason I started with the big hitters is because they are fairly easy to play, and they offer the Newb a nice array of choices in how to play his game. Be careful, a couple of early wins with these units can lead you to overconfidence that will make you pay the first time you play with weaker units. The Big Hitters can be effective in a stand off battle due to FP and range or in close up slugfests because of smoke, assault fire and morale. As we will see with the next three newbie tips, the situation will often dictate how you play a particular type of unit. But with the Big Hitters, although you don't want to be reckless, you can be aggressive or passive using the combination of FP and movement complimented by smoke, spraying fire and a confidence in morale to achieve your objectives.

American 747

Playing the Americans can be a pain in the butt. The Paras are no different. They have an excellent 7 FP, but are average in both range (4) and morale (7), all are underscored giving it some much needed options and it comes with a Smoke exponent of 3. What makes these units so difficult to play? They are deceptive. The Para player really needs to understand the situation he is in. 747s rarely come with the usual American compliment of support weapons. Leadership is generally above average but few. Due to the lack of support weapons, the Paras must rely on themselves, usually they have to get within 4 hexes to do much damage and take advantage of that assault fire bonus. The 747 is a borderline Big Hitter, played properly they can put a hurtin' on the enemy. A player must use all the tools at his disposal with these units to be in position to win at end game. They can be Big Hitters, they just need more finesse than the rest.

One last thing to note when facing squads which get the Assault Fire bonus - say you're being attacked by 6FP units which get Assault Fire. You're in a building and concealed. If you don't First Fire at the opposing units as they move, they'll fire at you with 3FP each (6FP halved for firing in the AFPh and again halved for firing at a concealed unit = 1.5 FP, +1 for Assault Fire = 2.5 FP, rounded up to 3 FP). If you DO First Fire at the attacking units, they'll Assault Fire back with 4FP each (6FP halved for firing in the AFPh = 3FP, +1 for Assault Fire = 4FP, rounded up to 4FP). Not much difference. So I find myself dropping concealment to First Fire at these guys more often, since their Assault Fire bonus usually only spells the difference between the 2 and the 4 FP columns of the IFT.

SPECIALIST UNITS

Now let's have a look at some specialist units. These are counters which have special abilities given to them and are many times given in an OB for a specific reason. The four I want to use as examples are the German 838, the Russian 628, the Ghurka, and the Partisan. (yes, I said Partisan)

German 838

The 838 is definitely a specialist unit. They are usually in a scenario or are purchased in Campaigns for specific tasks. When used properly they are probably the hardest hitting, most difficult to defend against, scariest counters in the set. However, Newbs have a tendency to over-rate them and in the hands of an inexperienced player they often are played under their potential.

838s have an ELR of 5, a Smoke exponent of 3 (except Finn 838) and all factors are underlined. Often, they are given Assault Engineer capability raising their Smoke number to 5! Their range is the thing though, at greater than three hexes, these units are no more than glorified 468s. The 838s in an OB are usually given a wide assortment of SWs. Flamethrowers, DCs, MGs, and whatever else is needed to accomplish their task. Goliaths are generally entrusted to the 338 HS.

These units are for in-your-face fighting, using Smoke to get close, high firepower in the Advance Fire Phase and CC phase. When you sit down to play a scenario with 838's in your side's OB, look carefully at the task at hand. You'll probably see something that the 838 is needed for; a fortified position, cleaning out cellars, dug in tanks etc...

Russian 628

Want a difficult unit to play? Here it is. Good FP and morale, but can you get close enough to use it? The 2 Range is pathetic so you have to get creative with these units at times. They make good Human Wave troops with their high morale, (look at the tailor-made HW set up for you in Guards Counterattack) and their need to get close. At ranges greater than 2 they are almost as poor as the Russian conscripts. They can also be used to exploit a hole or breach in you opponent's defence, holding it open and staying put with their high morale.

In *RB*, they help hold the factories, and are unstoppable with a Commissar. (NB: only buy them in *RB* when the momentum has shifted to your side). Give 'em a LMG and they're a 8-2-8 monster!

As attackers, they are good riders (ML) and can be ferried up close quickly to have a close impact.

I've also found that a 6-2-8 with a FT and Commissar in a night attack is as potent a force as you'll ever need. :-)

Gurkhas

Gurkhas use British 458, 648 counters most often. These units hold a special place in my *ASL* heart (sniff!) They are a blast to

play. Generally found in PTO scenarios, I have also played them in a Cassino Campaign. These units seem destined to take on the tough Japanese in our hobby. They get a special -1 in HTH combat, are considered Commandos (H1.24) and are really the only units in our game who can stand toe-to-toe with the Japanese. If you haven't played Gurkhas before, give them a shot. You can't afford to be reckless with them, but they do offer some opportunities against the Japanese that you just can't utilise with other PTO units.

