

The map is a hexagonal grid with letters (F1 to P8) and numbers (1 to 8) along the edges. The terrain is color-coded: yellow for open desert, green for scrubland, and blue for water bodies. Various game pieces are placed on the grid, including red 'BANZAI' cards with 'ML: +1 8MF Pin, HoB NA' and yellow cards with '6-6-6' and '3-4-6' values. A 'PREP FIRE' card is also visible.

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EDITOR'S FOXHOLE

Matt Shostak



Welcome to our first newsletter of 2017! Our pace has not been very fast lately, but fresh off a record turnout at the renowned Texas Team Tournament, we have a renewed enthusiasm and inspiration. Thanks to everyone who submitted material for this issue. Without you we can't publish. Enjoy.

SHOULD I TAKE THE BACKBLAST PENALTY?

Rich Spilky



I recently created an ASL rules summary table concerning the applicability of the Backblast/Desperation penalty depending upon the SCW firing unit's Location in various terrain types. This particular rules table also indicates the terrain Locations in which the firing unit may attempt to avoid the Backblast/Desperation penalty by using the Case C3 +2 TH option. [Readers may examine this specific rules table by downloading the entire set of ASL Rules Tables from:

<http://texas-asl.com/download/ASLRulesTablesRSS,%2009-04-16.pdf>

The Backblast applicability rules table is found as Table 28].

Subsequently, while playing an ASL scenario involving Backblast weapons I was consulting this rules table as a

reference regarding the Backblast/Desperation rules themselves and considering how I might avoid the Desperation penalty. I got to asking myself the age-old ASL question we see in many situations: *is it worth the risk?* In this case, was it worth the risk to take the 1FP Desperation penalty in order to gain the extra percentage chance to secure a hit vs. the AFV target?

As I started to think about this more carefully it began to occur to me that not all situations involving potential Backblast/Desperation penalty decisions are the same. For example, you might be indifferent about your Infantry unit suffering an injurious outcome from the Backblast/Desperation penalty, in which case you wouldn't need to consult a table of percentages concerning this topic in order to make this decision. You would simply "eat the Backblast" in a case like this to increase your To Hit chance and wouldn't concern yourself about the effect on the SCW firing unit. However, in those situations in which you actually want your SCW firing unit to stay in Good Order and wish to balance the risk of the Backblast/Desperation penalty against the increased likelihood of obtaining a hit vs. the opposing AFV, then this article may provide some insights.

The first thing we need to consider is how much the chance of hitting the opponent's AFV will be going up by accepting the Backblast/Desperation penalty. To answer this, Table 1 has been produced to cover the majority of situations that the SCW firer will be encountering.

| Table 1: Increased % TH Chance by accepting Backblast Penalty | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| TH DRs # w/o Backblast: | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |
| TH DRs # with Backblast: | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | |
| Increased % Chance TH: | 13.9% | 19.4% | 25.0% | 30.6% | 30.6% | 25.0% | 19.4% | 13.9% | |

For example, if the SCW firer needs a DR of 4 or less to hit its target while avoiding the Backblast and consequently needs a DR of 6 or less if he is willing to accept the Backblast/Desperation penalty, then his TH chances increase by 25%. Clearly, the "middle" section of this chart that includes the TH DRs of 6, 7, and/or 8 are the situations in which an SCW firer's odds of hitting their AFV target increase the most while at either end of the table, the odds of a successful hit increase proportionally less when avoiding the Backblast/Desperation penalty. (The percentages shown in this table do not take into account an AFV in a HD position but suffice it to say that the percentages shown in each column would be significantly lower versus a HD AFV).

The next consideration we ask is what are the chances of something "bad" happening to the SCW firing unit by accepting the Desperation penalty? To make this a simpler calculation I made the following assumptions:

- A Pin result is acceptable.
- A Break result is "bad"

- A K/1 result is “bad” [whether or not the remaining HS (if any) survives the 1MC or not].

With these value judgments in mind defining what a “bad” outcome is considered to be vs. the SCW firing unit, Table 2 was produced to determine the percentage chance of Breaking or K/ing the SCW firing unit as a function of the unit’s Morale level when taking the Desperation penalty (e.g. the colored dr of the TH DR applied to the 1FP column of the IFT Table).

| Table 2: Likelihood to Break or K/ | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Morale Level: | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Break or K/ Chance: | 50.5% | 43.1% | 35.2% | 28.7% |

For example, if the Morale level of the SCW firing unit is 7, there is a 43.1% chance that this unit will Break or become K/ed as a function of the Desperation penalty. Clearly, as the Morale of the SCW firing unit increases, the less the chance of Breaking, (although the one in six chance inherent in these calculations of the K/ outcome remains constant irrespective of Morale level).

Next, Table 3 was produced in order to take both of these concepts into account simultaneously. Table 3 divides the increased TH chance % gained by accepting the Backblast/Desperation penalty (from Table 1) by the percentage likelihood to Break or K/ from doing so (from Table 2) in order to produce a group of ratios.

| Table 3: Ratio = (Increased TH Chance %/Likelihood to Break or K/) | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| TH# w/o Backblast: | | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |
| TH# with Backblast: | | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | |
| Morale | 6 | 0.275 | 0.385 | 0.495 | 0.606 | 0.606 | 0.495 | 0.385 | 0.275 | |
| | 7 | 0.323 | 0.452 | 0.581 | 0.710 | 0.710 | 0.581 | 0.452 | 0.323 | |
| | 8 | 0.395 | 0.553 | 0.711 | 0.868 | 0.868 | 0.711 | 0.553 | 0.395 | |
| | 9 | 0.484 | 0.677 | 0.871 | 1.065 | 1.065 | 0.871 | 0.677 | 0.484 | |

According to Table 3, the only times when the increased chance of hitting the AFV target actually exceed the odds of Breaking or K/ing by accepting the Backblast/Desperation penalty are when the Morale of the SCW firer is 9 and when the TH DR chance goes from 5 to 7 (or less) or from 6 to 8 (or less) [i.e. the **yellow** areas]. These are the only two cases when the ratio of these percentages exceeds 1.000. Other than that, the odds of Breaking or K/ing are always more than the increased odds of hitting the AFV target (hence the rest of the ratios in the Table 3 are less than 1.000). Nevertheless, it seems to me (and this is where opinion comes in rather than hard and fast numbers) that whenever one can increase one’s TH chance by at least 60% of the proportion of obtaining the “bad” (i.e. Break or K/) outcome, then that is an acceptable amount of risk to me and I would “take the Backblast”. The additional situations that meet this criterion are shown in **green** in Table 3.

