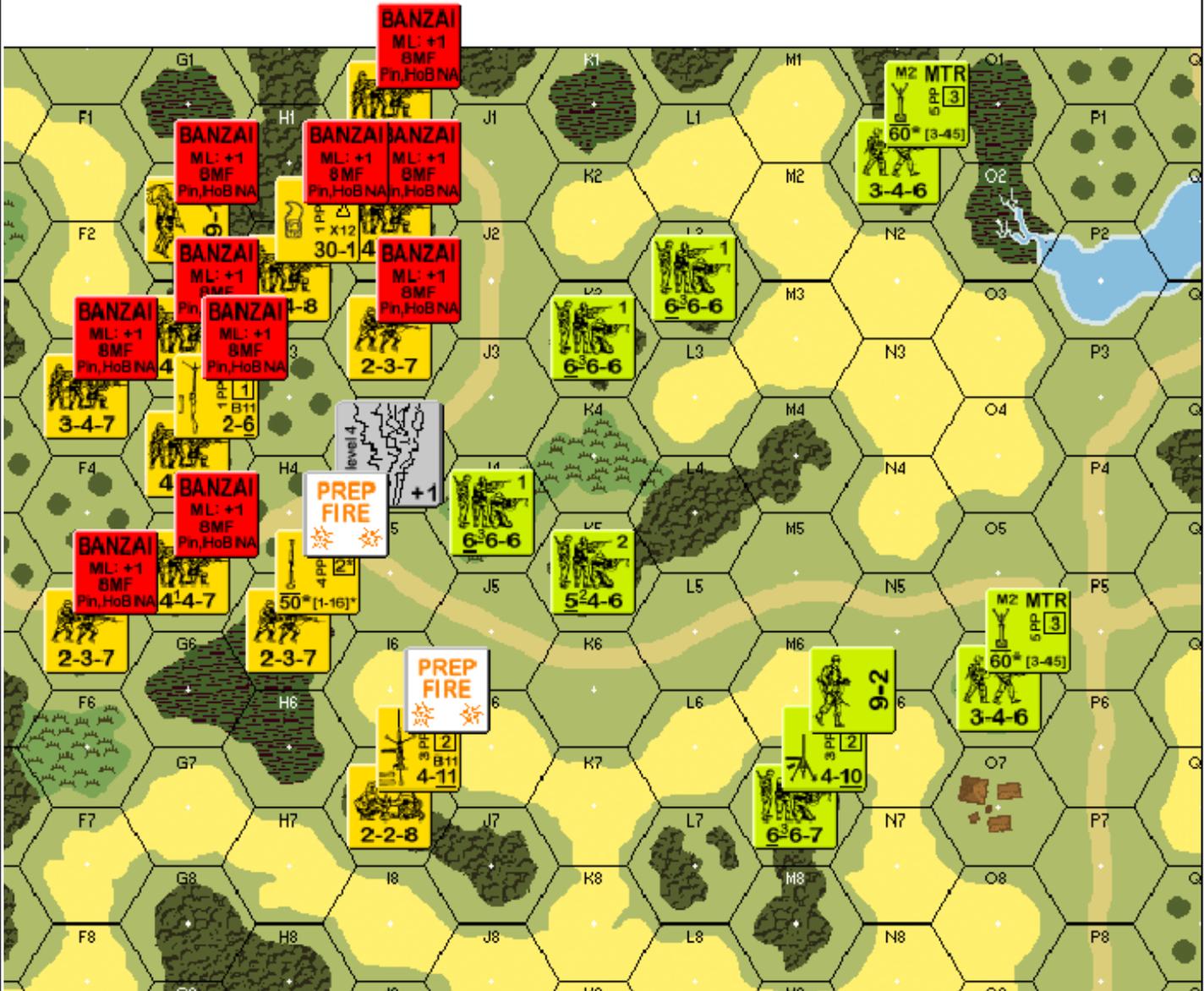


# BANZAI!!!



The Newsletter of the Texas ASL Club

November 2017 Volume 22, Number 2

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## EDITOR'S FOXHOLE

Rick Reinesch



We have a jam packed issue of Banzai!! for you. This issue takes a look at how one approaches playing a scenario, both in general terms though a fine article by Tom Kearney, and through practical application. To that end we are pleased to take you on a trip down memory lane by bringing back the old Crossfire approach to scenario analysis with a review of a classic scenario courtesy of the great folks up in the Chicago area. While the Crossfire articles from the old ASL Annual magazines were insightful, not only have our authors generated a fantastic review worthy of those original endeavors, but Robert and Rich have taken the original concept and made it a step better. Whether you're brand new to ASL or an old grognard, we recommend you dig out the boards and follow along with Rich and Robert as they run through their thoughts on their respective tactics and reasoning to the scenario, and then enjoy the blow-by-blow of the aftermath.

We profile local player, Matt Evans, and I do a debrief of the results of the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas Team Tournament. All that and more awaits you in this issue. Thanks to everyone who submitted material for this issue. Without you we can't publish, so keep those articles coming! Enjoy.

## MISSION PLANNING

Tom Kearney



Here's something that began as a response to a Facebook post and morphed into something a little bigger. The original post was about a player regretting being unable to play a scenario more than once against an opponent.

Few, if any, commanders have ever been able to re-fight a battle under the exact same conditions. In order to prepare for tactical situations units practice battle drills. These battle drills are a series of generic actions that a unit practices over and over again until they become proficient, then they continue to practice. Examples of battle drills are Movement to Contact, Establish a Hasty Defense, Conduct an Ambush, etc. Certain techniques, tactics, and procedures (TTPs) are standardized and can be used in any situation. In ASL terms this could be as simple as using a -2 leader to direct the fire of a kill stack, hopefully breaking or pinning an enemy position so a maneuver element can close with and destroy it.

The Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) uses the acronym METT-TC when planning a mission. I'll discuss each letter of that acronym as it applies to ASL.

**M:** Mission. This is the victory conditions. One must stay focused on the objective and not get distracted. One must either accomplish his mission or prevent the enemy from accomplishing theirs. Mission accomplishment should ALWAYS be the number one priority.

**E:** Enemy. This is the enemy force composition, deployment area, capabilities, and anything else not associated with your own forces, to include environmental conditions and SSRs. This is usually spelled out on the scenario card. Capabilities of enemy units are no secret as chapter H is available to everyone.

**T:** Troops. This is what you have to work with to accomplish your mission. Knowledge is power and this is most important when it comes to knowing the rules. Many times players fail to perform beneficial actions simply due to the fact that they aren't aware that some units are capable of more. For example: BFPs Crucible of Steel SSRs allows AT ditches to be breached by set demo charges. Knowing these capabilities and using them often is the difference between victory and defeat.

**T:** Terrain. Identifying and either using key terrain or denying it to the enemy is of paramount importance. Using covered and concealed approaches (cover protects, concealment obscures) greatly assists in force preservation. Using another acronym, OCOKA, could aid commanders during terrain analysis (map recon). The letters of this acronym stand for:

- O:** observation/fields of fire
- C:** cover and concealment
- O:** obstacles (natural and man-made)
- K:** key terrain
- A:** avenues of approach

The player who more efficiently uses the terrain is at a distinct advantage.

**T:** Time. This is the amount of time one has to accomplish the mission. Some scenarios end immediately when certain conditions are met, though this is the exception. It might be a good idea to create notional phase lines when on the attack; i.e., my guys should be across that road by turn five. The same sort of phase lines could be used by a defender with troops assigned to delaying an attacker.

**C:** Civilians on the battlefield. This is rarely used; only in rare cases where interrogation is in effect, or by an SSR stating movement difficulties due to refugees, or the Royal Family in Assault on a Queen.

While many ASL players formulate some form of plan for the scenario they are about to play the above provides a format. I could go on and write about an operations order (OPORD) but everyone knows that no plan survives first contact.

## BANZAI CROSSFIRE

### ASL Crossfire Scenario: A44-Blocking Action at Lipki

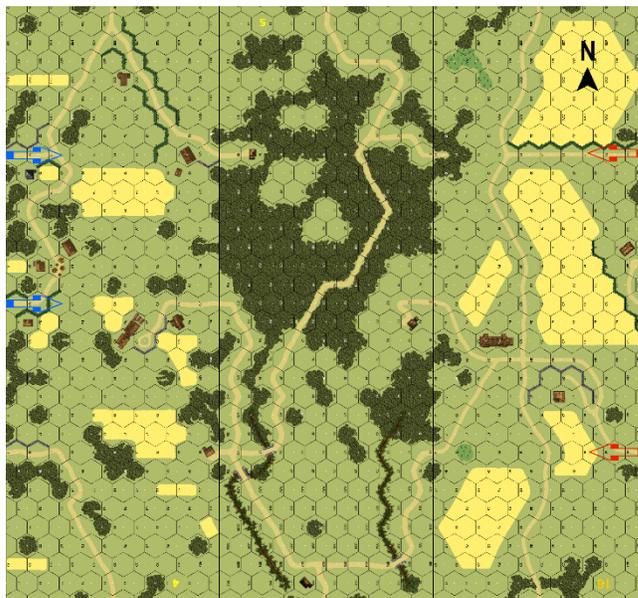
**Robert Banozic - Russian Perspective**

**Rich Spilky - German Perspective**

*[Crossfire articles originally appeared in the old ASL Annuals as an in-depth analysis of a featured scenario. For those of you unfamiliar with Crossfire articles, the authors simultaneously and separately analyze a scenario from opposite perspectives. They then exchange notes and simultaneously write responses to their counterpart's comments. While no game was actually played (such as with a Series Replay article), the commentary is often as incisive as those in Series Replays. Banzai!! is pleased to publish the insights of Robert and Rich as they do a Crossfire analysis of an Advanced Squad Leader scenario from ASL Annual '92. And in a great twist on the original Crossfire concept, they will go ahead and play the scenario to see how their analysis pans out. - Ed.]*

This scenario originally appeared in the ASL Annual '92. As background, the scenario utilizes boards 4, 5, and 16 in the below configuration. The Russian player moves first and enters on Turn 1 on the east side on hex 16I10 or 16Y10, and the Germans enter Turn 1 on the west side on hex 4Q1 or 4Y1. The Russians win immediately by exiting at least 15 VP off the west edge between 4Q1 and 4Y1, or at game end if they have amassed greater than or equal to 15 CVP more than the Germans.

The Russians have 8x4-4-7s with a KV-2, T-34, 2xBT-7s and 4xTrucks, along with the opportunity to swap out the 8-0 leader for a Commissar. The Germans are meeting them with 4x4-6-7s, 2xPzIIIIs, 3xhalftracks, a truck and a 28mm AT gun, along with 2xPzIVs that are randomly available starting on Turn 4. The only SSR of note is that Grain does not exist, and is treated as Open Ground.



**RUSSIAN**  
**Robert Banozic**  
**Rating: Even**

Scenario A44 *Blocking Action at Lipki* is a personal favorite of mine. The situation is more interesting than might be apparent from a quick glance at the scenario card, there are some cool toys, and for my money you won't find a better-balanced scenario anywhere. But I fear that the lopsided record (favoring the Germans by nearly 2:1 on the ROAR on-line record) may unfortunately discourage some ASLers from giving this gem a try. The scenario opens with a combined arms force of Red Army armor and truck-borne infantry ostensibly seeking to drive through a Panzer spearhead and off the board to victory. A very difficult challenge, to be sure, but fortunately the VCs provide an alternate means of winning the day: it turns out that just killing Germans is sufficient, provided that I am not too careless with the lives of my own troops. This is much the easier alternative, I think, and so will be the focus of Soviet efforts as my men take the battle to the enemy. For the Motherland!

## RUSSIAN ATTACK

**Advantages:** Armor, Commissar, Capture CVP, Squad Numbers

The KV-2 and T-34 are without doubt the superstars of the Red team, and much of the action will revolve around their various (mis)fortunes. Truly rolling fortresses by the standards of 1941, I expect that these monsters will keep Rich preoccupied. The 8-0 naturally gets politically educated to a 9-0 (A25.22); there is no real reason not to, and in a short, sharp engagement such as this, the Commissar's morale and rally benefits could be critical. I will also not overlook opportunities to scoop up the double CVP awarded for captured units and equipment (A26.222), and my squads' numerical advantage should be of great help there.

**Disadvantages:** Radioless AFVs, Mechanical Reliability, Time

It isn't difficult to imagine the outcome turning on the Russian's ability to move a tank at a critical juncture, but at this time (pre-1943) the low-tech T-34 and BT-7s just don't want to go without a friend (D14). Worse, sometimes any of my tanks might want to go, but can't - maybe not for the rest of the game (D2.51 & Russian Vehicle Note M). Even when operating freely, these tankers will have to make a quick job of it; depending on the German dispositions, it can take a good 4 Game Turns to fully engage. That doesn't leave a whole lot of time to get the job done, and the Russkies always seem to have to push a bit harder than might be prudent. Absent this constraint - if the Russians could advance at their leisure - I would expect them to win something like 80% of the time.

### Russian Turn 1

The Exit option in the VC basically establishes the parameters of the scenario. This defines the area which the German is required to defend and so establishes the contours of the battlefield (note that the "between 4Q1 and 4Y1" VC language should be read to be inclusive of these hexes. A44 is a very old scenario, before all of the modern ASL conventions had been adopted. I think that the context clearly shows that 4Q1 and 4Y1 were meant to be included, and I have never met an ASLer who disagreed. But you should still clarify this with your opponent before choosing sides).

However, I believe that actually trying to achieve the Exit VC is a big mistake. Doing so means having to run the entire length of the playing area, further exacerbating the time problem. But given the alternative VC - amassing at least 15 more Casualty VP than the Germans - I am hard-pressed to understand why the Russian might try to exit

instead. It seems to me that if the Russians could actually meet the Exit VC, they must have demolished the German force in the process, and so should win on CVPs anyhow. On the other hand, if the Soviets are unable to destroy sufficient German forces to win on CVPs, or have lost too much of their own force, how could they manage to exit? A Russian win by exiting *without* killing enough Germans for CVP victory implies that the defense must have been woefully out of place or otherwise somnolent. There's not much risk of that with *Oberstuhmbahnpanzergruppenfuhrer* Spilky in command of the bad guys! But I do think that many of the reported Russian losses in A44 are due to failed attempts to exit. That isn't a mistake that I'm going to make. My goal is to kill Germans!