Partisans

3-3-7

I include partisans in the specialist category because they are usually given some means to get their job done that they wouldn't ordinarily have. Mila 18 is a good example; the partisans in this scenario have fanaticism, stealth, MOL, sewers and HIP. In the Czerniakow Bridgehead they are given MOL, sewer movement and Stealth. Even as recently as J2, the scenario "Scobie Preserves" has Partisan units and they are able to use special ATMM rules against Infantry and Riders. Yes, in all these scenarios the Partisans also have some things taken away from them like suffering from ammo shortage, or no deployment, or captured weapons penalties.

Players tend to shy away from Partisan scenarios, understandably. However I think that they are just as fun and challenging as the rest of the scenarios out there when played properly and using the tools given to them.

Specialist counters are in your OB generally to perform tasks, and to get specific things done. When used to these ends you will enjoy success. When trying to use the 838 or 628 as regular line units, you are removing some of their unique capabilities and taking them out of their element.

Gurkhas and Partisans are specialists too, although in a different light. They are often the only troops in your OB, but own or are given special abilities to deal with the enemy.

Understand why they are there and use them properly, and your game will not suffer for it.

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Truly Critical Hits

Brien Martin

One of the 'trouble spots' in the application of ASL mathematics comes whenever it is essential to compute the value needed for a Critical Hit (CH) on the Infantry Type Table of the ordnance charts. It's very easy to make mistakes here. Making a mistake in one direction will increase the number of CH that you have (which will infuriate your opponent), and making one in the opposite direction will leave you disappointed that you aren't smoking enough targets.

Before we tackle the math, let's review what is and is not a CH:

On the Area Target Type, a CH is scored whenever an ORIGINAL DR of 2 is rolled during the To Hit process.

On the Vehicle Target Type, a CH is scored whenever an ORIGINAL DR of 2 is rolled during the To Hit process.

When resolving HE FFE or WP, a CH is scored whenever an ORIGINAL DR of 2 is rolled during the IFT resolution process, even if the target is Hull Down.

For LATW Hit Tables, a CH is scored whenever an ORIGINAL DR of 2 is rolled during the To Hit process.

If the lowest FINAL TH DR is the only possible hit, then a CH is scored on a subsequent dr of 1.

On the Infantry Target Type, a CH is scored when the FINAL TH DR is less than half the MODIFIED TH number

On the Infantry Target Type, a CH is scored whenever an ORIGINAL DR of 2 is rolled during the To Hit process and is followed by:

A subsequent dr of 1 OR

A subsequent dr that is less or equal to half the MODIFIED TH number

Here's an example of the Infantry Target Type CH process. Let's say that a 57L, firing at a range of 14 hexes is firing on an Infantry target. The BASE TH number is 6, modified by a +1 for the L, and -1 for the 57mm. Thus, the MODIFIED TH number is 6. Any FINAL TH DR that is 2 or less will result in a CH. However, if the ORIGINAL DR is a 2, then a CH can be scored if the subsequent dr is either a 1, or less than one-half the MODIFIED TH, or 2 (which is less than 3, which is one-half of 6).

The last sentence of the preceding paragraph is very important. It's possible

that a FINAL DR of 2 or less will be a CH, but that a FINAL DR of 2 or less is not possible, given C5 and C6 modifiers. In that case, an ORIGINAL 2 may still get the job done, but only if a subsequent dr is 1 or 2. Admittedly, not great odds … but not impossible, either.

Where folks can get into trouble on the Infantry Target type is when they compute the MODIFIED TH number improperly. The MODIFIED TH number is comprised of a maximum of four elements (found in Rule C4), as follows:

The BASE TH number, found in Table C3 on the Infantry (Other) line

A modifier based on Gun Barrel Length (*, L, or LL)

A modifier based on Special Ammo (APDS/APCR or SMOKE)

A modifier based on Gun Caliber (up to 40mm and/or up to 57mm)

NOTE: The Gun Caliber modifiers are cumulative. Thus, a 40mm gun gets both the under 40 AND the under 57 modifiers.

Note that the only modifiers that apply in determining a CH are those found in Rule C4. The Rule C5 and Rule C6 modifiers pertain to the DICE ROLL ONLY, and lead us to the FINAL DR. It is the FINAL DR that is compared to the MODIFIED TH number to determine a CH.

