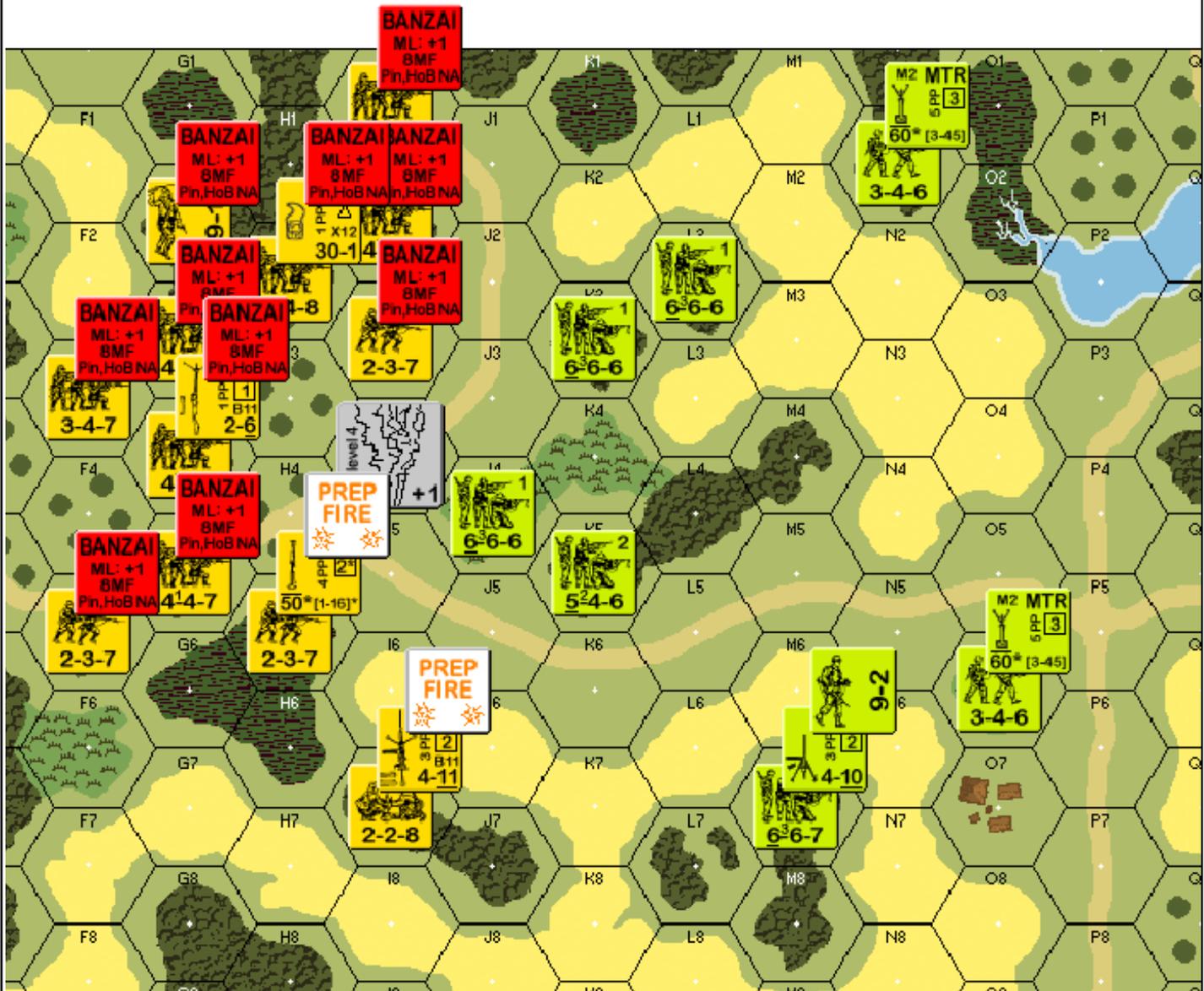


BANZAI!!!



The Newsletter of the Texas ASL Club

March 2018

Volume 23, Number 1

This newsletter is **FREE!** Don't let anyone charge you for it

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EDITOR'S FOXHOLE

Rick Reinesch



We have a real treat in store for you in this issue of Banzai!!. Tom Kearney and Al Saltzman decided to play every scenario in BFP's **Crucible of Steel**, in chronological order – Tom as the Germans, Al as the Soviets - and during the entire process they both kept a journal of the results and impressions of each scenario. They were kind enough to allow us to print it for everyone to enjoy.

We have a number of players in the Texas ASL scene that are just playing Starter Kit, so we want to make sure that we give them something in this newsletter. So with the help of Kevin and Amanda Boles we are premiering SK Corner with this issue, and hope to be able to present this as an ongoing series of articles to help new ASLSK players get up to speed on the game, and there could very well be something that can help out folks in playing full ASL, as well.

We profile local player Allen King, Matt Shostak gives us a scenario analysis of **A Real Barn Burner** [J183], and I talk about the upcoming 26th Annual Texas Team Tournament. All that and more awaits you in this issue. Thanks to everyone who submitted material. Without you we can't publish, so keep those articles coming! Enjoy.

SK CORNER

The Squadlets



Welcome to the first-ever SK Corner. This new addition to *Banzai!!!* will cover anything and everything related to the Advanced Squad Leader Starter Kits. Let's jump right in with our first article, this one covering both Close Combat and Routing.

We have in an isolated corner of the map, out of LOS of all other units except a Russian 76L Infantry Gun, the following Melee:



The Russians decide that the HS must take one for the Motherland and Prep Fire into the Melee with the 76L. The resulting 12 flat IFT roll nets a 2MC. Obviously, the proud 2-2-6 passes with flying colors! The question for you is, using the set of given DR/dr below, what happens to the Germans as they resolve the 2MC? Note that per convention all rolls will be top-to-bottom starting with the leader. Not all rolls may be used (we are sneaky like that). The German ELR is 3, if that comes into play.

Available bank of dice rolls:

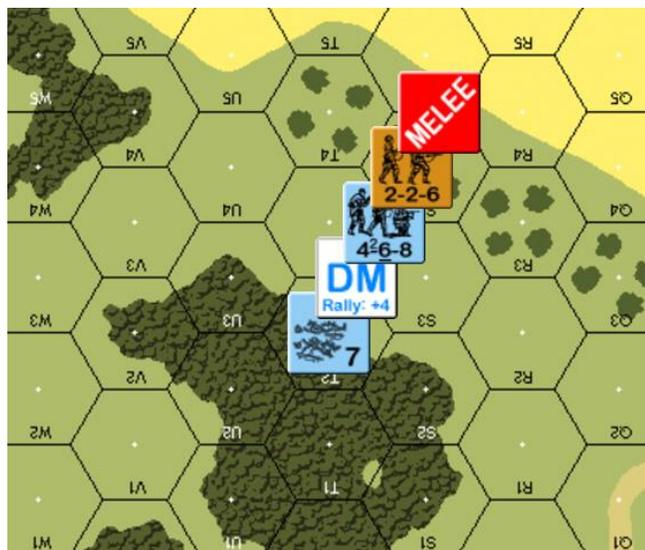
DRs: 6,6 1,1 5,5 2,2 6,6 3,4

drs: 5 1 3 4 6

To encourage you to take the time to work through the scenario and not simply read the answer, I will first introduce the authors. My name is Kevin Boles (aka Lt. Squadlet) and I picked up Starter Kit 1 back in 2004, rushed headlong into full ASL and played and studied a **lot** for about 2 years. By then Amanda Boles (aka Bean aka Cpl. Squadlet) happened along and thus my gaming life changed. Well, as all parents out there know, **every** facet of my life changed! 😊 Fast forward 10+ years and Bean had decided to give up the competitive softball she had been playing. Gaming became her next major “pursuit to excellence”, with ASLSK being the primary focus. I jumped back in with her, and together we have been going at it a little over a year now. She has become a quite a good player, with an excellent knowledge of the rules. Cpl. Squadlet won't be chiming in in this article due to having a clarinet symposium all weekend.

Back to the 2MC resolution for the Germans. Per rule 3.2.3 Effects, NMC section, the boxcars result in a Casualty Reduction for the 9-2. As an SMC, this means a Wound (covered in the K/# section just above NMC in rule 3.2.3) and we must immediately roll a dr to determine the wound severity. The first dr number is 5, which sadly means the 9-2 dies. Back to the NMC section of the rules and we find that when a leader is eliminated “all units with a lower current morale level stacked with him and not in CC must take a NMC after resolving the attack”. The “not in CC” part is something that I think is missed in the rules pretty easily. It sure does help the Germans here though, because without it the pair of 4-6-8s would have to take **another** morale check with the dearly departed 9-2’s negative leadership value taken as a **positive** modifier to the MC!

Carrying on with the 2MC, the next DR is snake eyes! Bummer for the Germans there is no Heat of Battle in Starter Kit. But the top 4-6-8 is clearly stout and holds up fine after both eating a major shell AND watching his BFL - Best Favorite Leader ☺ - get blown in half. The second 4-6-8 is not so lucky, as his DR of 10 nets to a 12 which means the dreaded Broken/ELR combo. He is replaced with a broken 4-6-7 and gets a pretty blue hat (aka DM counter). Hopefully you got all of that correct and agree that we are left with the following in our Melee hex:



In and of itself we have covered a lot here. But let’s carry on for the remainder of this turn. Nothing occurs in this section of the board through the AFPh. Now for routing. What say you – does the broken 4-6-7 get to/have to rout out or not? The answer is ‘no’, and I have known many to play this one incorrectly, even full ASL players. Two clues come in the first two sentences of rule 3.6 Routing. In both sentences (which address a) which broken units **MUST** get a DM counter, and b) which broken units **MUST** rout out of

their current hex) there is a key exception: “not in Melee”. As you note, our broken 4-6-7 already has the blue hat of shame, but regardless he **cannot** rout. Another rule that prohibits routing from Melee can be found near the end of section 3.8 Close Combat Phase. There we find out about Melee and see this “... they are considered to be locked in Melee and may not conduct any activity other than CC...”.

And now for the Close Combat phase! The Germans' choices are straightforward: per rule 3.8 broken units cannot attack but defend at full strength, although they do suffer a -2 DRM on an attack against them. Thus the 4-6-8 gets a 2:1 attack on the Russian 2-2-6. Said 2-2-6 has 3 different attack options:

- 1) Attack the 4-6-8 straight up at 1:2
- 2) Attack the broken 4-6-7 at 1:2 with a -2 DRM
- 3) Attack both units at 1:4, also with a -2 DRM against the broken 4-6-7 ONLY

The last one can be confusing. The intent, although not spelled out well in the ASLSK rules, is that CC **attack** modifiers affect the entire attack, even if they come from just one of multiple units. Actually, this **is** explicit for the Ambush DRM of +1 for CX, PIN, etc, but it is supposed to be for combined CC attacks as well. But **defensive** CC modifiers only apply to each individual unit. This makes sense, as it would be easier to take out units that are in disarray even though you are trying to take on additional unit(s) that are otherwise fine.