With this in mind, I choose to enter my units on 16I10. I dislike the northern approach because it is a bit of a bottleneck, and it's relatively easy for the German to position for Deliberate Immobilization attempts (C5.7) against my heavies. I am also not inclined to split my already-small force, as I would then essentially have to win two battles instead of just one, and half the struggle would still be to force that narrow northern passage. Therefore I am concentrating my command for a drive across the center-south. It's the shortest, fastest way to bring the bulk of my army into contact with the enemy, and I want the general mayhem and destruction to get started as quickly as possible. Using this approach I expect to be fully engaged by the end of turn 4. The Radioless tanks enter first using Platoon Movement, then the KV-2, and finally the trucks with the troops. Using the prescribed 1/2 of my available MPs, my units end my first Player Turn as follows (all Infantry are Passengers, all vehicles are in Motion, and all tanks are CE):

Board 16:

J1/6 T-34 M40

J2/6 BT-7 M37

J3/6 BT-7 M37

M7/1 KV-2

N2/1 ZIS-5, 9-0, 2 x (4-4-7+LMG)

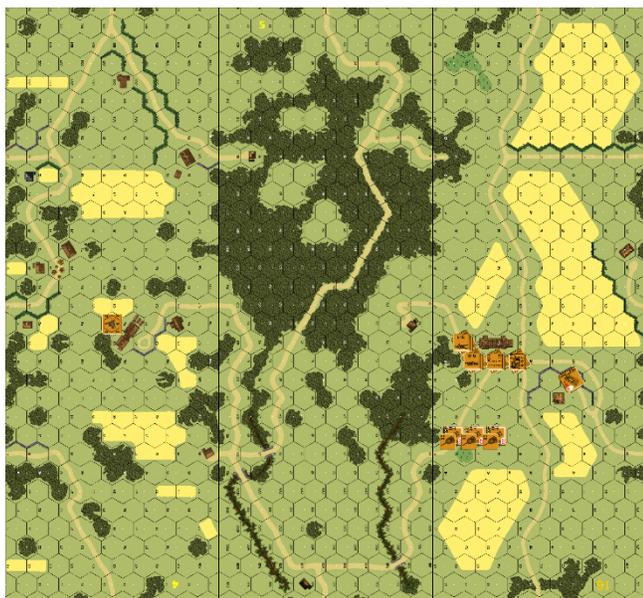
N3/1 ZIS-5, 2 x (4-4-7+ATR)

N4/1 ZIS-5, 2 x 4-4-7

O2/1 ZIS-5, 9-1, 4-4-7+MMG, 4-4-7

Board 4: P5, Sniper

All of these enter concealed, though given my moves the enemy will hardly be mystified. Only the identities of the leaders and SWs will actually be in doubt.



**Figure: Final disposition of Russian units at the end of Turn 1**

Rich's own first move - unknown to me as this section is written - will likely not much impact my plans. The exception is that it is possible for the Germans to haltrack the 9-2 & 4-6-7+LMG to 5S9 for an APh push into 5T8. This is 12 hexes from 5DD1 and so allows for the possibility of a 2 'even' shot at a CE T-34 racing up the road on turn 2, with the possibility of 1 FP ROF. It isn't much, but an early Stun on this tank would hurt the Russians badly. Worse, any form of Casualty Reduction - either a k/ or a Casualty MC - means STUN=RECALL, and would positively ruin my day. The game is probably then irrecoverable for the Soviets. Well, I can't do anything to stop this, so we'll just have to see if Rich takes advantage of that opportunity.

I also expect to see a Pz IIIG behind the wall in 4O7, and another heading for a position in 4M10. The latter hex is a particularly tough not to crack, as my heavies would have to risk Deliberate Immobilization shots to take it on.

If all this unfolds as expected, my turn 2 plans are mostly set. The tank platoon braves any fire from 5T8 and moves up the road, Stopping in 5AA9. The idea here is to get the T-34 into the vicinity of 4H7 on turn 3 to tackle the expected 5O7 Panzer, while being careful to keep the range to at least 7 hexes to avoid those dreaded D.I. shots. The BT-7s stay out of the line of fire, but will be positioned to cover the T-34 in case a truly bold Pz IIIG would try to roll around it. Meanwhile the Passengers unload from 5P2-S3 with a goal of reaching the 5R8-O10 woods line on turns 3 and 4. The KV-2 rumbles up the center in support, and could challenge anyone in 4M10 by turn 4.



Not much more can be projected beyond this without additional knowledge of German intentions. I expect the 4O7 Panzer to go into Motion and make its escape rather than face down the T-34, and any Panzer in 4M10 might do the same for the KV. But no matter where they run, no matter where they hide, we will be coming for them... and their CVPs!



**GERMAN**  
**Rich Spilky**  
**Rating: 70% pro-German**

It's hard to believe that this scenario is 25 years old at this point. I imagine it was thought to be a good tournament-sized scenario in its early years and may have been considered a balanced scenario as well. However, as the playings have accumulated I suggest that the consensus is growing that this scenario as it stands is significantly pro-German. Statistically speaking, as we're writing this

Crossfire piece in the Fall of 2017, the ROAR record is showing 107 German v. 56 Russian wins. That equates to about a 65.6% German win rate or a 1.91/1.00 win ratio at this point.

Now, for those of you who have read Robert's numerous contributions over the years with respect to both Crossfire and other ASL-related articles appearing across several publications, you'll understand why I'm more than a bit intimidated by taking both this public and opposing view with respect to the opinions of this seasoned and distinguished ASL player. Back in the day, Robert's ASL nickname was "The Shark". As I understand things, this nickname was attributable to his ability to lure his opponents into playing the "favored" side in a scenario only to lock in an easy victory with a tactic that they hadn't anticipated with the so-called "disadvantaged" side. So, with that perspective in mind, I hope the readers will empathize with my feeling a bit cautious here as we move forward.

However, "The Shark" and I have bantered about this scenario a number of times over the years. Through those exchanges I understand that he feels that this scenario is more balanced than what the pro-German record suggests. During these same conversations he's indicated to me that his strategy as the Russian player is to forget about the EVP option and to focus on the CVP option instead. To effectuate this, I understand that he plans to lead a Platoon of AFVs with the Radioless T-34 M40 AFV with its nearly impenetrable frontal AFs and proceed to take out the 15+ CVPs worth of the significantly more vulnerable German AFVs and simply run away after that leaving the German player with little recourse. While I agree that if the Russians are to win this scenario then this is a good procedure to follow, I just don't think that it will work more than a third of the time. Consequently, I'm ranking this scenario 70% pro-German which is just a tad higher percentage-wise than the actual ROAR results to date.

## GERMAN DEFENSE

**Advantages:** Rate-of-Fire, CE Fire capabilities, 9-2 Infantry leader, APCR potential, Deliberate Immobilization, and the denial of Russian EVP VC is not difficult.

Assuming my concept of the Russian attack strategy is correct, the Germans are going to need as many shots/hits as possible (in order to increase the odds of generating at least one low TK DR) at the (radioless) T-34 since its frontal armor factors are **11/8** (hull and turret), respectively. The two German Pz IIIGs feature a 50mm Gun with a TK number of **11** at a range of 3-18 hexes and a ROF=2. The German SPW 251/10 sports a 37L Gun with a TK number of **9** at a range of 3-18 hexes and a ROF=3. Barring a CH, this 37L Gun can really only hope for a D.I. (C5.7) result

(at  $\leq 6$  hexes) v. the T-34 although it could readily take out either of the BT-7 M37s should they come into LOS. Each of these two Russian AFVs only has a maximum AF of 2 depending on the CA perspective. All three of these German AFVs can and will fire from a CE posture which they'll do in order to maximize the TH/TK probabilities. Since the SAN for the Russian is 2, and since a TH DR of 2 would yield a CH for our German Guns we'd be more than happy to administer the favorable outcome for our German TK number value should this occur. Consequently, I will take my chances with respect to the CE/SAN risk. Note that a TK DR of 2 might also generate a beneficial outcome for the German TK objectives but a TK DR does not invoke a SAN dr per A14.1. Meanwhile, don't forget that all three of these AFVs possess an APCR ammo possibility with a TH DR of  $\leq 4$  in '41. The availability of APCR with an increased TK number anywhere from 1 to 4 higher (than the AP TK numbers listed earlier) will vary based on Gun type and range, but might prove to be beneficial at all ranges from which TH attempts are anticipated. I certainly am not counting on APCR being available with this low of a TH number required, but the Germans have got nothing to lose by trying to use it given the opportunity (and they should have at least three opportunities). Surprisingly, the German's best TK number generating Gun is the 28LL ATG which has a ROF=2 and which *only* utilizes APCR TK numbers. Consequently, this 28LL ATG has a TK number of **13** from 3-6 hexes and **12** from 7-12 hex range. Therefore, it may be that this weapon actually has the best chance of generating that low TK DR result needed. The placement of this weapon therefore is important as we want it to get as many shots in as possible.

As far as the KV-2 is concerned, we note that its frontal AFs are the reciprocal of the T-34's offering a frontal **8/11** (hull and turret) AF respectively. Meanwhile, although the KV-2 is radio equipped and therefore exempt from Platoon Movement restrictions, it only has 9 MPs. Therefore, it will take this beast at least four or five game turns to get into the action. It is also especially vulnerable to Deliberate Immobilization (D.I.) attacks by presenting a very large -2 TH modifier for target size. In any case, I doubt that either the Russian T-34 or KV-2 will get closer than 7 hexes from any of the German Guns since that will enable D.I. attempts against them. While a D.I. result will not gain the Germans any VP, the risk of the vehicular crew bailing out with an Immobilization TC of  $\geq 9$  (thereby rendering the now-immobilized Russian AFV inoperable for at least a turn or two) is a chance I do not believe the Russian player is going to take since the time it may take to re-crew the AFV to re-engage the German AFVs (which may have moved away in the meantime) will just take too long.

The remaining two HTs will move to locations that hamper the Russian's ability to exit the board. Notice that the VCs do not enable the use of the actual road hexes themselves in

order to satisfy the EVP option (4Q1 and 4Y1 respectively). Additionally, these vehicular crews will Abandon their HTs on turn 2 and remove their LMGs as they do so. This will boost the Infantry capabilities a bit via Fire Lanes (A9.22) as well as the potential anti-AFV CC capabilities a small amount too (A11.5), not to mention that this act will also lower the CVP value of the HTs considerably should they come under fire by the Russian AFVs (although I doubt they will from where they will be located). I will go on the record and say that should the Russian infantry actually have the wherewithal to reach these HTs and find the time to re-crew them and drive them off the board for double/captured EVPs, then I deserve to lose this scenario! As far as the German infantry is concerned, the German 9-2 leader commanding a couple of 4-6-7 squads and LMGs from the relative safety of a +2 TEM wooden building and possibly from a hastily dug Foxhole ought to be able to keep the Russian infantry at bay. The use of the other German infantry will be discussed later.

**Disadvantages:** Relatively weak AFs, Low TK numbers v. opponent's AFs

The two German Pz IIIGs only have frontal 3/4 (hull and turret) AFs respectively while the SPW 251/10 displays a paltry AF of 1. The Russian 76mm Gun of the T-34 has a TK number of 12 for ranges of 2-18 hexes. So, if it hits us first and often, we are in trouble. One detail that may prove important is the fact that Russian equipment is required to use the Red TH numbers. Thus, if the T-34 does indeed stay at the 7+ hex range that I'm envisioning in order to avoid D.I. attempts, then its Basic TH number will be 8, which is effectively a 7 since its RST weapon must be BU in order to fire. The German AFVs/Gun meanwhile are either small (+1) and/or will endeavor to reside behind hedges (+1) or have Gun Shields respectively, so all these (albeit small) details may help the survivability of the German Guns a bit. It must be acknowledged though that when and if the T-34 hits any of our AFVs they will most likely be destroyed. The KV-2 meanwhile has even higher TK numbers of 17 (AP9) and 16 (HE), so, we'll stay away from this monster if we can!

At the same time, the two Russian BT-7 M37s have 45L Guns with a TK number of 10. These also have the capability (although a bit less than the T-34) of destroying the German AFVs. However, if these actually come into LOS then I suggest that that is actually to the German player's advantage as the German Guns can more likely eliminate them first. In fact, if the German side can eliminate both of the BT-7 M37s he would have gained 10 CVPs. If in the process that means he would lose both Pz IIIGs and the SPW 251/10 to the T-34 and/or to the KV-2 as a consequence, that means he would have lost 15 CVPs (assuming no crews survive on any side). Should each of these outcomes occur then the Russian will have attained a

+5 CVP advantage and they will at that point still need to find 10 more CVPs in this situation to satisfy the CVP VC. This is where the reinforcements in the form of two additional AFVs will come into play, the implications of which will be discussed later.

## German Turn 1

In looking at Robert's first turn deployment, I believe it is pretty clear what's what despite the concealment. It is obvious that the Trucks carrying Infantry are in hexes O2, N2, N3 and N4 on board 16 while it seems that the T-34-led platoon resides in hexes J1-J3 (again on board 16). The radio equipped KV-2 appears to be in hex 16M7 making its way forward. Based on these assumptions, I calculate that the furthest the T-34-led platoon can make it on turn 2 is to hex 5Y10. *[Make sure to note rule B6.43 as the Russian Platoon moves. This rule indicates that an AFV must spend 2MPs to change VCA on a bridge across a non-road hexside. While using Platoon Movement, this may become a condition that the Russians may have to contend with as they cross Bridge hexes 5EE2 and 5Z9].* Meanwhile, I'm estimating that the KV-2 will not get to the 5Z9 bridge hex until turn 3.