While this may be interesting, there is another way of looking at these situations. What if instead of looking at the increase in the *absolute* chances of hitting the opponent’s AFV by accepting the Backblast/Desperation penalty as in Table 1 we instead focused on the increase in the *relative* chances of a successful TH DR vs. the opponent’s AFV by accepting the Backblast/Desperation penalty? In other words, in the situation in which I need a TH DR of 2 to hit the AFV without the Desperation penalty but a TH DR of 4 or less by accepting the Desperation penalty then my *relative* chances of hitting the AFV target have increased by 500% as there is only one way to roll a 2 but there are six ways to roll a 4 or less with two six-sided dice. This is in contrast to Table 1 which tells me that the *absolute* increase in my TH chance has only risen by 13.9% in this situation. To address the perspective of considering the *relative* increased TH chance, Table 4 has been produced. Note that Table 4 is similar to Table 1 but now shows the *relative* % increase in each situation instead of the *absolute* % increase in TH chances as was the case in Table 1.

| Table 4: Increased <i>Relative</i> % TH Chance by accepting Backblast Penalty | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|--|
| TH DRs # w/o Backblast: | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | | |
| TH DRs # with Backblast: | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | | |
| Increased % Chance TH: | 500.0% | 233.3% | 150.0% | 110.0% | 73.3% | 42.9% | 26.9% | 16.7% | | |

When we examine the *relative* perspective shown in Table 4 it is clear that these percentages look very different than the *absolute* perspective shown in Table 1 with a significant bias towards the lower end of the TH DR areas! Next, if we follow through as we did earlier and divide the increased *relative* TH chance % gained by accepting the Backblast/Desperation penalty (from Table 4) by the percentage likelihood to Break or K/ from doing so (from Table 2), we produce a group of ratios as shown in Table 5.

| Table 5: Ratio = (Increased <i>Relative</i> % TH Chance/Likelihood to Break or K/) | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| TH# w/o Backblast: | | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |
| TH# with Backblast: | | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | |
| Morale | 6 | 9.908 | 4.624 | 2.972 | 2.180 | 1.453 | 0.849 | 0.534 | 0.330 | |
| | 7 | 11.613 | 5.419 | 3.484 | 2.555 | 1.703 | 0.995 | 0.625 | 0.387 | |
| | 8 | 14.211 | 6.632 | 4.263 | 3.126 | 2.084 | 1.218 | 0.765 | 0.474 | |
| | 9 | 17.419 | 8.129 | 5.226 | 3.832 | 2.555 | 1.493 | 0.938 | 0.581 | |

Now, if we apply the same rationale and criterion used to color code Table 3 to the ratios produced in Table 5 we see a lot more **yellow** areas (ratios that exceed 1.000) and **green** areas too (ratios less than 1.000 but greater than 0.600). We see too that the acceptable outcomes are much more prevalent and heavily tilted to the left hand side of the table. Therefore, if we choose to look at this decision from the *relative* perspective it would certainly encourage us to take the Backblast Desperation penalty under many more circumstances than we would when we look at things from the *absolute* perspective discussed previously in Table 3. Which perspective to consider is a matter of judgment and dependent on circumstances.

Of course every game situation is different and a number of factors besides these will each need to be taken into account

when making this decision during an actual scenario. A few such additional factors that come to mind are:

- How much time is left in the scenario?
- How important is destroying the targeted AFV to your opponent's ability to win the scenario?
- Conversely, how important is your SCW firing unit remaining in Good Order enabling you to win the scenario?
- Are there other Infantry units in the Backblast/Desperation penalty Location which would also suffer from the Desperation penalty on the TH attempt?
- Is there a safe rout path for the SCW firing unit to take should it break?

In any event, while these tables will not serve as the final word on any Backblast/Desperation penalty acceptance decision, I hope they will provide ASL players with an interesting perspective as to when it's worth it and when it may not be so. So, are you feeling lucky?

[Ed: Readers can access the spreadsheet used in this analysis in the Banzai!! section of the texas-asl.com website.]

RECOMMENDED SCENARIOS

The Grogs

We asked some players for recommendations of scenarios to try. Here's what they said.

Matt Shostak

FrF78 No Glory in War. This is sort of a meeting engagement in 1941 on the eastern front where control of a pair of crossroads is the objective. It has an interesting mix of units, with only light tanks on each side. The Russians seem more like the defenders here, since they can get to the crossroads first and then must fend off the Germans, but there is opportunity for counterattack, and not being able to set up on the objective means the Russian player must exhibit different skills. Thanks to Jim Bishop for suggesting this one to me at the Texas Team Tournament.

SP194 Requiem for a Dreadnought. Judging by the headaches this one gave Brian Roundhill and me at the Texas Team Tournament, where our game came right down to the wire, there are difficult choices for both sides throughout play. There aren't many scenarios that feature the T-35 and here the land battleships take center stage. With guns seemingly pointing every which way, they can

be surprisingly difficult to kill via tank assault, that task being made that much harder by their big bully bodyguard, a nearly impregnable KV, and his annoying henchmen light tanks. The Russian infantry screen can collapse very quickly though, and a game that appeared in the bag can rapidly deteriorate for the defenders. I suspect that over time, players will discover the best ideas for the Russians and play balance may tilt their way, but this one is well worth your time. Play each side.

Allen King

I know some of our readers are newly acquainted with ASL, so I wanted to reach back a little so they do not overlook a couple of all-time classics.

My single favorite scenario that I have played is *API2 Cream of the Crop* (ROAR 108-94 GE). This scenario set in 1941 has a quartet of Stug IIIB assault guns assisting German infantry in an assault on a village the Russians do not want to give up. A reinforcing T-34 or KV-1 makes this effort problematic. Don't overlook the fact that the Germans do not have HEAT rounds yet. I've played it twice and both times it went to the wire before a decision was reached. An old classic, but one a player does not want to miss.

Right behind *Cream of the Crop* is *A68 Acts of Defiance* (ROAR 187-131). This was ably written up in an earlier Journal by our esteemed editor. It's a late-war urban shootout that favors the Russians a tad, but which is also a cannot-miss scenario. What, Goliaths, SU122Ls, seldom-seen T-44s, sewer movement, and German werewolves with panzerschrecks isn't enough? Oh yeah, it is! Lots of replay value in this one too. This classic is so fun it ought to be outlawed. Mr. Reinesch and I engaged in this one this year and we had a blast doing it. If you've skipped it, they will not let you in ASL Valhalla.

Finally, I recently played *VotG7 Storming the Station* from *Valor of the Guards*. If you want a trip back (safely) to the hell of Stalingrad, this is a good substitute for those without the time to engage in a campaign game. It has a very authentic feel to it. It is ASL savagery at its keenest and playing it made me very thankful I have never experienced something like this in real life. A glance at the OB is deceptive. The Germans attack with a lot of elite guys with an arsenal of weapons (including Stukas). The Russians look undermanned initially, although later reinforcements do allow for a strong counterattack. But woe betide the overconfident German that fails to use copious smoke to enter these grim streets. Such arrogance only leads to an early death.

