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EDITOR'S FOXHOLE

Rick Reinesch



Welcome back to another edition of our newsletter. Matt Shostak gives us a his usual insightful scenario analyses of a couple of **Crucible of Steel** scenarios, *Early Morning Action* [BFP-90] and *Knife in the Flank* [BFP-103]. We have a few of the local grognards share their war stories. We also asked folks to provide their input on what they would like to see in new ASL products. We continue with Part III of Peter Di Cioccio's SK series with *Novices on the Attack*, and we present another great SK Corner article from Kevin Boles. I give a rundown of the upcoming 28th Annual Texas Team Tournament. All that and more await you in this issue of *Banzai!!*

SCENARIO ANALYSIS: EARLY MORNING ACTION [BFP90]

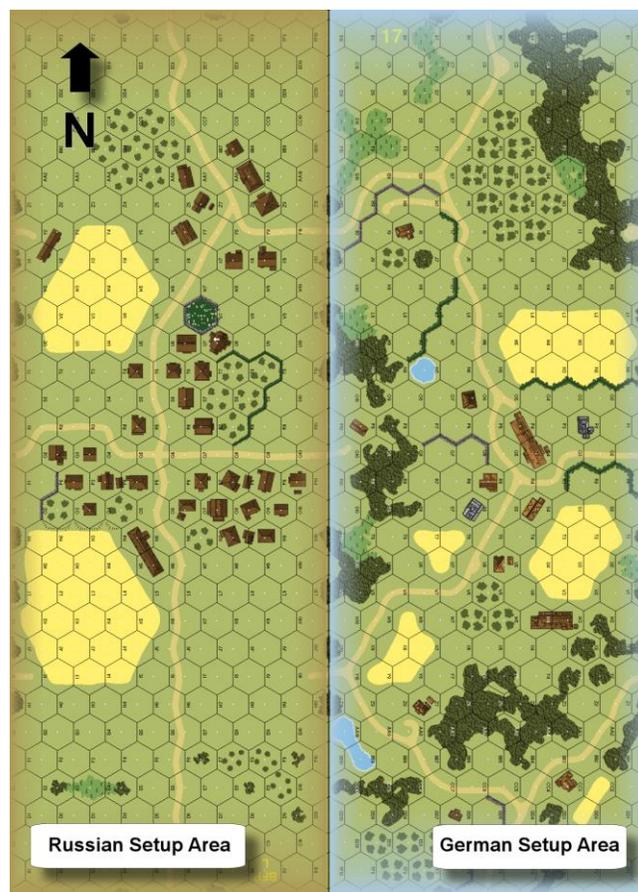
Matt Shostak



Attraction: Kursk, Small Size, StuGs

Firefights on the eastern front are popular, and the *Crucible of Steel* pack from **Bounding Fire Productions** certainly provides plenty of choices to explore the struggle at Kursk. Part of the fun of Kursk actions is how evenly matched the weaponry is. Many of those scenarios, however, are rather large and dense, featuring beacoup de fortifications and special weapons. As fun as those are, sometimes a smaller action is more suitable due to time constraints, or lack of player experience, or simply player preference. Simplicity can be a virtue, and considering the small size and lack of

special rules, players should be able to get through this one fairly quickly. For those fans of the StuG life (and I know you're out there), this one offers another chance to see them in a classic infantry support role. So break out your StuG Life coffee mug, and enjoy a steaming cup of Kursk. The Remote Online Automated Record presently shows this scenario favoring the Germans 37-25, so consider giving the more experienced player the Russians, and/or giving the defenders some kind of balance.



Boards BFP L (left) and 17 (right)

Russian Advantages: Compact Defense, Time

Russian Disadvantages: Troop Quality, Lack of Antitank Capability

The challenge here is indeed very simple: the defenders must just hold on for six turns within a fixed area in the center of the battlefield. They don't have to defend far-flung, separated objectives. Therefore, they can just hunker down and fight for terrain, using all the usual delaying tactics. All they need is one Good Order MMC at game end, and most of all of their soldiers could be set up in that area to begin with, probably melting back over the course of the scenario to some corner

or other. Six turns can go by pretty quickly, so if the Germans dawdle too much, they could find themselves behind the clock, requiring more desperate measures.

These Soviets, however, aren't very strong. Though about half of their troops have morale eight, they have one conscript squad, and the low ELR is a major factor, as morale failures will quickly turn these troops to rabble. If playing with the balance (raising their ELR to three), however, that may not be quite as big a factor. But still the SS have high morale, especially on the broken side, along with higher firepower, so their force should hold up over the course of the battle a lot better than the Reds. To fend off the StuGs, there isn't much in the way of antitank weaponry. The 37L is a bit of a pea-shooter, realistically unable to harm those AFVs through the front barring a critical hit, and even through the side or rear doesn't have a great chance due to the special *Crucible of Steel* rule about Schuerzen. The ATR and mortars have similarly slim chances, making the Molotov projector possibly the best antitank weapon in their arsenal. Let's take a quick look at the numbers. The StuG has frontal armor of eight, and side/rear armor factor of three (note the errata that it is *not* a boxed three as depicted on the card). The schuerzen bump the side armor up to four against any weapon less than 45mm, which obviously includes the antitank gun and the ATR in this scenario. The 37L's basic kill number is nine, which could be increased to ten at very short range. Not great. Thus the antitank gun may be taking deliberate immobilization shots, which are difficult against these small-target StuGs. The ATR is of course even worse with a base six, with similar bonuses at short ranges. The Molotov projector, however, if it can secure a hit, has a base kill number of six, or possibly seven if the crew is exposed, and armor thickness doesn't apply, though if the StuG is moving or in motion it gains two back in its favor.

German Advantages: Troop Quality, Armor

German Disadvantages: Time

As already noted, these SS have much better staying power in a firefight than the Russians. The very high morale on the broken side means they'll return to the fight quickly if they have good rally locations with leaders. The pair of assault guns can provide cover with smoke rounds and smoke dispensers, shell the defenders with high explosive rounds, or of course use their mobility to force rout failures or even employ the dreaded vehicular bypass freeze tactic if necessary.

They just don't have a ton of time, though. Six turns isn't a lot when trying to clear such a large area. Sure, it's very close to the German positions so they don't have a long way to go,

but it's easy to imagine the assault stalling due to a few poor dice rolls at inopportune times. They can set up anywhere on their board, which at first glance seems like a great advantage, allowing them to perform flanking maneuvers to come at the defenders from multiple angles, giving rise to encirclement opportunities, and making routing difficult for the Russians. But how long will that take? And they don't have a huge number of troops to do so, either. With only twelve squads, can they split into three groups of four, to come at the Russians from the front and each side? It might be worth a try, but each group would probably need one leader (and they only have three in total), and a precious turn or two might be required just to get into decent positions.

The Defense



Here's an example defensive alignment. It's probably not optimal, but it should be illustrative of many typical playings. The battlefield seems to be naturally divided into top and bottom sides, roughly by the road running east-west through the middle of town. The basic plan will be to hunker down into a kind of hedgehog, with the hope of fighting tenaciously and slowly pulling back to eventually hold on somewhere at the fringe of the victory area. The mortars,

naturally, are placed to rain shells on any Germans in the woods line, one to each side of the playing area. The one on the top has pretty good cover behind the wall, and can see many of the trees on that side of the front line. The one on the bottom is split wide in order to see most of the woods on that side, and they've dug themselves a foxhole there for extra cover. When trying to place the 37L, another problem with their antitank capability becomes more obvious. There is no vast field of fire available; no matter where this antitank gun goes, it's very possible that no StuG will blunder into its sights, especially not for a flank shot. A savvy German commander will probably not leave both StuGs vulnerable to such flanking fire at the same time. Maybe the Germans will attempt to come at the defense from both sides, with one StuG supporting each flank attack, but it's equally possible that they'll stay conservative, and just pound the defenses frontally. Who knows? With that in mind, the antitank gun is deployed to the bottom side of the defense, and will simply have to take what shots opportunity provides.

