

(1) Introduction:

One of the appeals of ASL is the importance of the "fog of war"; the fact that we as players do not know everything about the disposition of our enemy's forces. We all recall the D3.3 example of the T34/85 as it moves down a stately boulevard on board one only to be surprised by a hidden PaK 38 around the corner. There is nothing like the look on an opponents face after you reveal that his Sherman just walked into the hex you boresighted with your HIP 88. As a consequence of this limited knowledge, our tactics change; we make allowances for these surprises by searching, reconnaissance, and a more cautious style of play that would be unnecessary if one knew the location of each enemy unit.

In a solitaire game, where one plays both sides as if they were playing a real opponent, the location of every unit is of course known to the player. This omniscience allows and encourages the use of tactics that could never be employed in face to face play. As a consequence, many published scenarios become not only wildly unbalanced, but rather dull. Imagine taking the Partisan side in Sylvan Death, ASL 30, without setting up HIP, without hiding your mines or Trenches, and even revealing the location of your ART piece at the start! The German side, instead of searching the forest to find the Partisans while worrying about ambush and hidden artillery, can simply overwhelm their opposition in a firefight and claim a resounding but dull victory.

The purpose of this piece, then, is to present a set of additional rules for solitaire play that encourage the use of the same tactics that one would use in a face to face game. This is done by allowing units to shift their locations to other predetermined locations both in and out of the movement phase. For example, in Sylvan Death, the Partisans possess a 76mm ART piece. In a solitaire game, it would be placed on board, but to reflect the fact that it is set up HIP, additional locations are marked on the board. As long as the piece remains hidden, it may shift between these locations almost at will. If the German wishes to eliminate the weapon, they will need to reduce the number of locations to which it can move, for example by searching each of these locations. As a consequence, the German is forced to use tactics similar to those that would be adopted in a face to face playing of the same scenario.

None of these rules allow for the kind of surprises that are common in face to face play with hidden units; they do however make solitaire playings of the same scenarios both more competitive and more interesting. Please note however that this article does not provide a system to allow a player to play only one side in a scenario with rules governing the tactics of the second. Rather its purpose is to allow those players like myself who play both sides in solitaire matches to create some of the "fog of war" so necessary in face to face ASL.

(2) Dummy Stacks

(2.1) In a scenario that allots concealment counters for use as dummies, the player sets up their forces as they would for a conventional face to face match. Each stack of units that would become concealed before being viewed by a hypothetical FTF opponent becomes a potential dummy stack. Mark such stacks in any convenient way, for example by covering them with a concealment counter of a nationality that is not in play.

(2.2) Potential dummy stacks are treated as conventional concealed stacks for all purposes except for their ability to shift, which will be described below. In particular, potential dummy stacks lose concealment and their status as potential dummy stacks whenever concealment loss is called for by the Concealment Loss/Gain Table A12.121. Once a potential dummy stack loses its concealment, it may never again become a potential dummy stack. The only potential dummy stacks are those that are created at the start of the game or those created by splitting an already existing potential dummy stack into two or more potential dummy stacks by the movement of its components into two or more different locations. Two or more potential

dummy stacks may merge into a single potential dummy stack provided they share the same location and position in that location at the end of that sides CCPh.

A potential dummy stack remains a potential dummy stack so as long as it retains concealment. The presence of enemy units in its LOS or even its location does not affect its status as a potential dummy stack.

A potential dummy stack may drop this status at any time and still retain concealment if it desires.

(2.3) A potential dummy stack may attempt to exchange locations with any dummy stack or potential dummy stack at the start of its MPh or at the start its APH, provided no friendly unit has yet moved/advanced. Provided the following criteria are met, the units may exchange locations immediately following a successful shift DR.

If either of the two stacks contains a vehicle, after locations are exchanged, the vehicle may choose its TCA, its VCA, and its CE/BU status immediately following the exchange of locations. The vehicle retains whatever motion status it had before the shift. If a vehicle shifts to a location with a crest line, it may immediately make a HD maneuver attempt DR immediately following the successful shift.

If either of the two stacks contains a gun, it may choose its CA immediately following the exchange of locations. If the gun was allowed to emplace at the start of the scenario, it may be considered emplaced after a shift, provided it is in appropriate terrain and the consistency requirements are met (2.4).