Jack O'Quin

My recommendation is *J19 Merzenhausen Zoo*.

This is a meaty combined-arms scenario. A strong US infantry and armor force, with three British Crocodile flame-thrower tanks and two Churchills attached, try to take most of a small village from a mixed German unit. The Germans get some powerful reinforcements in turn five. ROAR currently favors the Germans 63 to 54. Not too bad, but I believe that reflects the greater skill required to play the American side. They have lots of smoke and need to use it effectively to reach the village without too many losses. If you want to work on your American combined-arms tactics, this is the scenario to play. And, with three Crocodiles, your attack is not at the mercy of a single bad dice roll. Both sides get some really cool units: the German counterattack includes two King Tigers and some elite infantry. Lots of fun for both sides!

Sam Tyson

ITR-14 Between Rockets and a Hard Place. This scenario has a cool title, and lots of action on both sides. The Germans have to fight through the Russians to earn exit VP, but the Russians can drop a rocket barrage on/behind the attackers to really slow them down. A Stuka makes its appearance early in the game, but in my game it ended up killing one of my own tanks in a mistaken attack. Fanatic Russians in factories, hand-to-hand CC, flamethrowers, DCs - just a short list of the cool stuff in this one.

BFP-104 Flying Turrets. It has 65 Russian AFVs and 40+ squads attack across an AT ditch landscape, going up against elements of SS Panzergrenadier Division 1 - just 20+ squads backed by 38 AFV of their own, guns, and air support. The scenario is bigger than almost any other, and over just 8 turns it will live up to its title over and over.

Randy Strader

FrF71 Pulling Out. I like scenarios that feature atypical situations. In this case, elements of a Russian tank brigade have a town surrounded. Three HIP German howitzers and assorted other personnel are in the town, pinned by the Russians and needing help when -- almost literally -- the (German) cavalry arrives to pull them out. The Russian tankers, presumably lounging around their tanks, perhaps some half asleep, have to hop into their vehicles, start them, and then prevent (or pursue?) the Germans who have come to save their colleagues. As the scenario aftermath indicated: "a wild firefight erupted..." I found this to be the case in my playing as well. Highly recommended.

FrF76 Pain in the Neck. Sticking with the theme of atypical situations, this is another in the same pack as *Pulling Out*. A group of SS from a panzer division-- some five days after the fall of Berlin-- are looking to move west at a rapid pace, both in order to be taken prisoner by the Americans (for obvious reasons), as well as to avoid getting steamrolled by the Russian onslaught. Not realizing that the Russians had outpaced them in their movement westward, the SS men happen upon detachments of both a Guards motorized rifle brigade, as well as a couple of T-34s. The SS engage, only to discover that behind them, rolling them up, is another mixed tank company of T-34s escorted by Guards. Caught in the middle, the SS have to choose whether to fight a running two-front engagement, or push everything they have at the elements in front of them that are keeping them from exiting (presumably to be taken prisoner by the Americans). Replay-ability of this one is high, inasmuch as the different strategies for dealing with the scenario's tactical situation can be explored.

Vincent Maresca

East Side Gamer #109 Backs to the Wall. Why? Because I designed it, it's even on ROAR, and most people probably have never heard of it. But mostly because it's an early war swirling urban fight with tin cans and options for both sides.

J34 Men of the Mountains. Why? Anyone can capture a strongpoint with a Panther and elite troops, but try it using Partisans and no smoke! Balancing act of boldness and maneuver.

Red Barricades CGIII. The most engrossing and fully encompassing ASL experience -- ever!

GAME TRACKS

Don't forget to log the games you've played in the club's game tracker. It's easy to use, and a fun and convenient way to follow all the action of Texas ASL. See what your comrades have been playing, track your own games, and surf the various stat breakdowns. Want to know what scenarios have been played most often in the club? You can find out there. Such a nifty tool needs data, so make sure you enter your results. Simply click on the Game Tracker link on the club website at <http://texas-asl.com/>.

FAVORITE SCENARIOS

Dave Reinking



For those who may not be familiar with our process, in any issue of **Banzai!!** where we profile a player, we ask that player to follow up in the next issue with a list of their favorite scenarios. In issue 21.1 of **Banzai!!** we profiled Dave Reinking. So with that, below are a few of Dave's all-time favorites.

Turning the Tables [39]: This is a desert scenario in which the Germans are attacking a fortified British strongpoint. The British have lots of fortifications— wire, trenches, sangars and some known minefields— shielding their main line of resistance. They are well supported with a good number of MG and both AT and AA assets. However, they are not experienced (ELR of 2). The Germans are elite and have some armor and air support to assist, along with sappers to break through the British lines. I believe that this a good scenario to play on both sides.

Bread Factory #2 [RB3]: Who can resist fighting in Stalingrad— especially on the Red Barricades map? This scenario employs an interesting SSR that causes one of the German SMC to go berserk and take men of the 64th Motorcycle Battalion on a suicidal charge into the heart of the enemy defenses. But, the Russians just cannot sit back and wait for this crazy charge, as the Germans have infantry of a panzer division approaching from the opposite side. Can the Russians hold off the determined German attack as they await reinforcements heading from the Volga?

Guards Counterattack [A]: Many ASL players cut their eye teeth playing *Guards Counterattack* back in the SL days. The ASL version allows the Russians to launch a human wave assault across the street into the German-held F5 building. However, the Germans can reinforce and support their comrades with the help of a 9-2 leader directing a full platoon of Germans armed to the teeth with a LMG. This is a great old-school scenario to introduce someone to full ASL. Add in a 9-0 Commissar for the Russians in a different building, and the opportunity for both sides to attack and defend, and you have some great action in a city fight.

Last Minute War [J148]: Some may be surprised by this choice, but you not only have an Axis-Minor force (Hungarians) defending, you also have an Axis Minor force attacking (Slovaks). The Slovak player commands a large group of infantry, with armor support provided by 4 armored cars. and a single LT vz 35 tank. However, a fair amount of their infantry are conscripts. The Hungarian player is outnumbered from the beginning, but has some weapons to employ— including AT and AA assets and OBA that can wreak havoc on the attacking Slovak player.

Add in air support for both sides, and you have the opportunity for both strafing runs against both sides and aerial combat as well.