The Molotov projector is more mobile, and it goes in the center of town in case the StuGs try to get up close and personal. It can be shifted around a bit during the game to find a good shot. The ATR is deployed likewise. The dummies are used to mimic stacks with support weapons and leaders. Perhaps the Germans will think the stack at the rear of the defense is the MMG with a leader, preparing to lay a fire lane down the road through the center of town. The other dummy stack similarly is pretending to be ready to sling a fire lane across the left front just before the hedge. The rest

of the defenders are split roughly evenly right and left, with one leader in each zone ready to rally those that break away from the front line. It's not very complicated.

The Attack

As mentioned, the Germans could try to envelope the Russians from one or both sides, but for purposes of this analysis they'll eschew that approach. This attack will be as subtle as a punch in the face. The StuGs will kick off the assault by trying to place ordnance smoke in front of the Russian front line. They'll even start crew exposed despite the sniper risk, to maximize their odds. Being SS makes them elite for purposes of special ammo, so they'll have s9, which is darned good. If both smoke placements succeed, then the overwatch fire group of three squads, the MMG, and two LMGs will try to light up the hedge line defenders on the Russian left. Some good early luck with rate of fire could make things miserable for the defenders in this area. The other big stack may fire at the Russian squad in the forwardmost right front-line building, either with Prep Fire or as Opportunity Fire.

The other German infantry will use the smoke cover to run half squads into the Russians to strip concealment, and move full squads to get adjacent with the hopes of killing them in CC, or maybe watching them break and rout away to avoid that fate, which would give them a foothold in the wooden buildings. One half squad will move along each flank. Their mission is to get around the Russian defense and just make things more difficult for the Rooskies by making routing trickier, and maybe even encircling some of them, or if they discover a vulnerable unit in their weight class, like a Soviet crew manning a mortar or the 37L, try to take them out in CC. This could work brilliantly or be a total failure, because neither has a leader nearby to rally them should they break, but the hope is that most of the defenders will be too preoccupied dodging the haymaker coming at them from the front to spend much energy on them.

If the StuGs do not have smoke ammo, then the targets for the overwatch fire groups may vary a bit, likely still firing at



defenders on the front line to strip their concealment, which would allow the StuGs to then shell them instead. A minus-2 acquisition on a wooden building will often be enough of a threat to cause enemy infantry to skedaddle. A few 12+0 attacks could break the line pretty effectively.

Once the landsers get established in the wooden buildings, they should be able to wear down the defenders. It's only a matter of time before they clear them out completely. But will they be able to do it fast enough? There's no casualty cap on the Germans, so they can be bold. The StuGs are expendable, especially in the late game. During movement they can use their smoke dispensers to cover the assault. On the last turn or two, I would not hesitate to use them for VBM freeze if it looked like a better option than using their high explosive shells.

Conclusion

Early Morning Action looks like a fun scenario that can be knocked out in a few hours. It's back-to-basics ASL. See if you can hold or take the village without a lot of special weaponry or fortifications. Enjoy.

WAR STORIES

Allen King

In playing BFP 114 *Engineering Defeat* with Eric Gerstenberg, an unlikely thing occurred to me. As the Germans, I had to gain control of three of four one-level buildings. Having secured one building, I was close to capturing a second with a couple of turns to go and good prospects for capturing the third objective. The fourth objective was rapidly burning to the ground. Eric was tenaciously battling in the last ground floor building hex. He sent a lowly 7-0 upstairs above that hex to ensure he held control of the building if I eliminated his toe hold on the ground floor. I countered by sending a force to ensure a 4:1 close combat attack on the 7-0.

I routed the ground floor units out of the building and was confident I'd win a 4:1 CC against the leader, thus claiming the objective prize. I rolled a 9 resulting in a wounded leader. He survived the mortality roll. Well, okay, I'd get him on the Polish turn as he could not reinforce the leader or get into the building while trying to hold the third building. In Polish CC, the leader killed a German half squad at 1:4 odds. I rolled an ineffectual 11 at 4:1. Drat!

On the last German turn, I captured a second objective. All that was left was to kill off the wounded leader, thereby claiming the third building, and hold off the last desperate Polish counterattacks. Things were still looking very good.

On the last German turn, I reinforced the melee to an 8:1. A win here and I would control the three buildings I needed. But, no, I rolled a 12. The game was lost as the wounded leader survived and crawled away to fight another day.

David Hailey

Noticing that both sides received air support in preparing to play *J148 Last Minute War*, I couldn't help but get excited about the possibility of a dogfight, so I read up on the rules. I had to wait until both planes automatically arrived on turn 4, which really meant turn 5 before my Slovakian fighter could go after the Hungarian aircraft. As I declared my intentions for a dogfight, my excited anticipation returned. The dice settled to a 2, 2 result for the kill! I threw my hands up in victory - I felt like Snoopy having shot down the Red Baron.



1939 Defence of Slovakia medal

SK CORNER: WAR OF THE RATS [S2]

Kevin Boles



In this SK Corner article, we are going to do an in-depth review of a setup for a solo playing of the classic Starter Kit scenario S2 *War of the Rats*. This setup was done by Flavio Ceccanti, a shiny new SK recruit, who posted a picture of the setup on the Advance Squad Leader Starter Kit Facebook group that I moderate. (Come and join us!) I got his permission (thanks Flavio!) to post an analysis of the setup as a Lesson of the Day on that group. As I progressed through the various aspects of attacking and defending in SK play, I soon realized that there was far more to share than a simple Lesson of the Day is designed to show. If I recall correctly, this was Flavio's *first ever* SK game, so do keep that in mind as we are stepping through our analysis.

S2 is a quintessential Stalingrad-style city slugfest. Crappy Russian troopers with crappy leadership and crappy Russian