My objective quite simply is to "pack it in" and make it difficult for the Russian commander to position his T-34 (and subsequently his KV-2) such that:

- It will often be on the receiving end of a large volume of fire from at least two German Guns, and/or,
- It will need to come closer than 7 hexes away and consequently become vulnerable to D.I. attempts, and/or,
- (In an effort to avoid the Radioless TC with the T-34) it will cause the Russian to bring his more vulnerable BT-7s into the LOS of the German Gun(s).

Furthermore, by establishing the defensive perimeter near the exit area I believe that it will take the Russian player that much longer in Game Turns to engage our German forces, but more importantly, it will allow all the German AFVs and infantry to lend each other mutual support and will nearly make the EVP option unobtainable for the Russian player. Although he has already indicated his strong preference to go for the CVP VC option, we might as well remove as much doubt about the alternative VC as possible. Finally, by providing the German infantry with safe routing options that can't readily be cut off, the Russian will not be able to obtain CVP (or double CVP for prisoners) without difficulty.

With this in mind here's my off-board setup (all concealed):

4Q(-1): 9-2, (3) 4-6-7s, (2) LMGs (will try to deploy one 4-6-7 in RPh) all on foot; HT (CE)

4Q(-2): 2-4-7 on foot, HT (CE)

4Q(-3): TRK, towing ATG, 2-2-8

4Q(-4): CE SPW251/10 w/ 8-1, 2-4-7 as Passengers

4Q(-5): Pz IIIIG (BU)

4Q(-6): Pz IIIIG (BU)

Board 4: O8, Sniper

German Turn 1 Movement and Advance Phases (all concealed)

4Q(-1): 9-2 stack to 4T3, APh: 9-2, (2) 4-6-7, (2) LMG, 2-4-7 to S4 (O.G.), remaining 2-4-7 to 4T4 (Woods). HT to Bypass 4X0/Y1, Stop and BU.

4Q(-2): 2-4-7 CX to 4N1, APh: to 4M1. HT (CE) to 4S1, Stop and BU.

4Q(-3): TRK, towing ATG, 2-2-8 to 4S3, unload Gun/2-2-8, Restart to 4W2, remain in Motion.

4Q(-4): SPW251/10 w/ 8-1, 2-4-7 as Riders to 4Q1, unload Passengers with inherent ATR, Restart and continue on to 4T2. 8-1, ATR/2-4-7 (now on foot) still has 2MF left in MPh to 4P0, APh: to 4O1.

4Q(-5): Pz IIIIG to 4R2, (stay BU for now)

4Q(-6): Pz IIIIG to 4Q2, (stay BU for now)

## RUSSIAN RESPONSE

The opening move of the wily enemy commander gives away very little information about his intentions. If anything, the lack of forward progress by the Germans is probably smart, as it sacrifices nothing while keeping me in the dark. But from what I can discern, it seems that the plan is to gain position so as to overwhelm my monster tanks with sheer volume of fire due to the superior accuracy and ROF of the German weapons. I have to say that I think this sort of strategy plays into the hands of the Russian, as I would generally expect each of my heavies to maneuver so as to avoid a battle with more than one enemy cannon at a time; at least, that's my goal. For example, if the Germans maintain their turn 1 positions (and I'm not claiming they will, this is only an example) the Pz IIIIG at 4R2 could be targeted from a hex like 4I8, which my T-34 can easily reach on turn 3 (assuming no problems on start-up). No other German weapon could engage me there, and my tank would burn all but the needed 2 MPs (entry + Stop) out of LOS of the target to make a Motion attempt unlikely to succeed - another important consideration when approaching the German armor. Of course the situation might be very different by Turn 3, but these are the kind of

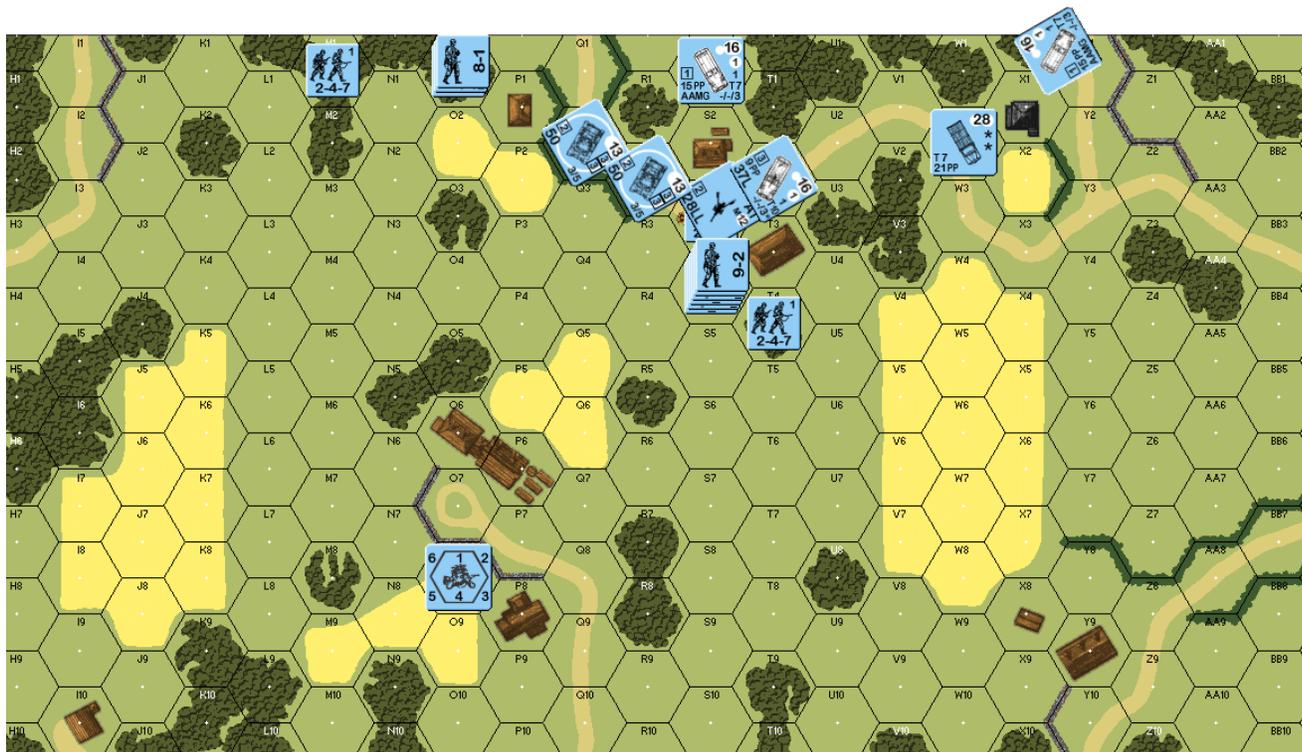


Figure: Final disposition of German units at the end of Turn 1

opportunities to look for. And in any engagement where a Panzer goes toe-to-toe with either of my heavy tanks, the Russian armor is going to be heavily favored.

As anticipated, nothing in turn 1 happens to thwart my plans, so my turn 2 move comes off as outlined above. I expect to end Russian Turn 2 with everyone on Board 5 thusly (all vehicles Stopped unless otherwise indicated, all tanks BU, all units concealed):

AA9/4 T-34

BB9/4 BT-7

CC8/4 BT-7

S4 2x4-4-7

S3/3 ZIS-5

R4 9-1, 4-4-7+MMG, 4-4-7+ATR, 4-4-7

R3/3 ZIS-5

Q3/4 ZIS-5

P3 9-0, 2x (4-4-7+LMG), 4-4-7+ATR

P2/4 ZIS-5

R2/3 KV-2 (Motion)



**Figure: Final disposition of Russian units at the end of Turn 2**

Rich's commentary gives me no real idea about where his armor is headed, but by the beginning of turn 3 I will be trying to maneuver the T-34 so as to engage whichever AFV I can reach. The BT-7s will accompany if they can be kept out of trouble, otherwise the T-34 risks the Radioless TC for independent movement, either way always being mindful to stay at 7-12 hex range. I especially want to keep out of LOS of that 28LL, as it is the most effective anti-tank

weapon in the German arsenal, while also being difficult to counter with my armor. I would risk a run past the ATG with a heavy's frontal armor if necessary, but a dedicated showdown isn't in the cards.

Meanwhile the KV-2 grinds up the center to reach 5T7 on turn 3. From here I can smash into either of woods hexes 5T8 or 5S8, and stop, using all of my MPs on turn 4; the leviathan remains mobile on any Bog check DR less than '11'. This is the plan if it enables me to pound (or just scare away!) targets which would be blocking my advancing Infantry moving up through the woods, and I would want the tank to have the +1 woods TEM if there is German armor about, for example in 4M10. In such a case a CE German would need a TH '6', WITH a hull hit, for a successful D.I. I would accept that risk for the chance to kill a German AFV in return. If circumstances are different and there is nothing to be gained from the small Bog risk, from 5T7 I could instead continue on the road to cross the 5Y8 bridge and so enter the battle proper.

Also as planned, my foot soldiers move up through the woods en mass to emerge along the western edge on Turns 3 and 4, with the idea of gaining the area around 4O6. Not surprisingly, it appears that Rich is sending his own most powerful infantry to block me. But I want to make this area into a trap for broken Germans who might be unable to extricate themselves before my numerically superior troops can cut them off, ideally capturing at least a few in the process. It isn't hard to imagine a broken 9-2 & 4-6-7 combo being forced to surrender, yielding a jackpot of 10 CVPs! Possibilities like this can give the BT-7s a chance to shine, because with their outstanding speed and immunity to Small Arms Fire they can rapidly move to positions that cut rout paths, forcing elimination or surrender for failure to rout. And if the game has not yet been decided, I would be looking for fire from my MMCs to threaten the 28LL. Suppressing the ATG could really allow my tanks to run amok, and I might capture the Gun (4 CVPs), too. Well if that actually happens I probably have a win well in hand anyway, but my point is that the CVPs are out there to be had, which I think gives the Russkies at least a fair chance.

Rich's choice to Abandon the SPW 251/1s is a bit of a novelty, I think. The 2 CVP hulks he leaves behind are sitting ducks if I can just get into position to take a shot, and they are obvious targets for my ATRs (and remember that the Russian ATRs are a bit better than most others, with a basic TK of 6). 4S1 in particular is vulnerable from 4P6, which is someplace I would like to go. True, without the crews and MGs they are not nearly so valuable, but now the crews might be chased down in other ways. Perhaps they are going to hide? Removing the MGs does delete 2 VPs from the German OB, though. Drat!

The appearance (on a dr) of the German reinforcements cuts a bit both ways: On the one hand, Rich is going to need

the help. But on the other, they represent another 12 CVPs for me to kill. In fact, the failure of the Pz IVs to appear until late (or never) can be a considerable source of consternation for the Soviets.

As Rich points out, if I net the necessary 15 CVP advantage I am going to declare victory and either withdraw if feasible or, at most, hold my positions. Generally I would expect a German concession at this point, but if play continues the onus of the attack would switch to the blue guys who are ill-equipped for the task, particularly since I must have been beating up on them fairly convincingly. Any German movement into the teeth of the Red Army dispositions should only serve to increase my score. And while I can't see it happening, I would certainly be alert to any surprise opportunity to dash sufficient units off the board for a win - though the enemy commander isn't buying my theory about "clarifying" the exit area!

Now I want to take a moment here to mention a few items which should be kept in mind while playing A44, but are easy to overlook:

1. Grain is Open Ground – it's right there in SSR 3. But back in the day, one of the best players of the 1990s lost this scenario as the Russians and later began to tell me about how the Grain complicated his attack. Don't be that guy.
2. A rusty old grognard playing the Russians once lost this scenario at the ASL Open in Chicago when my opponent destroyed one of my tanks with HEAT. It was *Herr Spilky* who reminded me post-game that the Germans don't get HEAT until May, 1942 (and 1943 for everyone else) per C8.3. So don't be me, either! And is there any good reason why these date limits should not be printed on the counters for HEAT like they are for other kinds of Special Ammo?
3. The T-34 and BT-7s have Restricted Slow Turrets (D1.321). So these will not be firing MAs or CMGs while CE.
4. The KV-2 *does* have a turret even though it is *not* printed on the counter (see Russian Vehicle Note 24). You probably won't use it, but there can be situations where it is advantageous to have the VCA diverge from the TCA (e.g., to save the MP for VCA change, or to put the BMG on a different CA than the MA/CMG).

## GERMAN RESPONSE

Robert's Turn 2 movements allow me a bit of time to prepare my defensive positions a bit more effectively. We'll attempt to dig a couple of foxholes, abandon our HTs and

take their LMGs with us, continue movement of the Truck into bypass of a hex to make it impossible for the Russian to exit from that hexside should they even consider the option (D2.31). The purpose of digging the FHs is to create additional +2 TEM Locations in order to spread the Russian FP out a bit and preserve our infantry from any potential lucky Russian IFT shot. The purpose of Abandoning the HTs is threefold:

1. To gain additional infantry fire support with the scrounged LMGs brought along by the (self-rallying capable) vehicle crews. These have the potential to create Firelanes and help prevent any aggressive Russian infantry moves.
2. They will also present additional defended Locations that will serve to dissipate the Russian firepower we're expecting by Turn 5 or so.
3. The Abandoned HTs themselves are unlikely to even be seen and therefore will be difficult targets to destroy as far as CVPs are concerned. Furthermore, they are now only worth 2 CVPs should they find themselves in LOS of the Russians from their back row Locations.

We'll also move the ATR off to the right flank in order to provide potential TK attempts v. any BT-7s that may come into view in that area. Note that per C5.7, the German ATR's Base TK number is **5** and therefore too low to attempt D.I. shots v. either the T-34 or the KV-2.