Round One [84]: It is September 1939, and the Germans have reached the outskirts of Warsaw. The German player is again attacking the defending Poles. However, this time they must attack into an urban environment, with their tanks subject to fire from 75mm artillery pieces and 37L antitank guns. The Germans have a quality force— with good infantry, MG and FT's-- but must be aware of the CVP cap. So the Germans must not be shy in their attacks, or they risk losing by not accomplishing much. But attack too aggressively and you risk losing too many men and AFVs— and thus, the scenario.

TACTICAL TIP

Don't attack the freeze; at least, not always. Sometimes it's not in your best interest to try to attack a vehicle with CC Reaction Fire or an LATW when it bypasses your location to impose target selection limits on your defenders. The better choice may be to just lay low. Why? Well of course it depends on the situation, but suppose it's the last turn of the game and your opponent needs to control that single-hex stone building currently occupied by your 6-6-6. He has two 4-6-7 squads and a leader nearby, ready to move up and try to eliminate that squad in CC to control the building. Not wanting to dodge bullets on the way in and chance breaking, your opponent makes a natural end-game move, putting an AFV in motion bypass of your squad in order to "freeze" them (render them unable to fire outside the location due to rule A7.212). Perhaps your first instinct as the defender is to use CC Reaction Fire against the AFV as it moves in, to try to kill it. After all, you don't want those enemy squads to be able to just waltz up unmolested and get into CC, right? Consider, however, that you have to take a PAATC to make such an attack, and failure will pin the squad. That could be bad in the upcoming CC. Even if you knock the tank out (and the odds aren't that great), you've used up a fire opportunity anyway, and furthermore in the imminent CC phase your opponent won't be saddled with that unfavorable ambush modifier for an AFV (maybe even BU). Having an AFV involved would also make the CC sequential, with the non-vehicular player going first, which would give you a chance to eliminate or reduce one of the enemy squads before they can attack, thus improving your odds.

THIS HAPPENED TO ME

Rolled a 12 Sighting Task Check, which took out my AFV with the following mistaken attack. On the plus side, I scored 24 Ferocity Fest style points for a Stuka taking out an AFV. You win some, you lose some. -- *Tim Kelly*

How about the consecutive Heat of Battle John Garlic had against me in *Rage Against the Machine*? Turning a 9-1/HMG/squad into a heroic 9-2/hero/HMG/squad. Or the snake eyes IFT with the 200mm bomb, obliterating a 9-1(?) and 2 squads in Ferocity Fest? -- *Brian Roundhill*

In a playtest for BFP's Finnish package, a scenario called *Last Minute Heroics*, I had a 9-1 leading an HMG/HS that managed to break and abandon their forward position, routing to a 9-0 and reserve squad in a relatively safe place, spouting something about a flamethrower tank? The 9-0 was happy to rally the 9-1 who went berserk, then convinced the rest of the stack to join him - 9-1, 9-0, 1.5 squads all berserk. The left side of my defense was now out of my control. Fortunately, they stormed across the street, broke a squad in a wooden building, then chased down the broken squad until it was ground into the dust. I should mention this was facilitated by a well positioned antitank gun that took out the FT tank and brewed up another AFV, generating a smoke screen to move through. Upon returning to normal, they found themselves behind enemy lines and given the victory conditions were to protect the entire road, they had the freedom to easily leave the Russians with an impossible task - complete their assault as well as clean up the mess behind their lines. -- *David Hailey*

At the *North Texas Shootout* up in Fort Worth, I was paired up against Ross Zarzecki in *SP259 Corridor to Extinction*. This is a great little late-war Germans vs Russians scenario that is notable for the presence of a JagdTiger (JgPz VI), which can start out hidden if it sets up next to the main road the Russians have to move along through boards 2a and 5a. During the course of the scenario I managed to locate the beast sitting behind a wall next to the road in hex C16 of board 5a, acting all the part of a big barrier to my attack. As time was running out, I had to be aggressive to get past it, so I took one of my T-34/85s on a flanking run, pulling up a couple of hexes away and taking a bounding fire shot at the side. My roll was too high; no effect. Not good. The JagdTiger fired up and pivoted, making a return shot and brewing up my tank. The only other tank in position to try anything was a T-34/85 located on the other side of a row of trees on the opposite side of the road. This tank fired up and crashed into the trees in an attempt to break through,

get adjacent and fire a side shot on the JagdTiger. Into the trees it went, but got high centered on a tree stump and my T-34/85 bogged. I was not going to be able to get any closer, so I took a shot from 3 hexes away, but the shot went wide. Damn. On to the German half of the turn.

Ross did not pivot and prep fire, but instead started up with the intent of closing the distance with me in the movement phase. The German tank pivoted to face mine and crawled over the wall. I tried for an underbelly shot, but my frantic crew managed to hit the turret instead. Ross kept moving forward and pulled up in front of my tank and stopped. Well nothing left to do at this point but intensive fire. I was dead meat anyway. My 85L's 17 TK had no chance against the JagdTiger's 26 frontal armor. So, my only hope was snakes. Drop, rattle, double ones. Holy.... But I was not out of the woods yet. Even with the critical my TK was only a 34 vs the JagdTiger's 26 AF. I needed at least a 7 or less to kill the thing. Down went the dice and I rolled... a 3, and up it brewed. We were both whooping it up at the outcome. -- *Rick Reinesch*

Mud (not blood) is thicker than water.

[playing *Ja, Bix* from the *Noreaster* scenario pack]

When you need to get 4 of 16 T-34s across a board filled with 3 Jagdpanters, you should hope for a dry day. I had to slog through the mud past Brian Roundhill's juggernauts. Those that survived the 88LL shells had trouble with the mud. Brian rolled plenty high for the secret rolls, bogging 3 tanks during the last two critical movement phases. I was able to knock out 2 of the German tanks, which reduced my exit requirement from 4 to 2 of my T-34s, but the mud held me tight. My last chance was to take out the 3rd Jagdpanter with two leaders pairing up in CC, but I could not get the low roll I needed. -- *Sam Tyson*

Sometimes when you lose a scenario it's because you really roll do have sh*tty dice. For example, at the *Texas ASL Tournament* in June (2016) I played a scenario called *A Quick Strike* (WO 10). I took the Japanese to defend against an American onslaught. My opponent needed a combination of exit victory points, and a number of VPs awarded for occupying and destroying my pillboxes and bunker fortifications.

My setup was solid and my tactics were good.

My rolls sucked. I rolled the dice approximately 44 times all game. All told I dropped eight twelves, seven elevens (which broke 6 out of 7 support weapons I had in my order of battle) five tens and five nines. 26 out of 44 rolls were 9 or greater. And all of the rolls of 9 or greater I rolled during a fire phase or for a morale check. 17 of these "9 or greater"

rolls happened during the first three turns! Suffice it to say my opponent rolled the Nipponese quickly, and occupied all my bunkers and pillboxes with ease and a turn to spare.