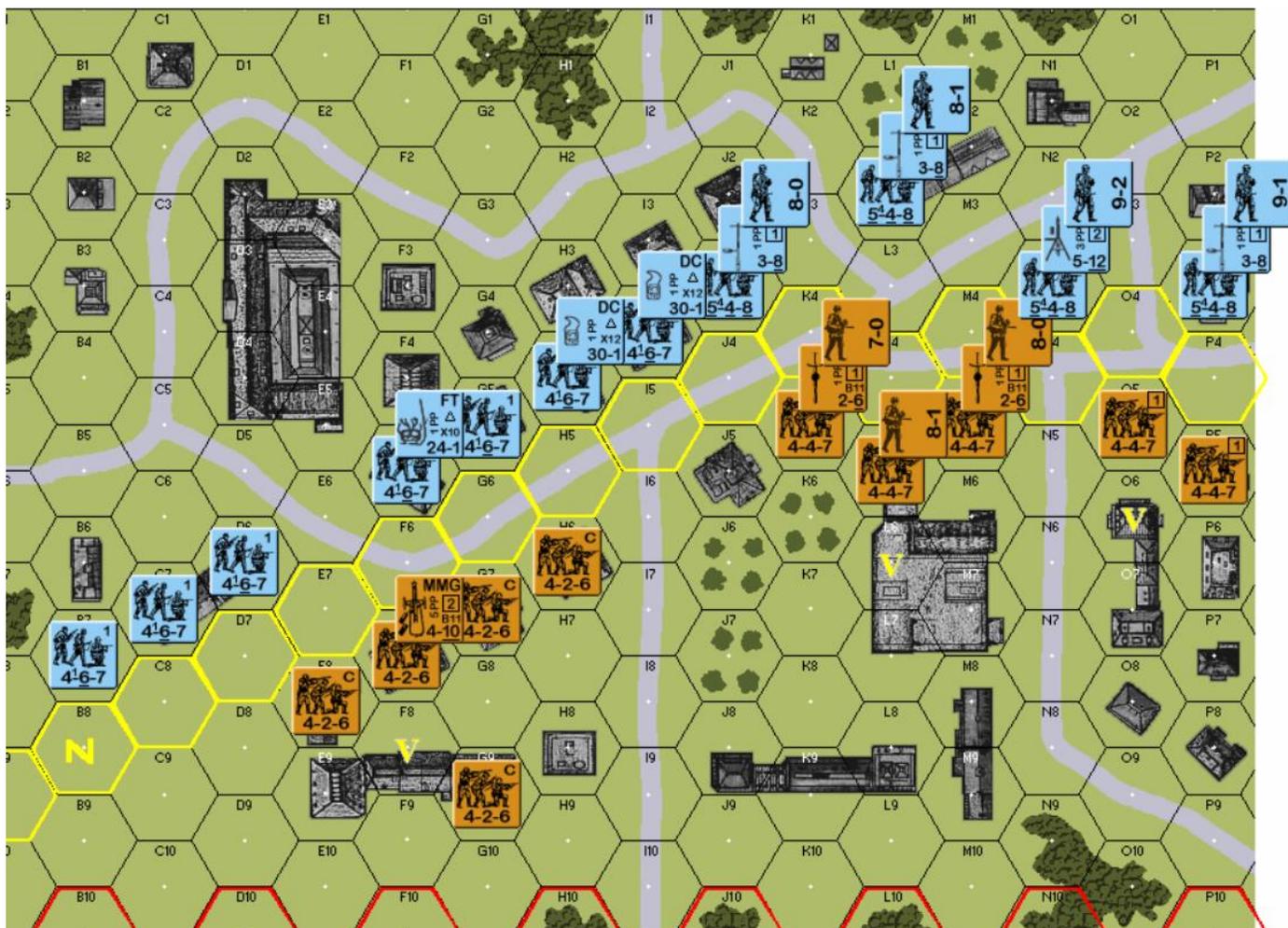
SW have been tasked with defending the Chemist Shop, Commissar's House and the Red October Factory complex. Assaulting your positions will be a vast array of Hitler's Finest that are quite literally the complete opposite of what the Russians are defending with.

Below is a VASL screenshot of the at-start unit placement:

Russian Defense Review

We will start with the Russians, since they are the Scenario Defenders and set up first. I will begin with a review of units that are in stacks.

F7 (4-2-6/MMG): Right off the bat we find several significant problems. Despite being a horrible piece of equipment [B11 and a whopping 5PP], the MMG is the most substantial support weapon the Russians have, so it needs to be both properly placed and properly managed to ensure it has the greatest impact on the Russian's probability of success.



For placement, we have it right across the street from the hoard of German attackers. This exposes it to initial German prep fire, which includes a potential 24+1 from a full 9-2 led kill stack as well as a 12 flat from the FT. That lowly 6 morale Conscript squad is very likely to break from either shot. This piece of equipment needs to be around for as long as possible so it can inflict the most damage on attacking units, and getting it broken and abandoned (you can't carry a 5 PP SW with you when you rout) in the turn 1 Prep Fire Phase (PFPh) is definitely *not* the way to accomplish that objective! 😊

For management, the Conscript 4-2-6 suffers from Inexperienced penalties that represent a *triple*-whammy here! These are:

- 3 MF (rule 3.3.1) – As previously mentioned, the beast of a machine gun is a *five* PP SW. A full squad has a 3 PP capacity, and as you know anything over that subtracts from the usable MF for movement. This results in humping that thing around being a 2 MF reduction. With just 3 MF to start with, that leaves the 4-2-6 with only **one** movement factor available! You can't even assault move into open ground for goodness sake! Moving the 4-2-6/MMG pair into an adjacent building would require the 4-2-6 to declare CX. The additions and subtractions here are about as complex as math gets in SK and result in a final MF available of . . . 3 PP available with 5 PP SW is 2 PP over . . . carry the $\sqrt{\pi}$. . . TWO! So you can barely make it one hex – by declaring CX! And since you would be CX getting there, you *cannot* advance into another building hex during the APH (rule 3.7).
- B# reduced by 1 (rule 4.0) – This is self-explanatory, but consider the math. Rolling an 11 or 12 on a DR occurs about 8% of the time. Rolling a 10-12 on a DR occurs about 17% of the time. Put another way having the Conscript shoot the MMG is a 100% increase in the probability of breaking it! The net B10 also happens almost 1 out of every 5 shots! ZOINKS!
- Cower 2 columns (rule 3.2.2) – *Wow*, does that *suck*! One-sixth of the time (~17%) your 4-2-6/MMG will cower, taking an initial 8FP shot down two columns to a 4. I note that is the *residual* FP you would have left on the shot had you not cowered!

That cowering happens because of the second main issue with management of the MMG, which is the lack of a leader. Putting a leader with an MG is another triple-whammy, but this time it would be to the Russian's benefit!

- SMC fire direction in SK eliminates the possibility of cowering on a shot (rule 3.2.2). This is quite important in general, but even more so given that the MMG has a 2 ROF.
- It is an almost universal rule that your best leader pairs up with your best MG. Here that leader would be the 8-1. Including a -1 DRM for a shot is actually a bit better than increasing the shot by one IFT column to the right. I say a tad better because lower DR get you improved results. Here I would term the 4-2-6/MMG an "improved" 12 FP shot.
- The leader also helps *tremendously* with moving the MMG around. He would add 1 PP and also increases the squad's MF by 2 (rules 3.3.1 and 4.0)! All that CX'ing to move or advance are eliminated. Given that one of the mantras of defensive play is to look for opportunities to skulk (skulk = move 1 hex out of enemy LOS and then advance back to the line) when possible, being able to do so or do so without a CX after you are done is great.

I will pause here to mention that we covered a *lot* of tactics, rules, and improvements with the setup, just by analyzing *one* hex containing just a squad and MG! Now back to our Russian stack examination.

K5 (7-0/4-4-7/LMG) AND M5 (8-0/4-4-7/LMG): Both of these suffer from the same common defensive setup flaw, so I will lump them together. The issue is that rallying troops and getting them back into the fight is *critical* to defending territory, and leaders cannot do that if they are out on point. The problem is amplified here because the leaders are exposed to prep fire and could thus themselves be broken right off the get-go. In general, you only place an SMC on the front lines on defense if you need to keep a really important SW from cowering and/or to help reposition it when the time is right. If you want to be good at this game, *routing* (both yours *and* your opponents) must *always* be part of your plans and decisions!