German Turn 2 Prep Fire, Movement, and Advance Phases

**PFPh:** 9-2 Stack in 4S4, all attempt to dig FHs directed by 9-2, become TI

2-4-7 in 4T4 also tries to dig FH, becomes TI

*[Note that an entrenching attempt is a potential SAN generating DR. Therefore, all our AFV's are BU at this stage to make them invulnerable to a Sniper attack in the unlikely event one occurs. We'll CE our 3 AFVs the upcoming APH in anticipation of the Russian Turn 3 MPh].*

**MPh:** 2-4-7 in 4M1 to L0, 8-1, ATR, 2-4-7 in 4O1 to 4K1

Vehicular crew in bypass 4X0/Y1, Abandons HT, scrounges LMG from HT

Vehicular crew in 4S1, Abandons HT, scrounges LMG from HT

TRK in 4W2 to Bypass 4W1/X0

**APH:** 1-2-7, LMG in 4X0 to 4X1, 1-2-7, LMG in 4S1 to 4S2

Unbutton SPW251/10 and both Pz IIIGs

2-4-7 in 4L0 to 4K1

8-1, ATR, 2-4-7 in 4K1 to 4K2

Everyone should still be concealed at this point.



**Figure: Final disposition of German units at the end of Turn 2**

As was already stated, I agree that the best way for the Russians to win this scenario is by utilizing some form of the tactics that Commissar Banozic is following, namely: by focusing on the CVPs and not on the EVP VC option. Consequently, bringing his T-34 forward without the much more vulnerable BT-7s nearby, and at the same time, attempting to isolate only one of the German AFVs from a 7-12 hex range will accomplish three objectives for this scheming Communist:

1. The T-34 can avoid D.I. attempts since he's at a range  $\geq 7$ , and
2. The T-34 can also avoid a significant volume of fire from more than one German Gun simultaneously
3. The more vulnerable BT-7s will not be in the LOS of any of the German Guns which could provide the German player with CVPs

However, in order to bring these conditions about, I suggest that the Russian commander may be taking on a not insignificant amount of risk that could swing the odds significantly into the German's favor if they don't work out as he envisions. For instance, Comrade Banozic nonchalantly mentions his intention to take a Radioless TC (D14.23) with the T-34 at the start of his turn 3 MPH in order to move the T-34 alone (to hex 4I8 by way of example) to bring these three conditions about against the Pz IIIG in hex 4R2. Let's take a closer look at the odds of this happening as intended. First of all, the odds of passing the Radioless TC  $\leq 8$  are 26/36 (about 72.2%). Then, if successful, the odds of rolling a Mechanical Reliability DR  $\leq 10$  (D2.51) are 33/36 (about 91.7%). Consequently, the odds of *both* of these going the way the Russian proposes are only 66.2%. So, the odds are certainly better than 50/50 that both the Radioless TC and Mechanical Reliability DRs will work out as wished-for, but this mathematically

challenged Russian is taking an unprovoked 33.8% chance (a bit more than 1 in 3 chance) of moving the pendulum of victory significantly in the German's favor by attempting this maneuver! I'm not saying that the Germans will automatically win if either of the T-34's Radioless TC or Mechanical Reliability DRs are failed, but I will say that if it should happen then the Russians will have lost another precious Game Turn before commencing engagement with the Germans which decreases their odds of winning this scenario significantly.

Furthermore, is this move really such a fantastic ploy that it is worth taking this chance? Let's assume that the more likely 66.2% outcome does occur as the Russian hopes and take a look at what the Germans can do in response and also at what the approximate odds are of these German reactions and the consequences to the Russian plan. First of all, as Comrade Robert has already indicated, he wisely intends to use the minimum two MPs in hex 4I8 in the Pz IIIG's LOS which resides in hex 4R2. Indeed, this unit will roll for a Motion attempt per D2.401 (and if successful, will rotate its VCA as well to enable an easy escape next Game Turn) once the T-34 has stopped in 4I8. Quite simply, the odds of this Motion attempt  $dr \leq 2$  are a clean 1 in 3. [Note that if the Motion attempt is successful, then the sD7 roll isn't really necessary since the Russian will require an Improbable Hit (C3.6) v. the Pz IIIG in his AFPh (8 basic TH number, +2 Case B, +2 Case C, +1 hedge, +1 BU, +2 Case J)]. Should the Pz IIIG's Motion attempt fail, it will pass on the sD7 opportunity (D13.2) in favor of taking its chances with Defensive Fire. My reasoning is that the Pz IIIG in 4R2 might at least try for a potentially effective TK DR outcome in the DFPh now that his Motion attempt has failed. In this case, the Basic TH number is 9 and the Pz IIIG will need to pay +2 DRM for Case J (Motion) and no other TH modifiers that apply at this point. So he'll hit the T-34 on a TH DR of  $\leq 7$  in this case. Of course let's not forget that he can try for APCR needing a TH DR  $\leq 4$  as indicated earlier. Should he find APCR ammo, his TK number rises to **14** at that range v. the previously mentioned frontal armor factors of **11/8** (hull/turret respectively) of the (fortunate so far) T-34. If not, he'll just roll for an AP shot with a TK number of **11** at that range and hope for the best, needing a very low TK roll to obtain a result. In any event, he'll turn his VCA after his DFPh shot in order to prepare to make a run for it during his turn 3 MPH. Specifically, he'll turn his VCA after firing the MA at the T-34 (as if to fire the CMG or BMG per C3.22). Let's again assume that none of these things go the way that the German wants them to and accordingly neither the Motion attempt  $dr$  nor the TH/TK attempts of the Pz IIIG produce any results. Consequently, the Pz IIIG is not in Motion during the Russian's AFPh and the T-34 is unharmed. The T-34 will need a TH DR of exactly 2 in the AFPh in order to hit the Pz IIIG at this juncture. If we assume Comrade Banozic

does not get this TH DR of 2 in the AFPh but rather gains acquisition, what can the German player do during his upcoming Turn 3 to spirit the Pz IIIG out of LOS of the T-34 in hex 4I8 in order to live to fight another day (or at least a few more turns)?

Well, the German player still retains faith that the Pz IIIG may survive to make it out of 4R2 along with some tactics to try to justify that sentiment. Firstly, since it has already rotated the VCA of the Pz IIIG during the previous DFPh he has minimized chances of being hit by the T-34 by only providing it with one, and only one, shot during the T-34's Defensive First Fire once the Pz IIIG has expended his first Start MP during the ensuing German turn 3 MPh. If the Pz IIIG expends a Start MP right away in his turn 3 MPh, the TH DR that the Russian T-34 will need is shaping up to be a TH DR  $\leq 7$  (8 basic TH number, +1 hedge, +1 BU, -1 Acquisition from last AFPh). If the Germans can find a way to add Smoke to the hex before the Start MP expenditure, then the Russian T-34's TH number required will be decreased to a TH DR  $\leq 5$  (or even to a TH DR  $\leq 4$  if they are fortunate enough to place two Smoke counters into the hex but they don't want to be seen as greedy). In order to accomplish this, both of the nearby 4-6-7s with a Smoke exponent of 1 will move adjacent to 4R2 and try for one each. They are not at risk of being seen by any Russian units at this point and so have nothing to lose and can still return to the safety of protective terrain with positive TEM modifiers afterwards in the APh. If the 4-6-7s both fail in their smoke grenade placement attempts, then the Germans will attempt what may seem like a risky move but is not as bad as one might think. This tactic will involve the moving of the adjacent Pz IIIG in 4Q2 directly into the already acquired hex (albeit taking the risk of overstacking penalties per A5.132) in an effort to try for sD7 before the original Pz IIIG in 4R2 makes the sD7 attempt itself. Surprisingly, if the Russian now chooses to shoot at the moving Pz IIIG it is actually to the German's advantage because the T-34's TH DR v. the moving Pz IIIG will need to be a TH DR  $\leq 4$  (8 basic TH number, +1 hedge, +1 BU, -1 Acquisition from last turn, +3 cases J and J<sup>1</sup>). Admittedly, a TH DR of exactly 5 in this situation and a subsequent dr = 1 will also cause a hit to occur to one of the Pz IIIGs in the hex due to Overstacking (A5.132), but this is a chance worth taking.

Assuming the Russian is wise enough not to shoot at the moving Pz IIIG at this point, the moving Pz IIIG will roll for the sD7 and skedaddle out of the hex whether successful or not. After that of course we'll endeavor to place another sD7 with the original Pz IIIG who has been waiting patiently in hex 4R2 all along to be assisted by others. Hopefully, this sD7 effort will simply be attempting to place Smoke on top of Smoke that is already there, but if not, it will give him extra incentive to obtain that sD DR  $\leq 7$  that is required. My computations indicate that the odds of

missing all four of these Smoke attempts are  $[5/6 \times 5/6 \times 15/36 \times 15/36]$  which is about 12% yielding a fairly likely Smoke placement outcome. Of course if all four Smoke attempts do miss, the exceptionally blessed T-34 will still need a TH DR  $\leq 7$  upon the expenditure of the Pz IIIG's Start MP (which would have been a TH DR of  $\leq 5$  or  $\leq 4$  depending on Smoke placement outcomes) followed by a TK number of around  $\leq 7$  or  $\leq 8$  for an outright kill (depending on the hit location). These successive TH/TK DRs are by no means guaranteed to be successful for the Russian T-34 commander. Just to be thorough, in the case of no Smoke being placed, the odds of the Russian obtaining the needed TH DR  $\leq 7$  and the subsequently TK DR  $\leq 8$ ish required for the kill are  $21/36 \times 26/36$  yielding about a 42% chance. And keep in mind that this is the best case scenario that the Russian can ask for in this circumstance! So in the end, Comrade Banozic is taking about a 33% chance of hurting his chances of winning the scenario appreciably by going it alone with the Russian T-34, only to gain a *potential* 42% chance (at best) of having this outcome go his way! Meanwhile, what are the odds of *all* of the following outcomes going against the German player in this series of potential events, any of which would appreciably lower the odds from the 42% for the Russian to succeed?

- Failing the Motion attempt dr in the Russian turn 3 MPh in which the T-34 appears, or
- Failing that, causing no harm to the T-34 in the DFPh with either APCR or AP, and
- If the Motion attempt failed, and no harm was done to the T-34 in the previous DFPh, not getting Smoke from any of the four attempts described previously in the ensuing German MPh, and finally,
- The T-34 obtaining both the necessary TH and TK rolls in the single Defensive First Fire shot it may have available during the German MPh of turn 3.

It is too difficult (for me) to calculate the collective odds of *all* of the following going against the German player, but I will estimate them to be significantly less than 10% when combined. Finally, I anticipate that one of these (potentially) moving Pz IIIGs will consider stopping in the ATG's hex 4S3. This will make it more difficult for any subsequent Russian AFV to move into the LOS of just one German Gun by enabling both Guns to shoot any subsequent Russian AFVs who move into their LOS.

As far as the German AFV reinforcements go, I agree with Robert when he indicated that their appearance "cuts a bit both ways". These Pz IVEs have a 50/50 chance of appearing on German turn 4 followed by subsequent 50/50 attempts which may cause them to arrive on future Game Turns if they don't show up in the prior turn. This means that they have a 75% chance of showing up turn 5 or sooner

and an 87.5% chance of showing up on turn 6 or sooner. There is even a small chance that they may not show up at all. In any case they possess a bit more survivability v. the Russian Guns with their frontal 6/4 (hull/turret) armor than do the Pz IIIGs but not much more. Further, their 75\* AP TK number is a paltry 10 at a  $\geq 7$  hex range and note that this is depletable AP7 ammo we're talking about just to add insult to injury. The 75mm HE TK number is not worth talking about. As Robert has pointed out already (and will likely never forget himself), these Pz IVEs do *not* have H6 ammo despite that notation showing up on the back of the counter. They're effective against Russian infantry with their 75\* Gun and MGs but I really don't see much practical use for them and will utilize them (or not) depending on the situation in place when they arrive. I certainly don't intend to hand the Soviets an EVP victory unnecessarily.

## RUSSIAN CONCLUSION

Rich's analysis has conclusively established that the Russians will not win this scenario on Turn 3. But before I pack my bags for the gulag I will remind STAVKA that we always expected the Panzers to run at the first sight of the heavy tanks (see above). While the day of liberation might be delayed, we have to keep chasing after them until they lack the means or opportunity - or luck - to effectuate an escape. And the KV-2 should arrive on scene by turn 5, I think, to add its 152mm cents' worth.

We should note that the probabilities Rich calculates above mostly ignore other chances of hurting the German armor, such as Immobilization, Shock, or even Stuns (from tank MG fire), though any of these might lead to its eventual destruction. Also, my AFVs' Mechanical Reliability DRs are a fact of life, and have to be made whether moving individually or not. While Platoon Movement would mean fewer Mechanical Reliability DRs, in case of failure Random Selection could affect multiple tanks; no more than one can be impacted when moving independently.

I cited 4I8 as an example of a hex that would give me the kind of LOS I'm looking for, without realizing that the Germans were planning to stay put. Similar results vs. one or the other Panzer can be achieved from 4J8, 4I9, 4H8, and more. Some of these allow the light tanks to accompany safely, others don't. As it happens, my light tanks have other things to do besides read maps for the T-34. Specifically, I want to get these to 4O8/6 and 4N8/6. On turn 4 my infantry will be running out of the woods up to the 4O5 area, and they have to be screened from the concealed (though should-be identified) ATR troublemakers in 4K2. True, this exposes the BT-7s to a small risk from the ATR. But with 4 shots [2 x (MA + CMG)] replying for every one incoming I am optimistic

that the threat can be suppressed, perhaps scoring some CVPs in the bargain. As an added bonus I get the tanks closer to my right flank, as I still have hopes of deploying these usefully to surround broken Germans - now probably in the vicinity of the 4V2 woods cluster.