The CH rules give even veteran players fits at times, proving that no matter how good a player is, he can't know everything.

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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 and then by postal code region. The date at the end of each entry is the date the address was last confirmed.

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H Heyman, 91 B, Klapperbeekstraat, B-9100, B-9100 Sl-Niklaas
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Vincent Kamer, 275, Albert Ier , B-1332, B-1332 Genval
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William Roberts, 1 Kiln Close, Corfe Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 3UR (23/10/98)
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Stuart Holmes, 1 Milne Street, Irwell Vale, Ramsbottom, Lancs., BL0 0QP (08/03/02)
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Jackie Eves, 1 Dowling Parade, Bridgewater Road, Wembley, Middx., HA0 1AJ ()
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Ruarigh Dale, 13 Swinemoor Lane, Beverley, Humberside, HU17 0JU (24/04/03)
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5SS (20/03/03)

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Kev Sutton, 1 Gorphwysfa, Windsor Road, New Broughton, Wrexham, LL11 6SP (25/02/99)
C. Jones, Deer Park Lodge, Stepaside, Narbeth, Pembrokeshire, SA67 8JL ()
Emyr Phillips, 2 Cysgod Y Bryn, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 4LR (27/08/02)

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

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ASL Word Search

Here's a little ASL *word search puzzle to keep you occupied while you wait for the next* VFTT *to arrive.*

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K N C G T B A X K T F I S E A
I E Y L A U N D P L A J R V S
D K T E O Q O R L Z P I V B S
D O G M T S E R N I F Y T W A
S R Q X E P E A U E T J E B U
U B W S F L B C V E S A H T L
G H L I S J E I O I B K M I T
C J R Y W M S E I M W S A G F
T E Z Z Y N Y I N P B M M E I
L Q K R E S R E B B W A O R R
L I N T Q V L B H C G T T J E
S D N L C P T T F V P M S N B
G I A R M O R E D C U P O L A
C K O T C L N A P A L M T J P
V Y Z N B K F G B H F O K O Q
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ARMOREDCUPOLA	MATILDA
ASSAULTFIRE	MELEE
BANZAI	NAPALM
BERSERK	PREPFIRE
BROKEN	PTO
CLOSECOMBAT	ROUT
INTENSIVEFIRE	TIGER
JSIII	VFTT
LLTC	

ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL

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

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

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

AUGUST
WILD WEST FEST X

When: 27 – 29 August.

Where: Shilo Inn, 2300 S. W. Hazelfern Rd, Tigard, OR 97223. Tel 503 639 2226. Book by 20 August to get the special room rate of $59.00 per night.

Fee: $25.00.

Format: The player to be undefeated on Sunday is the winner. To qualify the player must have at least four wins by Sunday morning. Games started before midday Friday do not count. After each round the player must face an opponent with a similar win-loss records.

Notes: There will also be a Team tournament, a Tank Rumble and a Heroes event.

Contact: For more details contact Keith Todd, PO Box 23153, Tigard, OR 97281 or visit the website at http://w3.gorge.net/pro6man/wwf10info.html.

SEPTEMBER
A BRIDGE TOO FAR 2004 ARNHEM ASL TOURNAMENT

When: 17 – 19 September.

Where: Stayokay Hostel, Diepenbrocklaan 27, Arnhem, Holland. Next to an excellent gaming room, the hostel offers its own restaurant, bar and various amenities. 20 beds have been pre-booked at the Hostel, which will be offered on a first-come first-serve basis. For those who prefer to stay in a nearby B&B or those not served on this basis the organisers will be happy help in finding alternative accommodation near the venue.

Fee: £7.00.

Format: Five-Round Swiss style tournament, which has attracted an international audience. In each Round, the players will choose from three selected scenarios. After each round the players will face opponents with similar win-loss records, until a winner can be announced after round five. Players also receive points for opponent win/losses, which will be used to determine final rankings in case of an equal overall record. The Scenario List will be announced in early July.

Notes: There will be an Operation Veritable Battlefield Tour on the Thursday with a visit to the Goch-Kalkar area of Germany. This will be followed by a visit to the Dutch War Museum in Overloon, Netherlands.

Contact: For more details contact Pete Struijf by email at pastruijf@hotmail.com or visit the website at http://www.xs4all.nl/~hennies/.

CANADIAN ASL OPEN

When: 17 – 19 September.