Resolving each given attack choice with the next DR in our list (2,2 since the Attacker goes first in the CCPh) we have:

- 1) CR the 4-6-8, reducing it to a 2-4-8
- 2) Eliminate the broken 4-6-7 on a net roll of 2
- 3) No effect on the 4-6-8 (unmodified 4 on the 1:4 odds column) but eliminate the 4-6-7 (net roll of 2 on the 1:4 odds column)

For the 4-6-8’s attack we use the next DR (6,6), and clearly the 2-2-6 is unaffected. Recall that even if the 4-6-8 had been CR’d by the attack on it, its attack back would still be at its original odds since Melee close combat attacks are always simultaneous unless there is an AFV in the hex.

Note, all rule references in this article are taken from the *Decision at Elst* rule book, which is the latest and most updated currently available.

We both hope you have enjoyed and learned from this article! Please come join us both in the Advanced Squad Leader Starter Kit Facebook Group. Lt. Squadlet is a moderator and poster of the Quiz of the Day, and Cpl. Squadlet is a regular poster there as well. We are both interested in playing new opponents and helping out new ASLSK players, so give us a shout. Oh, and we will both be attending the entire 26th Annual Texas ASL Team Tournament this June in Austin!

THROUGH THE CRUCIBLE OF STEEL

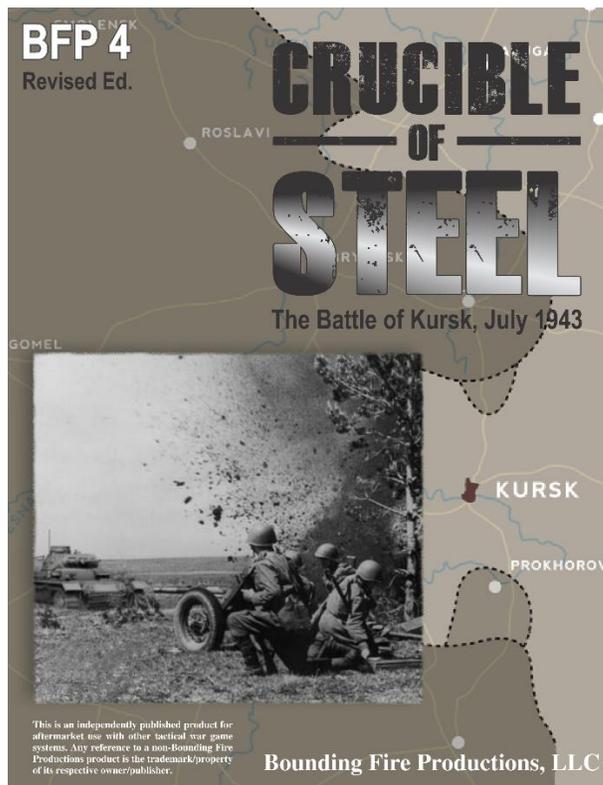
Tom Kearney & Al Saltzman



I met Al Saltzman through an 'opponents wanted' bulletin board posted in the Hobbit Hobby Shop in Fayetteville, NC back in late 1991. We were both airborne grunts stationed at Fort Bragg; he in the 505th PIR and I in the 325th AIR. Al was a relative newcomer to ASL while I had been playing SL, then ASL, since it came out in 1977. The first time we played was on his kitchen table but I can't remember the scenario. From that time until 1996 we played several hundred scenarios, including a *Red Barricades* campaign. We both preferred Russian Front scenarios as they seemed to fit our style of play and concept of total war. All good things come to an end, though, with Al retiring and moving to Florida and me being transferred to Ft Jackson as a drill sergeant. Al managed to continue finding opponents but I discovered Columbia, SC to be a dry hole for ASL, so I got involved in 40K.

I retired from the Army in 2006 after having graduated to *Flames of War* in 2004. Al had moved to Raleigh, NC and was involved in a substantial ASL group. Over the years he attempted to pull me back into ASL but I was reluctant due to my significant investment in miniatures. Finally, in late 2015, I relented and we played a 1941 Russian Front scenario. Though my knowledge of the rules had faded I was immediately hooked again.

Al and I had wanted to do something big but our schedules, the distance between us (a little over an hour), and other logistical concerns precluded a proper campaign like RB or KGP. He possessed the earlier version of *Crucible of Steel* and BFP had announced that they were re-printing it. This was an opportunity that we had been looking for and decided to play the entire module, in chronological order, as a linked scenario campaign. We would play all 32 scenarios in order, Al opting to play the Russians and I playing the Germans. In addition, we would use the personal leader rules that first appeared in the original *Squad Leader* rulebook, was adapted for ASL in an ASL Annual, and further modified by me.



We played the first scenario, *Preliminary Move*, on 2 April 2017 and completed the last one, *Flying Turrets*, on 12 December 2017. We created a spreadsheet to track our progress. After each scenario we would add our notes on the scenario.

Following is the completed spreadsheet:

| Date | Scenario | Scenario Name | Result | German Notes | Soviet Notes |
|----------|----------|------------------------|------------|---|---|
| 7/4/1943 | BFP 073 | Preliminary Move | German win | Seesaw battle that started out badly. Once the mist lifted the "Death Star" was in place and crushed any exposed Soviets on the crest. This allowed the Germans to get into the trenches and, subsequently, prevail. | Very close game until turn 6. Russian player set up the 37L-AA Gun incorrectly, very costly. The German Death Star made its presence felt on turn 6 and 7. This turned the tide in the German favor and carried the day. |
| 7/4/1943 | BFP 074 | Coiled to Strike | Soviet win | My plan was to capture the entire central hill and cause sufficient casualties for a win. However, I suffered heavy casualties which forced me to attempt capture of another objective, which I failed. Great scenario though! The Soviet aircraft played a big role in my defeat. | A very close game in which the Sons of Mother Russia prevailed. The Irresistible Force met the Immovable Object and the immovable object won. The hero of the day was the Russian fighter-bomber that single-handedly stopped the Germans on many occasions. |
| 7/5/1943 | BFP 075 | Schreiber's Success | German win | The Soviets had a very effective deployment. The Germans took some time to get into the village but once they were inside, their superior morale and firepower facilitated their victory. | A tough loss for the sons of the steppe. Superior German firepower wore down the Russian defenders. The Russians fought long and hard, but in the end, it was the Germans that carried the day. |
| 7/5/1943 | BFP 076 | Trial of the Infantry | Soviet Win | This one went down to the wire with a 9-1 assaulting a bunker occupied by broken Soviets. The Germans pushed hard but couldn't pull out a victory. | The Soviets barely eked out a win by surviving a close combat while being broken in a Soviet pillbox. This is the closest win the thus far in this series. |
| 7/5/1943 | BFP 077 | Burning Down the House | German win | I broke through the right side of the defensive belt and began rolling up the flank. All three flame tanks were destroyed but the infantry got into the village and routed the Soviets. | This was another loss for the Soviets. Tom massed on my left flank and pressed forward with everything he had. Once he had managed to break through and all my AT capability was destroyed it was over. Kudos to my buddy Tom for a well-executed attack. One of the main turning points in the game was when an 81mm mortar managed to get a hit on one of my 122L ART crews and break it on a normal morale check. This allowed Tom to roll up my left flank. |
| 7/5/1943 | BFP 078 | Operation Wheatfield | German win | This turned out to be a battle of attrition. The German plan was to kill the majority of Russian troops, occupy the objective buildings, and exit a few units to satisfy the victory conditions. I broke through in the center and got into the rear. The Soviet guns, however, were in the rear and began taking a toll on the German armor. This was a new development as AI has defended forward to this point. It's interesting how our tactics are evolving. Soviet T-34s arrived, threatened some | Another tough loss for the Soviets. Tom attacked heavily on my left flank again and managed to capture one of my 1+5+7 pillboxes, which in turn severely compromised my defense. Tom continuously ground his way forward with an excellent combined-arms assault. Tom managed to get behind me with the bulk of his armor by turn four. However, I had all of my AT capability securing my rear. The Soviets managed to immobilize two tigers and destroy four other German |

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| | | | | MkIIIs, but were quickly destroyed after whiffing all of their shots. The Soviets then conceded. | tanks. My personal morale check broke when I needed a nine to hit a German tank and rolled a 10. The Soviets conceded after that shot. |
| 7/5/1943 | BFP 079 | A Hard Push | German win | Though I lost one StuG to a mine, the other to a side shot from the 45L, and broke my Tiger due to ESB my infantry managed to carry the day. They stormed the hill and neutralized resistance quickly. At one point a Soviet crew fired an ATR (1 factor) at a stack of SS men with a 9-1 and broke the entire stack on a 1 check. However, I rolled HoB 3 times and created 2 heroes during the game. | The Russian tried to utilize a somewhat forward approach to slow down the Germans in this scenario, but it did not work. However, I managed to kill or immobilize all three of the German tanks. By turn 4, the superior German SS infantry had just shredded my line of defense and I threw in the towel on turn five. I feel that this scenario is a turn too long. Perhaps a complete reverse-slope defense is what is needed here. In any event kudos to Tom on crushing my valiant Russians. |
| 7/5/1943 | BFP 080 | Ratushniak's Sacrifice | Soviet win | Every now and then things go completely wrong despite our best efforts. This was one of those games. I initially moved cautiously and things appeared to be going well. Then, I attempted to create breach in the Soviet lines and became impetuous. This impetuosity led to my losing all of my armor. I hit a brick wall. My mission objective of earning 53 CVP/EVP was missed by a mile. I only earned 14. Al played a masterful defense! The only silver lining from this one was that my personal leader was promoted to 8-0. | Lt. Ratushniak's Rearguard Detachment stood like the Spartans of the Hot Gates of Thermopylae. They did not give an inch and managed to kill or immobilize all seven of the German tanks. The supporting German SS infantry also took heavy casualties. It felt good to finally get back into the win column. I utilized my 76L ART guns as close support to reinforce my infantry trench line and it paid off. Note, all of the Lt. Ratushniak's detachment will receive <i>Hero of the Soviet Union</i> awards by General Zukhov! |
| 7/5/1943 | BFP 081 | Iron Coffins | German win | I split my forces into two Kampfgruppen in order to cover both flanks. The Soviets refused the left and massed on my right. Long-range fire from MkIVs and Tigers, combined with closer shooting from MkIIIs and captured T-34s quickly put an end to the Soviet counterattack. The action was more like a gunnery exercise than a battle. The Germans only lost a pair of MkIIIs. | GOT CRUSHED! What a waste of good Soviet armor. This scenario was rated on the ROAR as German 8 and Russian 2, now it is German 9 and Russian 2. Now I know why. This scenario has some play balancing issues, in my humble opinion. |
| 7/6/1943 | BFP 082 | Steamroller | Soviet win | I divided my force into three parts; one on the right, one in the center, and a smaller one on the left. I became bogged in the center but the left and right progressed well. Unfortunately, the tank crews failed to perform proper maintenance on their weapons and many malfunctioned during the fight. I thought I had a victory; all I had to do was clear a few buildings on the | The Russians managed to hold on for a victory by passing a 3MC against fascist SS troops by an elite Russian (4-5-8) in a fortified building. As Wellington stated after the Battle of Waterloo, "It was a near-run thing". The Russians have closed the win/loss ratio. It is now German 6 and Soviets 4. I look forward to our next scenario BFP-83 |