L5 (8-1/4-4-7): This hex suffers from the same "leader on the front lines" issue as above. And we already discussed the *significant* benefits of having the 8-1 paired with the MMG. But here he isn't even with an LMG. 😞

That's it for the examination of stacks in the Russian setup, except for giving kudos for one thing. Flavio did not stack any MMC together! It is almost never a good idea to stack as the defender in SK scenarios. You just don't have enough dudes to go around.

Now we will consider the tactical unit placement for the Russian defense. Before we jump into that though I will say that the *overriding consideration* for defending in city fights like this is to keep the enemy out of your buildings for as long as possible, and then give up ground begrudgingly! Once they are in your face with +3 modifiers you are probably in deep kimchi. This is especially true when they have 8-morale shock troops adjacent to your 6- and 7-morale squads.

In the F8 area, we sadly find *five* squads without a single leader. A 4-2-6 has a broken-side morale of 5. So, if he were DM he would need to roll a *one* on his rally DR when in a building (-1 for building but +1 for self-rally), so cannot self-rally while DM since there is no guaranteed rally on 1,1 in SK. Even without the DM they need to roll a 5 or less to self-rally in a building. That is just 27% of the time. Put a leader in with them and you remove the +1 self-rally DRM, and now you rally on a 6, or 42% of the time. That is almost a 50 percent increase in your chances! I think that the 7-0 should probably be in G9. I am specific with him because odds are very high that you will lose the left side troops to a man, and you need the higher morale 8-0 over to the right where the final action often takes place.

We also see a 4-2-6 back in G9. They apparently didn't get the memo that the Germans were massing for an assault and to get their butts up to the front line! Either that, or those guys decided that eating some smores in the (relative) safety of the platoon HQ was more desirable than getting their faces shot off. 😊 I feel quite strongly that in this scenario every squad except the 4-4-7 manning the MMG needs to be up on the street at the start of the scenario. Remember: try to keep the Germans out of the buildings!

One final thing about the F8 area: you really must have MMC in both E8 *and* E9. If you just have one in either (E8 is best) then if it breaks from prep fire other units can run around the back side of the F8 building via B8 and there isn't a thing the Russians can do about it!

Moving on to the center area, we find 2 leaders with 4-4-7/LMG combos. We already talked about not having the Russian leaders on point. Another issue here is that there are three leaders all lumped together. It is usually right to spread that lovin' around! 😊 I think the 8-1/4-4-7/MMG pairing

should anchor the defense in the center, probably starting in L6. This has double-hindered LOS to the G6 and H5 street hexes and that is about it. But he isn't here to dish out damage on turn 1. He wants to be around to hit a DC-toting unit with a 16FP+something shot. Besides, you must always respect a B11. I would probably shoot any unit in H5 since it is just 4 hexes away and I would have an 8+1. But I would consider skipping a shot on G6, especially if it were an 8-morale troop. There isn't enough chance to break the unit compared to breaking the all-important MMG!

L6 also keeps the 8-1 centrally available to rally any of the point units that break – which they will. I do note that L6 is exposed to fire from I4, which is a wonderful place for the 9-2 led German kill stack. But your guys simply must stand tall and shake off any shots that come your way. But remember, if the buzz saw shoots you back there, it isn't taking the big shot at the guys up on the street!

One more point about the center: I like having both 4-4-7/LMG pairs there too. The 8-1 has the best chance to rally them. And hopefully one of them will be available to man the MMG when its original owner gets his legs cut off from under him. And more cannon fodder, er ... Motherland's Finest Defenders, increases my ability to delay the attack until Captain Denisov arrives with the shock troops. 😊

Not much left to discuss over in the right wing. The O6 building is defended by a pair of 4-4-7s on the avenue. But they are leaderless, and once broken will quite likely never return to the fight.

As already mentioned, our overall defensive strategy starts with keeping the Germans out of our buildings as best we can. But enter them they will. Once they do, we have to delay their progress so we can get our reinforcements onto the board safely. This often means using broken troops, and even leaders later in the game, just one hex away from the German vanguard. This tactic will mean the Germans can only move up one hex. Then after your brokie/leader dies/routs away, they can advance one hex. Delaying like this keeps the Germans away from the entry areas where your 9-2 led pile of whoop-ass can hopefully enter play without too much stress on them.

German Attack Plan Review

On to the Germans, again starting with a review of units that are in stacks. This section should be a bit smaller than the Russian's, since many of the same ideas carry over to the attackers. As before, we will start by reviewing units in stacks.

F5 (4-6-7/FT): The good news here is that the FT is lined up across the road. The most unfortunate news is that it is being wielded by a lowly 4-6-7. This 1st Line MMC is obviously not Elite. Flamethrowers are a handful, and when used by non-Elite troops suffer from a +2 penalty to the X# (rule 4.2). That means the FT breaks on an *eight* or greater, which is about 28% of the time! That is more than *triple* the probability of breaking when an Elite unit uses it. FTs are also shot magnets due to their overwhelming firepower *and* that they shoot full-strength in the AFPh. And since they are basically tanks of flammable fuel strapped to someone's back, they tend to go kaFLOOEY – taking the poor chap and often some of those around him down with it. This is represented in game terms as a -1 IFT DRM on shots against any unit carrying a FT. The 7 morale of this unit is not as able to stand up to more effective shots as other Elite units in the German's OB.

H4 (4-6-7/DC): Once again we have a SW that requires an Elite unit portaged by a 1st Line MMC. Here the penalty is even more severe in a way, because now if you roll a 10 or greater (vs 12 if Elite is deploying), the DC has *no* effect at all (rule 4.3). Even in a stone building, a 10 on the 30+3 IFT column is an NMC.

I4 (4-6-7/DC): Same as H4.

J3 (8-0/5-4-8/LMG): Kudos for 2 things here. The first is something that you should always be on the lookout for, but especially with the Germans – namely hitting IFT FP columns with MMC/MG combinations. We know that in real life soldiers would be *very* unlikely to say “hey, I don't think I will get much benefit from this MG, so I won't shoot it here” when enemy troops were running around willy-nilly. But if you take a 4-6-7 and pair it up with an MG42 LMG you have an IFT shot of 4FP + 3 FP or 7. There is no 7 IFT column, so you have in effect “wasted” 1FP because you must drop back to the 6FP column. You may still want to fire the LMG because it does have a ROF of 1, so you might be able to fire a 3 (really 2) follow-up shot with ROF. But the 5-4-8/LMG combo totals 8FP, so you pick up a column on the IFT.

The second positive thing is that there is a leader in this hex, giving all the benefits mentioned previously.

L2 (8-1/5-4-8/LMG): Same as J3 for 8FP and SMC in the hex. *However*, here we have a pretty significant flaw in that these units are *two* hexes away from the action. If they move, they cannot reach the other side of the avenue unless they do Non-Assault movement. That exposes them to a -2 shot (-1 FFNAM, -1 FFMO), unless there is Smoke in play.

Speaking of Smoke, recall that per SSR 1 the 5-4-8s have their Smoke exponent increased to 4. That is *hugely* important for removing those negative IFT DRMs that the Germans troops would otherwise be incurring as they try to cross the road to get into cover in Russian-held territory. 67% of the time you try for Smoke with these Assault Engineers you will get it! So L2 is not a good place for a 5-4-8 especially.