But I have to say that I am pretty darned surprised that Rich apparently is going to concede the 4O5 area to my troops without a fight. Obviously he has foreseen the risk of having his men cut off and possibly captured, but now I will occupy that building in record time, perhaps without loss. Running flat-out my 9-0 stack should be able to make 4P6 by turn 4 (and suddenly LOS from 4P6 to 4S4 becomes a critical issue. Is it blocked by the woods in 4R5? Either way can work for me, but I sure would like to know!). More likely I would not move so quickly. So the big push happens on turn 5, when all my Infantry will be available, properly dispersed, and with the best-equipped squads sheltering in buildings and woods and some may even be concealed. Now the 9-2, ATG, and SPW 251/10 are all vulnerable, and those foxholes will prevent skulking. There will be a furious firefight, but I like my chances. Capturing the ATG suddenly doesn't seem all that unlikely, and who knows? Maybe a run off the board is a real possibility after all! Imagine if I Ambush one of those board-edge vehicles to withdraw the decisive CVPs for the win (cue gleeful cackling).

Well, after all this it might seem like I think that the Russkies are heavy favorites in *Lipki*. But I refer you to my play balance rating above: I fully expect the Russians to lose half of the time, even if they stay focused on the CVP VC and play well. So how does the Red Army fail? Glad you asked! It so happens that I think I know: Generally speaking, when a competently-led Russian force loses in *Lipki* it will be due to one or more of the following (I've listed these factors in the order of my own sense of their likelihood of being significant or determinative, but any/all of them *could* happen to you):

1) *Lucky German TH/TK DRs*. Foolish or desperate German gunners will be dueling with the Russian heavies. If they are going to be scoring with CHs or really low TK DRs, the German commander will look like a military genius. It does happen, and Russians do lose.

2) *Bad start-up rolls*. Remember those Radioless TC and Mechanical Reliability problems plaguing the Russian tanks? Imagine if the T-34 is out of communication for two or more consecutive MPPhs, or either heavy throws a track for no good reason and at a most inconvenient time - which is pretty much any time. That's also the moment when victory begins to slip from the grasp of the proletariat.

3) *Either of the heavies suffers from MA Malfunction which is not repaired within two RPhs*. Not only does the Russian lose opportunities to score CVPs, but very possibly the

Germans gain opportunities to score CVPs! Not really what we had planned.

4) *Really bad Russian shooting*. If the Reds just can't score hits, or just 'no effects' and duds, they may run out of time before gaining the necessary CVPs.

Absent all of these painful prizes in the Russian grab-bag of potential disasters, I would expect the Soviets to win almost every playing. But then it would be a bad scenario, wouldn't it? My feeling is that the Russians will encounter such misfortune(s) in about half of the matches of *Blocking Action at Lipki*, but they should acquit themselves well the balance of the time. It really is a lot of fun trying!

## GERMAN CONCLUSION

It's hard to argue with Robert's logic. My disagreement with his scenario rating in this Crossfire piece is really more about the degree or the proportion of times that the Russian can win this scenario even while following his recommended strategy. As Robert himself cataloged in his conclusion there are a host of items that could put the Russian strategy in jeopardy. In my write-up I also point out a number of tactics the German player can use to tilt the odds even further against the Russian. In a nutshell, suffice it to say that the Russians just need too many things go their way and there are too many occasions when bad things can happen to them in this scenario, any one of which could be problematic to their ability to achieve their desired VCs. The Germans meanwhile just need to keep making the Russians take chances until either they themselves get a good break and/or until the Russian player suffers a bad break. I'm simply saying by my rating of this scenario that one of these outcomes is going to happen in favor of the Germans in a majority of matches and therefore the Russians should only win this scenario in the neighborhood of a third of the time.

*[Authors' Note: As a follow-up to this Crossfire, the authors decided to actually play out scenario A44 and put tactics and theory to the test. Accordingly, the appropriate DRs were made for German Deployment and Foxhole creation as discussed in the Crossfire article, and the action commenced with Game Turn 3. For the purpose of this playing it was agreed that free LOS checks and determinations would be allowed at any time so that the outcome would be a true representation of strategy and fortune, and would not be dependent on LOS mishaps. As an example, the players agreed in advance that the LOS from 4P6 to 4S4 was blocked.*

*The battle was fought on Rich's custom oversized boards, though LOS issues were resolved on standard ASL boards. It was discovered that the artwork - and therefore the LOS - on Rob's classic ASL boards of 30 years' vintage varies*

*from those printed more recently. The readers are reminded that their own LOS checks may or may not be in agreement with those referenced here. R.B. & R.S.]*

## BANZAI CROSSFIRE - AFTER ACTION REPORT

Played 10/6/2017 at ASLOK in Cleveland, OH

ASL Crossfire Scenario: A44-Blocking Action at Lipki

**Robert Banozic - Russian Perspective (Rob)**  
**Rich Spilky - German Perspective (Rich)**

### Turn 3: Russian Perspective (Rob)

The engagement begins most inauspiciously for the Red Army, when first the T-34 fails its Radioless TC and then the BT-7 taking position in 4N8 is promptly exploded by the ATR with a TK DR of 2! Otherwise, everything is going to plan. ☹



**Figure: Final dispositions at the end of Russian Turn 3. The T-34 is on board 5 located off to the upper right.**

### Turn 3: German Perspective (Rich)

The Germans failed their pre-game deployment TC, so had to modify the recommended turn 1 moves accordingly. This will also affect the FH digging guidance a bit as described for the turn 2 PFPh. Speaking of the PFPh of turn 2, our 4 FH digging DR attempts were 11, 12, 12, and 11 respectively (and I was worried about generating a SAN of 2 event with these DRs)! Hopefully, these high DRs have been washed from the system now. The big events of course are the failed Radioless TC of the T-34 still on board 5 and the opportune TK DR of 2 from the ATR v. the BT-7 in 4N8. The ATR in 4K2 needed a 9 TH so that was reasonably obtained, but I didn't see the 2 TK DR coming. We needed a TK DR  $\leq 4$  for a guaranteed result of some kind, but we'll take a good snake eyes anytime we can get one. **CVP score at this point is Russians 0, Germans 5.**

During the PFPh of German turn 3 we were able to dig a 2S FH in 4S4 and a 1S FH in 4T4, both aided by the -1 Labor counters from turn 2's PFPh entrenching attempts. The ATR took a shot at the other BT-7 in 4N7 (which is HD to a shot from the ATR still in 4K2), got a turret hit, but lightning did not strike twice with a low TK DR. The Pz IIIG moved from 4Q2 to join the ATG in 4S3. The purpose of this move is to make it more difficult for the Russian commander to isolate just one German AFV so as to allow more than one German Gun to engage the more powerful Russian AFVs when they approach. Meanwhile, the 1-2-7 vehicle crews with their scrounged LMGs move forward to support the other German Infantry positions.

### Turn 4: Russian Perspective (Rob)

The T-34 fails its Radioless TC again. Didn't someone mention that this is how the Russians lose? The KV-2 rolls across the 5Y8 bridge and into Bypass at 4I10/J10 to face down that blasted ATR team. Meanwhile my infantry run forward, but are slowed a bit by the extra MF caused by the Smoke emanating from the blazing light tank and by the continued firing of the ATR. Otherwise I would easily have been able to run stacks up behind building 4P6, which will henceforth be identified here as 'Fort Rob'.

In the German's turn 4 I finally draw the first Nazi blood by

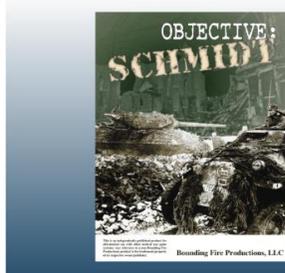
eliminating the 8-1, but the HS hangs tough and keeps the ATR in action. The Pz IVEs arrive promptly, but one stationed in 4S4 malfunctions its MA in its AFPh. Yay! The Panzers are now clustered in the vicinity of 4S3. Still-empty Fort Rob is blanketed with enemy acquisition counters.



Figure: Final dispositions at the end of Russian Turn 4

### Turn 4: German Perspective (Rich)

As Rob mentions, his T-34 again fails its Radioless TC, making it 0 for 2, so far. The only consolation I can offer to the Russian is that these two failed TCs are giving the KV-2 time to catch up with the herd such that both of these powerful AFVs might arrive at about the same time which will be difficult for the German OB to deal with



## Coming Soon from Bounding Fire Productions

simultaneously. This was one of the significant risks that I identified in the Crossfire article. Therefore, should I really be feeling sorry for the unfortunate Russian player?

On the German half of turn 4 the reinforcements are destined to arrive right off the bat, but this is a mixed blessing as we've discussed previously. The TK # of these Pz IVEs is only **10** (one less than the aforementioned and paltry **11** of the Pz IIIGs) and this is accompanied with a limited AP7 ammo depletion number which simply adds insult to injury. These AFVs are certainly useful against opposing infantry with 3/5 MGs and a 75\* Gun, but I fear that these AFVs may later end up serving as target practice (and CVPs) for the Russians. At this juncture, I thought about just sending them North to sweep around and go after the Russian trucks in the backfield, or, in any event, to remove them and their potential CVPs from the pool of targets, but instead, I opted for the more traditional approach and sent them to 4S4 and 4R3 respectively. These spots are currently out of LOS of the Russians and will serve as good spots to hamper any aggressive Russian infantry movement that may be forthcoming, but I don't think Commander Banozic is just going to let them sit there peacefully.

The major events in turn 5 are the 8-1 leader in 4K2 suffering multiple MC failures which ultimately resulted in his demise. **CVP score is now Russians 2, Germans 5.** Meanwhile, the Pz IVE in 4S4 malfunctions his MA while attempting to place an acquisition counter on 'Fort Rob' (if that is what we're calling it now). One "good" thing I can say about this outcome is that The Pz IVE is now worth 1 CVP less to the Russians in this state than it was just a short while ago.

### Turn 5: Russian Perspective (Rob)

That ATR team just has to go. I slow the infantry attack momentarily to deal with it, but now I am about a Game Turn off my pace. The T-34 finally passes its Radioless TC and is sent to 4S10, taking advantage of the Panzer's busted MA. The KV-2 moves up to 4J5. I also advance a squad+ATR into 4O6 with the idea that it can threaten the PSW 251/10; it will certainly draw fire, but risks must be taken. Now the squeeze is really on,

as every armed German AFV is threatened, some by multiple weapons. Only one Panzer succeeds in going into Motion; others blast away. The flurry of APCR and AP produces no effect. In the AFPh the T-34 destroys the malfunctioning Pz IVE for 5 CVPs. As my Player Turn ends it looks like I am about to have some fun.

But not for long! In the German half of turn 5 the KV-2 gets Smoked, but I return fire even though I need a TH DR of 2. Of course I get a 12! At least the German ATR team finally goes down, but that's scant compensation for the big tank being out of commission. I can scarcely win this scenario without it. My own ATR guys also crumble, and the Panzers maneuver out of LOS of the T-34.



Figure: Final dispositions at the end of Russian Turn 5

## Turn 5: German Perspective (Rich)

We've got nothing to lose by trying to repair the broken MA of the Pz IVE in 4S4 since a repair dr of 6-Disabled/Recall result will enable us to possibly exit the vehicle from the board without giving the Russians time to destroy it for CVP. If we repair the MA, all the better. It's a rare occasion where I'm actually hoping for a repair dr of 6-MA disabled result, but wouldn't mind a 1-repair result either. Neither happens. Next, the HS possessing the ATR in 4K2 breaks. This is where the HS in 4K1 was supposed to come into play. His purpose was to become the backup ATR firing crew once the first HS inevitably broke, but I didn't anticipate that the 8-1 leader who was with him would be eliminated outright and therefore there is no leader to take the ATR away from the now broken HS, and a broken MMC can't drop it. Drat! Therefore, Self-Rally is my only alternative to bring this weapon back into action while the other 2-4-7 is unsure what to do with himself as his purpose has been confounded.

Meanwhile, the T-34 decides to join the action after all (now 1 for 3 in Radioless TC outcomes) and moves in non-platoon movement style to 4S10. This is a great hex (from the Russian's perspective) for the T-34 to choose because it is six hexes away from 4S4 and seven hexes away from 4S3. If my Pz IVE's MA was operable in 4S4 it could attempt D.I. v. the T-34 in 4S10, but it remains malfunctioned. The ATG and Pz IIIG in 4S4 meanwhile remain seven hexes away preventing their still-operable Guns from attempting D.I. shots v. the T-34. This was an excellent move to take advantage of the changed German situation. Hats off to my erstwhile opponent Rob for noticing and making such a good move. Meanwhile, both German AFVs in 4S3 and 4S4 fail their motion dr attempts due to this move.

*[It was at this point we wondered if the T-34 in 4S10 also had LOS to the other German AFVs in 4R2 and/or 4R3? On my oversized board 4 the LOS was blocked. However, on Rob's (ancient) standard sized board 4 the LOS was wide open! We were considering his standard sized board 4 to be the "official" LOS reference board at that point but I wondered how there could be such a big difference? To settle the dispute, we obtained a relatively new and standard sized board 4 (remember that we were at ASLOK with over a hundred other ASL players present, so obtaining another board 4 quickly was no problem). It was then that we noticed that the shape of the woods depiction in hex 4R5 was significantly different on the old and new board 4s and that was affecting this particular LOS check significantly. From that point on we considered the new board 4 to be the official LOS reference board rather than the old board 4 and we moved on.]*

The KV-2 is now entering the fray and moves to 4K5. At this, the Pz IIIG in 4R2 successfully rolls for Motion due to

this move. Simultaneously, the Pz IVE in 4R3 and the SPW 251/10 in 4T2 both fail their motion dr attempts. So, for those counting, four of my five AFV's failed to roll for motion this turn each needing a dr  $\leq 2$ . I guess that's about average but I was hoping for more than one successful motion attempt out of five tries in this situation.

