

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

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DOWN BUT NOT OUT - The Belgians in *SASL*

CRUSADER LADDER - updated

6-6-6 THE AMERICAN SOLDIER - a look at the portrayal of American troops in *ASL*

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COVER: A two pounder AT Gun of the 4th Anti-Tank Regiment, 8th Australian Division, in action at a road block at Bakri on the Muar-Parit Sulong Road. In the background is a destroyed Japanese Type 95 Ha-Go, one of six (out of nine) destroyed during the engagement.

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

Issue 86 should be out at the beginning of September 2012.

VFTT costs £2.00 per issue (overseas £4.00), with a year's subscription costing £5.00 (overseas £10.00). Payment should be in pounds sterling, with cheques made out to PETE PHILLIPPS. Readers should check their address label to see when their subscription ends. You can also download *VFTT* free from the *VFTT* web site.

Back issue are now out of print but can be downloaded for free from:

<http://www.vftt.co.uk/vfttpdfs.asp>

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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.asml.net/listinfo.cgi/asml-asml.net>.

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PREP FIRE

Hello and welcome to the latest issue of *VFTT*, just about managing to hit its “out in May” deadline!

Hopefully the next issue will be roughly on time, as I already have most of the material for it, and it's just a matter of proof-reading and laying out. It'll also be a bit bigger than normal as Ivor Gardiner has written a 10 page article on how the army plans operations, and how to adapt those techniques to *ASL*, complete with example of its use in a scenario. There'll also be a *SASL* Sealion article and there should also be a report on the DOUBLE 1 tournament.

‘Til next issue, roll Low and Prosper.

Pete Phillipps



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

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BATTLEQUEST GAMES, 29 Victory Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 2JF. Telephone 01403 242003 or go to www.battlequestgames.com.

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

INCOMING

'FISH' CONNER DIES

ASL legend Bill "Fish" Conner passed away at home on Friday, 17 February 2012. He was 59. The news was posted by long-time friend Darryl Burk on the GameSquad ASL Forums:

I don't know what else to say as I'm still in shock. The world has lost a great gamer and I've lost a great friend and gaming buddy. Play a scenario in his memory and use Sgt. Conner, I know he'd appreciate it, Hope to see you at ASLOK but it won't be the same for me. Sorry, the tears are flowing freely now.

Darryl Burk

Bill and Darryl started playing *Squad Leader* in the 70s, and as part of Bob McNamara's group in Youngstown, Ohio, the pair also did a fair bit of play-testing during the development of the *SL* gamettes. Following the release of *ASL* at Origins '85, the pair immersed themselves in the new system, and contributed numerous series replays and articles for *The General*. In 1989, they produced the short-lived *In Contact*, the first *ASL* 'zine.

However, 'Fish' will probably be remembered most for setting up *ASL* Oktoberfest (ASLOK). First run in October 1986 (over the Columbus Day holiday weekend, as Bill worked for the United States Postal Service and always had Columbus Day off), it soon became the premier *ASL* tournament, and now lasts a week and attracts over 150 players, including many from overseas.

MMP REPRINTS BEGIN

Rising Sun is in its final stages of layout and proofing. The module combines *Code of Bushido* and *Gung Ho!* and will include the complete Japanese, Chinese and USMC orders of battle, a revised Chapter G updated with the latest errata and Q&A, 32 scenarios, 7 mapboards, several sheets of overlays, and a mapsheet for Gavutu-Tanambogo (the mini-CG originally

published in *ASL Journal 93a* and depicted by several overlays placed on the Ocean overlays).

Decision at Elst is the first *ASLSK* Historical module and covers the fighting between British and German forces in the area known as "The Island" located between Nijmegen and Arnhem during Operation Market Garden. Playtesting is complete and it is in the final proofing stage for the components. These will include a 22" x 34" map, the latest *ASLSK* rules set, four stand-alone scenarios, a Campaign Game, specific rules for the Elst *ASLSK HASL*, charts, and enough counters to play the entire module without having to own any other *ASLSK* product.

Both products are expected to be placed on pre-order by the end of July. No price has been announced yet.

The *Overlay Bundle* is being developed concurrently with *Rising Sun*, and should be completed later this summer, once *RS* has been finished.

Work progresses on *ASL Journal 10*, which will focus on the recently released *Festung Budapest*, with an article, a Series Replay of 'FB17 Stalingrad Redux', and a new scenario. There will also be several other articles and 12-16 other scenarios.

Work proceeds on *Hakkaa Päälle*, which will include new rules and units for the Finns, mapboard 52, and an updated National Capabilities Chart. As well as including the new Finnish units and characteristics it will also include Hungarian, Marine Raider/Paramarine, and SS MMC that have all been released since the last version of the chart was published.

MMP will also be reprinting *Swedish Volunteers*, the mini-module which covered the exploits of the Swedish Volunteer Corps in World War II at some point in the near future. It will include 12-16 scenarios and a sheet of counters for the Infantry, SW, and Guns of the SVC. What format it will take (magazine, scenario pack, etc.) has not yet been decided.

MMP are also planning on producing an

electronic version of the *ASLRB*, although the exact format (PDF, HTML, other) has yet to be determined.

BUNKER GOES GREEN

With the loss of their printer expected in the next year, and the cost of alternative printers being too much, the producers of *Dispatches from the Bunker*, have made the decision to stop the paper edition and be available only in electronic format. The next two issues will be printed as usual, but after issue 36 PDF copies of each issue will be emailed to subscribers in March and September. Existing subscriptions will be increased by one issue, and the price for new subscriptions will be lowered to \$15.00 for everyone.

Until that happens, work continues on issue 35, which will contain four new scenarios. 'The Gin Drinkers Line' is a tournament-sized scenario set in Hong Kong in 1941, which sees a reinforced company of Elite and 1st line Japanese infantry try to wrest the board 62 village from the 7th Rajput (Indian) Regiment. Also tournament-sized is 'The Gateway', which sees Panzer Grenadiers and Pioneers, supported by Stugs and a Flame-Hetzer, assault the 42nd Rainbow Division in Hatten, France during Operation Nordwind.

'A Willingness to Die' is the next scenario in the 6th Panzer Division series and has elements of the Russian 48th Rifle Division stand in the path of the German advance at Pailinus, Lithuania on the second day of Operation Barbarossa. The final scenario is 'Les Homme de Neige' which sees French and German troops fighting over the mountain tops near Storvtn, Norway in May 1940. Boards 2, 9 and 15 are featured, along with Alpine-style hills, Deep Snow, and snowshoes.

For those unfamiliar with *Dispatches from the Bunker*, it is a 12 page *ASL* Newsletter produced by the New England *ASL* Community, and released twice a year, sometime in March and September. It typically contains four new scenarios, an analysis of each one, an article on an aspect of the game system, Tactical Tips, *ASL* news and tournament updates from the region.

Four issue subscriptions (starting with the current issue, number 34 are available for \$16.00 (\$20.00 outside the USA). Issues 1 to 20 are out of print and the www.aslbunker.com website which previously hosted PDF versions is unlikely to return – plans are being made to make them available in the future. Other back issues are \$4.00 (\$4.50 outside the USA) or \$40.00 (\$50.00 outside the USA) for a complete set of issues 21-34. A complete set of issues 21-33 and a subscription for issues 34-37 is available for \$50.00 (\$60.00 outside the USA). Cheques should be made payable to Vic Provost and sent to *Dispatches from the Bunker*, P.O. Box 2024, Hinsdale MA 01235, or you can pay by PayPal to PinkFloydFan1954@aol.com. You can email them at aslbunker@aol.com.



A Justice Of A Mockery Of A Travesty

Craig Benn

Thursday

Pete Phillips: "You got a lot of nerve showing your face around here after last year, Hauser."

Me: "I don't totally recall what you're on about. Anyway everyone involved was over the age of consent...oh you mean the dice off*. Ah well you know. It's like Man United, in years to come no-one will remember the dodgy penalty decisions..."

(* Last year in a travesty of a mockery of justice I won the runners up prize not through winning a game but by rolling a single die with Dave Ramsey.)

To my surprise Pete was up for a game as he usually spends most of the tournament in a drunken stupor mouthing strange football nonsense. He managed to ambush me into playing the Yanks in the Niscemi-Biscari highway which proves that even drunks can possess low cunning.

The Germans get eight turns to cross some woods and open ground and take some buildings from some heavily outnumbered US paratroopers in this one. They also get an armoured car while I got two captured Italian 47mm guns. One of the guns broke on the first shot, while the other was completely out of position for the

entire game, but it didn't really matter as a bazooka team took out the armoured car early. It in turn got melted by a -2 directed killstack.

To my great surprise Pete started kicking my ass! I don't know what's happened to his game recently but it's much improved. Mr 9-2 was dealing out death very handily and Pete was using the eight turns to advance methodically and not take risks. It became clear that if I was going to win it was only going to be by the clock running out and not out of any stroke of brilliance.

The game turned when a sniper broke one of his squads which was guarding prisoners. They killed the guards but not before another squad had joined in the melee and simultaneously killed them. Sorting out that mess took Pete a turn and in the end just kept him away from the VC buildings. Phew. 1-0.

After that I was happy to walk round and exchange abuse with my fellow competitors and reflect on the number of points I would have lost to a Pete victory. Yeah quite a few really. Ah well, never mind Pete.

Time for another game before the tourney proper, and I ended up playing Early

Morning Action from *Crucible of Steel* against Steve Cook. Steve is a pleasure to play mainly because all his support weapons always break.

For me this was a rare opportunity to attack with SS and I think they have the advantage as long as you a) don't get silly with the Stugs and breach the CVP cap b) Don't get upset when your boys break as they come back quickly so take some chances. As there is only 6 turns, I opted for a high diddle diddle, right down the middle attack without any time consuming wide outflanks. The Russians put up a good show to begin with but then suddenly collapsed and it was mopping up. 2-0.

Friday

Round One – The Head of the Mace vs David Blackwood

There just aren't any easy games any more. This year I concentrated my limited prep time to rounds 3 and 4, hoping to wing my way through the first round. You are after all guaranteed a draw against someone from the lower half of the ranking pool - so this should be a doddle right?

I got the Poles in the one scenario in the round I'd played before and set up



The opening game of the weekend saw Pete Phillips defend the Montecorvino airfield against Paul Case in 'OAZ1 Gunter Strikes Back'.



Craig Benn demonstrates German camouflage techniques against American aerial recon over the Niscemi-Biscari highway!



The Russian set-up for a game of 'VotG22 Bark you Dogs!'



The defiant Russians desperately attempt to hold off the German assault.

a solid reverse slope defence. I used the turret counter sleaze last time I played it – obscuring the defending tanks so you can't tell which ones are the Fireflies. Legal advice has since outlawed this – but the great thing about sleazes is that there are so many to choose from. No one would be examining the barrel lengths of my Shermans – not with those HS and SMC riders. Why yes I'm sure if you're involved in a desperate defence against SS, the back of a tank is a perfectly sensible place to be. Someone has to ehrrm...liaise...and do...err...coordination and stuff.

So I've got the side I want in a scenario I've played before, and I reckon it's tough on the SS to get the 26 exit VP in 5 turns. Simples. Except...Dave who is supposed to be as green as grass starts prepping Smoke, uses armoured assault and infantry smoke, and aggressively moving panzerfaust toting infantry forward. One of my Shermans gets toasted by a Pz IV killing a half squad of riders and a Firefly brews up to an AFPh faust.

I do start breaking and killing his infantry as it comes over the top of the hill, but I don't start killing his vehicles until he starts feeling the time pressure and launches them forward in the mid-game. Several times my lines are overrun on the flanks but the Poles are able to fall back and reform a new line, helped by the fact I never fail an out of fuel DR and my vehicles zip about. He does get about 9 exit VP off but runs out of time in the end. Very tough. I'd like to pretend we were engaged in witty banter and manly bonhomie but "final fire for four down one" was as sophisticated as our conversation got. 1-0 in the tourney. 3-0 overall.