However, I did keep my Yank opponent honest (somehow) and made him fight to the very end. Victory was actually in sight with one turn to go. I had the opportunity to prevent him from exiting sufficient points on the last defensive final fire phase. But I need to break some of his units. To do so I would have to make hay on two rolls, very much in my favor. I didn't; my last defensive fire phase shots were 11 (on a 4-1 from a MMG/crew) and 12 (from a full squad and a LMG on an 8 flat).

Forget it! -- *Eric Gerstenberg*

2016 TEXAS TEAM TOURNAMENT ROUNDUP

Rick Reinesch



Here are the results and rankings from the 24th Annual Texas Team Tournament. Where players had the same score, ranking was based on the opponents' W/L percentage first, and then their own W/L percentage second. So players with the same score who competed against stronger opponents would be ranked higher.

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

| Player | Score | Wins | Losses |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|--------|
| Jim Bishop (1 st) | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| John Garlic (2 nd) | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Matt Shostak | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| Carl Nogueira | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Jeff DeYoung | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Bill Stoppel | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Larry Zoet | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Allen King | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Sam Tyson | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Jeff Toreki | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Dan Best | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Walter Eardley | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Andrew Maly | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Doyle Motes | 1 | 3 | 2 |

| | | | |
|------------------|----|---|---|
| Matt Zajac | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Jason Cameron | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Matt Schwoebel | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Mark Carter | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Jack O'Quin | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Paul Works | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Brian Roundhill | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Pierce Mason | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Ross Zarzecki | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Tim Kelly | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Gordon Geissler | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Steve Desrosiers | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Arlen Vanek | -1 | 0 | 1 |
| David Hailey | -1 | 1 | 2 |
| Ed Beekman | -1 | 1 | 2 |
| John Hyler | -1 | 1 | 2 |
| Brian Ward | -1 | 1 | 2 |
| Chris Casten | -2 | 1 | 3 |
| Greg Schmittgens | -2 | 1 | 3 |
| Bud Garding | -2 | 1 | 3 |
| Will Willow | -2 | 1 | 3 |
| Eric Gerstenberg | -2 | 1 | 3 |
| David Kapp | -2 | 0 | 2 |
| Mike Rose | -2 | 1 | 3 |
| Gary Krockover | -2 | 0 | 2 |
| Shane Brannan | -2 | 0 | 2 |
| Randy Strader | -3 | 0 | 3 |
| Jesse Boomer | -3 | 0 | 3 |
| Roy Connelly | -3 | 2 | 5 |
| Chris Kubick | -4 | 0 | 4 |
| Matt Evans | -4 | 1 | 5 |
| Daniel Virobik | -5 | 0 | 5 |

Here's how the Major Johnson standings finished. Matt Shostak finally won this thing after trying all of these years. Great job, Matt!

| Player | MJ Total |
|-----------------|----------|
| Matt Shostak | 28873 |
| John Hyler | 20320 |
| Brian Roundhill | 15702 |
| Jim Bishop | 15136 |

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Ross Zarzecki | 14883 |
| Rick Reinesch | 14877 |
| Larry Zoet | 13332 |
| Matt Evans | 12072 |
| Sam Tyson | 11746 |
| Dan Best | 10410 |
| Paul Works | 10320 |
| Carl Nogueira | 9836 |
| Mike Rose | 9582 |
| Arlen Vanek | 9574 |
| John Garlic | 9561 |
| Roy Connelly | 8831 |
| Daniel Virobik | 8505 |
| Greg Schmittgens | 7973 |
| Will Willow | 7645 |
| Chris Casten | 7338 |
| Chris Kubick | 7239 |
| Jeff DeYoung | 6414 |
| Tim Kelly | 6108 |
| Ed Beekman | 6025 |
| Gordon Geissler | 5842 |
| Jesse Boomer | 5540 |
| Matt Zajac | 5283 |
| Jason Cameron | 4970 |
| Bud Garding | 4950 |
| Pierce Mason | 4684 |
| Albert Salinas | 4666 |
| Ed Hack | 4666 |
| Doyle Motes | 4584 |
| Randy Strader | 4272 |
| Allen King | 4092 |
| Bill Stoppel | 2800 |
| David Hailey | 2424 |
| Eric Gerstenberg | 2352 |
| Jeff Toreki | 2238 |
| Steve Desrosiers | 1548 |
| Brian Ward | 1275 |
| David Kapp | 614 |
| Jack OQuin | 610 |
| Gary Krockover | 596 |

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Walter Eardley | 428 |
| Shane Brannan | 412 |
| Andrew Maly | 378 |
| Steven Duke | 370 |
| Shawn Shifflett | 231 |
| Matt Schwoebel | 148 |
| Mark Carter | 86 |

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

| Team | Score | Wins | Losses |
|---|-------|------|--------|
| Jim Bishop,Walter Eardley,Jason Cameron | 7 | 10 | 3 |
| Matt Shostak,James Woodall,Andrew Maly | 7 | 9 | 2 |
| Bill Stoppel,Jeff DeYoung,Chris Casten | 6 | 10 | 4 |
| John Garlic,Bernie Howell,Jack O'Quin | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Sam Tyson,Steve Desrosiers,Steven Miller | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| Carl Nogueira,Randy Strader,Pierce Mason | 1 | 6 | 5 |
| Matt Zajac,Brian Roundhill,Brian Ward | 0 | 7 | 7 |
| Larry Zoet,Tim Kelly,Matt Evans | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| Dan Best,Gordon Geissler,Will Willow | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| Doyle Motes,Bud Garding,Dean Rogers | -1 | 4 | 5 |
| David Longstreet,Allen King,Daniel Virobik | -2 | 3 | 5 |
| Jeff Toreki,Chris Kubick,Scott Bell | -2 | 2 | 4 |
| Ed Beekman,Matt Schwoebel,David Kapp | -2 | 2 | 4 |
| David Hailey,Greg Schmittgens,Steven Duke | -3 | 2 | 5 |
| Jay Harms,Roy Connelly,Shawn Shifflett | -3 | 2 | 5 |
| Mike Rose,Paul Works,Gary Krockover | -4 | 4 | 8 |
| Eric Gerstenberg,Jesse Boomer,Shane Brannan | -7 | 1 | 8 |

24TH ANNUAL TEXAS TEAM TOURNAMENT WRAP-UP

Rick Reinesch



We had another great Texas Team Tournament. In 2016 we celebrated our 24th anniversary of ASL camaraderie. We welcomed a record-breaking 67 pre-registrants and walk-ons from all over the southern part of the US and from locations as far away as California and Massachusetts to Austin, Texas. We were able to welcome several new faces this year and several returning locals, which is always great. We had a number of the new attendees who were getting back into the game after being away from it for a while, or who were just getting into the game, and we had several folks who came in just to play some SK. The tournament is a great way to get up to speed as the immersion of play over the weekend helps to reinforce rules learned/remembered.