If desired, a potential dummy stack may attempt to exchange locations with itself. In particular, if a vehicle or Gun exchanges locations with itself, it may freely change its CA/TCA/VCA and its CE/BU status accordingly.

If either of the stacks being shifted is in distinct portion of a location, for example in a foxhole or in Crest status, the new stack must remain in the same portion of that location.

Example: If a potential dummy stack consisting of a 4-6-7 in crest status in a gully shifted locations with a potential dummy stack consisting of a 5-4-8 squad in a hex containing a foxhole, the 5-4-8 must take up crest status and the 4-6-7 could only claim foxhole benefits if the 5-4-8 had claimed such benefits.

If any unit in either stack was eligible to Bore Sight a weapon at the start of the scenario, it remains eligible to Bore Sight that weapon following a successful shift provided neither stack has changed locations except via shifting one or more times since the start of the scenario.

(2.3.1) A potential dummy stack may only exchange locations with dummy stacks or potential dummy stacks as a complete stack. Thus the entire stack in one location must be exchanged for a complete stack in the second location.

(2.3.2) A potential dummy stack may attempt to exchange locations with any dummy stack of appropriate size regardless of location provided the number of real counters being shifted is strictly less than the number of concealment counters in the dummy stack.

Example: A potential dummy stack consists of a 4-6-7 squad, an LMG, and an 8-1 leader. At the start of its MPh, it may attempt to exchange its location with that of any dummy stack possessing at least 4 concealment counters, i.e., at least 3 dummy counters topped by a concealment counter.

(2.3.3) Two potential dummy stacks may attempt to exchange locations provided both have exactly the same number of real counters.

(2.3.4) Two dummy stacks may exchange locations only if they have exactly the same number of counters.

(2.4) CONSISTENCY: If the shift of two stacks would have caused either of the two stacks to lose concealment had the shift taken place at the start of the game, the shift is not permitted. In particular, if a shift would cause one of the two stacks to lose concealment immediately, the shift is not permitted.

Example: Suppose the Russian player possesses two potential dummy stacks, the first consisting of a single BT-7 (23 MP), while the second consists of a single T-35 (10 MP). If at a previous point in the game the BT-7 used more than 10 MP, (sans ESB), the two stacks are then prohibited from exchanging locations.

Example: A potential dummy stack consisting of a single T-34 in a woods location wishes to exchange locations with a dummy stack consisting of two concealment counters in an OG location. If the dummy stack is also in the LOS of an enemy unit, the shift is not permitted, for a vehicle in OG and LOS of an enemy unit immediately loses concealment.

(2.4.1) Provided they meet all of the criteria specified above and make a successful shift DR, infantry and other units using 1/2" concealment counters are permitted to shift with Guns, vehicles and other units using 5/8" concealment counters. There is meant to be no distinction between these types of potential dummy stacks. Optionally, a player may decide to prohibit such shifts, and treat these cases separately. Note however, that this approach requires some additional bookkeeping which can become tedious in games that also have HIP units, cloaked units and hidden fortifications. Note also that this approach requires rules to handle the simultaneous shifting of a Gun and its crew. (2.4.2) There are rare instances when units in separate locations should be permitted to shift as a single stack, for example a crew/squad manning a mortar and its spotter in an adjacent location. In such an instance two or more potential dummy stacks may shift with the same number of dummy stacks/potential dummy stacks solely at the discretion of the player.

(2.5) THE SHIFT DR: Once the player has decided to shift two eligible units, the player must make a shift DR with the following consequences:

Final DR	Consequence (No Leadership Modifiers)
<=0	Shift allowed; units remain concealed/HIP/cloaked and may move/advance normally. This shift does not incur the +1 modifier for subsequent shift attempts.
1-7	Shift allowed; units remain concealed/HIP/cloaked and may move/advance normally.
8-10	Shift disallowed; no other units may attempt to shift this phase, but both these units remain concealed/HIP/cloaked and may move/advance normally.
11-12	Shift disallowed; no other units may attempt to shift this phase. Potential dummy stacks retain their concealment, but lose their status as potential dummy stacks; dummy stacks are eliminated; hidden units lose their HIP status, but retain concealment if applicable.
>=13	Shift disallowed; no other units may attempt to shift this phase; both these units lose concealment/HIP/cloaked status, eliminating dummy stacks; both stacks become TI for the remainder of the player turn.