Round Two – Setting the Stage vs Tom Jackson

Tom has a reputation for slow play of almost Phil Draperesque (who moves in geological time scales) proportions. I had a bad feeling when after we chose this scenario, and he told me he had already

done a set-up...it still took him 30 minutes to set up. Last time I played this against Sam Prior it took 11 hours. I wondered if I was about to break that record.

In fact the delay was largely due to my counter storage system as he hunted for fortifications and we cracked along very rapidly. This is a beautiful scenario. The SS win by exiting 45 VP or taking three of five multi-hex buildings. The buildings are set up with two in the left front, one in the centre front, and two in the centre rear. The ground is generally open but there are patches of orchard and woods, and large grain fields at the back of the two Russian VC buildings on the left. There is a medium dust hindrance for tank to tank squabbling, and variable purchase options.

As the front centre building isn't really hold-able for the Russians, this will generally come down to a slog for the two left hand buildings. The numerous Russian fortifications and most of their ideological fervour will be concentrated here. Having played this before, I opted to bypass that kind of nastiness and pile through the centre and right, getting either the exit VP or the two back buildings.

For the first two turns there was hardly a shot fired, helped by his field phone breaking. Then the KVs arrived and it started getting serious. A Stug manoeuvring for a shot had to ESB to stop and immobilized itself. Another one showed its flank to an anti-tank gun and paid the price. A Pz III died to one of the Russian behemoths and frankly they were becoming a nuisance.

I had a brief moment when I thought I only needed 25 exit VP, started feeling smug for a turn, then panicked when I checked the VC's to be sure. Crap. Have to be the two back buildings then. The Tigers started mopping up the KVs, my reinforcing halftracks debussed in front of the VC buildings, and although time was tight I just managed to get enough stuff where it was needed. 2-0 tourney. 4-0 overall.

Saturday

Round Three – Dying for Danzig vs Martin Mathers

I've remarked before that Martin looks like a fat EMINEM.

Martin: "Last year I basically gave you a free pass, this year I'm gonna bust a cap in your ass..."

Me: "Yes, well. Rap is modern poetry. That's why it's sh*t."

Martin came into this game on the back of a 12-0 tournament winning streak that saw him crowned INTENSIVE FIRE 2011 champ. This coupled with his desire for revenge after our 20 minute game last year meant the chicken entrails looked a bit green. Still as most of his so called friends pointed out, this "achievement" was basically large scale bottom feeding. I mean IF is basically full of southerners, who (bless them) try hard but don't really know how to play.

I wanted the Germans as the Russians have a lot to do in 4.5 turns despite the large number of flamethrowers and the ROAR record. Unfortunately I got the Russians and his setup didn't look a million miles different from mine – although he had stuck the 88 too far forward.

My on-map forces charged forward in solid Russian fashion and started getting creamed, a pesky broken half squad straggler killing one of my squads through failure to rout, and most of the rest breaking or pinning. However my turn 1 reinforcements managed to sneak round the back, armoured assaulting in bypass behind a building in the entry zone. A judicious sniper breaking a half squad and his HMG jamming at a crucial point meant I could spread my guys out from the stupidly small entry zone, really flank him and it was game on.

Flamethrowers either melt the opposition away or break first shot. I had the good ones. At one point I had an OT-34 in motion with three German squads having advanced adjacent to take it out. With no

prep options, I overran a squad in a building, passing the bog and cellar checks, getting a KIA on the squad and with panzerfausts narrowly missing all around (gotta love that +3 TEM).

Although I eventually lost all my tanks, it wasn't before I got my moneys worth from them, with lots of filthy Nazis sent to Valhalla through the cleansing power of flame. Even so there are a lot of Germans and you have to break, encircle or disorder all but a half squad to win. On the final turn Martin started spreading out and would have snuck a squad away if it wasn't for the captured HMG which he'd handily repaired for me. Pesky kids. 3-0 tourney. 5-0 overall.

Interlude

After three rounds only Mark Blackmore, Tim Bunce and I were left unbeaten. One of us would play Martin Mayers who was the highest ranking player with a 2-1 score. Well one of the others, as I'd already played him. I drew the short straw and got Mr "SS" Blackmore. Mark had managed about 9(!) games by this point – and had been SS or good Germans in every single one. As we were waiting round for a bit we decided on a short game of Chapel St Anne not for points which has about 3.5 squads a side. I made him dice for sides, went the SS and won. I reckon he just can't put his heart (or whatever he uses for pumping blood) into beating the boys in black.

Round Four Raid on the Reich vs Mark Blackmore

We secretly bid for scenarios and ended up with Raid on the Reich as first choice. We then secretly bid for sides, with Mark picking the Poles and me the landers.

Von Blackmore: "I haff outvitted you again! You were expecting me to pick ze

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

Here are the individual win/loss records for the tournament

POS.	PLAYER	P	W	L	RND	CRUS
1	Craig Benn	5	5	0	0	3204.0
2	Mark Blackmore	5	4	1	4	3166.3
3	Sam Prior	5	4	1	3	3201.3
4	Alan Smee	5	4	1	3	2992.5
5	Martin Mayers	5	3	2	3	3183.3
6	Tim Bunce	5	3	2	3	3098.3
7	Tom Jackson	5	3	2	2	3135.0
8	Paul Jones	5	3	2	2	3110.0
9	David Ramsey	5	3	2	2	2968.3
10	Martin Vicca	5	3	2	2	2891.7
11	Miles Wiehahn	5	3	2	1	2848.3
12	David Blackwood	5	3	2	1	2798.3
13	Hakan Isaksson	5	2	3	2	2987.5
14	William Binns	5	2	3	1	2967.5
15	Paul Legg	5	2	3	1	2942.5
16	Nigel Blair	5	2	3	1	2892.5
17	Brian Hooper	5	2	3	1	2600.0
18	Simon Staniforth	5	1	4	1	3000.0
19	Bill Sherliker	5	1	4	1	2855.0
20	Nick Ranson	5	1	4	1	2855.0
21	Colin Bell	5	1	4	1	2345.0
22	Neil Brunger	5	0	5	1	n/a

RND is the round in which the player first lost – if players have the same W-L result, the one losing in the later round places higher.

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

Germans!"

Me: "No, no, I figured you'd pick the 8 morale attackers."

Von Blackmore: "Schweinhund pig dog!"

Me: "You have used Allied Minors before, haven't you? You know about the broken morale..."

Von Blackmore: "Is one higher like ze SS, ja?"

Me: "Not exactly."

The Poles have to take a building from the top end of board 2A, one from the bottom end of board 2A, and capture or eliminate a couple of wagons. The Germans get nine second line squads. The Poles get five squads and two tankettes to start with from the North and bring on another seven squads as cavalry from the North edge on turn2, west edge on turn3 and east edge on turn 4.

From AARs I saw most people put some speedbumps at the top, and defended the bottom building with the wire, mines, and bulk of troops. And lost.

I figured I'd try something different and defend the top building in sufficient strength to force some of the reinforcements to come on in the north on turn2. I also had two squads with trenches, the MMG and 50* mortar and a wagon on a hill on the left flank with decent LOS which would divert some of the turn3 guys. I reckoned I could make a fighting withdrawal back to the Alamo at the back as long as I didn't leave it too late. Two squads (one HIP) at the back with the mines and wire should be enough.

It worked well enough in a practice game...

Mark starts with his trademark full speed ahead attack. My MMG takes the first shot of the game for a long range two down three and KIAs a Polish squad. My 50* goes on a fiendish rate tear and starts breaking the others. The tankettes are a nuisance though and I keep missing or bouncing off the armour with my one ATR and get freeze-sleazed a few times.

After losing two squads without hurting me Mark starts really bitchin' that he's lost. But he's not one for half measures. No Polish reinforcements come on on turn two. I abandon the top VC building and start pulling back towards the rear. Mark brings all seven squads in on as cavalry who gallop at 20MF towards the rear VC building and get adjacent or close in one turn. Despite having played this before I really underestimated how fast galloping cavalry can move. Really makes my one squad in the VC building and one HIP in an outbuilding look foolish. Really foolish.

PlanB. Only one thing for it. I'm going to have to counterattack and retake the building I've just given up. Despite the tankettes, defending squads and the Polish MMG. It doesn't help when one of my leaders gets killed by a sniper (you only get two!) and the LLMC causes my MMG firing HS to go berserk and charge from safety right at the Polish MMG! Mark splits a couple of squads off from his flanking move to roll up my hill position. The 50* mortar

PLAYER RESULTS

Here are the individual win/loss records.

PLAYER	P	W	L
Martin Barker	2	0	2
Colin Bell	5	1	4
Craig Benn	7	7	0
William Binns	6	2	4
Mark Blackmore	11	9	2
David Blackwood	7	3	4
Nigel Blair	8	3	5
Neil Brunger	6	1	5
Tim Bunce	5	3	2
Shaun Carter	1	1	0
Paul Case	5	1	4
Steve Cook	2	0	2
Michael Davies	4	3	1
Trevor Edwards	4	3	1
Gareth Evans	3	1	2
Russell Gough	2	1	1
Malcolm Hatfield	2	0	2
Brian Hooper	5	2	3
Hakan Isaksson	8	3	5
Tom Jackson	7	5	2
Paul Jones	7	4	3
Paul Legg	5	2	3
Martin Mayers	8	6	2
Pete Phillipps	11	4	7
Ian Pollard	6	5	1
Sam Prior	5	4	1
David Ramsey	5	3	2
Nick Ranson	5	1	4
Bill Sherliker	5	1	4
Alan Smee	5	4	1
Simon Staniforth	7	1	6
Neil Stevens	4	2	2
Mark Tomlinson	1	0	1
Martin Vicca	5	3	2
Miles Wiehahn	5	3	2

THE SCENARIOS

Here is the table of Scenario Win/Loss records:

SCENARIO	ALLIED	AXIS
A49 Delaying Action	1	1
AP40 The Head Of The Mace	1	6
AP52 Into Vienna Woods	0	3
AP74 Batty-P	1	0
AP80 A Bloody Waste	1	0
BB5 Going to Church	0	1
BFP-102 Tolstoy Woods	3	2
BFP-73 Preliminary Move	1	0
BFP-75 Schreiber's Success	1	0
BFP-79 A Hard Push	0	1
BFP-90 Early Morning Action	0	1
BFP-95 Obian Highway	3	0
FrF24 Forging Spetsnaz	0	3
FrF52 Dying For Danzig	3	3
FrF53 Raid Into The Reich	3	4
FT KGS6 Biecker's Bastion	0	1
FT148 La Horgne	1	0
FT165 Shopino Struggle	2	3
FT167 Wasp Sting	2	3
FT168 By Dawn's Early Light	1	4
HG-8 Perin's Thunder	0	2
J103 Lenin's Sons	1	0
J122 Bloody Bois Jacques	0	1
J129 Mountain Hunters	1	1
J138 Point To Make	2	3
J139 Light Aid Detached	1	0
J146 Ragnarok	2	0
J53 Setting the Stage	1	2
JATK7 Brothers in Arms	1	0
O1 Go Big or Go Home	2	1
OA21 Gunter Strikes Back	1	0
RB6 Turned Away	0	1
S38 Raiders Along The Wall	1	0
SP185 Von Renesse's Recon	1	0
SP29 Schloss Bubingen	0	1
T9 Nissemi-Biscari Highway	1	0
TBBA07 Cracking Fortress Holland	1	0
VotG09 Eviction Notice	0	1
VotG22 Bark You Dogs!	1	0
WO7 Hell For The Holidays	0	2
TOTALS	92	41

is broken and so is its half squad. There are now four Polish squads in the rear VC building, although my one – now encircled – defender somehow holds out for the time being and he shies from CC waiting for the break. It's looking bleak in a very bleak east Prussian way...

And yet...we know the dice gods are fickle. They give and they take away. I get a squad into the top VC building adjacent to a Pole which breaks it. My guy is going to die for FTR except I get a sniper. I could choose to hit the Polish MMG position on the hill or I could break the one defending squad in the VC building, save my guys, kill him for FTR and take control of the building, kiss the girl and win the game...what was the first one again?