As we have in previous years, this year's event was held in the Tech Room of the Wingate Conference Center located in far north Austin. This is our fifth year at this hotel which works out especially well for us as they cater to conferences all the time, so coordination goes very smoothly from my standpoint. The venue provides us with plenty of elbow room to play, they had an open bar for beer for us, and the connectivity in the room allows us to show an endless loop of WWII-related DVDs, which makes for a great ambiance while playing. I've already signed the contracts for us to be back there again next year.

In the title match for the individual crown of the Texas Team Tournament, Jim Bishop bested John Garlic in *Cradle to Grave [J154]* to take the 10-3 Award as overall individual champion in our championship bracket, along with the engraved dice cup and very cool BattleSchool dice that goes along with it. In the loss, John took the 9-2 Runner Up dice cup and a pair of BattleSchool dice, as well. As I noted, this is set up as a single-elimination bracket for the individual award, seeding it with the top 8 scorers after Friday's play. This helps me to narrow the winner down and give the folks who were really interested in vying for the overall championship the chance to do so.

The Team Tourney continued the use of a three-man team format. This makes the possible absence of one person on a team less of an issue and allows for all teams to stay in the hunt throughout the weekend. This format has also made for some very tight races for the team crown heading into Sunday play. Again this year the team results were determined by the final games on Sunday with the winning team of Jim Bishop, Walter Eardley and Jason Cameron finishing on top through their strength of schedule over the

second place team of Matt Shostak, James Woodall and Andrew Maly by a scant 0.015 strength of schedule points.

Our Thursday mini featured the time-honored Houston institution, **Ferocity Fest**. This is always a fun but brutal and deadly mini as evidenced by its name, and this year the scenario being highlighted was *Between Rockets and a Hard Place [ITR-14]* from Bounding Fire Production's **Into The Rubble 2** pack. This scenario was originally called *Tramvanya Street*, but based on feedback from players at the tourney, BFP changed the name to the final version you see. When all the points were counted up, the Axis winner was Brian Roundhill, with the runner up being Larry Zoet, and the Allied winner was Jeff Toreki with the runner being Jim Bishop. The winning Axis and Allied Commanders each took home a WWII replica Japanese Type 97 grenade, with **The Gamer's Armory** gift certificates being awarded to the second place finishers.

On Saturday we featured a Starter Kit mini-tournament for those folks new to the game or getting back into it, and offered them a chance to take home a great prize. This year it was Andrew Maley taking home the first place plaque and BattleSchool dice. As always, it was very encouraging to see the number of folks getting involved with SK, and we certainly encourage their participation over the weekend.

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

The Major Johnson award was hard-fought again this year; with Matt Shostak playing the most ASL over the course of the weekend and taking home the cup. Matt was actually the originator of the award so many years ago, but had never won it himself. While he has tried for many years, this year he was a man on a mission, and finally pulled it out. So the next time you see Matt, ask him to show off his Maj. Johnson. The Major Johnson can be won in many ways, but win or lose you are always in the hunt for MJ just by playing (a lot).

On Thursday our featured big scenario was *Whom Gods Destroy [J171]* which saw Matt Zajac win as the ELAS, and Larry Zoet won the Squad Bleeder mini on Saturday. We also had a BFP playtest mini happen on Saturday as well. So there is always plenty going on.

We were honored this year to help out the family of a very dear ASL friend, Tom Gillis. Sadly, Tom passed away in the fall of 2015. Tom had an infectious passion for the game. It was always a pleasure to play him, not only for the

enjoyment of playing the game with him, but also to share a great time with someone very special. He will be missed. We conducted a silent auction of Tom's ASL gear over the course of the weekend. In the end, we raised \$1670 for the Wounded Warrior Foundation, which Tom was passionate about. To everyone who helped out, thank you. We raised a lot of money for a good cause and folks will be able to let Tom's memory live on in the ongoing enjoyment of the gear that brought so much enjoyment into his life.

It's also worth mentioning that in the room adjoining the main tourney room we had an all-weekend play of Critical Hit's **Omaha East/West** going on. We had 5 guys tough this one out through Saturday night, and it was quite an experience. This is actually the second time we've sponsored this, and this time we used the streamlined rules that John Hyler and the rest of the Houston crew came up with. These rules both speeded up play and made the overall experience more enjoyable for all. If you want to download a copy of the rules and updates that John and Co. used, you can find it in the Download section of the Texas ASL website or on Desperation Morale, as well.

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

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

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

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

- Allen King and Matt Zajac for the use of their ice coolers
- Ed Beekman for the use of his vast military video library during the course of the tourney
- And especially my terrific wife Rhonda who ran a number of errands for me during the tourney. To say she is supportive of me doing this would be an understatement!

The website has already been updated with all of the information for 2017 and we've even got our first pre-registrants already, so it is never too early to get your hat into the ring. Don't be left out of the fun!

...AND A PREVIEW OF THE 25TH TEXAS TEAM TOURNAMENT



Rick Reinesch

The planning for the 2017 version of the tournament is in full swing and it promises to be just as much fun as in years past. This year will be a very special one as it marks 25 years of providing the very best that ASL has to offer down in Texas. So make those plans now to attend the Silver Anniversary of the Texas Team Tournament in Austin, TX, June 22-25, 2017. Last year we had record participation with 67 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 8th, 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 individual champion, single elimination bracket, to the Major Johnson award given to the individual playing the most ASL over the weekend, along with any number of mini-tourneys.

We will be setting up Thursday play to feature a big, multi-player scenario. This is your chance to get in on something that you might otherwise not have the chance to participate in, so keep an eye out on the web page for details and make sure to get your name into the ring. I'll probably throw in something special to be randomly presented to one of those players that choose to partake. If you are interested in getting in on this unique opportunity, keep any eye out on the Texas ASL website and send me an email to let me know of your interest. We will get coordinated ahead of time so that you can be prep'd to hit the ground running that Thursday.

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 we featured *Tramvanaya Street* which gave players a sneak preview of one of the scenarios from Bounding Fire's upcoming **Into the Rubble 2**. 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 mini and featured play promptly at 9am, June 22nd. If you are interested in participating in any of the featured playings that day, please contact the Tournament Director (me) directly. We'll post participants for the games online as they come in. That way I can get

everyone prep'd beforehand to speed things along that day. You can find my email address in the Club Notes at the end of this newsletter.

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 of 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!