N3 (9-2/5-4-8/MMG): Good job putting the 9-2 with the best MG! N3 also has LOS to 5 front-line building hexes. However, if you add 5FP from the 5-4-8 to the 5FP for the MMG you get 10FP. So now you have given up another TWO FP since you must drop back to the 8FP column.

We also have the same issue of using an uber-5-4-8 with Smoke exponent 4, to be static and shooting an MG. The Germans absolutely *must* make use of the term “Assault” in Assault Engineer! 🗨

One more significant issue with this hex is that there isn't more in it. It is a mantra in ASL that you should avoid stacking, for numerous good reasons. But a 9-2 SMC is a truly powerful unit. That -2 IFT DRM is equivalent to (but actually better than as described before) a *two* IFT column increase in the firepower of the shot! And the Germans are well suited to take advantage of his DRM. Picture this: 9-2/4-6-7/MMG/4-6-7/LMG. 4FP + 5FP + 4FP + 3FP = 16. Magical! Throw in the -2 leadership and you are cracking a 16+1 on something in a stone building. That gives you an NMC or better on a 9, or 83% of the time! And let's not forget that you have not one but *two* MGs in the mix, so if you roll a 1 on the colored die you get to shoot again with an 8+1 and if you roll a 2 on the colored die you get to shoot a 4+1.

A quick side story is in order here. I started playing ASLSK in 2004, just over a month before the World Boardgame Championships, which I attended. The night before the inaugural SK tournament at that event I sat down to play none other than Perry Cocke in S2. The exact stack I mentioned went on a tear and broke 4 squads across the street. The FT broke another. Perry commented to a grognard watching how easy this game is when you roll like that. And he was not wrong! 😊 The key is to have yourself positioned to take advantage of streaks like that. Another key is to always keep your chin up and not fail your PMC (Personal Morale Check) when those streaks happen to you.

R3 (9-1/5-4-8/LMG): Same as J3.

Now for the tactical placements of German units. The *overriding principle* when assaulting in a city fight is to *get*

in the buildings! Only from there can you do things like safely place DCs, survive the doubled firepower of adjacent shots and actually achieve the victory conditions of location control or enemy elimination. You also **must** keep the pressure on at all times, even if the opponent doesn't have uber-reinforcements waltzing in mid-scenario. In order to keep the pressure on you need to:

- a) Get your broken units back into the fight quickly.
- b) Kill off or keep DM'ing the enemy's brokies. Failure to Rout is your friend!

Starting over in the F8 area, we see three 4-6-7s. They are lined up on the street, but they are really uncertain as to what to do. They can only manage 12 FP if they create a fire group and prep fire at E8. A 12 + 3 shot must roll a **six** or less to get at least an NMC, or 42% of the time. The 4-2-6 will fail that 58% of the time. Thus, you only have a 1 in 4 chance of breaking **one** 4-2-6 if you prep fire **all three** 4-6-7s! And remember, if you are shooting you aren't **moving!** These guys also have the same problem as the Russians in that area regarding leadership – i.e. there isn't any. If they break, they will need to self-rally, which is an iffy proposition.

Moving up the boulevard, the FT simply must be employed by the 8-0 leader in this one. In fact, in many SK scenarios where there is an FT in the OB you will find a "spare" 8-0 leader just for this purpose. SMC are Elite, have 1PP, and can use the FT full strength. His morale is better than the 4-6-7's. Please read the Jay Richardson ASLSK Tutorial Document to learn more about how SMC are **awesome** with DCs and FTs! BTW, I personally like the FT over in P3.

I usually give a DC to a squad that is stacked with the 8-0. Then he can take possession of the DC if the FT runs dry - which is my first shot about 90% of the time sadly! 😊 I usually put a 5-4-8 with said 8-0 to tote the DC. This unit is also Elite and can thus use the DC without penalty if the 8-0 is otherwise indisposed. A 5-4-8 often gets the other DC, but I kind of like giving it to the 9-1 when it comes time to deploy it. That guy shrugs off a 1MC almost 60% of the time!

Note that there are another 3 squads along the road from F6 to I6 that don't have good access to a leader. And from J3 around to P3 we find the leader-led stacks we have already discussed.

Given all we have discussed I want to now show you (below) a possible setup that takes these myriad suggestions into account.

Some key points. You will note some stacking with the -1 leaders, and with 4-6-7s. We need to try to break some of the guys across the street, and with that arrangement we get 8+2s, which aren't great, but aren't the worst thing either. And the biggest shot **any** German stack can receive in DFPh is 8+3. The 4-6-7 out in N2 seems like a big mistake since it has no clear path to rally terrain. But it can help exploit an opening into O5 initially if the FT does its job on that hex. And believe it or not it is also bait. Unless the Russians get **very** lucky and break a **lot** of stuff in German 1, as the Germans I would **beg** the Russians to stand on the street and fire everything they have at me in their turn 1 PFPh! The concentration of FP and leadership DRMs are **hugely** in favor of the Germans in such a situation.

I already mentioned I4 as the perfect place for the 9-2's 16-FP stack. That location has LOS to **eight** front-line hexes up on the road! Note that it also sees down the I5-I10 road, which acts to cut off escape for the Russian troops over in the F8 complex. It can also see L6, which will expose it to an 8+3 leader directed shot in DFPh, but Mr. 9-2 will hopefully keep the group standing tall. And being able to put FP on L6 will be very important, as broken units may try to congregate there to attempt to rally. Your pressure could force the 8-1 off of the MMG to go rally guys further back, which would be awesome.

What follows is a quick analysis of how the first few phases of turn 1 may go. During PFPh, P3 roasts O5 with the FT for a 12 flat. If you succeed, or if the 9-2 stack breaks O5 on a ROF shot (see below), then you try for Smoke with the 5-4-8 Assault Engineer (remember that Smoke exponent 4) as Assault Movement. You won't be moving into the Smoke if you get it (it would take 4 MF) – you will stay in hex. The 4-6-7 will Assault Move into the Smoke if it comes. If it doesn't then the 4-6-7 will sit in place. If you don't break O5 with the FT or the 9-2 stack, then both the 5-4-8 and 4-6-7 will prep and hope for a lucky shot.

It is a target-rich environment for the 9-2 mini-kill stack in I4. Something is going to take a 16+1, and I personally like the 4-4-7/LMG in K5. It can shoot a 6 flat in DFPh against someone sitting in a street waiting to advance into a building, and 6 FP without a leader gets a K/ on a 2 or 3 DR. Remember kids, dead guys don't rally back! You aren't going to enter that central area just yet, but the 4-2-6 in J5 isn't going anywhere because it has no place to skulk to. You can spank them in the Russian DFPh. If you keep ROF on

I hope this setup analysis has helped you improve your understanding of how to go about constructing a defensive and assault setup and plan. Some of it was specific to a city fight, but the majority is universally applicable.

Oh, before I close, I want to give a shout-out to my good friend and regular ASLSK opponent Steve Worrel, who helped with the analysis.

ASK THE GROGNARDS

We posed this question to our panel of grognards: what do you like to see (or not see) in a new ASL product? Here are their responses.

Wes Vaughn

Right now, in the tournament arena, we are all looking for several new tournament scenarios. Also, maybe a good new campaign game. But I believe tournament scenarios are in high demand in the ASL world. I personally like the big scenarios, but very seldom get to play them in the tournament world. I don't have any local opponents right now, so I'm playing tournament scenarios almost 100% of the time.