Mark desperately freeze sleazes with his one remaining tankette, and launches everything he can to take the top VC building back. He gets two melees on the ground floor on the last turn. Wins one and nobody hits in the other. I have a squad on the top floor that can assault move on top of the ongoing melee without being shot at, so he can't regain control. 4-0

If Martin beats Tim Bunce in the other game then amazingly I am tourney champ. If more likely he loses it'll be decided in the fifth round in the morning. Mark plays quick. Those guys are on turn 2 of Mountain Hunters and it...looks...li..ke...it...mi..ght...take...a...loooooong time. So rather than watch this drying paint of a game we go out to get pissed in Blackpool as this is the only sensible way to prepare for a final. (Well I come back early because I really really wanted to win but let's not puncture the laddish myth.)

Sunday Round Five – By Dawn's Early Light vs Paul Jones

Tim Bunce texted me that he'd won to ruin my night out. But he hadn't, Martin had. What a C*ck. So the pressure was off and I could play for fun having already won the tourney.

I got my favoured Americans in this four turn simultaneous set-up, roll to see who goes first dust-up. The Germans win by taking four multi-hex building and not losing four of five AFV's.

There were some very unedifying moments in this scenario, which would never have passed a moderately efficient war censor. I'm talking US paratroopers screaming like little girls at the first shot and surrendering in droves no less. Elite German panzers not trying to shoot it out with the Amis, but running round the back of the map, dispensing smoke, staying in motion... cats and dogs living together...

The first shot of the game, the German panzers start prepping smoke and

Continued on page 13, column 1



Top: tournament champion Craig Benn receives his trophy.

Above: Runner-up Mark Blackmore.

Bottom: Neil Brunger picks up the wooden spoon (a £25 voucher from Second Chance Games).



Double One 2012



Friday June 22nd to Sunday June 24th

The London ASL tournament "Double One" is set for the weekend of June 22nd to 24th, returning to the same venue and with continued support from our main sponsor, Leisure Games - www.leisuregames.com.

Double One's college venue offers excellent value for money bed and breakfast accommodation, large gaming rooms, open for extended gaming times across the whole weekend, and is located close to Chelmsford, Essex, with easy access to London via a 40 minute main rail link, the M25, and Stansted international airport.

The weekend

The tournament starts on the Thursday evening with a meal off campus. This year's venue will be a local curry house about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile walk from the college, with a good reputation in the area and a large stock of beers (although, we understand, no "Newkie Broom").

The gaming room opens at 8.30am on Friday 22nd June. We will be running a couple of one day minis (4 or 8 entrants, straight knock out) but players might like to consider tackling one of those big monster scenarios that you never get chance to play in a morning or afternoon.

New to Double One in 2012 will be a 3 day "maxi" monster tournament, where 4 players will play each other in a round Robin format, tackling 1 monster scenario per day from a possible list of 3 each round. No more will you be able to curse that one crucial snake eyes / box cars!

On Saturday morning, players will have the option to continue open gaming or enter the main tournament. Participants that want to take part in the latter will be entered approximately according to their ASL ladder rating.

Players will be organised into groups of 4, and will play each other on a round robin basis. Round 1 commences at 9.00am, round 2 by 2.30pm, and round 3 on Sunday morning at 9.00am. Details of the tournament scenarios will be released in published on the website in December 2011.

Saturday evening will also see the return of the now infamous Double One quiz, where your knowledge of ASL rules, general and military history will be stretched to its limits by the ASL world's answer to Nicholas Parsons, Richard Dagnall.

The venue

The college has a licensed bar which will be open during the weekend. Sandwiches and snacks will also be available. Writtle village is a very short walk from the college, with a varied selection of pubs, restaurants and a mid-sized supermarket.

The tournament's venue will be the Writtle Room, Writtle College, Lordships Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3RR - www.writtle.ac.uk. Room opening times are 8.30am - midnight Friday, 8am-midnight Saturday, and 8am-3.00pm Sunday (prize giving circa 2.30pm)

The venue is less than 2 miles outside Chelmsford and is easily accessible:

- By car - the college is less than 15 miles from both junction 28 of the M25 and junction 7 of the M11.
- By train - Chelmsford station has a regular direct service on the London Liverpool Street line. Free pick ups and travel between the station and college can be arranged with the organisers
- By plane - London Stansted airport is less than 30 minutes from the venue, and for those flying into Stansted, free pick ups and transportation can again be arranged with the organisers.

Participants intending to stay overnight should book their B&B accommodation directly with the college (£30.00 plus VAT per person per night). Contact the organisers for a booking form and T&Cs. Further information can be obtained by contacting the college (phone +44 (0) 1245 424200 ext 25645)

The college has a licensed bar which will be open during the weekend. Sandwiches and snacks will also be available at certain times. Writtle village is a very short walk from the college, with a varied selection of pubs, restaurants and a mid-sized supermarket.

Attendance fees

The attendance fee for the weekend is £15.00. Payment can be made by either Paypal or cheque.

For further details, please either visit the tournament's website at www.doubleone-online.net or contact the organisers as follows:

Derek Cox, 25 Cramphorn Walk, Chelmsford, Essex. CM1 2RD. United Kingdom. derek.cox@dsl.pipex.com

Brendan Clark brendan.clark@virgin.net

You can also keep up to date with developments by joining the London ASL Yahoo Group - <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/LASL>

We look forward to welcoming you to Double One in 2012!



The Crusaders Open ASL Tournament Ladder

HEROES 2012 Update
The Champion – Craig Benn
Derek Tocher

Here is the full Crusaders Ladder as of 31 March 2012.