ROOTING OUT THE LAST FANATICS

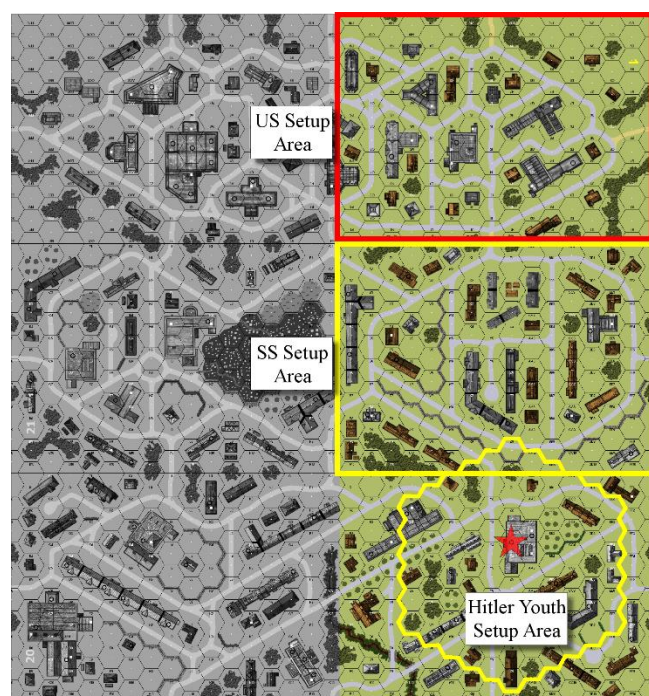
An AAR and Analysis of Golden Pheasants [J145]

Allen King and Gary Krockover



The western Allies had breached the Rhine and were advancing into the heart of the faltering Third Reich in mid-April 1945. Yet, because they were either true believers or had nothing else to lose, more than a few Germans fought to hold onto the fantasy of the thousand-year Reich. Among these fanatics was the mayor of Nuremburg, Willi Liebel, the local Nazi Party leader (Gauleiter), Karl Holz, and the general ordered to hold it, General Simon. At their disposal were elements of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, some low-grade Volksturm infantry, Hitler Youth conscripts and the city's fire and police personnel. Their opponent was the well-equipped, veteran 3rd Infantry Division. However, this US unit had to battle across a built-up portion of Old Town Nuremburg and take the city hall complex to snuff out the fanatical German resistance.

The Scenario and Objectives



This scenario is the last of three in a mini-campaign game designed by the veteran designer, Peter Shelling. All three can be played alone or combined for a campaign game. The scenarios appear in **ASL Journal 9**. The scenario plays out on three different half boards (1, 21 and 20 from north to south). There are two modest building overlays to place on the middle board (21). The US starts on any legal hex of board 1 and must drive through board 21 to board 20. Centrally located on board 20 is the objective building (20Z3). Presumably this is the Nuremberg City Hall wherein Holz and Liebel were holding hands and sending others to die for them and the Reich.

Those "others" include five squads of SS infantry, five additional squads of second line infantry and conscripts, a 105mm artillery piece, eight dummies and some meaningful fortifications. The fortifications include six wire counters, four trenches and a road block. The Germans are equipped with a HMG, MMG, a DC and LMG along with one panzerschreck (PSK). Of course, this being 1945, the Germans come inherently equipped with the strong likelihood of plentiful panzerfausts (PF). Given what they must defend against, that is a paltry collection of support weapons. But, in what I consider a great way to introduce an element of fog of war, both sides get to choose part of their order of battle (OB) in secret. For the Germans, they may choose a late-war StuGIII or a quad 20mm with crew. German leadership includes a 10-0 (acting as a Commissar by SSR). This is, of course, Gauleiter Holz. Mayor Liebel is a wimpy 6+1. The SS must set up on board 21, while the other rag tag types and fortifications set up within five hexes of 20Z4. Consequently, the US player is unlikely to know exactly where the fortifications are until he can get a clear line of sight (LOS) to the ground floor of the objective building. The Germans may also fortify 3 locations and use HIP for one squad equivalent with the usual SMC and support weapons. Finally, the Germans get a platoon of conscripts with a 7-0 leader (Police Chief?) on turn 4. These "soldiers" enter from the south edge.

The Americans come lavishly equipped with both infantry, weapons and armor as one would expect at this stage of the war. A mix of fourteen elite and first line infantry squads are assigned the dirty business of bringing these fanatics to justice. They are well led, with a 9-2 gracing the initial collection of four SMCs. To supplement these stalwarts, they have a HMG, 2 MMG, 3 BAZ45, a 60mm mortar, 2 DC and a really fun zippo flamethrower. To back this up, they roll out with two Sherman (75) and two Sherman (105) tanks. With WP smoke, regular smoke and smoke mortars, there is no shortage of smoke-screen-producing weapons for the US. The US OB allows for some variation. The US can choose a HMG with an elite half squad or a halftrack with an 81mm mortar. If all this bounty is not enough, they receive reinforcements on turn three in the form of two nice GMC tank destroyers, an armored car and an armed jeep,

along with a 7-0 and two half squads. The American ELR is 3 while the German ELR varies. The SS is ELR 5, but the generally clueless grunts are ELR 2. In total, this is an impressive array of American military power.

Finally, the scenario features an SSR accounting for the previous fighting and bombardment in the area. Prior to set up, the players put a sniper or AR counter on hexes 21Y5 and 21AA6. From each location, three random location dice rolls are made. If the result of a DR ends up in a building or woods hex, that location is rubbled and a check is made for falling rubble. If it lands in any other type of hex, a vehicle wreck is placed there. If any are repeats, they are rerolled. Thus, the landscape can change from game to game.

The drawback for the US is that the scenario is only 6.5 turns long. Hence, they have seven movement phases to get to and clear the two-story, five-hex, fifteen-location City Hall of all good order German MMC. As anyone that has played ASL for a while knows, clearing a building like that is no mean feat, and it is only made worse if the Germans fortify some of the ground floor locations.

The Battle Commences

ROAR showed this scenario getting only modest play with the US holding a slight 14-12 advantage as of December 2016. This seemed a bit odd given how long the scenario has been available and the well-known ability of the designer. But over the years, I have noticed that any scenario that requires overlays (no matter how few) often seems to trail in the number of plays compared to scenarios published at the same period without overlays. I can think of no other reason this scenario would not get considerable play as it is a combined arms battle of moderate length with lots of fun toys. But for whatever reason, it has seen only modest exposure.