Allen King

I like large two-player scenarios and campaign games the best. However, for this response, I like large scenarios like those found way back in the earlier ASL scenarios. The ASL U series module is a good example of scenarios featuring longer runs. These scenarios are anywhere from 8 to 15+ turns long. Some are two maps and some span up to eight map boards. Most of these scenarios don't show many reported playing on ROAR, probably due to their age and length. However, my experience with a couple of them has been good.

Recently, I played one and started another one. I completed *U3 The Factory* (9 Turns), in which victory came on the last half turn. I started *U36 Operation Switchback* (15 Turns), a six-board, canal-crossing scenario with lots of small boats, dense forces, air, offboard artillery (OBA), and very interesting terrain. These features are seldom present in the typical five-turn combined arms, tourney-size scenario. In my current stage of ASL evolution, that's what I'm looking for regarding ASL experiences.

Specifically, what am I looking for in new products? First, longer scenarios that aren't going to be resolved by one lucky dice roll. Two, innovative terrain that is, at least, out of the ordinary enough that experienced players still have to pull out the rules and refresh their knowledge before play. Examples are things like extreme winter, mud, rain, fog, heavy rain, paddies and snow. But, please, no caves. In addition, things like mines, wire, panjis and obstacles are fun and generally require a little refreshing before play. Three, WW2 land combat often was affected by air assets, but air is seldom seen in scenarios. Four, I like paratroop drops as they are so random that pre-planning attacks and even defenses is not possible in detail. Five, the use of ski troops, amphibious landings and motorcycles is relatively rare in ASL play. Motorcycles were common enough and, in some areas, skis were common in winter, but are seldom featured in scenarios. Finally, I only recently got involved in a campaign game that featured night turns. Most players avoid night scenarios so there are relatively few of them. That's too bad. The night rules are pretty clear and are covered in about six pages. Night scenarios or night actions in campaign games are really fun and different.

Those are the areas I'd like to see covered more in new products. I have thousands of scenarios and 80%+ of them are fairly standard fare. Yes, they all have a tweak or two, but they are really just more of the same. There's nothing wrong with this as most ASL players still work and have only limited time to devote to the game. However, once one reaches grognard status, especially if that person is retired, there is the chance to really diversify play and commit to longer excursions on the cardboard battlefield.

Jim Ferrell

I would like to see an Action Pack devoted to the massive tank battles around Brody-Lutsk-Dubno in western Ukraine. The battles were conducted during June-July of 1941. The Soviet counterattacks against the 1st Panzer Group resulted in a series of swirling and confused engagements over a few weeks. I just feel there is an opportunity to have some real open-field shootouts where "L" guns come into play. Large vs. small: I would like to see a huge set of maps that allow for a swirling bit of action. Lots of movement, feints, and burning wrecks (created of course). I seem to recall both sides attacking, defending, and reacting to the unexpected in these frontier battles.

Ross Zarzecki

Like most ASL players, I guess, I do like getting my hands on a new map board or historical map to look over. Once the map is laid out, I find myself spending some time imagining whatever tactical problems the particular terrain depicted could conceivably create, and how one would go about overcoming it when on offense or enhancing it when on defense. Whether it's long streets for fire lanes or maybe brush that in a PTO terrain turns what was a minor MP or hindrance hex in ETO into bamboo and channels everything into a nice kill box or makes what was an easy flank to get around practically impassable.

Shorter scenarios over longer ones not because they are necessarily better but mainly because it is really hard to find anyone that is available to put in the time a long scenario takes to finish. This is especially true when considering the larger counter counts usually associated with the longer scenarios.

In the magazines I'd rather read about ASL tactics, like the use of smoke, OBA, armor fighting, skulking, use of half squads, etc. than a historical read. My experience has been that the chances of finding an ASL'er that doesn't know WWII history and random obscure WWII trivia better than the average college professor is practically nil. Having said that, if it is used in the context of this is why this scenario we are analyzing was set up this way or that, then yep that makes sense.

As far as what I'd like to see, how about another HASL that takes place in the PTO or even DTO? The battles for Knightsbridge, Shanghai, Buna in New Guinea, Iwo Jima? I've heard that Kohima (basically the Stalingrad of Burma) was done by somebody but if and when it is coming out, I don't know. Point is, and this not to say I won't be one of the first in line to get the new Dinant and Ponyri HASL when they come out, but I think ETO is covered.

Thing I've seen enough of: the SS and to a lesser extent paratroopers. I know I'm exaggerating but if I have one thing that annoys me about ASL it is that other than Stalingrad scenarios it seems every other scenario made involves these guys, I get it they are badasses and laying waste to everything in your path can be fun, but they did not fight in the vast majority of the tactical-level firefights in WWII. Give some other unit some love, like say the unit with the record for the most consecutive days in combat. Hint: it ain't the 101st's Easy Company or the 82nd Airborne, it is the 32nd Infantry Division, a National Guard unit from Michigan and Wisconsin.

Anyhoo, that's my 2 cents, which is about what it is worth.

John Hyler

I would like to see MMP offer customized SMC counter sheets that could have the individual player's name on them for all of the nationalities and type of SMC. Playing the Japanese and want to be a tank-hunting hero? Pull your named TH Hero from the counter mix, likewise with say, a Russian commissar. Feeling hungover or have a case of the vapors that day? Pull out your 6+1 SMC, if the scenario has one. These sheets would be expensive, given the customization, but I wager that they would sell quickly. These counter sheets tie in with other elements below.

The original SL rules had an optional segment for an SMC campaign game. A player could start with a 7-0 SMC, and then play a series of scenarios. Assuming that the SMC survived, it would garner elan or cowardice points, depending upon circumstance. Collect enough elan points, and the SMC is promoted to the next level, i.e. 7-0 becomes 8-0, etc. Collect enough cowardice points, and the SMC is demoted to the next lower level. Coupled with personalized counters, this gives players a fun option to try either with one of the CG modules, or over a series of stand-alone scenarios in a specific theater. I would like to see these rules updated and included in a set of optional SSRs pages that would be included in Chapter A. A similar approach would be taken with armor leaders.

Some other SSRs that might be fun:

If an SMC with a DRM of -1 or better is present with a squad trying to repair a broken SW, -1 is added to the dr. This represents the tricks of the trade element which is part of why he is an SMC. However, an original disabled dr result always applies.

The same would apply to an armor leader in an AFV trying to repair the MA, SA, or one of the MGs.

Allow an AL to direct the fire of any one weapon in the tank during a fire phase. Already have a -2 Acq on a target? Use the AL's DRM on a CMG shot.

Is your AFV immobilized? How about allowing AFV crews to attempt to regain mobility? Yes, this would constitute hazardous movement, but on a DR of say, 3 or less, the AFV would regain mobility.

An AL present in the affected AFV would add a -1 DRM, again with the tricks of the trade element. An AL in a

different AFV, but stacked in the same hex with the immobilized AFV could also add this -1 to the DR.

Require AFV crews to attempt repair of a broken MA. I have always felt it a rather gamey element where repair attempts could be deferred to avoid having to possibly withdraw an AFV. Speaking for myself, but confident that many others share this sentiment, that if I were on the battlefield in an AFV and my MA broke, I would be throwing everything including the kitchen sink at that MA to try to repair it.