| Date | Scenario | Scenario Name | Result | German Notes | Soviet Notes |
|----------|----------|-----------------|------------|--|--|
| | | | | final turn. However, one Soviet squad in a fortified building held on. | <i>The Second Belt.</i> |
| 7/6/1943 | BFP 083 | The Second Belt | German win | I sent the majority of my armor and halftrack-mounted pioneers toward the hill. Most of my infantry, supported by a few armored vehicles, pressured the village. On the bottom of turn 1 it started to rain. At the top of turn 2 the rain intensified. Pioneers breached an AT ditch in front of the hill and allowed the armor and pioneers to capture it after a sharp fight. The rain ceased around turn 4, allowing a Tiger to connect with a long-range shot on an SU-152. I then was able to hit the village from two directions. Had the Soviets sent their reserves toward the village it may have turned out differently. Great game! | Another excellent scenario by Bounding Fire Productions. The Russians just could not stand up to the awesome German firepower. The German player did an excellent job breaching my antitank-ditch line using demo charges in three places. Once that was accomplished the Russians could not stop the German armored advance. On the bright side, the Russians managed to immobilize two Tigers and KIA'd the other one with a bounding fire shot from a moving SU-76L against a non-moving tiger, with a flank shot. We had a combination of rain, heavy rain and clear skies throughout the scenario. The German player placed his pre-registered 150mm rocket OBA in hex N12 and had a slight drift, which caused minimal damage; however, it did manage to destroy a number of wire and trench locations. The Russian player resigned and called it a day on the Russian player turn 6 once all his armor was destroyed. At that point, the Russian player could not support his infantry defending the main village. After an analysis, we both feel that the Russian reinforcements should counterattack where the German player is not! Great scenario; would play it again either side in a New York minute. |
| 7/6/1943 | BFP 084 | Kreida Station | Soviet win | The Soviets left two of the objective buildings undefended at the start. I used a large stone building in the center for my support-by-fire position. From this position I could cover the majority of the board. I sent several platoons to secure the western objective buildings, hoping to capture them quickly. Another platoon was sent to keep an eye on the large building in the center east. Things began well with smoke from my 81s concealing my advance. However, around turn three the mild breeze intensified to heavy winds, nullifying any more smoke. Al delayed my western force very well and I failed to capture those objectives quickly enough. As a | The Russians managed to hold on to the large multi-hex stone building on board BFP-B for a victory. The Russian player split up his forces in two parts. The largest garrisoned the large stone building with all the Russian elite squads and all the support weapons and 1-2-7 crews as well as the light mortars. The wooden building on my extreme right flank was garrisoned by six 4-4-7 squads and no support weapons. I used the 9 concealment markers to give the appearance of a larger force. This force was eventually destroyed by the German forces by turn five. This left only two turns of German infantry to assist in the capture of Festung Saltzman. The German |

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| | | | | <p>result I didn't have enough time to get sufficient force into the center eastern citadel. Al mitigated my support-by-fire positions by falling back into interior building hexes. He played an excellent defensive game and caught me off guard. For some reason I never suspected that he would refuse several objectives and hunker down in only one building with his strongest units. Good job!</p> | <p>forces ran out of time and did not have enough firepower to get the job done. During this scenario the German set up some buzz saws which consisted of his heavy and medium machine guns. As the Russian player I simply skulked out of his line of sight. I also deployed all my AP mine factors and wire to protect the approaches to my festung. They were a considerable obstacle for the Germans to overcome. The Germans managed to get some infantry into the building on turn six, however, it was too little too late. Great scenario!</p> |
| 7/6/1943 | BFP 085 | Churchills at Kursk | German win | <p>I was initially concerned about the Churchills I was to face. I assumed that Al would mass all of his tanks on one flank and crush all in his path. As things turned out he spread his forces across the board. I was able to pick off individual tanks on a regular basis. I killed three on turn one, several more in later turns; nine killed and one immobilized by turn four. I must admit that my dice were very hot and only broke one MA. I had one MkIII kill several Churchills in one defensive fire phase. That crew will be mentioned in dispatches and probably be recommended for the Iron Cross (2nd Class).</p> | <p>This was a resounding win for the German armored forces. The Russian player got hammered by the superior gunnery of their well-disciplined crews. By turn four the Russian player was down to 5 Churchills and no loses to the Germans at all. The German player's defense was just superb. The highlight of the scenario from the Russian perspective was when a German PZ-IIIIL destroyed four Russian Churchill-IIIs with a combination of consistent turret hits with APCR shots and regular AP shots. By the end of the Russian turn 4 the Russian could not win mathematically by exit VP and the German armored defense was still totally intact. Good shooting, Tom!</p> |
| 7/7/1943 | BFP 086 | Panzer Regiment Rothenburg | German win | <p>I refused the left flank and massed on my right. The Soviets had a lot of ground to cover and were unable to react to the massed flank assault. Forward Soviet positions were quickly overrun and the Germans broke through their lines. All the halftracks then drove off the board for EVPs. The Germans also were beating up the Soviets with CVPs. The Germans easily won this though perhaps the conditions for victory points should be increased to one point for every 30 EVPs.</p> | <p>Once again stomped by the German jackboot. The Germans attacked with all their forces on my left flank and simply overwhelmed me. He made excellent use of regular smoke and AFV smoke dischargers to cover his approach. The Russians fought hard as usual, however by the end of the Russian turn 6 it was quite clear the Russians were not going to be able to catch the Germans in VPs. At that point, I reached over to Tom and shook his hand and resigned. This one is an extremely tough one for the Russians to defend. The Germans can just mass on either flank and plow through the Russian defenses. The Russians have to spread out the length of the board and just do not have the enough firepower to stop the German Armored thrust. The</p> |

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| | | | | | only one true tank killer the Russians have is the 85L AA Gun and it can't be everywhere. Tom and I talked at length about this scenario and discussed some ways of giving the Russians a fighting chance. First of all, they need the balance, which is, exchange the 76mm INF for a second 85L AA and lastly, have the Germans exit 30 points worth of units to receive the 1 VP instead of 15. According to ROAR, prior to our play, the tally was Germans 5 and the Russians 2. It is now, Germans 6 and Russians 2. Now I know why. |
| 7/7/1943 | BFP 087 | Fork in the Road | Soviet win | The Soviets hedgehogged on the hill and stubbornly held out. My inferior piecemeal attack faltered against the fortress on the heights and I suffered a total defeat. However, I didn't quit like a sissy and played to the end, despite my personal leader getting KIA'd by a sniper. | A resounding Russian win over the German fascists on the steppes of Russia. The Russians made good use of a reverse-slope defense coupled with excellent interior lines. The highlight of the game was when the Russians captured 4 German squads and a German 8-0 leader trapped in a woods hex, then in turn gunned them down and invoked no quarter. However, I give Tom credit for playing it out to the end, even though his chances of winning were fast fading. |
| 7/7/1943 | BFP 088 | The Bunkered Village | German win | I noticed that the Soviets had deployed facing southward, with few positions facing east. I planned to hold the Soviet main line in place with some infantry in the crest of the gully and hit the flank with my tanks and elite squads. My armor got around the flank of the Soviet position and into their rear. I was able to quickly reduce the right side of the enemy defenses and won this one relatively easily with only light casualties. | The Russians were defeated badly by an excellent flank attack by German armor on the Russian left flank. Tom used all four PZ-IIIs to unhinge my defense on turn 1. By turn two, my defense was totally compromised. My two 1+5+7 pillboxes set up protecting the wheat field on my left, however in hindsight I should have placed at least one MMG and one 4-5-8 and a leader in one of those bunkers protecting my extreme left flank. Tom supported his attack well with six 4-6-8 squads. By the end of the Russian turn 5, the writing was on the wall and the Russian player surrendered. |
| 7/7/1943 | BFP 089 | Relentless Pressure | German win | I deployed the MMGs in upper levels of the walled compound to interdict Soviet movement to my right. The Soviets launched their main effort up the left side with a supporting effort on the right. I was able to delay the left approach and the MMGs created havoc on the Soviets to the right. The two conscript squads deployed on the | Tom's Germans easily held off the Russians due to a slow and lackluster attack by the Russian troops. The German troops held like rocks against the Russian attacks. In the end the Russians managed to capture only three buildings. Tom made good use of terrain on his right flank and made good use of his MMGs by placing them in level-one |

| Date | Scenario | Scenario Name | Result | German Notes | Soviet Notes |
|----------|----------|----------------------|------------|---|---|
| | | | | right managed to hold that flank while my other troops maintained possession of the walled compound. The Germans get ATMMs in Crucible of Steel and were able to destroy two tanks with them. Another Soviet tank was killed by the PaK 38. | buildings which covered the center of the board and the large wheat field. The highlight of the game for the Russians was when one of the T-70 tanks killed a German StuG with a rear bounding fire APCR shot. The biggest Russian downfall was not being aggressive enough before the Germans got their reinforcements. Excellent defense Tom, hats off to you! |
| 7/8/1943 | BFP 090 | Early Morning Action | German win | The Germans went straight at the Soviets and immediately began achieving successes. I pushed through the lower left side of the village by turn 2 and sniffed out the 37mm ATG. The Soviets retreated across the road but had already lost too much combat power while fighting on the near side. Things were touch-and-go for a moment on the near side right as most of my troops on that side broke. One squad and a half squad saved the day in that area by breaking up a Soviet counterattack at the last minute. Soviet troops were then overwhelmed and the Germans captured the village with relatively light casualties. However, a Soviet MOL projector destroyed a StuG with a critical hit. | Tom's German SS troops easily put the bayonet to the Russians in this scenario. The numerically inferior Russian troops coupled with an ELR of two just could not stand up to the Germans. My delaying action failed miserably. However, the Russians did manage to inflict 10 CVPs on the Germans. A mere six more and the Russians would have pulled this out. The Russians came within a hairs breadth of capturing 3.5 squads and two leaders on turn three. A Russian unit moved into a dispersed smoke hex to complete the trap. However, it failed a one-morale check by a German SS squad. This allowed the German units to escape. Oh, how the dice gods failed me in my moment of need. Not a bad little scenario, with a little bit better luck, who knows? Good game Tom. |
| 7/8/1943 | BFP 091 | Death Roamed Freely | German win | This one was very close. The Soviets strongly defended the wooden rowhouse on my right, and lightly defended the stone building in my center. He left the other buildings in the center and my left undefended. I sent my southern forces to the center and right with the reinforcements claiming the undefended buildings. The Soviet 9-1 battle hardened and became heroic. Several other Soviet units battle hardened and another hero was created during the game. Despite this and a rampant Soviet sniper, the Germans pushed toward the wooden rowhouse with help from OBA and a "death star" that consisted of three HMGs and a 9-2. The climax happened on the last turn. The Germans forced their way into two of the three fortified wooden locations and began to clear by fire the final hex. Faced with a 30 FP attack with no modifier, and 3 | This was a very cool scenario that I enjoyed very much. It was unique in that there was no armor support for either side, strictly an infantry fight. This scenario went down to very last turn in which the Germans prevailed, but only by the narrowest of margins. The highlight of the game for me, as the Russian player, was when I was able to create two Russian heroes and battle hardened a Russian 9-1 to a heroic Russian 9-2. Tom made good use of his artillery which compromised my defense on numerous occasions. Tom also made excellent use of his support weapons by creating HMG buzz saws that slowly whittled down the Russian infantry. I would play this scenario again as either side in a heartbeat! Good Job Tom. |