Since it now has nothing to lose, the SPW 251/10 in 4T2 tries for APCR v. the KV-2 in 4K5, it gets it (and ROF too) but the TK# at this range is a meager **10** (which is only one more than its AP TK # at this range) and is ineffective v. the KV-2's frontal armor. Another AP hit from the 37L Gun of the SPW 251/10 is achieved but this too bounces off. In similar fashion the Pz IIIG in 4S3 attempts an APCR shot v. the T-34 in 4S10 but doesn't find any of this ammo on hand. Consequently, both the Pz IIIG and the ATG in 4S3 fire at the T-34 and are both ineffective, but do gain acquisition for what it's worth. Finally, the Pz IVE in 4R3 follows suit by firing AP at the KV-2 without result.

In the Russian AFPh of turn 5, the T-34 obtains a low TH roll (needing a TH DR  $\leq 5$ ) vs. the Pz IVE (with the malf'ed MA) in 4S4 and promptly eliminates it for 5 (not 6 since it's MA is busted) Russian CVPs. **Now the CVP score is Russians 7, Germans 5.** Lastly, the KV-2 acquires the Pz IIIG in 4S3.

In the German half of turn 5, the remaining Pz IVE in 4R3 attempts to defend himself by shooting +3 Smoke at the KV-2 in 4K5 and succeeds. By doing so, we're just hoping to slow this monster's TK chances down a bit because if it can't hit us, it can't destroy us. The ATG in 4S3 fires ineffectively again against the T-34 in 4S10, hitting without effect. Because the T-34 eliminated the Pz IVE in 4S4 during its previous AFPh, I am fearful that it's 76mm Gun is now freed up to fire upon and eliminate other German AFVs in its LOS during the DFPh of the German turn (who will each do their best to escape).

To start the German turn 5 MPh off, the 4-6-7 in 4T4 goes for the 1 in 6 chance for a smoke grenade to help protect the Pz IIIG in 4S3 but doesn't find any. The SPW 251/10 in 4T2 moves to 4S3 and tries for its own vehicular smoke grenade attempt needing a dr  $\leq 2$  but also fails. It spins around and returns back with its head hung in shame. Next up, the other Pz IIIG (already in Motion in 4R2) moves to 4S3 and hopes for a successful sD7 DR and also fails. Finally, the stationary Pz IIIG in 4S3 realizes that it must protect itself and uses its first MP to place sD7 successfully in its own hex, but it is not yet considered a moving target at this point. Naturally, the T-34 in 4S10 recognizes this and promptly fires at the Pz IIIG in 4S3 now shrouded a bit by +2 Smoke. The T-34 needs a TH DR  $\leq 4$  at this juncture and rolls a 5 (thank goodness for Smoke)! At this, the Pz IIIG in 4S3 spends its second MP to start up and moves out of the hex to live to fight another day. The T-34 wisely chooses not to intensive fire at the Pz IIIG in 4S3 because

even though it has gained a -1 acquisition marker on the AFV, the +2 intensive fire penalty would cause it to have needed a TH DR  $\leq 3$  for a hit at that point with the corresponding chance of a breakdown possibility of  $\geq 10$ . Since there are 3 more Game Turns left, this would have been an ill-advised risk to take and the Russian commander wisely (in my view) passed it up.

Finally, in an effort to place an acquisition counter, the KV-2 in 4K5 fires from the +3 Smoke needing snakes to hit the stationary Pz IVE in 4R3 that smothered it in Smoke to begin with this turn. It rolls a 12! After this event, I'm thinking that my odds are good to hold off the Russian CVP differential count, but at the same time, I've got a sinking feeling that the broken MA of the KV-2 isn't going to be broken for long.

### Turn 6: Russian Perspective (Rob)

The KV-2 fails to repair its MA in the Russian RPh, but I (perhaps optimistically) move it out of the Smoke. The T-34 fails another Radioless TC, and now the surviving BT-7 does the same! So far I have made 5 Radioless TCs, and failed 4. I finally have my infantry distributed fairly well in Fort Rob, if a turn late, but not much can be achieved without some armor cooperation.

In the German RPh the 152mm cannon comes back to life! Rich promptly dumps Smoke on it again with the remaining Pz IVE, but at least it's functioning. I spend the turn shooting-up the 9-2 kill stack with a number of attacks, hoping for multiple breaks/eliminations, but when the haze cleared only a HS had disappeared, though a squad was broken and the 9-2 and AFV crew were pinned. Rich voluntarily broke the 9-2 to allow it to rout back to 4V2 with the squad.



Figure: Final dispositions at the end of Russian Turn 6

## Turn 6: German Perspective (Rich)

The KV-2 doesn't fix its MA during the Russian RPh, but it wisely moves out of the Smoke hex to adjacent 4K4 in anticipation of a successful repair attempt at the bottom of turn 6. The Russian doesn't rally either of his ATR squads. The T-34 for the third time out of four attempts rolls  $\geq 9$  on his Radioless TC DR (perhaps he's not as brave without his KV-2 colleague's Gun in action)? The remaining BT-7 in 4O8 also fails its Radioless TC on its first attempt.

In the German half of turn 6 the KV-2 (now in 4K4) repairs his MA right on cue. The Pz IVE still in 4R3 promptly repeats history by dumping +3 Smoke on him once more in the German PFPh of turn 6. A German HS in 4S4 suffers multiple breaks and is eliminated scoring the Russian a CVP. **CVP score at this point is now Russians 8, Germans 5.** The KV-2 in 4K4 fires out of +3 Smoke to acquire the Pz IVE in 4R3 once more and does not break his MA this time. This Pz IVE may be living on borrowed time.

## Turn 7: Russian Perspective (Rob)

The T-34 moves! The KV-2 moves! With time running out, I use the heavies to surround the German positions. I send the T-34 to 4W2, where it threatens the AFVs in 4U2 and 4V1 and DMs the broken 9-2 stack in 4V2. The KV-2 moves up to 4P2, where it threatens more German armor while remaining out of LOS of the ATG. The BT-7 fails its Radioless TC again, though. This is really unfortunate, as I had designs on moving the light tank up to 4V4, which would eliminate the 9-2 and squad in the RtPh (due to failure to rout) for 5 CVPs. Instead they will find refuge in 4V3. I take a variety of 4, 6 and 8 FP shots +TEM from the environs of Fort Rob, without effect. In the APH, I advance Infantry out toward the German lines, preparing for the final assault.

In his turn Rich tries unsuccessfully to D.I. my T-34 with the 37L halftrack and generates a sD to cover the Pz under fire from the KV-2. The latter fires AP with a Depletion of 9 needing a TH  $\leq 8$ ; I would be happy with anything other than a TH DR of 9 or 12. Of course I get the 9, which both obtains and henceforth depletes AP ammo but also results in a clean miss, depriving me of another "bonus" TH attempt. Meanwhile the Panzer IIIs OVR some of

my infantry in the open, but without doing serious damage. In the DFPh the T-34 kills the SPW 251/10, but my infantry shots achieve nothing. **The CVP score now stands at Russians 13, Germans 5,** and the situation is bleak. My next Player Turn is the last, and I essentially have to kill two more tanks without significant loss to myself.

## Turn 7: German Perspective (Rich)

The Russian infantry Prep Fires at the ATG in 4S3 to no effect. The fickle T-34 starts successfully (that's two out of five tries by my count for this AFV) and moves all the way to the other flank (4W2). The Pz IVE in 4R3 passes its motion dr in response to this move as does the Pz IIIG in



Figure: Final dispositions at the end of Russian Turn 7

4U2. The SPW 251/10 in 4V1 fails his motion dr and consequently may not be around long enough to feel regret. The KV-2 moves forward to 4P2 to tighten the noose. The Pz IIIG in 4T2 fails its motion dr attempt in response to this move.

In the German half of turn 7 the SPW 251/10 in 4V1 tries for D.I. twice v. the adjacent T-34 in 4W2. Because of its adjacency (-2 point blank TH modifier), we need a Hull Hit (HH) and a TH DR  $\leq 7$ , but fail. On the intensive fire shot we need a HH once again but this time needing a TH DR  $\leq 5$  and we fail again. *[Note that we had nothing to lose with the intensive fire shot in my opinion since, if it worked, we'd have succeeded and if we broke our MA in the process, the AFV would then be worth one less CVP to the Russian who will most likely destroy it during its next firing opportunity].* Neither of these things happen and accordingly, we may need to say goodbye to the SPW 251/10 shortly. Indeed, the T-34 does not return the favor with inaccurate fire and promptly dispatches the SPW 251/10 in the Russian DFPh of German turn 7. **CVP score is now at Russians 13, Germans 5.**

Meanwhile, the stationary Pz IIIG in 4T2 obtains sD7, starts up and somehow escapes the wrath of the KV-2 and makes it over to 4U4. Note that the KV-2 is prevented from using intensive fire per the vehicle notes (and the back of the counter as well) and thank goodness this is so since this would have been the opportune occasion for the KV-2 to use it had it had been available. Meanwhile, the (already in motion) Pz IVE in 4R3 cruises towards the KV-2 (which again cannot fire at it) and chooses 4N1 as its final destination while staying in motion. He's still in LOS of the KV-2, but out of its CA and we know that the Russian player only has one player turn left after our player turn to eliminate this and another AFV to gain the needed CVP differential. Similarly, the Pz IIIG in 4U2 goes to 4N3 and stops (he is not in LOS of the KV-2) but is concerned about his susceptibility to an attack by the Russian infantry who are near this hex. Meanwhile, the brave little 2-4-7 HS in 4P1 successfully passes his PAATC to advance into the hex of the stationary KV-2 in 4P2 (and I thought that this HS no longer had a purpose)! I really don't expect this CCPh attack to be successful (and it isn't), but if the 2-4-7 survives the return fire of the KV-2 in the CCPh (which it should since the KV-2's CMG is broken) it will prevent the KV-2 from firing outside his hex in the next (and final) Russian PFPh. In the end, the 2-4-7 does end up surviving the return attack of the KV-2 in the CCPh. He is a brave 2-4-7 indeed!

## Turn 8: Russian Perspective (Rob)

When you're desperate, you start thinking crazy things. As I studied the situation I realized that, if I was fairly lucky, I

could actually win this scenario by exiting. The KV-2, T-34 and BT-7 were all within range of the exit area, and together would yield 19 EVPs - more than the 15 required. The BT-7 would make the run first, and if it failed without being destroyed (Stunned/Shocked/Immobilized) the heavies could still try for CVPs.

I softened up the ground by combining all the infantry in and around Fort Rob into a 20 FP attack on the ATG position, which is something I should have done at least a turn ago, and it went down. The BT-7 succeeded in starting up, much to my amazement, and began its run. But Rich had constructed a wall of defenders armed with LMGs, the ATR, and of course a couple of Pz IIIGs. The light tank drew fire from all of these and skated past a number of shots before finally being Stunned by an LMG firing point blank.

So I wasn't that lucky.

But, I still had the heavies and a small chance that both could score CVPs. The T-34 also started and parked point blank for Bounding Fire next to a Pz IIIG which retained ROF after firing and missing the BT-7. The 50mm round bounced off my armor but retained ROF again. My T-34 hit, needing a TK DR of 10, but really a 9 for a clean elimination and CVPs, and got a TK DR of 11. The panzer shook off the Possible Shock DR and fired again before I could take an intensive fire shot. Rich got a CH, exploding the T-34 and my hopes for winning this game.

## Turn 8: German Perspective (Rich)

The Commissar in 4N5 fails to rally a conscript FS, reducing it to a HS providing the German side with a gift CVP. **CVP score now stands at Russians 13, Germans 6.** Our 9-2 and 4-6-7 in 4U3 both rally while under DM! This could help knock down any Russian infantry who may be thinking about a human wave attack or a similarly aggressive move on the final Russian player turn.

All of a sudden, I realize (and Robert probably did so a few moments before I did) that he could feasibly win at this point via the Exit VC option by exiting all three of his remaining AFVs which when combined exceed the 15 EVP requirement. This is the VC option that he has sworn off for years but now it appears that he may be going to try it on the last player turn of the scenario! Wait a minute Robert; you can't do that now can you? If not a rule violation, is it not perhaps an ethics violation? Looks like he's going to try anyway and live with his conscience afterwards.

The Russian starts off with a 20FP infantry shot v. the ATG (manned by the 2-2-8 crew) and 1-2-7 with LMG in 4S3, breaking both units. This significantly increases his chances of the BT-7 making it off the board. The BT-7 in 4O8 chooses the last player turn to pass his Radioless TC (that's

1 out of 3 tries for him by my count) and rolls forward. We shoot every Gun and LMG we've got at him and are fortunate that at least one LMG was able to both hit and roll a low enough TK DR to Stun it on a point blank shot (good thing we abandoned those HTs early on to put two more LMGs at our disposal for use at times like this)!

Consequently, if it wasn't already (for reasons of conscience, if for no other), the EVP VC option is now officially off the table. Back to the CVP differential VC option. The Russian needs 8 more incremental CVP at this point which means he needs to take out two of my remaining AFVs or destroy one of my AFVs and try to eliminate the four CVP of broken infantry that could potentially be surrounded and destroyed in the RtPh.

To accomplish this the T-34 starts up successfully in 4W2 (that's 3 out of 6 Radioless TCs passed by my count for this unit) and moves to 4V4 adjacent to the Pz IIIG in 4U4. The Pz IIIG pivots its TCA, hits, keeps ROF (for the second

time, remember it also fired at the BT-7 as it went by but missed but kept ROF earlier), but has no effect on the T-34. The T-34 bounding fires and hits but rolls too high on the ensuing TK DR! The ROF-enabled Pz IIIG fires for the third time this player turn (second time against the T-34) and rolls snakes! The TK roll is sufficient and the **CVP score is now Russians 13, Germans 13**, and the Russian player concedes.

### Concluding Thoughts: Russian (Rob)

This playing of *Blocking Action at Lipki* was typically intense and competitive, with more than its fair share of drama - but this is not unusual for this scenario in my experience, which is why it is one of my favorites. Rich played an outstanding game and well demonstrated how to lead this German force to victory. I congratulate him.