Exposure or not, Gary and I decided to give it a whirl and we are glad we did. Gary decided he needed to practice his attack techniques, so he took the US side. I placed the Germans, setting up fortifications in a manner designed to delay entry into the objective building for as long as possible and to discourage US armor from getting behind the building to cut off the police reinforcements and cut rout or retreat lines. Instead of the StuG III, I decided to place the 20mm meat chopper where it could cover the front of the objective building and the line of wire in front of the objective building and the stone building on the German left. Also, it was placed to keep its location secret for as long as possible. The 105mm went to the German right behind the objective building. From this position, I thought I might nail a Sherman with a side shot, or an armored car or jeep sent to get behind the objective building. Otherwise, as can be seen from the setup photos, the five SS units set up on the back half of board 21 with the idea of getting back to board 20 rather quickly and then

into the main building toward game end. I hoped to get at least two unbroken SS units in the building to fight out the last couple of turns, and to use the conscripts to clog the two stairways to levels 1 and 2. A hidden SS squad with the PSK was placed in the woods on the German far right to discourage (by killing) tanks using that road to sweep the German right flank and get behind the building. The dummies were used to conceal troops and to create a couple of small stacks of fake “troops”.



Gary's attacking force was set up with what looked to be an emphasis on the center, with platoon-size forces and tanks on both flanks. The tanks appeared to be oriented to maximize fire on the upper levels of the objective building either with HE or smoke and to lay smoke to cover for crossing the first significant road and get the infantry into the Old Town buildings on board 21. His single mortar was positioned to fire at a couple of half squads in upper level locations on board 20. Unknown to me, Gary chose the HMG and the half squad to accompany Mr. 9-2 on his journey up the middle with the bulk of the infantry forces.



Turn one US activities told me a lot. His mortar fired at a half squad at level two (a spotter) and scored a critical hit (CH), obliterating the unit. Oh boy, I thought, I hope that does not set the tone for the game! The US then tried to fire smoke at a group of three dummies set up forward. Instead of using a half squad or two to approach and “bump” these fakes, Gary fired three of four tanks. One had no smoke, one got smoke down and a third got, but depleted, smoke. He did not know it, but all that was a delay and waste as there were no real units near the initial front. Other US units slowly went forward to gain positions in the Old Town buildings, but none drove deeply into Old Town and none challenged the three dummies holding up things. This tentative approach spared possible casualties, but slowed the US tempo.

This pattern continued as the real SS units either slowly retreated toward board 20 or zipped across the wall and long streets dividing board 21 from board 20. The US tanks basically stayed behind the infantry or fired smoke at the upper reaches of the objective building and environs. Casualties were slight to nonexistent on both sides through turn 3. Few, if any, fortifications were revealed.

By the end of turn three, the US infantry was about 2/3 to 3/4 across board 21 and still moving cautiously south. Consequently, the Germans slowed their own retreat. The five forward dummies got wiped out, as dummies often do in all games.

On turn four, Gary realized that the tempo had to increase or he would run out of time. The turn three US reinforcements dashed forward with the 90mm tank destroyers moving toward the German left flank and center. A Sherman 75 headed down the road on the extreme German right. Just before entering an excellent firing range for the PSK, it turned toward the center between Old Town buildings. I wasn't likely to get a better shot, so I fired the HIP PSK and promptly missed. Curses! Gary now knew where the HIP guy and the PSK was. He breathed a sigh of relief and continued his move. US turn four ended with some significant exchanges of fire, but to this point the Germans had suffered only two broken squads (one rallied) and one half squad. The US losses were equally light and mostly due to effective sniper fire. German turn four saw more exchanges of fire with a couple of US squads breaking (one with the FT), and a German squad suffering the same fate. The Americans had discovered the wire, roadblock and trench system in front of and around the objective building. Some US units had reached the long wall and road separating board 21 from board 20. The German 20mm and 105mm were still hidden. The German police forces had reached the objective building or positions just south of it and were pulling out the PFs to keep the US armor at bay.

The Germans felt confident at this point and noted that it was going to be tough to clear the building in the remaining three US turns. We broke for the evening. Below is the situation at the start of turn 5. Top photo is from the US perspective, the bottom photo from the German perspective.



We resumed play a few weeks later.

Realizing his attack might be fatally stalled, Gary stepped on the gas and the fun began! The FT squad rallied. Gary fired WP smoke into the front (20Z3) hex of the objective building. The German HMG squad passed its morale check, but was now shrouded in billowing smoke. A couple of other prep fire shots produced nothing. Then the US troops and vehicles burst into movement. Several half squads rushed toward the wire, but none made it safely under the wire due in part to quad 20mm fire raking the wire line in front of the objective building. The full squads inched forward, but remained short of the wire. The tanks moved inward toward the objective building, but none attempted to cross the wire or move behind the building. A brave jeep crashed into the wire only to bog and eventually die at the hands of the 20mm in German turn 5. Ominously, the US

machine guns and 9-2 leader moved into the first level of a long rowhouse facing the objective building. At the end of the US turn all they had to show for their efforts was a broken squad with a bazooka on the far German right, a jeep on the wire and several broken half squads in the center. No German units broke or took casualties.



In the German half of turn 5 (see photo above), the defenders did what defenders often do best: they skulked! As a result, there was little defensive fire; however, the Germans did manage to break a bazooka-toting squad on the far German right. The Germans with the PSK moved into the street and forced the broken US squad to rout away. This brave SS squad then advanced into the former US position, threatening some US tanks as well as possibly threatening the US left flank. Otherwise, it was an uneventful German half of the turn.

US turn 6 started with another mad dash to the wire line. The Germans poured small arms, MG and 20mm fire onto the stalwarts wading onto the wire tangles. Again, no infantry unit survived the attempt, though one half squad made it under the wire only to ultimately break. A US Sherman crashed through the wire barrier and overran a German squad in the front of the objective building, but neither the tank nor the squad suffered an adverse result. The US armored car attempted to crush the wire on the other side of the objective building only to bog in the tangle.

At this point, Gary threw in the towel as it was apparent that the US would not have time to break or kill all the Germans in the building locations. (See the photo below for the final disposition of forces.)

Final Impressions

Neither Gary nor I have any explanation as to why this scenario has gotten so little play. Despite all their interesting and powerful toys, we agree that the US has a tough timetable to meet. Despite what might look like a

German lean, it is still an exciting and fun scenario to play. The US player simply must move quickly forward and surround the objective building, and do so before the Germans can get their turn four reinforcements into it. Even better, keeping any SS squads out of the building is ideal. The wire is best overcome by crashing a hole through it with a vehicle or simply going around it. The fortified locations and limited staircase access in the objective building make it tough for the US troops to get into the building without first clearing those locations with direct fire. To do that, the US *MUST* get into firing position no later than the end of turn 3 and do so with a lot of firepower. Those German conscripts will melt away quickly under the torrent of US fire that can be brought to bear. All in all, we liked the scenario and give it a solid 7.5 of 10.



CLUB NOTES

Biweekly Lunch Gathering

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

Game Days

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

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