| Date | Scenario | Scenario Name | Result | German Notes | Soviet Notes |
|----------|----------|--------------------|------------|---|---|
| | | | | flamethrowers (one captured) at the final hex the Soviet conceded. I was physically drained at the end. Great game! | |
| 7/8/1943 | BFP 092 | Trenches in Flames | German win | The Soviets defended north of the center hill. I used a three-pronged attack with the main effort going up the center and supporting efforts on the flank. The T-34 flame tanks proved invaluable and I was able to quickly take the objectives at the cost of only one tank recalled. | The Russian player got totally crushed in this one with the German player only suffering a single tank that was recalled due to a lucky sniper activation number. As the Russian player I set up and took the central position. The German player just steamrolled my poor Russians. It was over by the end of the German turn 4. The Russian player is really restricted due to SSR setup restrictions. As the Russian player, I wish the scenario designers would allow the Russian player to have MOL capability, this would make it a much closer match. I have to say Tom made great use of smoke, both AFV and infantry smoke. This allowed him to advance on my position throughout the scenario. In my humble opinion, the German player just has too much time and not a long way to go. Even the balance provision for the Russian player is of little help. |
| 7/8/1943 | BFP 093 | Klein Stalingrad | German win | I pushed my armor and APC-mounted pioneers through a breach in a wire/mine obstacle line on the left flank while the infantry skirted a mined AT ditch in the center. I hit the village from the center and left and rolled it up. This didn't come without loss though as I suffered heavy casualties, especially with my armor. | My Russians fought long and hard in this one with basically one hand. Tom was able to pierce my defense on the Russian right flank by successfully destroying a wire counter by rolling the infamous 1 on the colored die of the DR. This was coupled with successfully creating a trail break on an AT-mine hex. This was made quite easily by the Russian player rolling boxcars on two antitank guns on the Russian's first two DRs of the game. I managed to fix one, however, the damage was done and the Russian defense was severely compromised. The Russian managed to repair one of the 76L guns which destroyed two tanks and a halftrack that was loaded with an engineer squad, 9-1 leader, FT and demo. Tom again massed on the Russian flank and utilized mass firepower, coupled with excellent smoke and broke through the Russian defenses. I really enjoyed this scenario even though I did not prevail. The Germans are tough as nails and hard to beat, as they were |

| Date | Scenario | Scenario Name | Result | German Notes | Soviet Notes |
|----------|----------|----------------------|------------|--|---|
| | | | | | during the real battle. Good game Tom. |
| 7/8/1943 | BFP 094 | To the Last Shell | German win | <p>I refused the left flank and attacked toward the village. The armor led the way and created smoke to mask the advance of the following infantry. The Soviets in the near side of the village skulked to avoid German fire. This allowed the German armor to get behind the nearest Soviet infantry and the German infantry stormed into the village. The weight of the attack quickly routed the Soviets, though I lost several medium tanks to AT fire. Somewhere around turn 4 or 5 I managed to put out of action all the Soviet guns in the vicinity of the village. The Germans then began systematically clearing any remaining pockets of resistance. The Soviets chose discretion over valor and conceded. This seemed to be a tough one as the Soviets have to defend a large area. The Germans can simply mass in one area and overwhelm the defenders with superior numbers and firepower.</p> | <p>Another Russian defeat at the hands of the cardboard bully boys. As the Russian player I did not incorporate my AT capability with my infantry and I paid dearly for it. My thought process was as follows: I would defend the village with infantry only for a couple of turns, then I would fall back to where my guns were. However, Tom was very aggressive with his tanks. This did not allow me to retreat in good order and caused me needless casualties. I retrospect, it is imperative that the Russians set up at least some of their guns up front to protect the Russian infantry. It is also important to destroy as much German armor as possible on the first three turns, so that the German infantry will have to attack the village without armor support. As the Russian player, I must admit, my defensive thought process was flawed. The German SS infantry is very powerful and could very easily capture the village by itself. The Germans have 18 x 6-5-8 squads and excellent support weapons and excellent leadership. This is an excellent scenario and I give Tom credit for an excellent combined arms attack. I wish my defense was up to the task. Great Job, Tom.</p> |
| 7/9/1943 | BFP 095 | Obian Highway | Soviet win | <p>I moved too slowly and cautiously which allowed the Soviets to crystalize in the village. Their reinforcements arrived and my task became all the more difficult. I cleared the near side of the village but ran up against a well-dug-in and deployed defense. Al played a superior game.</p> | <p>The Russian player was able to halt the German advance today. The high-water mark of the day was when the Russian 45L ATG killed a PZ-IIIIL with an APCR shot as it was attempting to cross a road hex to get into a better firing position. The arrival of the turn-two Russian reinforcements was decisive. They arrived and were placed exactly where they were needed to stop the German advance.</p> |
| 7/9/1943 | BFP 096 | Hotly Contested Town | Soviet win | <p>The failure to clear the objective in this mission simply falls upon my hubris as a commander. I had been having my way with the Soviets for the past several scenarios and I believed my troops could accomplish anything, sort of like Lee at Gettysburg. Instead of using the time-proven tactic of swinging the majority of my armor around a flank</p> | <p>The much-maligned Russian Army was finally able to halt the German invaders by hunkering down, using skulking and interior lines to advantage. The Russian player swapped all the AP mines for AT mines and laid a continuous belt of one-factor AT mines that immobilized 3 German AFVs. The Russian 57L ATG managed to kill</p> |

| Date | Scenario | Scenario Name | Result | German Notes | Soviet Notes |
|-----------|----------|------------------|------------|--|---|
| | | | | <p>to strike the rear I launched a frontal assault. As a result my troops became bogged down in a vicious fight through heavily defended and fortified terrain. Despite losing a Panther early to an engine fire I thought I still had a chance. However, I kept sending troops and tanks into a meat grinder. Three tanks were immobilized by AT mines and two were eventually picked off by a 57L. After losing several tanks I attempted to flank with three others, but lost two to a heroic and competent SU-76 crew. After the majority of my armor was mission killed I had to rely on the elite troops of Grossdeutschland to clear the objective. Though their efforts were gallant they didn't have the strength to push the Soviets out of the objective area, but they came close. Al played an excellent game against my less-than-adequate attack.</p> | <p>two Mk-IVs and immobilized one Tiger tank whose crew was eventually forced to abandon it. Also, Tom managed to roll the unforgivable 12 on a startup dice roll with a Panther. Lousy transmission I suppose. That's what the Germans get for rushing this tank into production. One Russian 76L tank destroyer managed to destroy two more German tanks that were trying to execute a flanking maneuver on the Russian left flank. The Germans managed to direct their artillery fire on the multi-level hex Q5, however, since both levels were fortified it did minimal damage during the scenario. All in all one of the more balanced scenarios that we have played out of this pack. The Germans certainly have the superior armor and Infantry, but the terrain is very restrictive. I had a blast playing it against my buddy Tom. We are off to our next scenario.</p> |
| 7/10/1943 | BFP 097 | Renewed Pressure | German win | <p>Things go hairy early on when the Soviets were able to easily dislodge my forward units. However, instead of the Soviets bringing their reinforcements in on one of my flanks they sent them up the middle, behind the initial assault. This allowed the German troops on the flanks to support the center. Once German reinforcements arrived they were able to hold off the Soviets.</p> | <p>As the Russian player I decided on attacking the Germans in their center of the line via a human wave which was successful in dislodging his forward units and gaining control of a large portion of the central wooden buildings. The Russian turn one reinforcements were brought in on the east edge. In retrospect this was a big mistake. My reinforcements should have entered on the north edge and cleared the orchards and wooden buildings in that area. This would have put even greater pressure on the German on-board forces. However, it was not to be. Tom made good use of his reinforcements and slowed the Russian attack to a crawl. As the Russian player, I managed to capture 18 of the 26 wooden buildings at game end. The victory conditions are tough for the Russian player, but they are definitely achievable.</p> |
| 7/11/1943 | BFP 098 | Place of Honor | German win | <p>I initially intended to establish support-by-fire positions on the hills overlooking the village and use mobile elements to flank to the right. That changed when I saw the Soviet deployment; they had refused the village and established positions behind. Al appeared to have been</p> | <p>As The Russian player I attribute my loss due to extremely poor initial deployment. I chose not to defend the village at all and, instead, deploy along the natural gully south of the village. This was a huge mistake. My thought process was as follows: 1. I would protect myself from the</p> |

| Date | Scenario | Scenario Name | Result | German Notes | Soviet Notes |
|-----------|----------|----------------|------------|--|--|
| | | | | <p>overly concerned with my preparatory 150-mm bombardments. He mistakenly thought that they were rockets. As a result I sent everything up the center supported by some units on the hills. We quickly occupied to the village and prepared for a Soviet counterattack which never fully materialized.</p> | <p>German 150-mm pre-registered hexes. 2. I would not move and stay concealed and protect myself against the three German Stuka dive bombers. Unfortunately, this allowed the German to gain uncontested access the village. Once the Germans arrived in strength I did not have the time or the strength to move them out. In hindsight the Russian player needs to deploy forward and use his guns and artillery to severely degrade the German armored forces as much as possible. The Russian 150-mm artillery did do significant damage to his infantry, but it was not enough. To combat the German aircraft, I would recommend the Russian player deploy his .50-cal and HMG in AA mode in such a way to protect his guns and armor. The Germans have superior firepower and superior infantry. It will take a lot for the Russians to win this one. Perhaps they should have the balance, but I am not sure this will be enough.</p> |
| 7/11/1943 | BFP 099 | Ivanovskii | German win | <p>The Germans advanced up the center and caused heavy casualties. A half squad managed to get around the left flank of the Soviet defense and caused the Soviets concern. Once the dug-in T-34 was destroyed in CC the Soviet defenses were compromised and the Soviet commander conceded. Once again the superior firepower and morale of the SS troops proved decisive.</p> | <p>The Russian rearguard was not up to the task defending the Russian hamlet. However, they made a noble effort of it. The Russian deployed forward and utilized an up-front defense in attempt to slow down the Germans and make them fight for every building. The Russian 4-4-7 and 5-2-7 are no match for the German SS infantry. Their superior morale and ELR were just too much for the Russians to overcome. I personally feel this scenario is a turn too long. Perhaps if this was a five-turn affair it would be a much closer match. Asking the Russian to hold for 6 turns is asking too much.</p> |
| 7/11/1943 | BFP 100 | Tiger Vanguard | German win | <p>The Germans sent the majority of their troops around the right flank of the Soviet defenses, supported by a smaller element to the south. They breached an AT minefield and got into the Soviet rear. Two Soviet AT guns were destroyed on critical hits. After the second one was destroyed the Soviet conceded.</p> | <p>The German Tiger vanguard was just too much for the gallant defenders of Kazachie, Russia. Tom's fascist Germans tore a hole through my left flank. He brilliantly used his armor to place smoke at key locations which blinded the Russian defenders. This is a difficult scenario for the Russians due to any real AT capability. Their 45LLs cannot penetrate the Tigers and can barely penetrate the front of the other German armor. Once the German</p> |