But despite seeing yet another 'W' in the German win



Figure: Final dispositions at the end of Russian Turn 8

column for A44, I have to say that I also feel vindicated. This playing allowed me to demonstrate pretty much every mechanism by which the Soviets lose in *Lipki*: Good German shooting (the “snake-eyes” in the first and last shots of the game to kill the BT-7 and T-34 respectively); Russian mobility problems; MA malfunctions (the KV-2); and even some bad Russian shooting. As a bonus, I also managed to illustrate my contention that if the Russian can’t win on CVPs, the EVP option will probably also be out of reach! The Radioless TC failures were particularly damaging, as by my count I failed 5 out of 9 tries in total, or roughly twice as often as would be expected from just average luck. Even the early arrival of the Pz IVEs proved very fortuitous for the Germans, because without the Smoke that discombobulated the KV-2 this game could have had a very different outcome. And yet despite this showpiece of disappointments, the Russians STILL very nearly managed to pull out a win. I feel confident that most playings will not see the Russkis so abused by fortune, and consequently the Reds should often enjoy more favorable outcomes.

At least, that’s what I’m hoping for the next time I get the Russians!

## Concluding Thoughts: German (Rich)

What a finish! Looking back, even if Robert had eliminated the Pz IIIG in 4U4 with the T34’s first bounding fire shot before the Pz IIIG itself rolled its lucky snake-eyes hit in return, that would have made the CVP score Russians 18, Germans 6. At that point he might have simply moved his BT-7 to 4S4 while the KV-2 moved to 4S2/S3 in bypass in order to surround the broken 1-2-7 and 2-2-8 crews in 4S3. This would have eliminated these two crews in the RtPh making the CVP score Russians 22, Germans 6. If achieved, that 16 CVP differential is 1 CVP point more than the Russians would have needed to satisfy the CVP differential VC condition and they would have won. However, in this hypothetical outcome, he would have needed to move the T-34 *first*, (not the BT-7) which would have meant that he wouldn’t have been able to even try for the EVP VC option which appeared to be a reasonably achievable alternative at the beginning of turn 8. Robert also might have tried to hold back some of his infantry from the big PFP shot in order to enable some infantry units to approach the stationary Pz IIIG in 4N3 on the last Player Turn in hopes of taking it out in the CCPh to gain the necessary CVP differential, but that would have diminished the amount of FP that ended up breaking the two crews in 4S3.

In any event there are a number of ‘what ifs’ that we can consider:

- What if the BT-7 did not get eliminated by the ATR’s low TK DR on turn 3?
- What if the German reinforcements did not arrive so soon (and obtain Smoke twice on two tries)?
- What if more Russian Radioless TCs had been passed?

Each of these outcomes was, in the alternative, more likely than what actually transpired and each of them went against the Russians. And yet, on the last game turn, the Russians were still in a reasonable position to achieve either of the VC options. On the other hand, one must consider that with all the chances the Russians are forced to take to execute this strategy, they’re bound to have some high DRs. Conversely, with all the shots the Germans are taking they are bound to witness some low DRs among them. In the end, show me the scenario where you need most things to go your way in order to win and I’ll show you a scenario that you will usually lose. This scenario may be fun to play as the Russians but the Germans are going to win it most of the time. The ROAR record is correct and Robert hasn’t convinced me otherwise.

## RULES TIP

B9.21 has an example in it that has a lot of implications when it comes to snap shots. Say your opponent is behind a wall and decides he is going to skulk away out of your LOS in his MPh. B9.21 says that those two vertices at the back of the hex are considered a part of the hex, and since the wall does not block LOS to any portion of its hex, those vertices are visible and you can snap shot your opponent as he is trying to leave the hex. He still gets the benefit of the wall TEM, but it provides a chance to fire on your opponent before he gets out of LOS.

## PLAYER PROFILE: MATT EVANS

**Banzai:** Tell us a little bit about your gaming background. How long have you been gaming? What was your first game? Are there any particular games that stood out over the years?

**ME:** I’ve played board games all my life, I enjoy them.

**Banzai:** When and how did you discover ASL?

**ME:** Back in the 70s, my older brother was playing Panzerblitz/Panzer Leader with his buddies. In 1979 we

moved to Fort Richardson, Alaska, since Dad was in the U.S. Army. I decided I wanted “one of those hex games” like my brother played. So I walked to the Shoppette (a mini-department store on army posts) and grabbed a box called “Squad Leader” and the rest is history. At the time, most (all?) other games had chits with information on one side and white on the other. That bothered me and I’ve always enjoyed the dual-sided nature of the SL/ASL chits. We all have our goofy OCDisms, I guess.

**Banzai:** What nationality do you enjoy playing the most?

**ME:** In the SL days I was always wanting to be the Americans, but I’ll take Germans now, too. I’m getting used to their equipment and how to best employ it..

**Banzai:** Describe your favorite kind of scenario. What kind of scenario do you find less enjoyable?

**ME:** I prefer just plain CVP scenarios. I find them to require more “chess-like” tactics—how to move and kill without getting killed. Whereas running through open fields to capture a Fortified Stone Building building...well, I just haven’t quite figured out how to do that successfully yet. Humph!

**Banzai:** What would you say are your ASL strengths and weaknesses?

**ME:** Having the ASLRB since ‘85 and everything AH/MMP, I’m fairly good with the rules (read ‘em a million times). However, I never had a chance to play much in the 80s and 90s in Alaska. Then family and stuff in late 90s and 2000s—even though we moved to Texas in ‘96. I’ve recently gotten back into the game and get to play a more often (not a lot, mind you!) Hence, my overall tactics still need improvement (see previous question!) I’ve been getting better on the small tactical things such as encirclement, taking prisoners, skulking, better concealment handling, and keeping my leaders available for rallying—I suppose basic stuff. The best advice I heard not too long ago—and I do not recall who said it to me—was, “The game is called Squad Leader, not Squad!” LOL! Knowing the rules and knowing how to apply them, obviously, are two different things!

**Banzai:** What is the best part of ASL, and what is the worst?

**ME:** The best part of ASL is the complexity. I’m drawn to complexity, so I like the detail and richness of the game. I look back at the Defender video game in the 1980s that had

seven controls when most had two or three. I was good at Defender and could play for very long periods on one quarter. ASL is a game, after all, and you can’t simulate real life very well, else it’s no longer a game or it wouldn’t be fun, so I’m good with all that ‘cause I enjoy games. I know everyone has their opinion of the IIFT, but I find that not using that LMG just because it doesn’t get you to the next column is gamey. I wish ASL has more IFT columns. I like the IIFT even if it doesn’t do much, just so I don’t have to think about the bracketed columns on the normal IFT—at least I think I’m getting my extra 2 LMG FP worth.

**Banzai:** What are you most looking forward to with regard to ASL?

**ME:** Form 1979 until around 2013 or so, I only played on average, one game a year. So I never got to play this “complex game” that I’m “into” and have sorted 50 different times (only 50 mind you!) with each new module. Being a recent empty-nester, I’m trying hard to make more time to play.

**Banzai:** What’s your favorite game piece in ASL and why?

**ME:** Heh, I’d have to go back to the 6-6-6 Americans. I love firepower! (Don’t we all.) They may break easy which forces me to think about my play, yet they can rally easier so I’m not always out a unit.

**Banzai:** You’re playing the Russians in a 1941 scenario, facing a German combined arms attack featuring several AFVs. Would you rather have a KV-2 or a platoon of two BT-7 M37s and two BT-7As? Now turn that around: which combo would you rather not have to face if you were playing the Germans?

**ME:** I don’t care, just give me some AFVs and I’ll do the best I can!

**Banzai:** You get to choose your side in a scenario set in the battle for France in 1940. Both sides have combined arms and a decent allotment of tanks. Would you rather command the French side to use their Char B1-bis, Somuas, and Renault tanks, or the Germans, with their PzIs and PzIIs, and a few PzIVs and Pz38ts?

**ME:** As I mentioned earlier, I’ll take the Germans here. Mostly because I’ve been trying to get better at learning their strengths and weaknesses and how to employ such.

**Banzai:** How do you like PTO scenarios?

**ME:** While I've played some DTO, I'm not burned out on ETO yet—I haven't played enough. So I haven't felt the urge to try PTO yet. However, I keep saying I'm going to dabble in it shortly. With KWASL coming up, I suppose I better get my PTO feet wet!

**Banzai:** What was your most enjoyable ASL moment? How about your worst, funniest, coolest, and/or craziest?

**ME:** A few things stick out. I think it was AP107, Better Fields of Fire. I was charging as the Americans and a squad went berserk. Then another squad in another hex went berserk. Then my kill stack with a leader went berserk and took two squads with him. I had four berserkers charging through open ground and one veered off to attack a lone German in the other direction. Needless to say I didn't win. The other one was recently at the 2017 Texas Team Tournament. We were playing U12 Riposte (from A GIs Dozen) and my Americans had a German prisoner. The Americans broke, the Germans passed their NTC and attacked my guards and beat me up (we played this wrong and transferred the now-free prisoners to another American squad in the hex.) The last funny one was recent also. Playing TBA5 Bob's Farm (from Lone Canuck's To Battle by Air) early on there were no casualties in the game. My Americans attacked the Germans causing HOB. The Germans generated a Hero. About a turn or two later, there was an American HS and leader sitting on the side of the board knocked out. That German Hero had caused their demise. So the only casualties in the game, to that point, were caused by a unit that didn't exist at the start of the game! Ya just gotta love this game!

**Banzai:** What area of your play would you like to improve on most over the next year?

**ME:** Dice rolls. LOL! Probably employing armor to assist my infantry, especially when the other side doesn't get any AFVs.

**Banzai:** Is there an area you think is under-represented in ASL?

**ME:** I guess it would be fun to see more dedicated nationalities instead of just "Axis Minors". Something like what Bounding Fire did with Poland in Flames.

**Banzai:** Dice glass or dice tower?

**ME:** Dice tower; always been a fan. My brother and I would create "Lego marble machines" growing up. Drop in a marble and trickle, trickle, trickle through tunnels and

ramps and things. That got me started in that direction. I'd like to make a bigger/taller dice tower than I use but it's too easy to knock over...but I still might. So if you see a two-foot dice tower that goes trickle, trickle, trickle, you'll know why!

**Banzai:** Axis Minor scenarios: overrated or underrated?

**ME:** I enjoy the challenge of Axis/Allied Minor scenarios because you have less firepower and toys. But cracking a +4 TEM Fortified Stone Building with Allied Minor troops is tough!

**Banzai:** What ASL products have your attention these days?

**ME:** Having everything AH/MMP, I've not bought "unofficial" stuff until recently. So I'm on a hunt to gather all the TPP stuff I can. Some older stuff is obviously hard to find.

**Banzai:** What advice would you give to players who are just starting out, and what advice would you give to ASL clubs in trying to attract and retain new players?

**ME:** I think the ASL Starter Kit series are great. Paratrooper/Chapter K failed in its "introduction" objective, I think—but kudos to AH for trying back then. I'd recommend anyone wanting to touch their toes in the water to play the ASL Starter Kits—great value for the money. Once suckered in, paying \$200 for BV + ASLRB is easier to justify.

**Banzai:** What were your worst and best runs of luck?

**ME:** Did I mention going berserk times five? Even with a ROF 3 I don't think I've ever gotten past three shots...dumb dice.

**Banzai:** We'll get to your favorite ASL scenarios in another issue, so how about telling us what your other favorite games are?

**ME:** I've played board games all my life. For "bigger games", I've stuck with ASL for wargames; I don't want to learn other wargame rules. In recent years I've played various Fantasy Flight Games games such as Runebound, World of Warcraft-The Board Game (and with all the expansions and six players, you need a 4'x8' game table—it's a blast!) I played D&D and Traveller in the 80s and 90s but just don't have the time to do it all anymore.

**Banzai:** What are your other interests outside of gaming?

**ME:** My other hobbies include astronomy, model railroading, and coin collecting. I've pretty much put them on the back burner to spend as much ASL time as I can. In addition, being a software engineer, I've created lots of HTML web pages and a hyper-linked eASLRB for my personal use. I keep trying to create something for ASL on the computer.

**Banzai:** Any final comments to wrap up?

**ME:** Nope!

## RULES TIP

The Case C mod for an AAMG MA is 0, not +2 like most other tank MAs (T/ST). See the example in C5.3. This means that a bounding fire shot by a AAMG MA equipped vehicle has only a +2 DRM instead of the usual +4 DRM (or +5 for NT vehicles) for Case B + Case C TH DRM in Bounding Fire.

## 2017 TEXAS TEAM TOURNAMENT ROUNDUP

**Rick Reinesch**



Here are the results and rankings from the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas Team Tournament. Where players had the same score, ranking was based on the opponents' W/L percentage first, and then their own W/L percentage second. So players with the same score who competed against stronger opponents would be ranked higher.

Here's where folks ended in the individual standings. Congratulations to John Garlic for winning the individual champion bracket this year, and Ryan Kent for taking the runner-up prize.