In pre 10/42 scenarios, the Russians can substitute one of their leaders for a Commissar. In the same vein, one of the SMCs in a force pool could be assigned as an Artillery Leader, who could then be stacked with a 5/8" ordnance counter, and could move from one 5/8" ordnance counter to another. This would apply in any scenario. Once assigned as an Artillery Leader, he would not be able to revert or act as an SMC for squad actions, (EXC: Multiple MMCs in the same hex as the Artillery Leader: any effects DRs against the crew and any MMC in the same hex as that crew would be treated just like MMCs with a leader. The leader would have to survive any Random Selection DR, (if applicable), then pass his MC, and could then apply his DRM to the crew and other MMCs present to their MC). Any LLTC or LLMC would apply to all MMC in that hex.

He would also add (presumably) his -1 drm to any repair attempts on a broken gun (Opt. A). An AL counter would be used to represent this assigned Artillery Leader.

Sam Tyson

I have realized that I will play almost any type of ASL scenario. The variety of possibilities for scenarios is amazing, and I don't want to limit my choices to one theater of operations or type of action. That being said, there are indeed a few scenario styles that grab my attention more than others.

Combined Arms: Yes, that is a broad, subjective category, but I will definitely gravitate more towards those scenarios that have armor and infantry, especially if both sides are so equipped. Whether it is a city fight and I need armor to help infantry attack or defend a village, or an open-ground meeting action where the infantry has to rely on the armor for protection, there is usually a fun scenario in there somewhere.

Bridge Crossings: Does anybody really like these? They are always a challenge for the attacker, but there are usually enough tools to get the job done. The challenge, which may

be the appeal, is using the tools the right way. Smoke, vehicles, movement, fire suppression--which one is the key?

Tigers! There are almost 60 scenarios with Tiger in the title. Usually those are combined arms scenarios, since Tigers usually have some infantry support. So, from *Belgian Tigers* to *With Tigers on their Tail*, put Tiger in the title and I will play it. (Even *The Tiger of Toungou*, Sam? -- eds.)

New Terrain: Not really a scenario style, but if there is new terrain to fight over, the scenarios will at least have a fresh feel. Give me a historical module or action pack, and there will be some new maps involved. With a new map, at least I have yet to lose a scenario on it!

There are a few other things I look for in the scenario selection process, especially with new products:

- does it look fun for both players?
- who is the scenario designer?
- is it too small or too big?

These are all easy questions, and some answers may vary based on time constraints or opponent. Enough ramblings.

Matt Shostak

I enjoy playing larger scenarios that are dense with action, and therefore I'd love to have a set of maps with a larger hex size, maybe as large as those on the *Red Barricades* map. The extra room in the hexes makes stacking a bit easier. Lately I've been playing some of the meaty *Crucible of Steel* scenarios, and I've often wished I had such maps as I've knocked over big stacks while pawing through them. At this point I'm not all that keen on new boards or counters, frankly. I know that's an unpopular opinion, but as a practical matter it's getting hard to sort and store them all now. I realize the benefit of new terrain, but maybe we could just slow down on the pace a bit. I would like to see more scenarios that bring some of the obscure counters into play. It seems a shame to have counters in the system that never get off the bench.

SCENARIO ANALYSIS: KNIFE IN THE FLANK [BFP103]

Matt Shostak



Attraction: Tourney-Sized Combined Arms

A small German company tries to fend off a determined Russian attack and hold a village crossroads. Each side has infantry and armor, and the defending Germans have some guns as well. There's a bit of variety here; the 28LL antitank gun seems a bit out of place at Kursk, and the Soviets have a couple of carriers and special antitank crews. Interestingly, this scenario is almost a mirror image of *Obian Highway*, which we analyzed in issue 19.1. They are roughly the same size, and each one features a combined-arms attack to take the center of the village, with the defenders counting on a small but potent reinforcement group to save the day. They even use the same board, but the roles of attacker and defender are reversed, and this time the attack comes from the other direction. Lovers of irony will perhaps enjoy the fact that despite the title, there really isn't much opportunity for a flanking maneuver in this small scenario.

German Advantages: Terrain

German Disadvantages: Troop Quality

The northern side of the board, which the Russians must cross to make their attack, has a lot of open ground, which always presents opportunities for cagey defenders to slow an attack and cause casualties. The German squads all have a morale of seven, while the Russians all have morale eight, which should prove important over the course of the game.

Russian Advantages: Troop Quality, Armor Advantage

Russian Disadvantages: None

Their superior morale has already been noted, and the four 6-2-8 squads are formidable if they get up close with point-blank fire, demo charges, and close combat. For a few turns the Soviet armor can run about relatively unopposed. It's not a huge advantage, especially once the German panzers arrive, but even after that the Red armor should be a match

for them. This force doesn't seem to have any obvious disadvantages; it's powerful, well led, and balanced. Being a Guards formation, they even have the plus-one bonus to their special ammo numbers. Frankly from just looking at the card, it doesn't appear that the Germans should have the edge that they do, 28:18 on ROAR at the time of this writing. But who am I to argue with data? I suspect that it's the mechanics of building control in the endgame that account for this difference. If you're commanding the Russians, keep in mind that you might need a little extra time at the close of the scenario to secure those victory buildings, especially if the Germans play hide-and-seek with their HIPsters. The balance provision for the Russians, an extra 8-1 armor leader, is rather minor, so don't be afraid to use it.

The Defense

The objective is to conduct a fighting withdrawal to the center of the village where the victory buildings are, there to make a last stand with the help of the reinforcements. The open ground and very light cover to their front may provide some opportunities to cause casualties among the Russians, but the Germans will still want to choose their shots wisely. They especially want to avoid a deep penetration by Russian armor. If the Russian AFVs get behind the Germans, they can cause all kinds of problems, not only with encirclement and making routing difficult, but also intercepting the German reinforcements earlier than the defenders would like. Stopping the armor will not be easy, though. The 28LL has a decent basic kill number of 12, which gives a good chance against the carriers and Sukas, about a 50-50 or so chance against the front of the T-70s, but almost no chance against the T-34s, barring side/rear hits. Though it can easily perforate the carriers, it has to hit them first, and those double-small targets can be a marksmanship challenge while moving, especially if they have any cover of hindrances. Despite being a small gun, its rate of fire is only two. The other antitank weapons aren't any better. The 20L AA has a basic kill number of six, and the halftrack's 75mm gun can only fire high explosive, which has a basic kill number of seven (though it has a chance for HEAT). They still have to be respected, but the Russian armor won't fear them.

What else is in the toolbox? The halftrack has H6, which has a kill number of 13, so it might get lucky and knock out a



Board 56

tank with it. It also has smoke ammo, so it could possibly provide some cover for the infantry as they withdraw (and don't forget the breeze). The *Crucible of Steel* special rules allow for German infantry to try for ATMMs, albeit with a lower chance than usual, so if things get desperate, they might be able to use one on a Russian tank. They also have hidden placement for one squad equivalent and any support weapon and/or leader set up with it. This can be used to lay a trap, hoping for a nice ambush shot to cause casualties, but it could also be used for some hide-and-seek. Hiding a half-squad or two in or near a victory building could be used to prevent building control in the late stages of the game.

With all of that in mind, here's an example defense outlined in the image above. The heavy machine gun is positioned in a stone building somewhat to the rear to take advantage of its long range, but also because it can lay a fire lane to its left across that flank to protect the half-squads on picket duty out there. Furthermore, from this spot, it's just a short hop backwards into the victory buildings area for the middle and late stages of the game. In addition to the given half-squads, another squad was exchanged for half-squads to cover more area. One pair of half-squads is to the left in a couple of wooden buildings, while the other is entrenched in foxholes to the right side. It would be nice if they could slowly retreat in good shape, but most likely these guys will die in place, especially



those on the German right in the foxholes. The rest of the infantry is in the middle. A good candidate for hidden placement is the ATR squad in V3. The dummy stacks in R1 and W10 are masquerading as units with support weapons. The halftrack will probably relocate, looking for shots against the weaker vehicles if possible.