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| Date | Scenario | Scenario Name | Result | German Notes | Soviet Notes |
|-----------|----------|---------------|------------|---|---|
| | | | | | armor cracked my left flank the remaining Soviet infantry had scramble back to the rear buildings and by turn 4 it was all over. The German victory was complete. Tom did a good job of keeping his Tigers at least seven hexes from my known ATGs, thus not risking an immobilizing shot. |
| 7/12/1943 | BFP 101 | Panzer Spirit | Soviet win | I was concerned with this one as the wheat fields and orchards provided the Soviets with good, concealed approaches to the village. I established a defense as best as I could and was alarmed when the Soviets refused my right flank. My Marders' gunnery was vastly superior to that of the Soviets but my rounds could not penetrate the T-34 armor. This ammunition inferiority resulted in the early destruction of all of my Panzerjagers. However, by the end of the game the Soviets only had two mobile tanks. Unfortunately, my infantry force had been severely degraded and failed in their final-turn counterattack. This was a tough one for the Germans but I have to give credit to AI for playing so well. | The Russian 169th Tank Brigade successfully destroyed the SS Marder platoon and its supporting infantry in a hard-fought action today. The Russians massed on the German left flank with 6 out of the 8 T34s along with supporting Infantry. The Marders just could not find their APCR rounds despite numerous attempts. When the SS did manage to hit the Russian tanks, they were unable to get the kill numbers they needed. Once the SS armor was destroyed, they were helpless in stopping the Russian infantry. Despite the Russian successes, the game went down to the last turn, as the SS attempted a last-ditch counterattack to regain a number of lost buildings. Tom's SS just came up a little bit short today. This was a fun and tense scenario that has a lot of replay value. |
| 7/12/1943 | BFP 102 | Tolstoy Woods | German win | I defended forward with only the HMG with an 8-1 covering the rear. The Soviets launched a human wave on the first turn but it was savagely gunned down, especially by the HMG on a rate tear. However, the Soviet armor arrived and cut the German lines in two. The Soviet infantry recovered and sprinted towards the village. They made it to the outskirts of the village just as the German reinforcements arrived. The MkIIIs did stellar work by eliminating all the T-34s. The reinforcing German infantry, along with a few stragglers from the initially deployed force, occupied the village. With the German infantry holding the town and the MkIIIs virtually unopposed the Soviets conceded. I was pleasantly surprised at the ease with which the MkIIIs handled the T-34's. The Germans moved to the flanks of the enemy tanks, fired at point blank range with | Elements of the Russian 183rd Tank Brigade were not able to secure the Tolstoy Woods and the surrounding hamlet. The Russians began the game with a human wave on turn one that suffered badly at the hands of a German HMG. This caused the Russians to take a full turn to recover and rally their broken troops. On the Russian turn two and turn three the Russians, with the help of their three T34/M41s and supporting infantry, were able to pierce the German center. However, on the German turns four and five, the German armor was able to destroy the Russian tanks and secure the village. Without the support of the Russian armor, the writing was on the wall and the Russians resigned on turn 5. In hindsight, the Russian commander placed his armor too far forward, which made them vulnerable to German bounding fire flank shots, which doomed the |

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| Date | Scenario | Scenario Name | Result | German Notes | Soviet Notes |
|-----------|----------|--------------------|------------|---|--|
| | | | | APCR, and managed to kill two during bounding first fire while in motion. The other enemy tank was immobilized. This was a very good scenario and could go either way. | Russian player. Oh well, lessons learned. Now it's on to BFP-103, <i>Knife in The Flank</i> . |
| 7/12/1943 | BFP103 | Knife in the Flank | German win | The Germans prevailed though things were hairy at the start. The Soviets attacked opposite of where I had hoped but changed their axis of advance into my pre-arranged killing zone on turn 2. This allowed me to kill two T-70s with the 28LL ATG. A bounding-fire shot with a MkIII killed a SU-76 and another SU-76 fell to a nice defensive-fire shot from another MkIII. The Germans created a heroic leader and he led a squad into CC against a T-34 resulting in its destruction. After the loss of most of their armor the Soviet morale sunk and they conceded the field. | The Russian attack failed to reach their assigned objectives today. The Germans put up a superb defense and destroyed all but one of the Russian AFVs. The German 28LL ATG destroyed both of the Russian T-70 light tanks before the crew broke to Russian infantry firepower. The Russians managed to destroy the German 75mm halftrack, 28LL ATG and the PzIV, and approximately half the German infantry, but it was not enough. The Russian attack ran out of steam and time to reach all the objectives assigned to it. As a result of my failures the Russian player resigned on turn 6 and called it a day. Now it's on to BFP-104 <i>Flying Turrets</i> ; this is going to be epic. |
| 7/12/1943 | BFP 104 | Flying Turrets | German win | The Soviets inexplicably stopped the majority of their tanks in order to shoot at the German defenders. This allowed the Germans to destroy many Soviet vehicles, especially after the Tigers arrived and got into position. The Soviets suffered mightily during the German prep fire phase of turn four and their collective morale broke, resulting in a concession. | The Russian counterattack southwest of Prokhorovka failed miserably today. The Soviet armor bravely advanced into the teeth of the German defensive line which bristled with armor and antitank guns. The German forces continued to inflict devastating losses on the Russian armor and infantry. Tom deployed his forces, making excellent use of the natural terrain, which included the hillocks located in the center of the battlefield. The Russians continued the advance for the three heroic turns against the wall of steel laid down by the Germans. At the end of turn three the Germans had inflicted approximately 35% losses on the Russians, without suffering a single AFV loss. To make matters worse, Tom had deployed his Tigers in such a way as to inflict even more damage on the hapless Russians. At the start of turn 4, the Russians decided to call it a day and retreat to fight another. It was a humiliating defeat; one that will be felt for many days and nights. It just goes to show one that superior numbers will not always determine the outcome of the battle. |

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We took many photos of the action and here are a few:



The above photo is of the final turn in BFP-74, *Coiled to Strike*. The Germans needed to capture just one more building but fell short.



The above photo shows the German assault during BFP-83, *The Second Belt*.



BFP-84, *Kreida Station* (shown above). The Germans were unable to wrest control of the large stone building in the upper right.



BFP-87, *Fork in the Road* (above). The Soviet hedgehog on top of the hill prevented the Germans from accomplishing their mission.

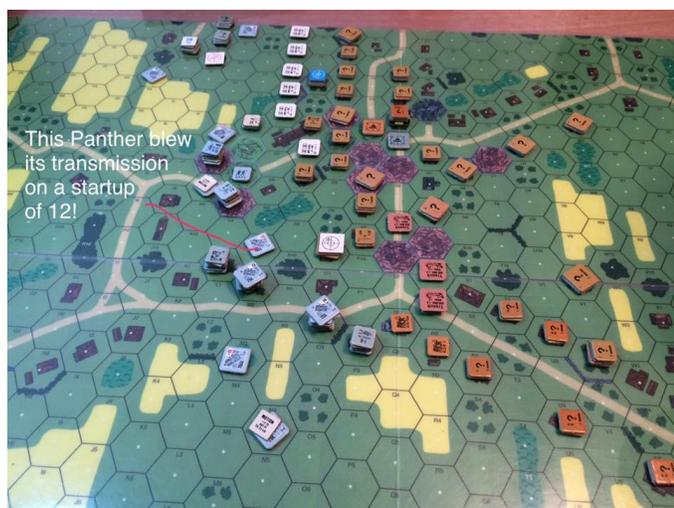
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BFP-93, Klein Stalingrad (above). The Germans breached the Soviet defenses in two locations and hit the objectives from two directions.



BFP-100, Tiger Vanguard (above). The Germans managed to flank the Soviets, again.



BFP-96, A Hotly Contested Town (above). Grossdeutschland was unable to secure their objectives.



BFP-104, Flying Turrets (above). The Germans killed so many Soviet tanks.

We used this endeavor as an opportunity to create and track personal leader counters over the course of the campaign, giving them the opportunity to excel or wilt in the ongoing crucible of battle. We based the leader campaign on the original SL rulebook and one for ASL that appeared in the '92 *ASL Annual*. During the course of the campaign we re-discovered something that we already knew; infantry combat on the Russian Front was dangerous. Our personal leaders rarely survived long. I made 8-1 once before being killed, then started over at 7-0 only to be killed again. Al's leader rarely survived a mission. Toward the end of the campaign I began being more cautious and ended up with a 9-1 for the final mission. We used the following criteria for earning elan or cowardice points toward any promotions or demotions, respectively, with +10/-10 points being the level which caused any change in leadership.

ELAN POINTS GAINED AS FOLLOWS

| | |
|---|--------|
| Single-handed elimination/capture of an AFV in CC | +10 |
| Led MMC/SMC which eliminated/captured AFV in CC | +8 |
| Single-handed (non CC) elimination of AFV with ordnance/LATW/SW | +6 |
| Led MMC/SMC which eliminated an AFV with ordnance/LATW/SW | +5 |
| Single-handed CC elimination of enemy infantry units (per HS/crew/SMC) | +5 (*) |
| Heroic due to HOB DR (retains heroic status until end of current scenario) | +5 |
| Single-handed elimination/capture of armed/unarmored vehicle in CC | +4 |
| Led MMC/SMC which eliminated/captured armed/unarmored vehicle in CC | +3 |
| Single-handed elimination/capture of armed/unarmored with ordnance/LATW/SW | +3 |
| Single-handed elimination/capture of 5/8" gun/mortar | +3 |
| Led MMC/SMC that eliminated/captured of armed/unarmored with ordnance/LATW/SW | +2 |
| Led MMC/SMC in CC resulting in elimination of enemy infantry (per HS/crew/SMC) | +2 (*) |
| Led MMC with eliminated/captured 5/8" gun/mortar | +2 |
| Directed fire which KIA/CR Wounded enemy MMC/SMC (per HS/crew/SMC) | +2 (*) |
| Rallied broken MMC/SMC (per MMC/SMC) | +1(*) |
| Eliminated/captured (or led MMC which eliminated/captured) an unarmored vehicle | +1 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Directed fire which broke enemy MMC/SMC (per HS/crew/SMC) | +1 |
| For each game turn remaining after victory conditions have been achieved | +1 |
| Member of victorious side in scenario | +1 |

COWARDICE POINTS DEDUCTED AS FOLLOWS

| | |
|--|----|
| Broke (per occasion) | -3 |
| MMC in same location eliminated/CR'd due to a rally DR of 12 (per MMC) | -2 |
| Failed PAATC/INF OVR TC | -1 |
| MMC in same location downgraded due to ELR failure (per MMC) | -1 |
| His breaking caused MMC in same location to fail LLTC (per MMC) | -1 |
| Ordnance/LATW/SW malfunctioned under his direction (per occasion) | -1 |
| Reduced in rank due to ELR failure (will retain lower rank) | -1 |

(*)add an additional +1for each negative leadership modifier of affected SMC

I had to attack against fortified positions often and developed some techniques for success. Here is an overview of the tactics used:

ISOLATE: In order to prevent the breaching/assaulting elements from being molested by reinforcing enemy troops the area to be cleared must be isolated. All likely avenues of approach must be covered by supporting elements in a way that would adversely affect their ability to fight.