Ω

Rank	Player	P	(W-D-L)	Pts	Rank	Player	P	(W-D-L)	Pts	Rank	Player	P	(W-D-L)	Pts
1	Toby Pilling	75	68-2-5	4085	93=	Jas Bal	5	3-0-2	3090	186=	Jakob Norgaard	6	1-1-4	2885
2	Derek Tocher	125	94-2-28	3935	93=	Kevin Beard	13	9-1-3	3090	186=	Bernard Savage	21	9-1-11	2885
3	Steve Thomas	42	32-1-9	3755	93=	Gary Lock	2	2-0-0	3090	188=	Sam Belcher	8	3-0-5	2880
4	Simon Strevens	87	60-1-25	3720	93=	Iain Mackay	43	22-0-21	3090	188=	David Blackwood	27	11-0-16	2880
5	Dave Schofield	151	110-0-41	3710	99	Peter Michels	3	2-0-1	3090	190	Patrick Dale	38	15-1-22	2875
6	Mike Rudd	38	32-1-5	3660	98	Paulo Alessi	6	4-0-2	3085	191=	John Johnson	1	0-0-1	2870
7	Fermin Retamero	13	11-0-2	3650	99	Dirk Beijaard	5	3-0-2	3080	191=	David Kalman	5	2-0-3	2870
8	Mark Blackmore	77	57-0-20	3645	100=	Billy Carslaw	11	4-0-7	3075	193=	Russell Gough	83	46-4-39	2860
9	Georges Tournemire	8	7-1-0	3640	100=	Hakan Isaksson	23	12-0-11	3075	193=	Peter Ladwein	21	9-0-12	2860
10	Craig Benn	69	50-0-19	3635	100=	Robin Langston	9	4-2-3	3075	193=	Lutz Pietschker	4	1-0-3	2860
11	Michael Hastrup-Leth	45	31-1-13	3615	100=	Chris Milne	5	3-0-2	3075	193=	Neil Piggot	4	1-0-3	2860
12	Trevor Edwards	138	80-1-57	3605	104=	Jean-Luc Baas	3	2-0-1	3070	197	Nick Angelopoulos	5	1-0-4	2850
13	Aaron Cleavin	6	6-0-0	3565	104=	Serge Bettencourt	3	2-0-1	3070	198=	Keith Bristow	69	39-1-29	2845
14=	Peter Bennett	14	12-1-1	3560	104=	Robert Schaaf	3	2-0-1	3070	198=	John Martin	6	2-0-4	2845
14=	Bjarne Marell	36	26-0-10	3560	107=	Tony Gibson	36	19-0-17	3065	200	Bill Eaton	21	8-3-10	2840
16	Steve Linton	17	14-0-3	3545	107=	Alexander Rousse-Lacordaire	4	2-1-1	3065	201=	Nigel Blair	155	58-1-96	2835
17	Sam Prior	79	46-1-32	3535	107=	Bob Runicles	3	2-0-1	3065	201=	Mark Furnell	13	5-1-7	2835
18	Paul Haesler	17	10-2-5	3530	110=	William Binns	48	22-0-26	3060	201=	Dave Otway	5	1-0-4	2835
19	Jes Toudval	24	16-0-8	3475	110=	Scott Byrne	12	7-0-5	3060	204	Mike Daniel	5	2-0-3	2825
20=	Tim Bunce	81	55-0-26	3460	110=	Raurigh Dale	38	17-0-21	3060	205	Mark Chapman	6	2-0-4	2820
20=	Martin Mayers	65	27-0-38	3460	110=	Patrik Manlig	16	9-0-7	3060	206=	Michael Essex	38	18-0-20	2815
22	Dominic Mcgrath	162	100-2-61	3440	114=	Stefan Jacobi	11	5-0-6	3050	206=	Mat Haas	16	7-0-9	2815
23	Alan Snee	9	8-0-1	3435	114=	Bo Siemsen	4	2-0-2	3050	208	Michael Robertson	4	1-0-3	2810
24	Lars Klynsner	11	8-0-3	3400	116	Scott Greenman	8	3-1-4	3045	209=	Michael Allen	6	3-0-3	2805
25	Paul Jones	52	28-0-24	3385	117	Steve Pleva	6	3-0-3	3035	209=	Ian Morris	5	1-0-4	2805
26=	Ran Shiloah	11	7-0-4	3370	118=	Ian Pollard	134	55-1-78	3030	211=	Ivor Gardiner	17	8-0-9	2800
26=	Peter Struijff	10	8-0-2	3370	118=	Mark Warren	20	11-0-9	3030	211=	Clive Haden	5	2-0-3	2800
28=	Andrew Dando	48	27-2-19	3365	120=	Daniele Dal Bello	4	1-0-3	3025	213=	Kevin Crosskey	16	6-0-10	2790
28=	Carl Sizmur	21	13-0-8	3365	120=	Peter Hofland	4	2-0-2	3025	213=	Alistair Fairbairn	3	0-0-3	2790
30	Bern Ribom	5	5-0-0	3350	122	Ian Daglish	150	70-2-78	3020	213=	Bill Sherliker	43	19-2-22	2790
31	Phil Draper	78	49-2-27	3330	123=	Martin Barker	29	12-1-16	3015	213=	Nick Shonks	8	3-0-5	2790
32	Joe Arthur	21	13-0-8	3305	125=	Vincent Kamer	4	2-0-2	3015	217	Malcolm Hatfield	64	26-0-38	2785
33=	Michael Davies	84	46-1-37	3295	125=	Colin Graham	5	3-0-2	3010	218	Chris Littlejohn	14	3-2-9	2780
33=	Frank Tinschert	15	10-0-5	3295	125=	Andrew Saunders	33	15-1-17	3010	219	Graham Worsfold	3	0-0-3	2775
33=	Martin Vicca	43	29-1-13	3295	127=	Shawn Carter	83	38-1-44	3005	220=	Lee Bray	14	3-0-11	2770
36=	Philippe Leonard	9	7-1-1	3285	127=	Allard Koene	3	4-0-3	3005	220=	Richard Kirby	7	2-0-5	2770
36=	Andy Smith	13	7-0-6	3285	127=	Ian Willey	11	5-0-6	3005	222	Bill Hensby	31	10-0-21	2765
38=	Will Fleming	3	3-0-0	3280	130=	Nick Brown	3	1-1-1	3000	223=	Andrew Hershey	10	4-0-6	2760
38=	Ralf Krusat	6	5-0-1	3280	130=	Thomas Buettnert	3	2-0-1	3000	223=	William Roberts	12	3-1-8	2760
40=	Dave Booth	7	5-0-2	3270	130=	Stephen Burleigh	37	15-2-20	3000	223=	Flemming Scott-Christensen	6	1-0-5	2760
40=	Derek Cox	20	11-0-9	3270	130=	Steve Grainger	8	4-0-4	3000	226=	Brian Hooper	171	61-2-108	2755
42	Gerard Burton	55	33-0-22	3265	130=	Martin Hubley	4	3-0-1	3000	226=	Jonathan Townsend	4	1-0-3	2755
43	Daniel Kallman	11	8-0-3	3245	130=	Ian Kenney	4	2-0-2	3000	228	Peter Neale	3	0-0-3	2750
44=	Jackson Keddell	5	5-0-0	3240	130=	Phil Nobo	11	6-0-5	3000	229=	Colin Bell	5	1-0-4	2745
44=	David Ramsey	66	37-0-29	3240	130=	Duncan Spencer	4	2-0-2	3000	229=	Andy McMaster	34	12-0-22	2745
46=	Daniel Batey	4	4-0-0	3235	138=	Gilles Hakim	5	2-0-3	2995	231	Burnham Fox	23	10-0-13	2740
46=	Paul Saunders	19	10-0-9	3235	138=	Kris Pugh	14	6-0-8	2995	232=	Rupert Featherby	3	0-0-3	2735
48=	Bob Eburne	57	33-0-24	3225	140=	Eric Baker	2	1-0-1	2985	232=	Nick Quinn	14	5-0-9	2735
48=	Ray Woloszyn	31	18-1-12	3225	140=	Matt Blackman	2	1-0-1	2985	232=	Simon Staffinforth	20	7-0-13	2735
50	Christian Koppmeyer	15	8-0-7	3220	142=	David Farr	4	2-0-2	2980	235	Hamish Hutson	4	0-0-4	2725
51	Ian Percy	12	8-1-3	3215	142=	Malcolm Rutledge	3	1-0-2	2980	236=	Steve Cocks	4	0-0-4	2720
51=	Tom Slizewski	5	4-0-1	3215	144=	Brendan Clark	24	10-1-13	2975	236=	Marc Horton	6	1-0-5	2720
53=	Klaus Malmstrom	4	3-1-0	3210	144=	Eric Gerstenberg	18	10-0-8	2975	238	Ray Jennings	11	3-0-8	2715
53=	Nils-Gunner Nilsson	5	4-0-1	3210	144=	Paul Kettlewell	89	42-0-47	2975	239	Richard Dagnall	6	1-0-5	2700
53=	Yves Tielemans	3	3-0-0	3210	144=	Sergio Puziello	5	1-0-4	2975	240	Neil Brunger	55	19-0-36	2695
56=	Francois Boudrenghien	3	3-0-0	3205	148=	Simon Church	5	2-0-3	2970	241	Simon Hoare	4	0-0-4	2690
56=	Simon Croome	63	34-0-29	3205	148=	Paul Legg	152	64-2-86	2970	242=	Jeff Howarden	7	2-0-5	2685
56=	Tom Jackson	33	16-0-17	3205	148=	John O'rielly	5	2-1-2	2970	242=	Chris Walton	60	18-1-41	2685
59	Jean Devaux	3	3-0-0	3190	151=	Elliott Cox	2	0-1-1	2960	244	Christain Speis	5	1-0-4	2680
60	Armin Deppe	13	7-1-5	3185	151=	Ben Jones	49	23-0-26	2960	245=	Stuart Brant	13	5-0-8	2675
61	Bill Durrant	5	4-0-1	3180	153	Michael Maus	7	3-0-4	2955	245=	Steve Cook	31	14-0-17	2675
62=	Steve Crowley	47	21-1-25	3175	154	Gavin White	5	2-0-3	2950	247	James Crossfield	15	6-0-9	2670
62=	Jonathan Pickles	8	5-0-3	3175	155=	Wayne Baumber	79	37-0-42	2945	248	Pedro Barradas	7	1-0-6	2655
64=	Grant Pettit	7	4-1-2	3170	155=	Laurent Forest	3	0-0-3	2945	249	Indy Lagu	7	0-0-7	2645
64=	Bruno Tielemans	3	3-0-0	3170	155=	Alex Ganna	2	0-1-1	2945	250=	Nigel Ashcroft	52	19-1-32	2635
64=	David Tye	45	20-0-25	3170	155=	David Murry	2	2-1-2	2945	250=	Pete Philipps	156	60-0-96	2635
67=	Rodney Callen	6	4-0-2	3160	155=	Pedro Ramis	5	3-0-3	2945	252	James Short	11	3-0-8	2630
67=	Mel Falk	9	5-0-4	3160	160=	Paulo Ferreira	9	4-0-5	2940	253=	Adrian Catchpole	11	2-0-9	2625
69	Ulric Schwela	46	21-1-24	3155	160=	Wayne Kelly	11	4-1-6	2940	253=	Graham Smith	49	18-1-30	2625
70	Jeremy Copley	9	6-0-3	3150	160=	Bob Nugent	3	2-0-1	2940	255=	Gareth Evans	7	1-0-6	2620
71	Nick Edelsten	22	14-1-7	3145	160=	Jon Williams	14	6-0-8	2940	255=	Adrian Maddocks	12	3-0-9	2620
72=	Paul O'donald	72	44-1-27	3135	164=	Derek Briscoe	1	0-0-1	2935	257	Arthur Garlick	21	2-5-14	2615
72=	Frenk Van Der MEY	4	3-0-1	3135	164=	Martin Bryan	19	8-0-11	2935	258	Bryan Brinkman	9	1-0-8	2610
72=	Andrew Whinnett	16	9-0-7	3135	166=	Andrea Marchino	1	0-0-1	2930	259	Neil Stevens	69	27-2-40	2605
75=	Chris Courtier	13	7-2-4	3130	166=	Andy Price	3	1-0-2	2930	260	Simon Taylor	24	7-1-16	2600
75=	Miles Wiehahn	40	21-0-19	3130	168=	Paul Boyle	5	2-0-3	2925	261	Ian Parkes	10	3-1-6	2595
77	Paul Sanderson	41	21-0-20	3125	168=	John Sharp	8	3-0-5	2925	262	John Fletcher	6	0-0-6	2585
78=	Lee Brimmicombe-Wood	12	8-0-4	3120	170=	Steve Allen	6	1-1-4	2920	263	Oliver Gray	15	4-0-11	2580
78=	William Hanson	19	11-0-7	3120	170=	Tim Collier	17	7-0-10	2920	264	Chris Netherton	30	10-2-18	2560
78=	Philip Jones	5	3-0-2	3120	172=	Iain Ainsworth	1	0-0-1	2915	265	Mike Stanbridge	47	13-1-33	2555
78=	Anthony O'boyle	3	2-0-1	3120	172=	Edo Giaroni	3	1-0-2	2915	266	Michael Rhodes	43	10-0-33	2545
78=	Paul Ryde-Weller	10	5-1-4	3120	172=	Nathan Wegener	3	1-0-2	2915	267	Robert Seoney	5	0-0-5	2510
83	Mark Walley	4	3-0-1	3115	175=	Joel Berridge	3	1-0-2	2910	268	Damien Maher	9	1-0-8	2485
84=	Luis Calçada	43	21-1-21	3110	175=	Brian Martuzas	5	2-0-3	2910	269	Nick Carter	11	2-0-9	2475
84=	Luc Schonkerren	5	3-0-2	3110	177=	Mark Caddy	1	0-0-1	2905	270	Justin Key	69	25-1-43	2470
84=	Aaron Sibley	64	38-0-26	3110	177=	Ian Gaueman	3	1-0-2	2905	271	Roger Cook	131	9-2-20	2440
84=	Stewart Thain	24	12-0-12	3110	177=	Mike Kinley	5	2-0-3	2905	272	Paul Case	31	35-3-93	2425
88	Simon Morris	11	6-0-5	3105	177=	James Neary	5	2-0-3	2905	273	John Kennedy	24	5-0-19	2410
89	Russ Curry	6	4-0-2	3100	177=	Phil Ward	5	2-0-3	2905	274	Chris Ager	26	7-0-19	2405
90=	Nigel Brown	26	11-0-15	3095	182=	Josh Kalman	10	5-0-5	2900	275	Nick Ranson	52	8-1-43	2395
90=	Marc Hanna	6	4-0-2	3095</										

6-6-6 THE AMERICAN SOLDIER

Michael Dorosh

In 2009, I posted the following in response to some threads on a website that discussed the depiction of American soldiers in *ASL*, most particularly the 1st line U.S. Army squad that saw combat in Europe. I didn't intend to crawl into the thought processes of the original designers of the game – I wasn't one of them nor do I know any of them personally – but as I review and revise the material for presentation here, I still feel perhaps a historical discussion of some of the characteristics of the American infantryman and a little compare/contrast with the Germans might be of interest to those unfamiliar with him, and offer a brief look at the depiction of the G.I. in the evolution of the *Advanced Squad Leader* game system. The comments are really applicable to any tactical game system, though references to firepower factors and morale are obviously peculiar to *ASL*.

Squad Leader to G.I.

A brief description of the evolution of the portrayal of the G.I. in *ASL* is easily achieved; in *Squad Leader*, there were two types of squads for the three nationalities. The Russians and Germans had 4-firepower squads to represent the fact they were predominantly armed with bolt action rifles. The Americans had an advantage in men (by 1944, a 12-man squad as opposed to the 9-man squad of the Germans) and raw firepower (the semi-

automatic M-1 Garand rifle, described by General Patton as the best battle implement ever devised, supplemented by a the M-1 and M-2 carbines in semi- and full-automatic intended as a replacement for the .45 automatic pistol in front-line units). Engineer squads received 8 firepower and represented units armed with submachine guns, the Germans 8-3-8s and the Americans 8-4-7s. The American 6-6-6 squad, with its ominous ratings, was competitive because the GIs were also immune to Desperation Morale (DM) status. They were also automatically granted captured weapon use beyond what the Germans were permitted, representing the American fascination – so so the designers told us – with “gadgets.”

Cross of Iron introduced new unit types for the Germans; the 6-5-8 SS squad, armed with assault rifles, and the 5-4-8 “cavalry” squad which in *ASL* is often used to depict paratroopers armed with the FG42 assault rifle. *G.I.: Anvil of Victory* saw an expansion of the Americans to include Green and 2nd Line units, as well as Elite 6-6-7 squads a cut above the 6-6-6s, and the downgrade of the Airborne squad to a 7-4-7. The ability to repair broken support weapons on a “1” or “2” was not trivial (33% chance of success, double that of other nationalities), increased smoke grenade capability, WP availability and the retention of DM-lessness.

ASL saw minor changes to the

American order of battle, though the elimination of the DM bonus was not trivial. However, the broken side morale of the 6-6-6 squad was increased to 8 – a “bonus” of 2, something not granted to other squads of other nationalities at that scale.

Morale

So why does the G.I. rate a 6 morale? The observation is often made that the American fighting man is rated lower than the worst of the European armies. The Italians, who lost Hitler's war in Russia, the Balkans, and North Africa, who surrendered in pitiful mobs at the first opportunity, have a 1st line squad superior to the G.I. The Romanians, who collapsed on the flanks of the 6th Army, have a squad superior to those that stormed ashore on OMAHA Beach. Why?

Quantifying factors for a game is no simple task; armour values are a relatively simple matter (the late Lorrin Bird would no doubt argue it is not, and he'd be right, but at the least, it is more a matter of mathematics than such intangibles as morale) compared to capturing the likelihood of a group of 12 men to stand and fight, or go to ground, or even surrender – or try and devise a game system in which you can depict a squad doing all those things in the same turn.

Conscription and military training

The majority of American soldiers were (relatively) short-term soldiers; many were volunteers, some were draftees. Almost all intended to leave the military at the conclusion of hostilities. This was not different from the European militaries, though military life was certainly different in the European militaries. In the German Army, pre-military training might start before the age of 12 in the youth services; after high school, mandatory service in the Reich Labour Service beckoned, which was highly militarized and included drill, field camps and marching in addition to labour tasks. Mandatory military service followed. By the time he was in the Army, the German male had been fully indoctrinated in a military outlook and rarely had problems adjusting to discipline and authority. The average U.S. recruit encountered considerably more culture shock, particularly the urban recruit not used to long days or physical labour. Like all soldiers, though, he quickly adapted because



he had to.