Where: The Viscount Gort Hotel, 1670 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Attendees can contact the hotel by telephoning (local) 204 775 0451 or toll free at 1 800 665 1122, or by email at infor@viscount-gort.com. They can also be visited at www.viscount-gort.com.

Fee: To be confirmed.

Format: Five rounds starting Friday afternoon and ending 1600 Sunday afternoon. There will be two rounds on Friday, two rounds on Saturday and one round on Sunday.

Contact: Jim McLeod, Box 31, Group 8, RR 2, Dugald, MB, R0E 0K0. Telephone 204 444 2583 or email jmmcleod@mb.sympatico.ca.

OCTOBER
OKTOBERFEST *ASL*OK 2002

When: 3 – 10 October.

Where: Radisson Inn, 7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights, Ohio 44130. Telephone 440-243-4040. Room Rates are $78.00 for 1-4 occupants.

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

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

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

INTENSIVE FIRE 2004

When: 28 – 31 October.

Where: The Kiwi Hotel, West Hill Road, Bournemouth, England, BH2 5EG. Telephone (01202) 555 889 or fax (01202) 789 567 to arrange accommodation. Single rooms are £33.00 per night, double rooms £29.00 per night per person if booked prior to 1 October – thereafter normal rates apply. Remember to mention INTENSIVE FIRE when reserving to qualify for the special rates. You can also book online at www.kiwihotel.co.uk.

Fee: £7.00 (entry is free for those only able to attend for one day). 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 Phillipps, 24 Huggett Close, Leicester, LE4 7PY. Phone (0116) 266 6894 (evenings only) or email if@vftt.co.uk.

NOVEMBER
GRENADIER 04

When: 11 – 14 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.

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.

Notes: There will be a battlefield tour through some of the Hurtgen Forest battlefields on Thursday or Friday.

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.

MARCH 2005
HEROES 2005

When: 25 – 27 March.

Where: Hotel Skye, South Promenade, Blackpool, England. Room rates are £22.00 for a shared room or £28.00 for a single room and include breakfast. Bar meals and good beer are also available at the hotel.

Fee: £7.00.

Format: Four or five round tournament beginning Friday afternoon (arrangements will be made for those unable to arrive until Friday night), with three or six scenarios to choose from in each round. Players will be expected to have a knowledge of the first half of the Chapter G rules to play in the tournament. CG and friendly games can also be found throughout the weekend. There will also be opportunities for new players to learn the game and friendly games available.

Contact: For more details or to register contact Pete Phillipps, 24 Huggett Close, Leicester, LE4 7PY. Phone (0116) 210 1798 (evenings only) or email heroes@vftt.co.uk.

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HEROES 2005

ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER TOURNAMENT
25ᵀᴴ-27ᵀᴴ MARCH (FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY) 2005
HOTEL SKYE, SOUTH PROMENADE, BLACKPOOL, ENGLAND

THE EVENT

Following its success in 2004 HEROES continues in 2005 to fill the gap for UK ASL action in the first half of the year. As normal the action starts on Thursday and continues through to Sunday so you can play in an ASL tournament and/or play friendly games (or even try your hand at a campaign game if you can find an opponent). The focus of the weekend will be the main tournament,in which players of like record are paired off to allow us to determine the winners - depending on numbers attending there will be four or five rounds. The first round will start on Friday afternoon and each round sees players choose from three carefully selected scenarios. Main tournament entrants are to be familiar with the rules through to the first half of Chapter G.

BOOT CAMP

Don't worry if you are a new player (someone who hase only ever played five or fewer games against a live opponent), as a special tournament based on the *ASL Starter Kit* will be available on Friday. You can learn the game with an experienced player nearby to offer advice on rules. There will never be a better time to try your hand at *ASL*!

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

THE VENUE

The Hotel Skye is familar to those who have attended in the past and offers plenty of gaming room for the whole weekend, Meals and good beer are also available in the hotel, and numerous alternative food outlets are close by. The hotel is easily accessible from the M55 and the train station is a 5 minute walk away.
Bed and breakfast is just £22.00 per person for a shared room or £28.00 for a single room.

THE COST

The weekend, whether you enter a tournament or just play games with the people you will meet, is fantastic value at only £7.00!

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HEROES 2005 BOOKING FORM

Please enclose a cheque for £7.00 for registration payable to PETE PHILLIPPS and a cheque for £10.00 for the hotel deposit payable to HOTEL SKYE and return with this form (photocopies acceptable) to Pete Phillipps, Heroes 2004, 24 Huggett Close, Leicester, LE4 7PY.

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