SUPPRESS: The enemy units in and around the isolated area, and any units outside the area, should now be suppressed in order to reduce their ability to affect the breaching/assaulting friendly units. This can be done with SMOKE and/or fire. Once the volume of fire from enemy units has been sufficiently suppressed the breach/assault can go in.

REDUCE: Once the objective area has been isolated and suppressed the breach/assault elements can now begin to reduce the fortifications. Always remember and never forget that it is **always** best to approach a bunker or pillbox from outside its covered arc.

Conclusion

This undertaking has been one of the most enjoyable experiences in my ASL life. *Crucible of Steel* provides a

feel of what the commanders faced during that epic struggle. I highly recommend this module for anyone expressing an interest in WWII on the Russian Front.

PLAYER PROFILE: ALLEN KING

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?

AK: I begin to play "wargames" when they first began to appear. Yep, I'm that old now. That would have been in the early 60s when Avalon Hill started producing them. My first game was probably in the Summer of 1963 or '64 when I encounter AH's old *Gettysburg* game with the rectangular counters, quickly followed by *Bismarck*, *U-Boat* with the metal counters and *Tactics II*. Following those, it was a continued slew of games from various producers with an emphasis on SPI products. Among my favorite games are *Guderian's Blitzkrieg* from The Gamers OCS series, *Kasserine* from World Wide Games, *Destroyer Captain* from Quarter Deck and those marvelous wooden block games from Columbia Games. Then, I discovered *Advanced Squad Leader (ASL)* in 2002.

Banzai: When and how did you discover ASL?

AK: I had bought and fooled around with *Squad Leader* and all its later modules, but consciously decided not to get involved with ASL when it came out. While I liked *Squad Leader*, I was just too invested in other games and gaming to make the jump. But, in 2002, Mike Denson introduced me to ASL. I loved it. Mike had created a monster. With that discovery, I found the Austin ASL group and ASL became about the only game I play.

Banzai: What nationality do you enjoy playing the most?

AK: Well, I guess I like playing the Russians the most, however, it is a better question to ask which one I like playing the least. That is the Japanese. The Japanese are the most unique nationality to play in my view. They are also the most difficult to play well. To master the Japanese is to master the art of the Banzai charge and Pacific terrain. Sadly, I am not very good at either.

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

AK: My favorite scenarios have changed as I have evolved as a player. Typically, I am like most players and prefer combined arms scenarios, but unlike some, I prefer large to very large scenarios including a variety of weapons including air and off board artillery. As time has gone by, I have grown to like more unusual scenarios that feature amphibious landings, para/glider drops and battles involving substantial fortifications. Campaign games take center stage. Conversely, I least like very short scenarios that are too often decided by one or two dice rolls.

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

AK: Unfortunately, I haven't evolved beyond a mediocre player, so it hard to pinpoint what I do particularly well or poorly in ASL. But, I can say that I defend better than I attack. In the attack, I lack the patience to develop an attack plan that really utilizes combined arms, smoke, encirclement and cover terrain optimally. I keep a record of all my games. Consistently, I'm better defending fortified positions than in any other aspect of the game. A particular weakness is the use of OBA. As most players will probably agree, it can be a fickle mistress even when one has full command of the nuisances of the OBA rules. I just haven't jumped that hurdle yet. But, watch out; I'm working one it!

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

AK: The best part of ASL to me is the comrades I have found playing the game. Over the years, I've come to know many people that share my love of the game. With almost no exception, I find the gamers I've shared this game with to be real comrades in (paper) arms. Tournament time is about as good as it gets. The worst part of ASL is my wife's three cats. Being the jealous sort that cats naturally are, they seem to take great glee in moving pieces around on the map when I'm not looking. I think the devils really just want to play themselves, but cannot figure a way to read the rules. So, when I play large scenarios, I've got to secure things really well or write down all the units and reset to play again without cat trauma.

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

AK: I most look forward to finding opponents that have the time and inclination to play campaign games. These are by far my favorite ASL games as good opponents can really present you with an order of battle that is unexpected. Besides that, going to tournaments is always something to look forward to as those gatherings bring a lot of players to

town that I normally don't have a chance to see, much less play. More commonly I look forward to game day Saturdays and a chance to spend a whole day in uninterrupted ASL play.

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

AK: My favorite game piece has to be examined from the viewpoint of infantry/ordnance/armor. The rock, scissors, paper game within the ASL game. Of these, the 81mm mortar is my favorite piece. Its high rate of fire, hitting power, ability to lay voluminous smoke, and cause havoc for those targets hiding in woods is just plain awesome. Among ordnance that isn't the 81mm, the good old 88mm gun is a dead-eyed killer. Among tanks, I favor the Panther just slightly over the T-34/85. But, on the whole, that 81mm mortar is tough to beat.

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?

AK: If I am the Russians defending against the German tanks, I'd probably prefer the KV-2. How do you kill this thing with 1941 German tanks? Even against four German tanks, it is tough to kill although it can be immobilized fairly easily. But, in defense, even immobilized, it can be placed in a position to deny the attackers their objective if the crew sticks with it. If I were the attacking Germans, I'd rather not face that KV-2. However, while not asked in your question, if I was attacking as the Russians, I'd prefer the BT-7 platoon as the BT-7 has a decent gun and MGs and is very fast, thus affording possible flank shots on the defending armor.

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?

AK: I would take the French side in a 1940 scenario. Their armor is clearly superior in that period although the presence of radios in all the German tanks is a plus. As it happens, early war scenarios are my favorite and those French tanks, guns, and infantry are generally pretty good. Too bad for the French and the world that they did not know how to use them effectively on the strategic and operational levels.

Banzai: How do you like PTO scenarios?

AK: PTO, oh wow. For the longest time, I did not even play PTO scenarios. The first couple of PTO scenarios I played left me sort of bored and struggling to understand the PTO terrain and how to use the Japanese. Now, I like them better and have some clue as to how to play the Japanese. However, PTO scenarios are still a long way from being my favorite.

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

AK: One of my prize ASL moments was when I won my only game against Zeb Doyle. To say he dominated me is a vast understatement. I think I was like 0-10 with him when I pulled out a victory in *Jura Juggernaut (SP101)*, despite the fact that he created no less than three heroes in that game and spreading fire burned me out of a great defensive position. But, without a doubt the best ASL moment I ever experienced was playing Zeb in the *Red Barricades* campaign game. We played it in November and December and the weather outside was cold and dreary. A truly fitting atmosphere to recreate that gruesome battle. As usual, Zeb crushed me, but it was sure worth the effort.

My coolest moment was playing one of my favorite opponents, Tom Gillis. The game came down to me stopping an on-rushing tank. The odds were poor when I made a desperate shot with an AT gun. As it was, it took a snake and an unlikely hit to get him. I rolled the snakes, followed by a one and that was it. Many opponents would have wailed mightily and cursed the ASL gods. But, as always, Tom just laughed and said, "I hate this game". That was the way Tom played ASL. He was always a joy in victory or defeat. He became a fast friend and I miss him now that he has passed.

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

AK: I mentioned this above, but I have never been comfortable with the rules and options available with Off Board Artillery (OBA). While I don't avoid scenarios with OBA, I am just not adept in its use. My New Year's resolution is to master it.

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

AK: Actually, there are two areas I'd like to see used more extensively in scenarios. First is air power, particularly in

ETO scenarios. The British and Americans used it significantly and effectively and the Germans feared it greatly, but air is relatively seldom seen in scenarios. Second is night actions. Okay, so I've never played a night scenario, but night attacks were very often used by the Japanese and it was not uncommon in the west. Nonetheless, it is an environment relatively seldom explored in scenario design.

Banzai: Dice glass or dice tower?

AK: I prefer to use and have others use glass dice cups. Towers tend to have a lip on them that often blocks my view of the roll. I do not suspect others of misstating the roll, I just prefer to see it myself. On occasion, I have caught a mistake regarding rate of fire, mistakes regarding the result of the colored die or other such issues. Some have gone against me, while others played in my favor. I just want to see that roll.

Banzai: Axis Minor scenarios: overrated or underrated?

AK: Axis minor scenarios are fun, but I think they are a bit overrated. However, this is a tough call as the designers pick battles in which the minor side was relatively equal to the major power. This tends to reflect minor powers as stronger than they were overall. Nonetheless, I enjoy playing the Poles, Rumanians, Hungarians and other minors just fine and I am glad there are scenarios including them.

Banzai: What ASL products have your attention these days?

AK: I just finished playing part of the campaign game in *Blood Reef: Tarawa*. The game had languished unopened for ten years on my shelf. Eric Gerstenberg and I slugged it out for over a year. It was quite a bloodbath and really represented the real battle well. Currently, I am looking at playing, at least, some of the scenarios in Bounding Fire Productions' new package, *Objective: Schmidt*. The battles in and around the Hurtgen Forest haven't gotten as much attention as they deserve in my view. I hope I can find someone interested in the campaign game or some of the very large scenarios in this package.

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?

AK: For new players, I suggest starting with short, simple scenarios with a person willing to mentor them without concern over win/loss records. I've never been wild about

the starter kits as they leave so much out. It's better just to jump in with the full rules but simple scenarios and play, play, play. I'd advise avoiding PTO early on. As to attracting and retaining new members, I sadly don't have much to add. Board gamers are rare enough in this day of computer gaming. In addition, there are a lot of different games out there for even the most dedicated board gamer. The only way I know of attracting and retaining some of them is to mentor them early and often. Sometimes they will settle on ASL, sometimes they will drift off to other games.

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

AK: Like everyone, I have had runs of both good and bad luck, but I consider myself generally lucky. We all have moments of rolling three treys in a row, only to roll a pair of critical boxcars later in the same game. Nothing really stands out in my memory.

Banzai: Slopes - like 'em or hate 'em?