Raw material, though, was often wanting. Other armies also noted a tendency for the best officer and junior leader candidates to join the air service or the navy; there was no glamour in the infantry, though the paratroops (and in the U.S., the Marines) did draw eager volunteers – the jump pay of the former was a nice incentive as well. The U.S. Army only had one category of general service into which physical abilities were graded, compared to the German or British armies which had a wider series of grades, meaning that American infantry units received fewer suitable candidates. Education and intelligence was also a problem.

Craig F. Posey discussed this in his excellent article “A Nation of Workers: Utilization of American Manpower and Material in ASL” in *ASL Annual '89*. According to him:

Field commanders in 1942 complained repeatedly that they were receiving men of so low a mental capability to be trained. One commander stated that the hardest problem in finding competent enlisted personnel to be instructors was because “everybody higher than a moron” had already been pulled out... An Army Ground Forces observer with the Fifth Army in Italy (obviously in 1943 or later) reported, “Squad leaders and patrol leaders with initiative were scarce...the assignment of Grade V men to infantry is murder.” In essence, competent leaders were scarcest where the fighting was the thickest.

No one can criticize them for not being perfect, but it sometimes seemed like they didn't even try. What is clear is that the AGF had a problem in that by the time the “specialists” (which, oddly to us today, didn't include the infantry) skimmed off the higher graded candidates, the U.S. Army found that the average intelligence level was “well below the national average.” The U.S. Army Infantry did score at least one coup over the other services in their quest to predict who would stand up best to the crucible of combat. A skinny Texas farm kid named Murphy was turned down for both the paratroopers and the Marines before becoming America's most decorated soldier of World War II.

Rank and Authority

The German Army was ironically more egalitarian than the U.S. Army; German officers were often considered “good comrades” by their men, exposed themselves to front line conditions, and enjoyed relatively few comforts. There

were also far fewer officers in a front line infantry company in the Wehrmacht; platoons were almost always led by battle-hardened NCOs in the German Army. In the U.S. Army, platoon commanders had to be commissioned officers, and by 1945 they were inexperienced – “90-day wonders” from an Officer Candidate School. Those few “mustangs” who were commissioned from the ranks were not permitted to serve in the same units in which they cut their teeth out of fear their former comrades would not respect their new-found authority. Casualty rates among officers was also high, meaning many did not live long enough to gain the experience they needed to command with the authority and respect their German counterparts earned by advancing through the ranks, usually for months, sometimes for years. The officer candidate system in the German Army required the soldier to serve in the ranks of a field unit as an *offizieranwärter*, something U.S. OCS candidates were not necessarily required to do. Robert S. Rush commented in his book “G.I.: The U.S. Infantryman in World War II”:

Later in 1944, the OCS policy changed to accept soldiers directly from the RTCs, which because of the younger draft ages, lowered the average age of candidates to something less than the mid-20s. The popular image of the beardless 90-day wonder leading other baby-faced soldiers, though partially true in 1945, was not in 1944. Before deploying overseas, officers shipping as replacements spent, by AGF policy, at least three months with company-level tactical units in the U.S. (emphasis added)

By contrast, German officer candidates did two months field training with units of the Field Army – combat units, in other words.

Regionalism and Replacements

It is not widely reported in English histories, but the German Army had a regional-based organization very similar to the “county” regiments of the British Army, though individual regimental identities had been phased out after the First World War to place emphasis on divisional identities, a model the U.S. Army strongly emphasized as well. While the Wehrmacht did have official perpetuations of regimental histories, there seems to have been little but lip service paid to these in favour of regional designations of the divisions. They are usually absent in English language histories. Elite units such as *Grossdeutschland* were notable in that they recruited nationally, but other divisions drew strength from recruiting locally. The U.S. Army drew some strength

from this model as well, certainly the National Guard divisions such as the 36th (Texas) Division or the 29th (Blue and Gray). The story of Bedford on D-Day is well known.

The Germans and the U.S. Army both had a system in which wounded men might not be returned to their former unit. The American system of “replacements” however, was notorious. While the Germans fed their divisions by recruiting locally and creating formed units known as “March Battalions” for the trip to the front (often stopping on the way to the Field Training units for indoctrination in the rear areas by way of “partisan hunts” before final advanced training), the Americans treated the need for replacements somewhat different. According to Mark Henry's “The US Army in World War II: Northwest Europe”:

The giant olive drab machine needed a constant flow of additional troops to keep up its strength. The AEF in World War I solved this problem by disbanding about every fourth division arriving in France... In World War II the Army refused to allow this, and depended on individuals sent from the US to fill the gaps. Emphasising its machine-like viewpoint, the Army called these men ‘replacements’. In 1944 the number of men individually trained for posting as replacement parts rapidly fell short of the needs of the ravenous armies in France. The units based in the USA were soon mercilessly plundered. This weakened these training units, and sent bewildered replacements forward to units with which they had no connection. The semi-trained GIs lurched through the system until they arrived at forward replacement depots...Here combat-experienced GIs, sent forward again after recovering from wounds, mingled with the green replacements for days or even weeks as they awaited new assignments.

Stephen Ambrose said of this system that “Had the Germans been given a free hand to devise a replacement system for the ETO, one that would do the Americans most harm and least good, they could not have done a better job.”

As a sidebar, both armies were racist and both had an interesting history of social experimentation when manpower crunches began to make themselves felt. All-black combat units began to see action in Italy and the ETO; some, like the 761st Tank Battalion, gave a good account of themselves while others, such as the 92nd Infantry Division, have been painted in much harsher terms. The Nisei units have

been painted in much more glowing terms and have a better war record. Both were officered predominantly by “whites”. The Germans, for their part, considered themselves racially homogenous due to their bizarre Nuremberg Laws which stressed biological purity, but when the crunch came in the mid-war period, dozens of foreign legions began to appear in uniform, and Ost Bataillon were in the trenches on the Normandy beaches on D-Day. Other exotic units such as the Free India Legion saw little or no combat but were advertised for propaganda value as taking their place in the anti-Communist, anti-Semitic crusade. The point, perhaps, is that in the all-white combat units that made up the majority of either army, there was less discord of the type that characterized units of the U.S. Army in Vietnam, where strife sometimes existed within units broken down along racial lines, reflecting the same kind of rifts in society back home.

In my Army unit in Vietnam we had a rule that only E5's and above were permitted to enter our NCO Club. However, an E4 was allowed to enter if 'sponsored' and escorted by an E5 or above. To keep black troops out of the club, which displayed a four-by-six foot Confederate battle flag on the wall behind the bar, no black was ever promoted above E4 during my 12 months there, and no black E4 was ever 'sponsored' by a white E5 or above.

Racism in Vietnam was practiced daily by many in Vietnam. But you would never know it today because those who practiced racism against their fellow Americans adamantly deny any form or manner of racism ever existed in Vietnam, or if racism did exist it was rare and isolated. Very few African Americans hold memberships in Vietnam Veteran organizations because of past and ongoing racism. --Otis Willie (Ret.), Military News and Information Editor, The American War Library

Motivation

Perhaps the crux of the morale issue is the least tangible and hardest to source accurately; the GI was the least warlike compared to the Europeans because he had the least to lose. His home was farthest from the fighting. The Italians on Sicily were defending their own soil; the Germans in Normandy were fighting a last ditch defence of what by 1944 had become a way of life to them. The Romanians and Hungarians and various factions of the Yugoslavians all had bitter old scores to settle with each other. The American soldier was for the most part eager to shed his olive



The Culin device, one of many implements devised in the bocage to get through the hedgerows.

coloured clothes and return to the normalcy of civilian life.

Criticisms

The G.I. is often criticized for being a lot of things, but the criticisms don't ring true. Among some of the more popular ones:

The G.I. was too reliant on firepower to win his battles for him.

This one makes little sense on the face of it. The G.I. effectively used his excellent artillery support to good effect to pound the daylight out of the Germans whenever and wherever he found him. No one seems to “criticize” the Germans for using their mortars so effectively in the defence, or whining that they “didn't fight fair” for sighting these invisible, near-soundless weapons with wild abandon wherever an infantry battalion stopped to fight and inflicting terrible damage with them (by some accounts, up to 70% of British casualties in Normandy, for example, were a result of German mortars). The G.I. wasn't concerned about fighting fair – he fought smart where and when he could. And there were plenty of bloodbaths to go around regardless; Hürtgen Forest coming to mind.

The G.I. was no match for the German in a one on one battle.

Outside of the Roman Coliseum or an episode of Combat!, there were very few one-on-one battles, so the comparison is meaningless. And even so, the G.I. received a lot of training before embarking for overseas – certainly more training days than the Landsers, though admittedly things like close order drill and other Army “chicken” crowded the syllabus long after the German dropped such things from his (by 1944 basic training for German infantrymen might be

as little as 7 weeks, and advanced training might include actual combat missions such as “partisan hunts”).

Conclusion

The frontline G.I. won the war; without arguing about the importance of the Eastern Front or the Pacific, or the Combined Bomber Offensive, or the North Atlantic Run, all of which was part of a massive team effort by the Allies and the United Nations, the G.I. in France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany and Italy in 1944-45, along with his allies, guaranteed final victory over the Germans.

He didn't do it with bloodless victories such as Operation Desert Storm; it wasn't that kind of war, and the Germans weren't that kind of enemy. The G.I. had to go at him for long months, and devise new ways of doing things, often with equipment not up to the task. And he overcame and adapted. The best example is the Culin hedgerow device; a tactical problem made itself apparent and the U.S. Army responded. (There were others, less famous, such as the “Salad Fork”.) When the Sherman proved vulnerable to enemy tanks – a role that doctrine never intended it to take on – tank crews provided local solutions in the form of improvised armour kits, tactics (placing Jumbos in key positions) and eventually new equipment. Individual units simply endured appalling conditions wherever they were; despite a few setbacks on the way – mass surrenders such as the 106th Division in the Bulge were extreme outliers as were mass slaughters such as OMAHA Beach – he was capable of outstanding feats of bravery.

There is no insult in saying that there was nothing European about him.

The American is – or was – an individualist with pride in himself. The G.I. eschewed the trappings of the British regimental system, and was derided for having no pride; and forewent the flash of the German uniforms, and was ridiculed for having no style. But by the time he blasted himself out of the bocage, he had something far more important – the self-assuredness of a veteran soldier who could use his equipment, training and bravery to best advantage, and historians can say that after Kasserine Pass, the American soldier never lost a battle.

Does he “deserve” to be treated in *ASL* the same as those Europeans, with 7 morale? I say he doesn’t. He had a unique character that is well reflected in *ASL* which is itself a unique game system. The replacement problem was not confined to the Americans – the British and Canadians

in Northwest Europe also suffered from a “reinforcement crisis” in the autumn of 1944, post-Normandy. And Canadians were just as far from Europe as the GIs were, so the rationale for the “6” morale can’t stop there. The other factors all play into it as well; there is also the well documented poor quality of recruits and the leadership aspect – which should extend beyond just the SMC counter-mix of any given scenario.

Jeffery Williams, a Calgary Highlander serving in a staff position in 1st Canadian Army, wrote after the war about contacts between the 3rd Canadian Division and the American 82nd Airborne in the winter of 1944-45:

It was the first time that General Spry’s men had had direct dealings with Americans. They were

intrigued by their language which was familiar but seemed non-military – torches were flashlights, petrol was gasoline. They were fascinated by their equipment, their robust ‘deuce-and-halves’ and four wheel drive ‘three quarters’ (2-1/2 and 3/4 ton trucks), their weapons and their rations. They liked the U.S. .30 calibre carbine but they wouldn’t swap a Browning automatic rifle for a Bren. In fact, there was little that the Americans had that they envied, certainly not their rations nor their clothing. Everyone shivered in that damp November but the Americans ‘looked’ colder. As one battalion commander put it, ‘They were great guys, good soldiers who had fought well. We gained a great respect for them but their ways were not our ways.’