This DR is modified by the following DRM:

DRM	Cause
+1	For each previous shift that side has made in this phase
-TEM	The worst TEM of the two locations is applied with sign reversed (Air Burst TEM NA)(Emplacement TEM NA)
+1	If either location is in the LOS of an enemy unit
-1	If both stacks are HIP (including minefields)
-1	If a LV hindrance applies at all ranges >=0
-2	If the scenario is at night
-1	If either stack contains an emplaced Gun
0 (*)	Infantry, fortifications, small guns, very small vehicles
+1 (*)	Normal size guns, small vehicles
+2 (*)	Large guns, normal size vehicles
+3 (*)	Large vehicles
+4 (*)	Very Large vehicles

These DRM are cumulative, however if more than one starred modifier is applicable only the largest is used.

Remark: In scenarios that rely strongly on the use of dummies/HIP for balance, it may be appropriate to add an extra DRM of -1 or -2 to all shift rolls; the use of such an additional modifier is at the discretion of the player.

Example: A potential dummy stack consisting of a 4-6-7 squad, an LMG and an 8-1 leader in a stone building in the LOS of an enemy wish to shift locations with a dummy stack of four counters in the woods. At the start of the MPh, a shift DR is made yielding 7. To this are applied the modifiers -1 (TEM of woods) +1 (in LOS of enemy) giving a final DR of 7. The shift is made, and further shift attempts may be made during this MPh.

Example: A potential dummy stack consisting of a 6-2-8 squad, a 2-4-7 HS, a 1-4-9 hero and a 10-0 commissar in woods wish to shift locations with a dummy stack of 5 counters in open ground and LOS of the enemy. At the start of their APh, a shift DR is made, yielding an 11. This is modified by +1 (LOS of an enemy unit) to obtain a final DR of 12. The units are not exchanged, the dummy stack is eliminated while the remaining stack loses its status as a potential dummy stack but still retains concealment. If this side had already shifted two pairs of units in this APh, there would be an additional DRM of +2, so the final DR is becomes 14. Then the dummy stack would be eliminated, and the other stack would both lose concealment and its status as a potential dummy stack, as well as become TI. In either instance, no other stacks may attempt to shift locations during that APh.

Example: A potential dummy stack consisting of a single 4-4-8 squad in a 1+5+7 pillbox wishes to exchange places with a dummy stack consisting of 2 concealment counters in a 1+4+6 cave. The shift DR is made, giving a 3. If neither location is in the LOS of an enemy unit, the shift DRM is -4 (worst TEM of cave with

sign reversed), yielding a final DR of -1, so the shift is allowed. Further, subsequent shifts in this phase will not incur a +1 DRM due to this shift.

Example: A SPW 250/1 halftrack in woods out of the LOS of all enemy units wishes to exchange locations with a Tiger tank (PzKpfw VIE), likewise in woods out of the LOS of all enemy units. The final shift DRM is $+2 = -1$ (woods) $+3$ (large vehicle). Note that the +1 DRM for the halftrack is superseded by the +3 DRM for the Tiger, and only the larger is applied.

(3) HIP Units

The modifications to the rules for HIP units are similar to the modifications made for dummy stacks. Note however, that the requirement in A12.3 that solitaire players substitute two "?" counters for each squad--capacity of HIP that is given by SSR is not used and will be ignored.

(3.1) Units granted HIP by SSR are set up on the board normally, but should be distinguished from other units in any convenient fashion. The HIP side is also allotted a number of dummy HIP counters distinct from dummy concealment counters.

Remark: Personally I use 1/2" concealment counters of a different nationality to denote potential dummy stacks and 5/8" concealment counters of that same nationality above a stack to denote its HIP status, while a lone 5/8" counter of that nationality represents a dummy HIP counter. Feel free to devise any convenient system of your own.

(3.1.1) The total number of dummy HIP counters is one greater than the total squad capacity of HIP granted that side.

Example: If a side is allowed to set up five squads using HIP, that side would be allotted six dummy HIP counters.

Example: If a side possesses an HIP AT gun and no other HIP units, they would be granted two dummy counters. Counting the initial setup location of the gun, it may be shifted to three distinct locations over the course of the game.