AK: Funny, as I am at this moment reading Chas Smith's article on slopes found in the *Objective: Schmidt* module. It is excellent. Yes, I really like slopes and wish the regular ASL rules added a section on slopes outside those found in various modules and campaign games. Slopes break up the plateau effect that exists on hills/crests in normal ASL play. This gives the terrain a more realistic feel without adding a lot of extra complexity.

Banzai: You've played several campaign games. Any practical advice for others who may want to give them a go?

AK: Campaign games (CG): Because I much prefer large and very large scenarios, it is only natural that I'd gravitate to campaign games. I've played three. In playing them, one should look at the game as a long haul. The defender will typically start disadvantaged; often to the point that the disadvantaged player will panic as the enemy rolls over his initial positions. This results in a personal morale break and early surrender.

I have heard and read that this is a common result in the initial scenario of *Valor of the Guards* and *Blood Reef: Tarawa*. Don't panic; don't break. The game is designed for the long haul and the initially defending player will have ample time to rebuild positions and counterattack in later scenarios of the CG. Defenders should husband their initial forces while planning the next defensive position and forces to be built to first, slow/stop the attacker and then prepare an offense. Good CGs are designed to allow this very thing.

Fight as tenaciously as the real soldiers did; hang on, abide, plan a counterattack and then attack when you have bled the attacker sufficiently.

Also, read the special rules for the CG **carefully** and understand the various terrain features and special units the designers have added. These can be very important. For example know the advantages of rooftops and cellars in *Red Barricades*. An 81mm mortar section on a rooftop with a spotter in *Red Barricades* can do a lot of damage without even being exposed.

Finally, keep your wife/significant other happy and beware the feline intruder.

Banzai: What are your other interests outside of gaming?

AK: I am a huge movie fan. In a typical year my wife and I go to 35+ in theater movies, watch 25+ classic movies on TV and watch movie awards. I read a lot. A typical year is 50+ books; about a quarter of which are non-fiction. I walk a lot for exercise. I still do all my yard work and dote on my peach trees. Finally, I watch some football and a lot of college basketball (my true love in the sports world). the rest of the time it is ASL and family activities.

Banzai: Any final comments to wrap up?

AK: ASL is a great pastime for a retired guy that cannot play sports anymore. The camaraderie it offers is appealing. The thinking that goes into mastering it keeps an old mind sharp and provides a wealth of entertainment. While I like board gaming generally, I keep coming back to this excellent gaming venue and probably will until vision or health fails. Thanks for the chance to talk with Banzai about my experiences in ASL. Roll on!

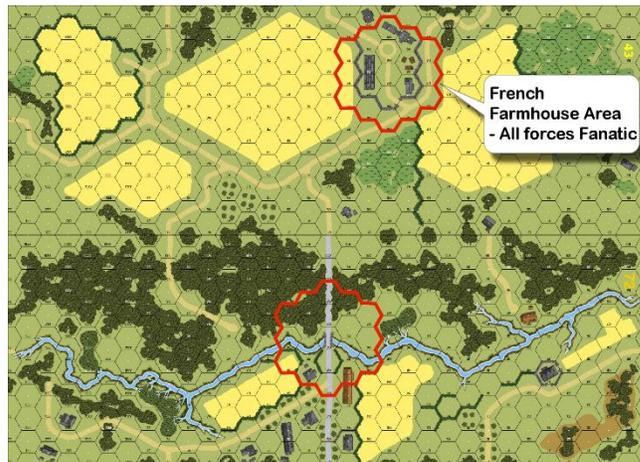
SCENARIO ANALYSIS: A REAL BARN BURNER

Matt Shostak



Attraction: This short, sharp action is playable in a couple of hours, so it should appeal to those that are pressed for time. It's also accessible to newer players because it has no vehicles and only one gun. The situation is evocative and interesting, with a cut-off but fanatic platoon of French soldiers trying to hold on in the farmhouse area (43N7) long enough to be rescued by their countrymen. Experienced players may often skip reading the prelude and aftermath sections but for this contest it's worth perusing since it adds

to the historical flavor. Both sides will likely have to attack and defend, and safe rout paths may be difficult to find with enemies in multiple directions. Moreover the scenario starts with a burning barn, which is pretty cool. As of this writing, the French lead 41-33 according to the Remote Online Automated Record, so it seems fairly well balanced.



German Advantages: Initiative

How this contest proceeds is largely up to the Germans. The victory conditions state that the French win by controlling either of two particular buildings in the farm complex (43M7 and 43O7) and also having at least one of the relief force in one of those buildings at game end. This means that the Germans could try to win without even storming the buildings, at least in theory. They could deploy all of their forces to block the French relief force and hope to win by preventing anyone from getting through. I doubt that gambit will be tried often, but even if a more conservative approach is taken, the Germans still control the broad outlines of the game with how they choose to allocate their forces. Do they put just a token in place to delay the Frenchmen of the 3ième Compagnie while the majority of the Germans storm the buildings early, or do they divide things up more evenly, striving for maximum efficiency in taking the buildings, since after all there aren't many French there to kick out?

German Disadvantages: Difficult Choices, Poor Rout Paths

Having the initiative is great, but the choices already discussed above are not easy, and it can feel like it's possible to really put your side at a disadvantage with a poor setup. The blocking group will not have many good rout paths to choose from, especially if there are still any fanatic Frenchmen in the farmhouse area.

French Advantages: Fanaticism, Large Relief Force

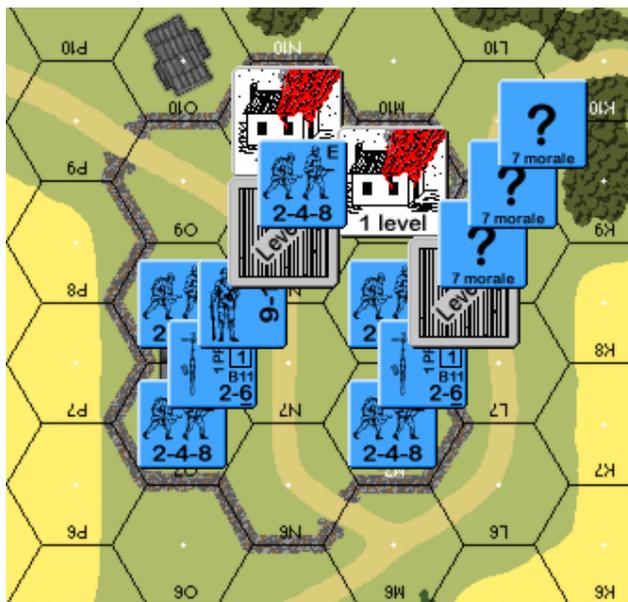
Fanatic troops in stone buildings can be a tough nut to crack, and every moment of delay Gehin's platoon can cause brings more pressure from their compatriots in the 3rd Company.

French Disadvantages: Time, Outnumbered at the Farmhouse

This is a short fight at only 4.5 turns. The men of the 3rd Company have 5 movement phases to get someone into one of the victory buildings, and very likely will have to wrest control of one of them from the Germans as well. The distance to be covered is not too long and there should be enough time to do some prep firing, but the French will have to be mindful of the clock. Although Gehin's platoon at the farmhouse is fanatic, they are outnumbered locally and the Germans can set up very close indeed, so they are in imminent danger of being wiped out.

Gehin's Platoon Setup

These guys are the ones who originally deployed forward in the farmhouse to help spring a trap on the Germans, but where we pick up the action things have gotten desperate for them. They are only 2.5 squads, they are isolated, and part of their position is on fire. However they are fanatic, have some concealment, and may freely deploy at start. Notice the setup restrictions, though: they must be within 2 hexes of 43N7. That means the O10 stone building is out of bounds for them, but not for the Germans, who must set up at least 3 hexes from 43N7 and 72Q6. This is an important point. The order of the day for Gehin's platoon is to delay long enough for rescue, so it seems sensible to put someone in as many Locations as possible under concealment to prevent an early penetration of the walled compound. A concealed half-squad on the ground floor might just soak up a prep fire shot from Germans next door and maybe even survive the ensuing close combat if they remained concealed throughout. Usually when a scenario allows one side to freely deploy, that should be taken as a hint. The advantage of deploying is that the French can cover more ground, and possibly take just a little bit longer to root out, but the disadvantage is that half-squads can only use support weapons by forfeiting their inherent firepower. Therefore it may be tempting to retain one full squad in possession of one of the LMGs, and most likely stacked with Lt. Gehin. It's hard to say which choice is better. For purposes of this article, we'll consider a maximally spread out defensive position with both squads deployed into half-squads and all units concealed using the OB -provided concealment counters.



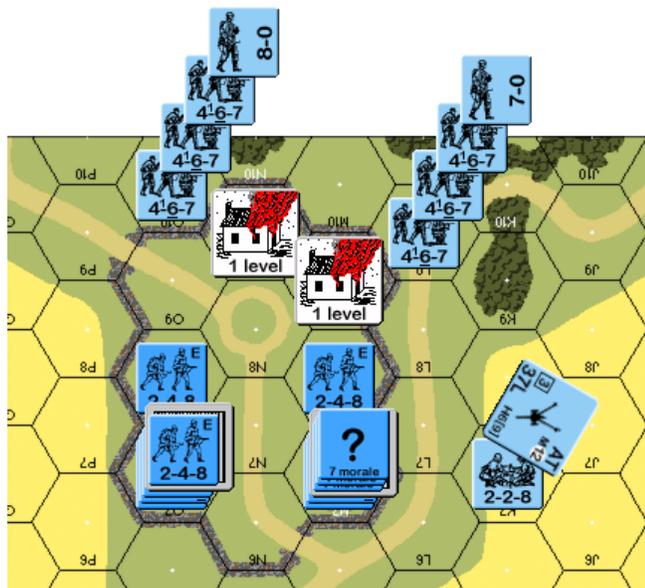
German Setup

After the fanatic Frenchmen set up, but before the 3ième Compagnie does, the Germans must set up. As mentioned earlier, this is where the character of the fight will be determined. The Germans could, at least in theory, win by eschewing storming the farmhouse area altogether, but preventing anyone from the 3ième Compagnie from reaching the compound. It might be fun to try this once in a while just to see if it could work, but it strikes me as an unconventional approach, essentially a gambit. There isn't a lot of great defensive terrain between the two groups of Frenchmen, and slipping a single unit into the compound is a lot easier than having to do that and wrest building control away from the Germans. Moreover, in that case Gehin's men will be free to take potshots and the Germans will likely find themselves encircled. Therefore most German players will probably deploy their forces with the intention of seizing the farmhouse buildings, so that the French will be forced to take them back. Still they won't want to leave an uncontested approach to the French relief force, so they will only attack the complex with some of their troops, while others will act as a blocking group. Just what is the most efficient split is not obvious.