The Attack

The Russians want to use all of the tools of this combined-arms force to best advantage, and make hay while the sun shines. They have three or four turns before they have to worry about panzers, and during that time they'll have a numbers advantage in men as well. They'd love to slip the carriers with the antitank crews behind the Germans, so they can get in position to threaten the panzers with Molotov cocktails, but that's a lot easier said than done. Being double-small and moving will help them dodge ordnance, but it doesn't help against small arms fire, so they'll have to pick their spots well. The mild breeze can enhance any smoke cover, but unfortunately the only smoke the Rooskies have available will come from their own burning wrecks, or vehicular smoke grenades. The T-34s have little to fear except deliberate immobilization, so they could be used in a variety of ways: penetrate deeply to head off the panzer reinforcements, get just behind certain German infantry to force rout failures, or just drive up point blank to give the enemy infantry the business with machine guns and



BANZAI!!!

cannon fire. The Russians don't want to be too cautious in the initial attack; the forces arrayed against them generally have low firepower, and will often be firing through hindrances.

Above is an example attack. The slightly stronger force goes on the Russian right flank. Each group will use riders to try to get some infantry forward a little faster. The ATR is on the left flank because that's slightly closer to the halftrack, while the demo charges are in the right-hand group, because this area looks more likely to have point-blank opportunities due to the extra cover. Rather than just look at where they might reach if they took no casualties, this time I actually rolled some shots for a hypothetical first turn to see how things might turn out. See the graphic, which shows the first turn at the beginning of the Rout Phase. The Russian left flank attack didn't fare as well as the right, and a couple of riders had to bail out under fire. (Cue Buck Turgidson: "I'm not saying we wouldn't get our hair mussed!") However, the Germans malfunctioned their LMG, and a half-squad broke. On both flanks, the half-squads out front are in deep trouble. Note how the T-70 in W8 is already messing with the rout path of the broken German half-squad in X2. The German

halftrack decided to take a shot at that T-70, thinking of going for HEAT in the next turn, but this could just as well turn out badly for the halftrack. It might have been better to attempt motion, and try to find a safe spot where they can still lob shells at some infantry. The 28LL was placed conservatively and hence had no good shots this turn. Had it been far forward, e.g. in brush in the center, it might have been able to nab a couple of Sukas before succumbing. The German ATR squad is biding its time, hoping a good shot will become available next turn. The 20L AA gun is doing likewise. The Soviet antitank crews, meanwhile, are also looking for an opportunity to dash behind the German line in the next turn or two, from whence they can stalk the panzers. The rest of the game should be interesting.

Conclusion

Knife in the Flank looks like a fun scenario that can be knocked out in a few hours. It's back-to-basics ASL. See if you can hold or take the village without a lot of special weaponry or fortifications. Enjoy.



SK CORNER: NOVICES ON THE ATTACK - PART III



Peter Di Cioccio

Generally, attacking can be harder than defending. The attacker has objectives to meet to win and the defender has to prevent that from happening. Newer players won't have the experience of analyzing an opponent's defense setup for optimal points of attack.

“Too Conservative”

Inexperienced players can be timid in the attack. Instead of moving towards objectives, a novice attacker spends a lot of time prep firing. Often, prep firing will have little to no effect due to the defender's units in defensive terrain and not suffering point blank fire. When the inexperienced attacker realizes prep firing early in the scenario is not achieving desired results, risky maneuvers tend to be employed, to a detrimental effect.

“Failure to Isolate the Battlefield”

"Yes, I still support overwhelming force. That's for sure. I support it big time. Always have, believe me," Jack Reacher, *Without Fail*. Obviously, when you greatly outnumber your opponent, the job of achieving victory is easier. In most scenarios, the attacker does outnumber the defender, but not tremendously. An attacker needs to create a numbers advantage by concentrating most of the attacking force on a portion of the defender's force. The rest of the attacking force can try to stop the rest of the defending force from reinforcing. As defending squads rout out of position, attacking units can take up the now- abandoned locations and fire on the defender's squads as they try to move into the area.

“Afraid of Ghosts”

Novice attackers can be too passive in their attack due to not knowing where all of the defender's units are. If the defender has a Hidden Initial Placement Gun, the novice attacker will be hesitant to move the infantry in potential harm's way. The experienced player will use lesser important units to scout ahead to clear a path, or find the HIP Gun.

“Can't Draw Fire”

Inexperienced attackers lack the experience to use less important units to scout an opponent's defense. Having a scouting unit move forward to present a target to an

opponent's defense can accomplish one of two things. First, a scouting unit could compel a defender with a hair trigger to fire on the sacrificial unit. This action allows the attacker's other squads to move with less resistance. Second, if the defender doesn't take the bait, the attacker will have moved units towards the objectives.

28TH ANNUAL TEXAS TEAM TOURNAMENT



Rick Reinesch

****NOTE****The planning for the 2020 edition of the Texas Team Tournament is progressing under the cloud of the current Covid-19 pandemic the world is experiencing. As of this writing, we are currently under shelter-in-place orders here in Austin until at least the end of April. We are still 2 months away from the start of the tournament, so I'm continuing to plan as if the tournament is going to happen. I'll probably be making a final go/no-go decision in early May about a month out from the start of the tourney. **In the meantime, please continue to register for the tournament.** It'll help me gauge how many folks are thinking of attending, which will help me coordinate with the conference center. If for some reason we do wind up cancelling, I will refund everyone their pre-registration.

In any event, this year promises to be just as much fun as in years past. This year marks 28 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 11-June 14, 2020. Last year we had near record participation with 77 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 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 1st, 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. Likewise, 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. 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 that side. It's that simple. Last year players fought it out on the Eastern Front diving into the classic slugfest, Z19 *The Trap at Targul Frumos*. This year will take players out to Asia, China specifically, for a real knock-down, drag-out in BFP29, *Hueishan Docks* from Bounding Fire Production's *Blood and Jungle*. This scenario takes place in the dense environs of Shanghai with both sides on the attack, Chinese OBA, Chinese and Japanese armor, T-H Heros, Flamethrowers, Dare Death squads, all the ingredients for a great *Ferocity Fest* scenario. 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 at 9am, June 11th, but you can get in on it anytime. 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, and who knows we might throw some

SK PTO in as well, with one person besting all others and walking away with the prize.

I'll be sponsoring some minis on Saturday, which can include playtest minis for BFP scenarios. So, if you are looking to fill your Saturday, give one of the minis a try. I'll have signups for them during the tourney, so there are plenty of ways 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 \$94/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

Lunch Gatherings

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

Game Days

The Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas/Ft. Worth groups have remained active, hosting various gatherings for

club members to get together and knock cardboard heads. If you missed any of these you missed a lot of fun. It's like a tournament atmosphere for a day. The Austin group meets on the first Saturday of every month. The DFW group has been meeting on the second, the San Antonio guys on the third Saturday of every month, and the Houston group on the fourth Saturday of every month. To stay informed of upcoming club events, stop by our club website, www.texas-asl.com 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!