None of which is to take away from the fighting abilities of the U.S. Army soldier – who turned in ferocious fighting performances from Morocco to the Elbe. But he was what he was – mostly just there for the duration, doing things his own way – just like everyone else.

Ω

A JUSTICE OF A MOCKERY OF A TRAVESTY

Continued from page 7

sets off a sniper. They are all CE of course. One down. The German infantry advances steadily destroying all before it. A Sherman takes out a Stug, after several hits. Two down. US paratroopers and 75* gun crews break all over the place. M10 knocks out a PzIV. The last German AFVs run for the board edges. It gets silly but in any kind of chase you’ve gotta favour the 24MP Americano... and Stug number four dies on the last turn which prevents Paul winning by about five more buildings than he needed. 5-0

In victory magnanimity, in defeat defiance. So said Churchill. But Churchill was an idiot as Gallipoli, Leros and the gold standard proved. FRAK Y’ALL Y’ALL I AM THE BEST!!!

Ω



Famous photo of an 82nd Airborne trooper in the winter of 1944-45 (in fact, it was used on the cover of Close Assault). The Canadians who relieved the 82nd in the Nijmegen Salient thought the Americans “looked cold.”

THE GOLDEN AGE OF ASL?

Ian Willey

This article is taken from Ian's blog at <http://walladvantage.blogspot.co.uk> and is used with permission – Pete.

Over the past couple of years, I have posted several "Fifteen Questions with..." articles on my blog, in which I ask the same set of questions to as many scenario designers as I can get to answer. One of the 15 questions is "When was the Golden Age?" In at least one of them I have seen the response, "What do you mean when?" So I think it's a fair question, is today, right now The Golden Age? Personally I think so; I was just playing Devils Advocate. So why not do it again?

First Love Lost

I, like many *Squad Leader* players, saw the development of *ASL* as a slight to my gaming world. At the time I was still a student and whilst I owned *SL* through *GI-AoV* I had really only worked in as far as *Crescendo of Doom*. I got *SL* for Christmas and by 25th of March owned the whole package. I then spent the next 2 years playing through (often repeatedly) the scenarios of *SL* and *CoI*. Yes I jumped into and out of *CoD* but it was the East Front that I liked the best. Even into *CoD* I did not find the rule switches to be too much to handle, I understand that with *GI:AoV* the problem really became a major issue. So the idea of putting to one side all but the boards was not a terribly appealing prospect. Hell I'd still a few *CoD* scenarios and most of *GI:AoV* yet to play. In short it just was not happening. I was not alone. Many a player just did not graduate to *ASL* when it came out. I also suspect many fit my mould. Little spare cash with plenty of other wargames interests to soak up the cash, a small pool of opponents reliant on my gear to play and most importantly I still loved *SL*.

For me the jump came a couple of years later, in fact in one of the many down periods of my *SL/ASL* playing. I was offered

a big chunk of the system for £20. I had played through so much of the scenarios, never a fan of Americans in *ASL*, *GI:AoV* had still been passed over (anyone up for Guards Attack?) But now for a few quid I could get new shinny shinny East Front Scenarios (in fact a couple of the cards had coffee stains but that's by the by).

Well nothing compares with the heady days of *SL* when everything was new, was *ASL* better? Sure was. Did I prefer to play it? Yep. But still nothing beats loves first fleeting moments. But whilst I will always have a fond place for *SL*, I can't bear to throw it out, even after 15+ years of not playing, I have not the slightest inclination to go back to her.

Rosy Tinted Specs or Best of Times?

I totally missed that period that I have heard others mention as either eager anticipation or the pulling out of fingernails that happened to be the slow steady release of core modules. I can see both views, after all the waiting for *Festung Budapest* and the joyful release as it lands in your hands is possibly better than some of the scenarios. However for me armed with more scenarios than I could hope to play before the next package hit the shelves meant I had no pain other than paying out for it. Add to this I scooped a bunch of *ASL* for a song as the boxes were missing, also picked up plenty of *Annals* from Virgin when they were selling them off (ignored the *KGPII* one at £5 as I was not into Americans!!!!!! Bugger and Blast) so Ian was set. In fact pre Allied and Axis minors the only module I bought new was *Paratrooper!*

I used to be happy playing a scenario over and over, hell I still did when I owned lots of *ASL* goodness but I was a less frequent player by far than today, I also was not moving out of my comfort zone. Yes East Front is where I lived. PTO, I owned this almost un-punched copy of

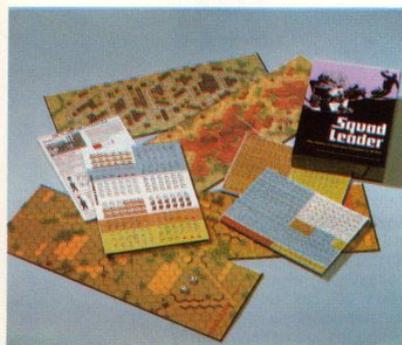
CoB but never got round to the hellishly difficult rules (what a surprise when I finally read them). Same goes for *WoA*, not that the desert really pulls me a great deal. So I guess I would fit into the group of happy to wait guys BUT I do remember waiting for *AoO* and how fed up I was with the constant "Coming Soon" adverts that just proved that in America, "Soon" has a whole different meaning.

So The Good Old Days can easily argue for the Golden Age. EVERYTHING was new. New rule book presentation where new rules can be added, self contained nations allowing a whole slew of troop types to be represented in one go. Historical modules with maps of real battles. The advertising of new product and the wait for it to arrive, what could be better? How about a magazine featuring these new items and with lots of scenarios which just happen to be some of the best scenarios ever released? If that was not enough you also have the house mag giving you two scenarios and the odd article on a fairly regular basis.

Surly this has to be the best of times?

Well you could see it that way but.... Can't argue with the rule book, 25 years and the same system is in operation. Sure it's gone to a 2nd edition but for all that it has not changed that much. We don't agree with all that is in it but it's amazing we agree over so much. The self contained nations was a good idea, only now it is showing it's lack of flexibility as modules go in and out of print. But keeping in era for a moment. OK AH would have been crazy to do anything but German/Russian in module 1, and *Yanks* well it had to be that way, after all the main market was American kids with family who fought in the war. Soon after that as the modules slowed down and with every new release someone's next favourite just did not come out and the waiting game continued. At least product was still available when it came out but for the hard hitters the act of replaying old scenarios was starting to wear thin (not everyone though, after all we knew no better). The other problem was for me at least "A great big box full of counters, boards and err 8 scenarios? Are you kidding? How long till the next Annual?" This issue of too few scenarios has stayed with official *ASL* until recent years.

Now who was not excited about *Red Barricades*? I mean yes you may never want to look at it EVER again but that's your fault for playing it non-stop for five years solid! This one is a bit like the rule book, it's hard to pick fault with the original.



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American weapon is at your disposal: machine guns, flamethrowers, demo charges, mines, panzerfausts, bazookas, anti-tank guns, tanks, halftracks, etc. Your company and battalion level force will seek out and engage the enemy on four different, isomorphic, full color mapboards (22" x 32" overall) where they'll do battle for hills, bunkers, shellholes, roadblocks, both small and multi-story buildings, even sewers which become valuable havens from enemy fire lanes in deadly street battles. Programmed Instruction method allows you to play each of the 12 provided scenarios in a minimum of time while gradually learning more and more sophisticated rules. Random Scenario design and Campaign Game provisions make SQUAD LEADER a source for seemingly endless battles and add on possibilities. Comes complete with 36 pp. rulebook and designers notes, scenario cards, Quick Reference Data Tables and 716 two-sided, full color counters.

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Going to *KGP I-II* was for me at least a bit of a shame; I still have yet to play anything from them as I am less interested than any other campaign. But again it was a hit. The sheer newness of the idea made this a great success and again is hard to have a go at.

The *ASL Annual*, again it was great, you got to read all about the latest new module, with historical backgrounds, series replays and scenarios to add to the eight you have now played constantly (including the dogs!) Of course the further into the system the more watered down the new product had to be, after all you have all the other sweets in the jar. This is where *The General* comes in. Over in the UK it was easy enough to get. Rather pricey if all you wanted was *ASL* content but you know, if it has *ASL* stamped on it.....

Living in the Past or Living for Today

So fast forward to the last 5 years. But before we do, lets have 2 minutes silence for the period that saw legal action, threats of such and the barren wasteland of the inter production years that seemed to be all promise and no product!

Now is this why so many of us view now as the best period to be into *ASL*? Again we have pros and cons for now as we did for then. Some of the issues (as I saw them) of early days still trouble us today. Firstly, we still have the module system with little sign of any change. Worse still due to the number of modules it's extremely hard to keep them in stock. Want to get into *ASL*? well you will be happy to know you are getting two hobbies for the price of one. The first one is played with counters, boards and dice. The other is with Internet, Credit Card and Frustration. Let's not also forget the change of ownership. MMP kind of get a raw deal with the Rosy Specks. Sure if you wanted *Yanks* just pop to the local store and pick it up. What, you can't do that now? Let's not go into detail, after all facts like The Local Game Store is no longer there so you could not do that anyway gets in the way of a fine rant. Also the fact that *Yanks* only had the one print run it was so huge! Or the fact the reason AH could do this (and MMP can't) is down to who owns them and who is watching the budget! To balance this though MMP did drop the ball; that is unless someone somewhere bought the last 2,000 copies or something. MMP's Achilles heal is organisation and planning, they just don't do it well. Yep part time business and all but whilst *Yanks* was steadily getting towards OOS status they should have known two things. When roughly it would run out and how long it would take to get a new edition ready to roll. Waiting till the last copy rolls out of the door and then starting years of development is plain stupid. In a real business someone would have had to be fired for that mistake. I am not trying to

be nasty to MMP when I say if it was a real business, the fact is it's not and whilst silly mistakes like this really hack me off I am thankful it's not a real business, because if it was I think it would go down the tube.

So given that Post-AH really is my argument for being the Golden Era, what can I say nice about MMP. AH was going backwards with *ASL*, whilst it may well have been one of its biggest money earners I think the concept-to-shelves time line was too long for it to flourish as AH and Monarch were starting to look at \$\$\$ concerns right at the door. This is why projects were floundering; MMP came in and got the boat sailing in the right direction. It's possible that without MMP you would not have any *ASL* in its format of today. But not resting on that *ASLSK* happens to be the best thing that ever happened to *ASL*. OK OK, I know most hate it, I know it might siphon off resources etc etc. Should we also ignore the players that have come from it, come back via it? I know we want to ignore those that do not come on to *ASL*, pesky buggers that they are. The cash injection into MMP that this product line brings in should never be ignored. I really don't care if *ASLSK* brings in no new players if it keeps *ASL* going, though this is a short term view so ignore it.

Are we better under MMP than we were under AH? Surprisingly I think yes we are.....now. Perry is very active supporting us with answers to rule questions etc. They clearly love the game and its longevity could be seen to surpass its fiscal security due to this, not that I don't think *ASL* pays its way. Far from this but times are hard. Enter Chas and we have *ASL* gold. No one in their right mind would say MMP was not strengthened with his joining them. How long will it last? Well who knows but here is the shocker everyone. The truth is it doesn't have to. MMP have steered *ASL* through the worst, they will soon have all the core done, that is once the Holy Grail is finished (*Hakkaa Päälle*). Then they could take a running jump off the pier to nowhere and *ASL* would still trundle on. It's not what I hope or expect but it could. So survive I say? Yep and do so rather well. With Gamesquad, ConsimWorld and BoardgamesGeek you have great structure for the sharing of common knowledge, or to the lay man, the E-Rulebook that some still call out for to be made by MMP. Not sure why they would waste money developing something that is already out there and as good as they could produce. If MMP collapsed this book would become the fastest selling free e-book ever as everyone clamoured to get a copy who do not have at least one version already.

Why would this be important to the survival of *ASL*? Because it's the only part of the system you possibly could not get elsewhere. CH already produces so many counters per product that moving onto the full OoB would not be an issue. OK so

the thousands of old scenarios would be unplayable without boards (really difficult to get since most players seem to have 2-3 sets since the *Map Bundle* came out). But all that would happen is either more boards would be designed or everyone would go CH's way and paper stand alone maps would be the new black.