Building 43O10 is begging to be occupied with a strong German group. There's no better terrain for protection from fire on this map than a stone building, and this one is so close to the objective it just can't be ignored. Putting even a full platoon with a leader in this position is entirely justified. With some reasonable luck, they may be able to break a French unit or two. Right up close to the blazing barn in 43L9 is another great position. The smoke from the blazes provides good cover, and from this spot troops can

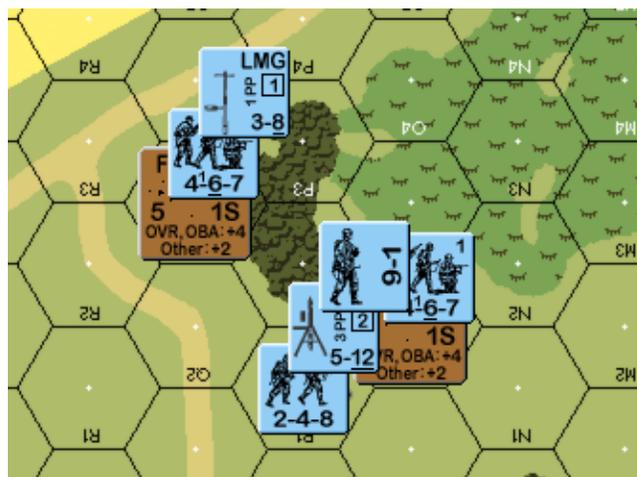
potentially assault move with the wall as cover, threatening 43M8 with close combat. This is why the French half-squad in 43M8 should take wall advantage before the first German move. If they don't take wall advantage, Germans could assault move to 43L8 without losing concealment, and fire from the French would only be a 2+2. It would be very likely then that these Germans would be able to overwhelm this French half-squad in close combat. With wall advantage, however, the Germans would have to chance a risky move in the open to get to 43L8: the French half-squad could then strip their concealment and fire at them with a 4-1. Another German platoon starts in this area to take advantage of this beneficial position.

The 37L antitank gun could be placed in a number of good spots. With a rate of fire of 3, it can be very effective against infantry, even those in stone buildings. At two-hex range, with a -2 acquisition, the gun would attain a critical hit against unconcealed infantry on a roll of 3 or less (8 base to hit, with +3 TEM, -2 acquisition, and -1 point blank). It might make sense to install the gun in a place like 43O7 or 43O8 to shell the bigger of the two victory buildings, perhaps Gehin himself, but here it's depicted in 43K7. From here it can try to suppress the French half-squad in the wooden building 43M8 and thereby open the way for the assault platoon stationed in 43L9 to make their way into the compound. This could also be a good spot for the end game, if the gun remains in operation that long. From here it looks down the L6-N5 road so it could shoot up desperate relievers as they charge the farmhouse area. Maybe a lucky shot from this gun on the last turn will make all the difference.



The blocking force also has a tough job. They have to choose their shots wisely, because they're locally outnumbered. With six squads assigned to the farm assault,

there aren't many men available to hold back the French relievers. Worse yet, the terrain here isn't great; anyone that breaks won't have many good rout options. That's why the two foxholes are given to this group. Fortunately there's still one stone building in the area, and it's directly between the farm and the 3ième Compagnie, at 43P1. This building and the woods next to it seem like the obvious place for the blocking group. It's a good place for the medium machinegun. Finally, the OB-provided German concealment counters are used to conceal all German stacks.



3ième Compagnie Setup

These guys don't have a lot of leeway in their setup either on board 72. As depicted here, the German blocking force is small, so the main decision is whether to go through them or around them. Muscling through them seems more natural. There's a lot of open ground on this battlefield, so even if they choose to go around they'll still have to endure plenty of negative-modifier shots, maybe even more of them than if they just went straight at the German blockers and eliminated them on the way to the farmhouse. That approach is what is shown here; the French are arrayed with the intent of eliminating the German blocking force on their way to the farm. Although most of these troops have a straightforward assignment, the mortar team is aiming at finding a position from which it can lob shells at the German antitank gun as soon as possible. They can get to L8 with double time and then advance to K9, and thus start shooting at the antitank gun as soon as possible. The other half-squad starting with them could sprint to K8 and advance to J8, with an eye toward infiltrating to the farmhouse from that side, where the 43L1-L5 hedge protects this move from being seen by the German blocking force. The squads in O7 can get to O9-N9, while the 8-1 in P7 can get the MMG and his men to P8 and Q9, concealed if they want to. Meanwhile the 8-0 can lead 3 squads on a

trek through the woods to S9 and T9, planning to advance to the edge of the woods in R9-S10-T10. The squad with the LMG could get to R8 and then also advance to the tree line in Q9 or R9. The idea here is to set up a long firing line from T10 to O9 (or even N9 if one of the squads from O7 or P7 decides to go there). Spreading out like this minimizes risk because it will be that much harder for the German blocking group to break more than 1 unit with any given shot, while also threatening a pretty hot retaliation: 8 squads plus MMG and LMG could reach the 36 column if none of them get broken by German fire.



Setting the Pace

Time is of the essence here; each side feels the pressure. The Germans want to take the farmhouse buildings as quickly as possible so that they can be in an advantageous defensive position by the time the 3ième Compagnie arrives. By the same token, the French want to get past the German blocking force post haste to save their countrymen. Therefore each side will probably have to endure some losses in order to stay on schedule; this farm will be dearly bought. Still it's worth noting that the distances are relatively short here, so the French probably don't need to charge headlong at the Germans from the get-go; they can probably afford to prep fire a little bit and still get to the farm. Sometimes managing the clock in ASL can be as difficult as it is for NFL coaches in football games, and this

scenario may be a good example. Knowing how hard to press the attack is the key.

Conclusion

Though rather small, this scenario has plenty to think about and plenty to do for both players. Both sides have to attack, defend, and manage the game clock. It's reasonably well balanced and doesn't take long to play, so it's worth giving it a try. Enjoy!

RULES TIP

When it comes to Conditional ROF (C2.5), note that the lowering of the ROF by one in the current phase for a CA change applies only to non-vehicular, NT Guns. So a Gun with fast traverse (e.g., 88L AA) is exempt from Conditional ROF. But also importantly, 76-82 mm Mortars are exempt from the conditions associated with Conditional ROF, as well.

A PREVIEW OF THE 26TH TEXAS TEAM TOURNAMENT



Rick Reinesch

The planning for the 2018 edition of the Texas Team Tournament is in full swing and the event promises to be just as much fun as in years past. This year marks 26 consecutive years of providing the very best that ASL has to offer down in Texas. So make those plans now to attend the Texas Team Tournament in Austin, TX, June 28-July 1, 2018. Last year we had record participation with 75 players from points all over the country registered for the tournament. The website (<http://www.Texas-ASL.com>) has been updated with information on tournament activities, the hotel info and the registration fees. We are constantly updating all that information leading up to the start of the tournament, so make sure to check in regularly for all the latest. Note that the last day to get our great hotel rate is June 13th, so don't delay! And while you are checking out the website, make sure to preregister; you never know what goodies I will come up with for those doing so.

As in previous years, Thursday's games will be informal gaming, with those games only counting toward the Major Johnson award. On Friday morning, we will launch the formal phase of the tournament where we will track wins

and losses over the course of the weekend to crown the team and individual winners.

Our tournament runs an open format; players are free to match themselves with anyone, and play any mutually agreeable scenario. As the Tournament Director, I seed the team part of the tourney so that every team has (hopefully) an equal chance at the top prize. Each team consists of three players, which makes for a great race to the finish with the final team winners generally not being determined until those final matches on Sunday. The way we score the team award is not based on total wins or losses but on the difference between the two. So, a team with 10 wins and 4 losses has a score of 6. But a team that goes 6 and 0 also has a score of 6. But it ultimately depends on strength of schedule in the case of a tie to determine who will come out on top. Check the website for all the details on how the team tourney works. Moreover, while we call ourselves a team tournament, individual play is still paramount. We offer plenty of individually based prizes, from the single elimination, individual champion bracket, to the Major Johnson award given to the individual playing the most ASL over the weekend, along with any number of mini-tourneys.

Thursday and Friday mini play will be featuring that time-honored institution – *Ferocity Fest*. For those that like their play brutal and deadly, this is not to be missed. Players will be paired up, one Axis and one Allied, to remove any issues with scenario balance. Your objective is to do better than the other players of your side, either Allied or Axis. The individuals with the largest number of points at the end of scenario play will be the winner for each side. It's that simple. We'll be posting the specific scenario(s) as they are determined. Last year players fought it out on the beaches of Tarawa. This year we head back to the Eastern Front and honor the 75th anniversary of the end of the Battle of Stalingrad by going old school as well with Scenario C, *The Streets of Stalingrad*. This mini is always a load of fun and well worth the effort. And I give away some great prizes for 1st place and runner up for each side. We will kick off Thursday play promptly at 9am, June 28th. If you are interested in participating in Ferocity Fest, just let me know that day. No requirement to sign up ahead of time.

But that's not all for the minis. We will also be sponsoring an SK mini on Saturday for those folks new to ASL and would like to try their hand at some formal SK play. We'll have it as a classic pairing bracket using scenarios from the SKs and SK expansion packs, with one person besting all others and walking away with the prize.

Saturday will also be featuring a Squad Bleeder mini this year, which should be a lot of fun as it was last year. So if you are looking to fill your Saturday, give this one a try. I'll have signups for this one during the tourney. We've also held playtest minis over the course of the weekend for both

BFP and MMP (Pete Shelling), so there is always a way to get in on the action.

For the regular part of the tourney, remember that above all else we are an OPEN tournament; play what you want against whomever you want, or even as much (or little) as you want. Mostly, just come have a great time.

That being said, there are plenty of prizes to be had. We give out the Major Johnson Award to the player who plays the most ASL over the course of the weekend. We provide awards for the best team over the course of the weekend as determined by the best point differential between wins and losses (as noted above). And then there are awards given to the overall individual champion and runner-up. But even if you aren't in the running for any of those awards, you can still try for the Audie Murphy Award given to the most snakes over the course of the weekend, or there is the Col. Klink for most boxcars. We also give an award for close combat points earned. But not just simple "I won" points, we give extra points for winning those close combats with style (or brutality, take your pick).

As always, we will be holding a drawing on Saturday of the tourney for all the merchandise our sponsors so graciously provide. As in years past we will be holding this drawing at 3:30 Saturday afternoon. I would encourage everyone to head out to our website and check out the listing of these fine sponsors of the Texas Team Tournament, and make sure to consider them first when you are making your purchases.

Registration this year is \$36 for all Thursday-Sunday gaming, \$31 for Friday-Sunday; and \$21 for Saturday only and can be done via PayPal through our website. Your entrance fee includes participation in any mini-tournaments you desire to enter as well as dibs on all of the great swag we give out. We are at the Wingate Conference Center at 1209 North IH-35 in Round Rock, TX with a fantastic room rate of \$89/night.

You can check everything out by following the ASL Team Tourney link from the Texas ASL home page at <http://www.Texas-ASL.com> . Hope to see you in June!

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 and Houston groups meet on the first Saturday of every month. The DFW group has been meeting on the second, and the San Antonio guys on the third Saturday of every month. To stay informed of upcoming club events, stop by our club website, www.texas-asl.com or better yet join our email group. You can post a message at 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!