Player	Score	Wins	Losses
John Garlic (1 <sup>st</sup> )	4	5	1
Ryan Kent (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	4	5	1
Rich Spilky	4	5	1
Jay Harms	3	4	1
Nathan Wegener	3	4	1
Mike Seningen	3	3	0

Player	Score	Wins	Losses
Ed Beekman	3	4	1
Doyle Motes	3	3	0
Mike Rose	2	2	0
Dave Reinking	2	3	1
Jeff Toreki	2	2	0
Dave Ginnard	2	3	1
Greg Schmittgens	2	2	0
Matt Schwoebel	2	3	1
Scott Bell	2	2	0
Robert Zinselmeyer	2	4	2
Jim Burris	2	3	1
Bryan Register	2	2	0
Arlen Vanek	1	2	1
David Hailey	1	2	1
Andrew Maly	1	3	2
Paul Works	1	2	1
Jim Ferrell	1	3	2
Sam Tyson	1	2	1
Mark Carter	1	1	0
John Hyler	0	2	2
Ray Woloszyn	0	2	2
Justin Williamson	0	1	1
Brian Roundhill	0	3	3
Paul Messina	0	2	2
Jesse Boomer	0	2	2
Jeff Taylor	0	2	2
Bud Garding	0	1	1
Steve Desrosiers	0	1	1
Kirk Woller	0	1	1
Allen King	-1	0	1
Steven Miller	-1	0	1
Kevin Kenneally	-1	0	1
Randy Strader	-1	1	2
Eric Gerstenberg	-1	1	2
David Perham	-1	2	3
Chris Kubick	-1	1	2
Jason Cameron	-1	1	2
Dan Preston	-1	0	1
Chris Casten	-1	1	2

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Player	Score	Wins	Losses
David Longstreet	-1	0	1
Shane Brannan	-1	1	2
Juan Franco	-2	0	2
Ed Hack	-2	1	3
Dan Best	-2	1	3
Paul Sidhu	-2	2	4
Dennis Donovan	-2	2	4
Mike Denson	-2	1	3
Kevin Denner	-2	2	4
James Woodall	-2	0	2
Michael Masura	-2	0	2
Bill Dorre	-3	0	3
Roy Connelly	-3	0	3
Will Willow	-3	0	3
Gary Krockover	-3	0	3
Kevin Klausmeyer	-3	0	3
Matt Evans	-4	1	5
Ross Zarzecki	-5	0	5

Here's how the Major Johnson standings finished. Brian Roundhill took home the beautiful MJ award created by Jeff Toreki. Great job, Brian!

Player	MJ Total
Brian Roundhill	22329
David Perham	17066
John Garlic	17052
Ryan Kent	15696
Dan Best	14404.5
Paul Sidhu	14264
Mike Denson	10140
Dave Ginnard	9870
Rich Spilky	9165
Matt Evans	9136
Dennis Donovan	8910
Nathan Wegener	8478
Jim Ferrell	8323.5
Jesse Boomer	7908
Arlen Vanek	7810
Robert Zinselmeyer	7714
John Hyler	7553

Player	MJ Total
David Hailey	7000
Will Willow	6776
Jeff Taylor	6732
Paul Works	6615
Ed Beekman	6480
Ray Woloszyn	5940
Chris Casten	5572
Greg Schmittgens	5098.5
Ross Zarzecki	4955
Jay Harms	4897.5
Randy Strader	4558
Doyle Motes	4360
Roy Connelly	4135
Mike Rose	3592
Kevin Denner	3498
Gary Krockover	3364
Ed Hack	3360
Chris Kubick	3260
Paul Messina	3076
Matt Schwoebel	2920
Jim Burris	2780
Bud Garding	2778
Andrew Maly	2734
Dave Reinking	2616
Jason Cameron	2360
Eric Gerstenberg	1893
Bill Dorre	1740
Bryan Register	1488
Allen King	1452
Kevin Klausmeyer	1395
Rick Reinesch	1380
Shane Brannan	1269
Sam Tyson	1233
Jeff Toreki	886
David Longstreet	852
Mike Seningen	831
Kirk Woller	722
James Woodall	664
Steve Desrosiers	652

Player	MJ Total
Juan Franco	638
Philippe Barbaroux	638
Kevin Kenneally	510
Michael Masura	480
Matt Shostak	369
Dan Preston	298
Justin Williamson	272
Scott Bell	230
Mark Carter	160
Steven Miller	158

Here are how the teams fared. If teams wound up with the same score, the team with the higher strength of schedule was ranked higher. Congratulations to Jay, Dave, and Shane.

Team	Score	Wins	Losses
Jay Harms, Dave Reinking, Shane Brannan	4	8	4
John Garlic, Chris Casten, Andrew Maly	4	9	5
Rich Spilky, Dave Mareske, Justin Williamson	4	6	2
Brian Roundhill, Jesse Boomer, Nathan Wegener	3	9	6
Mike Rose, Arlen Vanek, Kevin Kenneally	2	4	2
Eric Gerstenberg, Ryan Kent, Steven Miller	2	6	4
David Hailey, Dennis Donovan, Scott Bell	1	6	5
Doyle Motes, Roy Connelly, John Hyler	0	5	5
Paul Sidhu, Bryan Register, Serge Tocajtjan	0	4	4
Dan Best, Greg Schmittgens, Steve Desrosiers	0	4	4
Ray Woloszyn, Ed Hack, Robert Zinselmeyer	0	7	7
Dave Ginnard, Kirk Woller, Juan Franco	0	4	4
Matt Schwoebel, Mike Denson, Paul Messina	0	6	6
Ed Beekman, Jeff Taylor, Bill Dorre	0	6	6
Jeff Toreki, Kevin Klausmeyer, Brian Ward	-1	2	3
Jim Ferrell, David Longstreet, Kevin Denner	-2	5	7

Team	Score	Wins	Losses
Allen King, Bud Garding, James Woodall	-3	1	4
Matt Shostak, Chris Kubick, Michael Masura	-3	1	4
Jim Burris, Randy Strader, Matt Evans	-3	5	8
David Perham, Will Willow, Jason Cameron	-5	3	8
Paul Works, Gary Krockover, Ross Zarzecki	-7	2	9

## 25TH ANNUAL TEXAS TEAM TOURNAMENT WRAP-UP



**Rick Reinesch**

We celebrated a significant milestone this year as our largest turnout ever came to Austin to help celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Texas Team Tournament. The tournament has come a long way from its humble beginnings back in 1993 to welcoming a record-breaking 74 pre-registrants and walk-ons from all over the southern part of the US, and from locations as far away as California and Massachusetts to Austin, Texas. We were able to welcome several new faces this year, both playing Starter Kit and old grognards joining us for the first time, as well as several returning locals, which is always great to see. We had a number of new attendees who were getting back into the game after being away from it for a while, who were just getting into the game, or who came in just to play some SK. The tournament is a great way to get up to speed as the immersion of play over the weekend helps to reinforce rules learned/remembered.



As we have in previous years, this year's event was held in the Tech Room of the Wingate Conference Center located in far north Austin. In fact given the number of folks this year, we wound up spilling over into the adjoining room. At

this rate we'll take over the entire floor. This is our sixth year at this hotel which works out especially well for us as they cater to conferences all the time, so coordination goes very smoothly from my standpoint. The venue provides us with plenty of elbow room to play, I can provide an open bar for beer for us, and the connectivity in the room allows us to show an endless loop of WWII-related DVDs, which makes for a great ambiance while playing. I've already signed the contracts for us to be back there again next year.

In the title match for the individual crown of the Texas Team Tournament, John Garlic came back from his runner-up finish last year to beat Ryan Kent in *L'union fait la force (Strength Through Unity) [TAC51]* and take home the 10-3 Award as overall individual champion in our championship bracket, along with the engraved dice cup and very cool BattleSchool dice that goes along with it. In the loss, Ryan took the 9-2 Runner Up dice cup and a pair of BattleSchool dice, as well. As I noted, this is set up as a single-elimination bracket for the individual award, seeding it with the top 8 scorers after Friday's play. This helps me to narrow the winner down and give the folks who were really interested in vying for the overall championship the chance to do so.

The Team Tourney continued the use of a three-man team format. This makes the possible absence of one person on a team less of an issue and allows for all teams to stay in the hunt throughout the weekend. This format has also made for some very tight races for the team crown heading into Sunday play. Again this year the team results were determined by the final games on Sunday with the winning team of Jay Harms, Dave Reinking, and Shane Brannan finishing on top through their strength of schedule over the second place team of John Garlic, Chris Casten, and Andrew Maly by a scant 0.01 strength of schedule points. It doesn't get much closer than that.

Our Thursday mini featured the time-honored Houston institution, **Ferocity Fest**. This is always a fun and brutal mini which has a decidedly mean streak to it as suggested by its name, and this year the scenario being highlighted was *Just A Drive Along The Beach [BFP-49]* from Bounding Fire Production's **Blood and Jungle**. When all the points were counted up, the Axis winner was Paul Works, with the runner up being Rich Spilky, and the Allied winner was Paul Sidhu with the runner being Ed Beekman. The winning Axis and Allied Commanders each took home a WWII replica Japanese knee mortar round, with **The Gamer's Armory** gift certificates being awarded to the second place finishers.

On Saturday we featured a Starter Kit mini-tournament for those folks new to the game or getting back into it, and offered them a chance to take home a great prize. This year it was Andrew Maly again taking home the first place plaque and BattleSchool dice. It was very encouraging to

see the number of folks getting involved with SK over the weekend as we had as many as 8 folks playing SK either full time or at least for some of their games. We certainly welcome and encourage their participation over the course of the weekend.

We presented a number of dice awards for play over the weekend. The winner of the Audie Murphy award for the most snakes over the course of the tourney went to Rich Spilky. The winner (if he wants to be called that) of the most boxcars over the course of the weekend and taking the Col. Klink award was also Rich Spilky. We presented a nice plaque to the winner of the most Close Combat points collected over the weekend, and that honor went to Jim Ferrell.

The Major Johnson award was hard-fought again this year; with Brian Roundhill playing the most ASL over the course of the weekend and taking home the very cool diorama made for us by Jeff Toreki. So the next time you see Brian, ask him to show off his Maj. Johnson. The Major Johnson can be won in many ways, but win or lose you are always in the hunt for MJ just by playing (a lot).

Jeff Taylor won the Squad Bleeder mini on Saturday over Dennis Donovan in their playing of *Dismantling 1st DCR [SB4]*.



For swag this year, I gave out personalized, engraved dice glasses to everyone who attended. And as an added bonus for those attending our 25th, Ray from **Critical Hit** went above and beyond to generate personal hero counters for our attendees. I also had the pleasure of previewing copies of Critical Hit's ongoing series of games related to the Normandy landings by having Gold and Sword beaches set up in the room adjoining the main tourney room for folks to play. With Sword, Gold and **Omaha East/West** set up end-

to-end, we are looking at about 35 feet of gaming. I detect a featured play to end all featured plays at the Team Tournament in the near future.

We had a great list of sponsors for this year, without whose assistance we could not offer such a fantastic drawing of prizes. And here they are:

ArtbyStudioWhite  
BattleSchool  
Bounding Fire Productions  
Broken Ground Design  
Critical Hit  
David Pentland Art  
Dispatches from the Bunker  
Friendly Fire  
GMT Games  
Ken Smith Art  
Le Franc Tireur  
Lone Canuck Publishing  
March Madness Tournament  
MultiMan Publishing  
Osprey Books  
St. Louis ASL  
The Gamers Armory  
Wargame Depot  
Yankee ASL

Please make sure to frequent these folks with your product orders and let them know that you appreciate their support of the Texas Team Tournament.

I would also like to recognize a number of people that always stepped up to the plate to help out and make the tournament an enjoyable experience for all. They all did a fantastic job and I can't thank them enough:

- Jay Harms and Ed Beekman for the use of their ice coolers
- Ed Beekman for the use of his vast military video library during the course of the tourney
- Jeff Toreki for donating his time and artistic abilities to making the uber-cool Major Johnson award given out this year.
- And especially my terrific wife Rhonda who ran a number of errands for me during the tourney. To say she is supportive of me doing this would be an understatement!

Attendee Dennis Donovan even penned up a Texas Team Tournament theme song for us.

The Team Tournament in Texas  
To Mitch Miller's version of  
"The Yellow Rose of Texas"

The Team Tournament in Texas, 2017  
I went there for my birthday, 'cuz I had never been  
It's located in Round Rock, on Thursday it began  
And for my NorCal comrades, I went to kick some can

[Chorus]  
It's the best ASL tourney, the world ever knew  
The folks are really friendly, and there is great swag too  
You my talk about your Nor' Easter and ASLOK 23  
But the Team Tournament in Texas is the only one for me

The best guys all were showing, me how to do things right  
By crushing me like eggshells, practically every night  
A 6+1 can't beat 10-3s, ya think by now I'd know  
I promise to return again and have another go

[Chorus]  
It's the best ASL tourney, the world ever knew  
The folks are really friendly, and there is great swag too  
You my talk about your Nor' Easter and ASLOK 23  
But the Team Tournament in Texas is the only one for me

Alas I'm going home now, for my heart is filled with woe  
I'll re-play those scenarios, we played not long ago  
And I'll play ASL daily, so I'll be prepared for  
The Team Tournament in Texas. I'll be going back lots more!

[Chorus]  
It's the best ASL tourney, the world ever knew  
The folks are really friendly, and there is great swag too  
You my talk about your Nor' Easter and ASLOK 23  
But the Team Tournament in Texas is the only one for me

The website has already been updated with all of the information for 2018 and we've even got our first pre-registrants already, so it is never too early to get your hat into the ring. Don't be left out of the fun! I hope to see everyone next year from June 28 through July 1, 2018 here in Austin, Texas.

## CLUB NOTES

### Biweekly Lunch Gathering

Lunch gatherings have been more sporadic lately, but they still happen. Stay tuned to our yahoo groups email list. The club sends out email reminders, or you can call Matt or Sam for information on the next get-together.

### Game Days

The Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas/Ft. Worth groups have remained active, hosting various gatherings for club members to get together and knock cardboard heads. If

you missed any of these you missed a lot of fun. It's like a tournament atmosphere for a day. The Austin group meets on the first Saturday of every month. The DFW group has been meeting on the second, the San Antonio guys on the third Saturday of every month, and the Houston group on the fourth Saturday of every month. To stay informed of upcoming club events, stop by our club website, [www.texas-asl.com](http://www.texas-asl.com) or better yet join our email group. You can post a message at [central-texas-asl@yahoogroups.com](mailto:central-texas-asl@yahoogroups.com) or you can point your favorite browser to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/central-texas-asl> and take a look. For those still not connected, give Matt, Rick, or Sam a call for club information.

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Thanks to Rodney Kinney for VASL, Carl Fung for his VASL counter images, and the VASL Map Cabals for their VASL map images. We use a combination of VASL counter and map images for scenario layouts with permission of use for that purpose.

## NEXT ISSUE

- More articles about ASL
  - Player Profile
  - Favorite Scenarios
  - Club Meeting Recaps
- And much more!