Third party producers. This is the future of *ASL*. Never have they been so good, so productive or so interesting. It's often said that MMP have to play it safe with *ASL*, they are the guardians etc. Personally I think that's crap, it's not only crap it's insulting to MMP. Forts map boards were just wow, remember? Shame on you if you don't. How about those *ASLSKs*, NO ONE ELSE THOUGHT OF IT! Or if they did they lacked the conviction to go ahead and do it. The point is though, that many of the ideas are never MMP's, they buy them. Fort does not work for MMP, he choose MMP to release his product and hey rightly took him up on it. I have not heard of MMP turning down something that has gone on to be an amazing NEW idea. I know their recent double wide board was being talked about as something that the concept was on their desk before BFP was routinely working with and may have been before HOB did the *High Ground* but for me they are Johnny Come Lately in that department but its small beer in comparison to what they have achieved. However taking TPP collectively then MMP is a backwater for ideas. But that's plain not fair; each company should stand by itself not as a group. What is fair though is to say many of the TPP are leading the way with new products and new ideas. The production standards of many are excellent. What's more some of these designers don't work for just the one TPP, but are in print across the spectrum of suppliers. Each TPP has its own flavour and allows the *ASL* player to be picky, perhaps for the first time ever?

But we have a downside to now as well. Lack of core modules like *Yanks* is harming the influx of new players. Give us piles of modules though and they would not come streaming in, but still *Yanks* being out of print for years is a big issue. Rule book in and out of stock because they don't pre-emp is bad. Hell it can be gone for months. *Beyond Valor* went out not that long ago, again that should not be allowed. MMP are doing things about it such as combining modules but it remains a stain on this era. The difficulty of balancing new product for us old farts against reprints wins few friends as one's requirements puts you at odds with the guy at the other end of the spectrum.

The sheer flood of official and unofficial product is also a problem, just look at what has been released in the last 18 months. In the dark days you would not have had in 12 months what January

Continued on page 16, column 1

gave us. What came out last year would have filled 5 years in the early days. It's impossible to truly enjoy all that you buy unless you are truly frugal and then you feel like you are missing out. It sucks to be so well supplied. I don't see any change to this pattern either. Le Franc Tireur has brought out 2 excellent special packs in the last 3 years, BFP give us a massive package every year and have products stacked up waiting release over the next however many years. CH just produce both new and reworked product as if it was a full time job (oh wait, Ray does work full time) and yes HOB is going to close down once they get their last pack out but others Like Lone Canuck really fill their space. Once you then add Schwerpunkt, ESG and Friendly Fire for scenario packs all of which have wow factors of their own and even my 100 scenario a year pace is seeing me play less and less from new packs as I try to play older stuff as well. So is the very fact we have more than we can digest ultimately spoiling this era?

My Vote Is Cast

The sheer volume is an issue, I think in ten years time some of us will be trying to backfill from this era and paying a price to do so, this is despite the sheer number of product we already can't play. Maybe ten years is too short a period, maybe twenty. Can everyone including MMP keep up the pace? I don't think so, not unless they either drop off playtesting or something brings a lot more players into the hobby. My reasoning. We should see a slow but steady decline in players over the next 20 years, this reduces the number of playtesters as well as players. Less people to buy = less sales = less room to wriggle. OK HOB are stopping production, for now or ever only time will tell. FE seem to have closed down, any one or more of the other TPP could stop production, some or all of the designers will go elsewhere but I don't see many new operations starting up and anyway we have more than enough produced as it is. It's the "What if? MMP stop, maybe loss the licence?" Maybe all *ASL* becomes illegal to sell as Hasbro protect a revenue stream it no longer cares to support? 20 years allows for some strange events so who knows. What I do know though is that in twenty years you will see plenty of players still playing, possibly at cons in friends homes and over the Internet. And when they do it will be with a lot of the stuff being produced right now. We will look back on the glut, sigh and say "and we moaned we could not buy it all"

Yes today is the Golden Era, at least for me, it won't stop me looking back at that first love and nor does it stop me looking forward to what the future will bring but right here right now is where I want to be

Down But Not Out

The Belgians in SASL

Nick Carter

This article looks at running Belgian *SASL* campaigns, both as an Allied Minor company and then as a Free Belgian company. Although most if not all of the Allied Minor nations (Poland, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Yugoslavia and Greece) fell within weeks of being attacked by Hitler, many of their combatants not only fought in the campaign in their homeland but went on to fight in the West or East against the enemy, including in interesting and otherwise neglected campaigns. Another plus point of Allied Minor *SASL* campaigns is that the player gets the chance to play with AFV, ordnance and squads that otherwise might never see the light of day. This is also true of much German (and Italian) early war equipment, such as the Kfz 13 scout car or the Italian L3 tankettes.

Belgium 1940

As with many other campaigns waged by the Nazis against the minor nations, the impression is often given that the Germans walked into Belgium with minimum effort. It is certainly true that Belgium's stance of rigid neutrality and her trust in fortifications were to prove disastrously mistaken in May 1940. Nevertheless Belgium fielded some reasonably effective armour and had some good troops in the form of the Chasseurs.

The Belgian company for 5/40 is listed in section S18.511. Note that when setting up your company a dr should be made on the table in S17.85 to determine a possible HMG or .50cal HMG, and remember that 1st Line and Elite Belgian MMC have Assault Fire capability (A7.36). To get the most out of playing the Belgians in this campaign I would suggest three weekly Missions, as follows. Remember that the Belgian player is eligible to receive a British or Frency Ally. To get a feel for how the Belgians handled German armour, one of the Missions should be "Mission 11 Tank Attack". Then check your final score. If you have won the campaign you are eligible to escape to the UK with your Belgian company (see below). A draw allows your company to escape and join the Resistance. A loss means internment by the Germans.

The Force Publique, 1940-41

The Force Publique was the Belgian colonial army of Congo, initially raised during the later years of the Free State (when it acquired a very dubious reputation

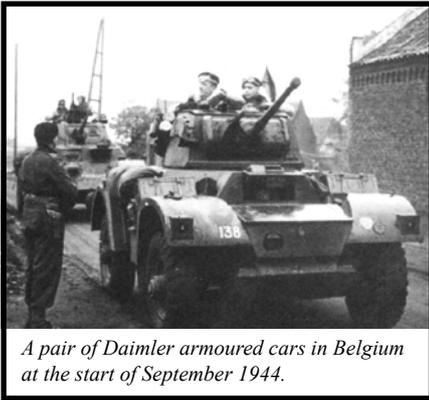
for involvement in Leopold's brutal rule) from local enlisted men and multi-national European officers. Once the Free State was taken over in 1908 things began to improve, with a drive towards modernising and disciplining the force. In World War One the Force Publique fought in German East Africa and apparently won a decent reputation (see Wikipedia article at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force_publique).

The surrender of Belgium in May 1940 left the Force Publique intact in the Belgian Congo, and during the war it was to grow to 40,000 strong, consisting of three brigades, a river force and support units. Our main interest in this article is in the 3rd Brigade and the XI th battalion, which took part in the East African campaign. Although I have been unable to find out exact dates for their participation, the Wikipedia article does mention that the XI Btn was assigned to Anglo-Egyptian Sudan at the end of 1940 and that the 3rd Bde took part in a victory over the Italians in 7/41. A reasonable supposition seems to be that the Force participated in the Allied counteroffensive of 1-11/41. Losses for the entire campaign amounted to 500 men.

Since the Force Publique had been equipped by the Belgians before the war, it seems reasonable to use Belgian Infantry and Gun counters for this unit. In view of a lack of detailed information on the performance of the troops in battle, the normal Belgian ELR of 3 and LG of 6 seems logical. If you feel this is overgenerous, raise the LG to 6.5. Since the Congolese troops were on the offensive and not facing the same psychological shocks as the Belgians had in 5/40, the broken-side morale should



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A pair of Daimler armoured cars in Belgium at the start of September 1944.

be the same as the unbroken side. However, the Belgian player is not eligible to receive any Belgian AFV: any AFV received must be rolled for on the British *SASL* tables. The Belgian player is also eligible to receive a British Ally.

Upon the conclusion of the campaign the force became essentially a rear-area security unit. Mention should also be made of the 10th Belgian Congo Casualty Clearing Station, which as a mixed African and European medical unit served with the British in Abyssinia, Somalia, Madagascar and Burma, although its actions are outside the scope of the game.

Brigade Piron

As with many other Allied troops, some Belgians managed to escape to the UK. In 5/40 the Belgian 1st Infantry Brigade was formed, although it did not reach brigade size until 1943. The brigade consisted of three motorised rifle companies, an artillery battery, an engineer company, armoured car squadron and supporting units. Initially the Allies were reluctant to commit the unit to front-line battle, seeing such small national contingents as the nuclei of post-war armies in their own country. Eventually however the unit landed in Normandy in 8/44 and fought its way up the Normandy coast with the Canadians, liberating several towns, before being reassigned to British control in 9/44 in Belgium, fighting both there and in the south Netherlands. In 17/11/44 it returned to Belgium for reorganisation, being increased in size to three infantry battalions, an artillery regiment of six batteries and an armoured car regiment. It returned to combat in the Netherlands in 4/45, fighting at both Nijmegen and Walcheren. Luxembourgers also fought in the Brigade Piron (the alternative name for the unit, after the name of its commander) and constituted one of the artillery troops.

A Free Belgian campaign for this unit is thus relatively straightforward. British-colour units and equipment are used, and an ELR of 4 for these volunteers seems reasonable. An *SASL* company of Brigade Piron is organised as an ordinary British

company but with 4-5-8 counters. The artillery troop consisted of 25 pounders, and the armoured car company employed Daimlers, Staghounds (including the AA variant) and Dingo SC. The Belgian player always selects an Offensive Mission, although airborne landings and seaborne assaults should be rerolled. In 8/44 Missions 4, 6 or 7 would be especially appropriate for clearing the French coastal towns and their defences. Missions should played until 11/44 inclusive, and then one final Mission in 4/45.

Belgian Commandos

Free Belgian soldiers formed 4 Troop, No 10 Inter-Allied Commando, the latter being a unit of many different nationalities. The troop was formed in 8/42 from 7 officers and 100 men of the 1st Independent Belgian Brigade. Its first action was 11/43 when it was assigned to the 2nd Special Service Brigade in Italy. In 1/44 the troop was sent to Yugoslavia to assist the partisans, but this was not a success partially due to political problems, 4 Troop being transferred instead to assist motor gun boats operating from the Yugoslav island of Vis with boarding enemy shipping. In 6/44 the troop returned to England and did not see action again until 11/44 during the brief but intense battle for Walcheren, during which they were assigned to 41 (Royal Marine) Commando. In this action the Belgians and another troop from No 10 IA Commando were ordered to clear the area of Westkapelle, coming ashore in Weasels and Buffalos. Fighting in this short battle was heavy, with the Allied troops facing largely second-line troops who were nevertheless well dug-in and supported by artillery. This was the last major action fought by the Belgian commandos, for although two new troops were formed (nos 9 and 10) these were used mainly to provide local security, although 10 Troop did go on to liberate Neuengamme Concentration Camp which it seems had been evacuated prior to the troop's arrival. The Belgian commandos would go on to form the nucleus of the Belgian post-war Para-commando Brigade.

Fusilier Battalions

Liberated manpower was used to form fusilier battalions from 10/44 onwards. The number of these battalions reached 57 infantry, 4 engineer, 4 pioneer and 34 motor transport battalions by 6/45, but most were used for second-line duties to free up better-armed Allied formations. However some (including the 5th and 11th) did see combat in the Ardennes and the Netherlands and at Remagen and even Pilsen in Czechoslovakia. To somewhat simplify matters and extend the campaign for a Belgian player, assume that a fusilier campaign (equipped as a British infantry

company) starts in 11/44 and continues through to 4/45 (or 5/45 if you wish). I have been unable to find out much about their composition, but the battalions were apparently lightly armed, so any non-infantry reinforcements will be in the form of US or British Guns or Vehicles. The Belgian player is eligible to receive a British or US Ally. For 11/44 "Patrol" would be suitable, while for 12/44 a Defensive Mission could also be appropriate with a US Ally if you wish to simulate the Ardennes fighting. Thereafter each Mission should probably be Offensive.