(3.1.2) Dummy HIP counters may be placed in the same location as real units, potential dummy stacks, and dummy stacks with no penalty.

(3.2) HIP units and dummy HIP counters are treated in the same fashion as a conventional HIP units with the following exceptions.

(3.2.1) HIP units and dummy HIP counters are immune to all fire attacks directed against their location; they are also immune to sniper attacks.

Remark: This is to prevent the omniscient player from targeting units that would normally not be known to exist in that location.

(3.2.2) HIP units and dummy HIP counters are not permitted to move out of their location or change CA within that location conventionally. However, these units are allowed to shift their locations as described below.

(3.3) SHIFTING OF HIP UNITS: HIP units and dummy HIP counters are granted the same ability to shift that is granted to dummy stacks and potential dummy stacks, with some minor differences. In particular they obey all the conditions in 2.3, 2.4, 2.4.2, and 2.5 except as amended below.

(3.3.1) Stacks of HIP units or dummy HIP counters may not shift locations with dummy stacks or potential dummy stacks.

(3.3.2) HIP units and dummy HIP counters may attempt to shift at any time in their sides PFPh and DFPh, and also in the enemy's MPh, as well as at any time in that sides MPh and APh.

(3.3.3) An HIP unit or dummy HIP counter may exchange locations with another HIP unit or dummy HIP counter regardless of the number counters in each stack. HIP units need not shift as a complete stack, but rather only a portion of a stack may shift if so desired. If an HIP unit wishes to shift into a location that also contains an HIP unit, the latter is not required to exchange locations with the first, although it may do so if it desires. If all of the HIP units in a location shift to different locations, the original location is marked with a dummy HIP counter.

Example: An HIP stack containing 3 4-5-7 squads and a leader may exchange locations with a dummy HIP counter alone in a location. The player is not required to shift the entire stack, but may instead attempt to shift just one squad and the leader to the new location. Regardless of the results of the shift attempt, the two remaining squads will retain their HIP status.

Example: An HIP stack consisting of a single 6-6-6 squad wishes to shift locations to one occupied by a single HIP 5-3-6 squad. If the shift is permitted the 5-3-6 squad is not required to move to the location once occupied by the 6-6-6 squad. If it does not move, a dummy HIP counter is placed in the hex originally occupied by the 6-6-6 since it is now devoid of HIP units.

(3.3.4) The inability of a side to shift additional dummy stacks and potential dummy stacks does not affect that sides ability to shift HIP units and dummy HIP counters and vice--versa. Although the same table is used, the shifting of HIP units and shifting of potential dummy stacks are strictly distinct operations. In a phase where both types of shifts are allowed, they may be performed in any order.

(3.3.5) If the shift of an HIP stack or dummy HIP stack is disallowed and the stack is not marked with a TI counter, the stack may attempt to shift again in a later phase that turn, however the enemy's MPh and that sides DFPh are considered as a single phase for this purpose.

Example: If the shift of the 5-3-6 and 6-6-6 described above were attempted in the enemy's MPh and failed, no other stacks of that side may attempt to shift until their upcoming PFPh.

(3.4) REVALATION OF HIP UNITS: HIP units and dummy HIP counters are revealed in the same fashion as conventional HIP units. If a dummy HIP counter is revealed, it is removed.

(4) Hidden Fortifications

Hidden fortifications are treated in the same fashion as HIP units with the following exceptions.

(4.1) A single dummy HIP counter is provided for each hidden fortification that does not contain HIP units or dummy HIP counters at the start of the scenario. (Exception: 1 dummy HIP counter is provided for each three Panji covered hexsides) (Exception: Minefields, 4.6)

(4.2) A fortification may not shift to a location that it would have not been allowed be placed at the start the scenario. Otherwise, a fortification may shift to any location containing HIP units or dummy HIP counters, subject to the usual consistency restrictions, and is considered the equivalent of an HIP unit in every respect. In particular, shifts between locations with HIP squads/vehicles/etc. and HIP fortifications are

permitted. Further, if a failed shift roll prevents the shift of HIP units, it also prevents the shift of HIP fortifications. (Exception to all: Minefields, 4.6).

Remark: Optionally, the player may keep track of HIP fortifications and HIP units separately, especially in light of the consistency requirement 2.4. However, separate counters for potential dummy stacks, HIP units, and HIP fortifications may give the board a somewhat cluttered appearance.