Postscript and summary

Although their contribution to the Allied cause in WWII is usually written off as 3 weeks of resistance and 5 years of Nazi domination, Belgian (and Luxembourg) soldiers fought in the defence of their country and some escaped to continue the struggle. The small national contingent was initially preserved to form the nucleus of the post-war army, but the Force Publique assisted in the East African campaign and later the Brigade Piron and Belgian 4 Troop fought in the West. The use of Belgian fusilier battalions in the closing months of the war freed up valuable Allied manpower for combat use in addition to the service by some of the fusilier units at the front.

Sources

Wikipedia as ever has some useful articles on the Belgians in WWII, including the Order of Battle for 1940, the conduct of the Battle of Belgium and Free Belgian Forces. Other than this, however, there is little available on the Net or apparently even in print on the Belgians, with even the normally reliable Osprey Publishing not carrying anything dedicated to the Belgians or Dutch.

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"THIS IS THE CALL TO ARMS!"

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Steve Crowley, 2 Mossy Vale, Maidenhead, Berks., SL6 7RX (23 Oct 2003)
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Jon Williams, 17 Larch Road, Colerne, Chippenham, Wilt., SN14 8SD (10 Dec 1998)
William Roberts, 20 Clayhill Copse, Peatmoor, Swindon, Wilt., SN5 5AL (26 Sep 2011)
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Roger Cook, The Brick Farmhouse, Cleuch Common, Marlborough, Wilt., SN8 4DS (26 Oct 2006)
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Mark Chapman, Flat 7, 265 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh, EH11 1TX (01/12/2005)
Garry Ferguson, 30E Forrester Park Avenue, Edinburgh, EH12 9AW (07/12/1998)
Alan Sheffield, 1 Barns Ness Terrace, Innerwick, Dunbar, East Lothian, EH42 1SF (09/09/2011)
Stewart Thain, 77 Birrell Gardens, Murieston, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 9LF (25/10/2007)
Bill Finlayson, 19 Taymouth Road, Polmont, Falkirk, Stirlingshire, FK2 0PF (16/06/2001)
Andrew Kassian, Flat 14/2, 20 Petershill Court, Glasgow, G21 4QA (01/01/1996)
John McLintock, B25 434 St Georges Rd, Woodside, Glasgow, G3 6JW (11/05/2012)
Ellis Simpson, 4 Langtree Avenue, Whitecraigs, Glasgow, G46 7LW (20/04/1999)

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!

JUNE DOUBLE ONE 2012

When: 22 – 24 June.

Where: Writtle College, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 3RR. On-site facilities include en-suite and standard bedrooms, free car parking on application, mini market, cash points, a self-service cafeteria and licensed bars. Bedroom rates start at £30.00 for a single room and breakfast.

Fee: £15.00 if paid before 30 April, £20.00 thereafter.

Format: A two day tournament with two rounds on Saturday and one on Sunday offering a choice of scenarios. A number of mini-tournaments are also planned for Friday, and friendly games will also be available.

Contact: For a booking form contact Derek Cox, 25 Cramphorn Walk, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2RD or by email at derek.cox@dsl.pipex.com, or Brendan Clark by email at brendan.clark@virgin.net. Check out the web site at <http://www.doubleone-online.net/1.html> for the latest details.

20TH ANNUAL TEXAS TEAM TOURNAMENT

When: 21 – 24 June.

Where: Wingate by Wyndam Conference Center, 1209 North I-35, Round Rock, TX 78664. Telephone (512)341-7000 or visit <http://www.wingateroundrock.com/>. Room rates (not including tax) are \$79.00 – attendees must contact the hotel direct to book their room, and should request the *Advanced Squad Leader* discounted rate when doing so.

Fee: 4-Day registration is \$36.00, 3-Day (Fri-Sun) is \$31.00. Saturday only is \$21.00.

Format: Thursday will be an open gaming day and will not count towards the tournament standings but will count towards the coveted Major Johnson award. Games related to the official tournament standings start Friday morning at 9AM.

There will also be a Thursday mini-tournament and an *ASLSK* mini-tourney as well.

Notes: A 20th anniversary scenario pack will be given to all pre-registrants.

Contact: Rick Reinesch, 1405 Hargis Creek Trail, Austin, TX 78717. Email CTASI@aol.com or telephone 512-828-4451. You can also visit the Texas ASL Club website at <http://texas-asl.com/> for the latest information.

SEPTEMBER A BRIDGE TOO FAR

When: 20 – 23 September.

Where: Stayokay Hostel, Diepenbrocklaan 27, Arnhem. There are 30 pre-booked 30 beds at the hostel, which will be offered on a first-come first-serve basis. If you wish to organise your accommodation at the tournament venue through the tournament organisers, you MUST register and pay in full before 1st of August, 2012. Accommodation for the three nights in a 4-bed room, including breakfast and dinner, is €135.00; add €40 for a room from Wednesday night, and €8.00 if paying by PayPal.

Fee: €30.00.

Format: 6 rounds of gaming. On Thursday and Friday, all players take part in the main tournament. On Saturday and Sunday, half continue in the main tournament, while the rest compete in a variety of mini-tournaments.

Contact: Peter Struijf at arnhemasl@hotmail.com. You can also check out the website at <http://www.arnhemasl.com> for the latest details and scenario details for each round.

OCTOBER ASLOK XXVII

When: 30 Sept – 7 October.

Where: Holiday Inn Airport, 4181 W. 150th St., Cleveland, Ohio 44135, phone 216-252-7700, fax 216-252-3850 or visit www.holidayinn.com/cle-airport. 2012 room rates are to be confirmed but in 2011 they were \$75.00 plus tax. Check the ASLOK web page for the hotel discount code to book on-line.

Fee: \$25.00 in advance, \$30.00 the door.

Format: Same as always. Weekend tournament plus numerous mini-tournaments. There is also an informal USA vs. World Cup where everyone keeps track of their games and a plaque is presented to the winning side.

Notes: T-shirts are \$10.00 ea (XXL \$13.00, XXXL \$15.00, 4XL \$18.00)

Contact: Bret Hildebran, 17810 Geauga Lake Rd, Chagrin Falls, OH 44023-2208 or by email damavs@alltel.net. Check out the web site at www.aslok.org for the latest details.

INTENSIVE FIRE 2012

When: 25 – 28 October.

Where: The Kiwi Hotel, West Hill Road, Bournemouth, England, BH2 5EG. Telephone (01202) 555 889 or fax (01202) 789 567 to arrange accommodation. Single rooms are £43.00 per night, double rooms £36.00 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: £10.00 if registering with the organisers before 1 October, £15.00 thereafter and on the door (entry is free for those only able to attend for one day). In addition to a discount on the entry fee, 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.

Contact: For more details or to register contact Pete Phillipps, 9 Pier Road, Kilchoan, Acharacle, Argyll, Scotland, PH36 4LJ. Phone (01972) 510 350 (evenings only) or email if@vft.co.uk. For up to date information check out the UK *ASL* tournament web site at www.asltourneys.co.uk.

NOVEMBER Grenadier 2012

When: 1 – 4 November.

Where: "Gästehaus Heimbach", Schulstraße 6, Hergarten. Hergarten is a little town in the German part of the Eifel. It is 10 Km to Zülpich and around 40 Km to Cologne. There is a railway station in Heimbach which is the neighbouring town and you can reach it from Cologne by train, which goes every hour. From Heimbach you need to take a taxi to Hergarten which is about 6 Kilometers. The location offers sleeping rooms nearly 60 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 (you will need to bring a sleeping bag or blanket and pillows). Bed and breakfast is €45 per night – single rooms are €6.50 extra.

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.

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

2013 MARCH HEROES 2013

When: 7 – 10 March.

Where: Colwyn Hotel, 569 New South Promenade, Blackpool, England, FY4 1NG. Tel 01253 341 024. Room rates to be confirmed, in 2011 they were £25.00 for a shared room or £30.00 for a single room and include breakfast. Bar meals and good beer are also available at the hotel.

Fee: £10.00 if registering with the organisers prior to 1 March, £15.00 thereafter and on the door (entry is free for those only able to attend for one day). In addition to a discount on the entry fee, players pre-registering will receive a tournament program in February.

Format: Five round tournament beginning Friday morning (arrangements will be made for those unable to arrive until Friday afternoon), with three scenarios to choose from in each round. Players will be expected to have 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, 9 Pier Road, Kilchoan, Acharacle, Argyll, Scotland, PH36 4LJ. Phone (01972) 510 350 (evenings only) or email heroes@vft.co.uk. For up to date information check out the UK *ASL* tournament web site at www.asltourneys.co.uk.

Ω

Hamish Hughson, 15 Esmonde Gardens, Elgin, Moray, IV30 4LB (21/03/2010)
Kevin Horner, 11 Baillies Road, Forres, Moray, IV36 1JA (11/10/2010)
Oliver Gray, 117 Upper Dalgair, Cupar, Fife, KY15 4JQ (04/02/2009)
Garry Marshall, 24 Allardice Crescent, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY2 5TY (21/05/2001)
Neil Stevens, 4 Grants Crescent, Paisley, Renfrewshire, PA2 6BD (09/03/2012)
Pete Phillipps, 9 Pier Rd, Kilchoan, Argyll, PH36 4LJ (23/05/2012)
Jonathan Swilliamson, Da Croft, Bridge End, Burra, Shetland Islands, ZE2 9LE (01/05/1998)

Wales

Andrew Whinnett, 6 Aquilla Court, Conway Road, Cardiff, CF11 9PA (03/09/2008)
Paul Jones, 9 Cwm Nofydd, Rhiwbina, Cardiff, CF14 6JX (22/11/2002)
Martin Castrey, 1, Thomas Cottages, The Highway, Hawarden, Flintshire, CH5 3DY (03/09/2008)
Key Sutton, 1 Gorphwysfa, Windsor Road, New Broughton, Wrexham, LL11 6SP (25/02/1999)
Nick Rijke, Aneddfa, Cellan, Lampeter, Ceredigion, SA48 8HY (06/09/2010)
C. Jones, Deer Park Lodge, Stepaside, Narbeth, Pembrokeshire, SA67 8JL (1)
Emyr Phillipps, 2 Cysgod Y Bryn, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 4LR (27/08/2002)

If there are any mistakes, please let me know so I can correct them for the next edition. If you have Internet access you can also correct your details on the *VFTT* web site at www.vft.co.uk/my-account.asp.

Ω

LASL

L o n d o n ' s
A d v a n c e d S q u a d
L e a d e r s

London's Advanced Squad Leaders (LASL) welcome ASL/ASLSK players or potential players. If you're passing through or staying over in London, you're welcome to come along and take part. There's no fee for taking part or spectating.

We usually meet on the second Saturday of each month from 10.30am until 5.30pm. LASL's venue is located in the lower ground floor of Starbucks, 32 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1AA. It's quiet and has space for up to 20 games.

If you want to come along send your name and contact details to brendan@doubleone-online.net to arrange a game and ensure there are no last minute problems.

INTENSIVE FIRE 2012

25 – 28 OCTOBER 2012



INTENSIVE FIRE is the UK's longest running tournament dedicated to the play of Advanced Squad Leader. 2012 sees us well into our second decade 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 (£46 per night for a single room or £36 for a double room). The hotel is within a short taxi-ride of Bournemouth rail station and ample parking is available. To book contact the hotel on (01202) 555 889 (+44 1202 555 889 from outside the UK). You can also book online at www.kiwihotel.co.uk.

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

COST

Weekend registration for the tournament costs just £15, or just £10 if you register before 1st October. 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, 9 Pier Road, Kilchoan, Acharacle, Argyll, Scotland, PH36 4LJ. Telephone (01972) 510 350 (+44 1972 510 350 from outside the UK) or email if@vftt.co.uk.