(4.3) If a fortification is being shifted, its TEM may not be used as a DRM for the shift DR, although the other terrain in the hex may apply its DRM.

Example: If a 1+3+5 pillbox in a woods hex wishes to shift locations with a foxhole in another woods location, the DRM due to TEM is -1 (woods). The TEM of the foxhole and pillbox is not used.

Example: If a location in a stone building is fortified, and the player wishes to shift its location to that of a dummy HIP counter in another stone building location, the DRM due to TEM is -3 (stone building).

(4.4) If a fortification shifts to a location containing HIP units, those units may be considered to be in the fortification in the case of pillboxes, trenches, caves, and foxholes, or above/beneath wire or panji at the discretion of the player.

If a fortification shifts to a location that contains units, concealed units, dummy stacks, or potential dummy stacks in addition to the required HIP unit or dummy HIP counter, any or all of these units may be considered to be in/above/beneath the fortification after a successful shift.

Fortifications that possess a well defined CA (Ex: pillboxes, caves, panji) may choose their CA immediately following a successful shift.

(4.4.1) CAVE COMPLEXES: If a cave counter is shifted, and that side is allowed a cave complex, that side may immediately modify the cave complex to take into account the new locations of the caves. The units inside any of the previously existing cave complexes may be placed into any of the new cave complexes without a shift DR.

(4.4.2) TUNNELS: If a pillbox or fortified building location possesses a tunnel, the location of that tunnel may be changed following a shift of either end of the tunnel. Thus if the tunnel ends in another fortification or cave complex, following the shift or modification of that fortification or cave complex, one may also change the location of the tunnel. However the tunnel must remain connected to the fortification that has been modified.

Example: If a tunnel connects an HIP pillbox with an HIP fortified building location, and the location of the pillbox is shifted, the location of the tunnel is shifted. One end of the tunnel must remain in the pillbox, while the other end can be chosen per the usual rules for tunnel exits (B8.6). If instead the fortified building location was shifted, the tunnel is also shifted, but must instead have one entrance in the fortified building location.

(4.5) SHIFTING UNITS AND FORTIFICATIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY: If a location contains both hidden fortifications and HIP units or dummy HIP counters, both the fortification and the units may be shifted at the same time with a single shift DR. In this case, the TEM of the fortification may not be used as a DRM. Note that if the fortification was not being shifted, its beneficial DRM might be used.

(4.6) MINEFIELDS: Minefields will use the shift technique as well, although special allowances are made for the unique properties of minefields.

(4.6.1) If a side is allotted a hidden minefield, they place their AP and AT mines directly on board with their strength facing down. In addition, for every 3 FP AP minefield factors allotted and each factor of AT mines allotted, the side receives a single dummy minefield which is also placed on board, strength side down.

If a side is allotted a known minefield, it is placed on the board in the usual fashion (F.7).

(4.6.2) Whenever any unit enters a minefield location whose strength has not been revealed, the player may attempt to exchange it for any other minefield counter whose strength has not been revealed. This is done by making a shift DR with the usual DRM. If the shift is allowed, the minefield counters are exchanged, and the entering unit is subject to their usual deleterious effects. If the shift is not allowed the two minefield counters remain in their original location. Regardless of the outcome of the shift, the strength factors of both minefields are now revealed.

(4.6.3) The only effect from of the shift DR is to allow or disallow the shift, and a final shift DR ≥ 8 has no effect other than disallowing that particular shift. In particular, other minefields may shift locations later in that MPh.

(4.6.4) The shift DR for minefields can be made even if shifting by potential dummy stacks and HIP units is not allowed that phase.

(4.6.5) If a scenario allots both hidden mines and known mines, only mines of the same type may be shifted, that is hidden mines can only exchange locations with other hidden mines, and known mines can only exchange locations with other hidden mines.

(5) Night Rules

In addition to dummy stacks and HIP units, night scenarios also present the difficulty of cloaked units. The modifications necessary to use cloaked units are the similar to the rules for dummy stacks and HIP units.

(5.1) Units under a cloaking counter may shift to any location beneath any other cloaking counter at any time at the start of that unit's MPh, at the start of that side's AFPh or the start of that unit's APh following a successful shift DR.

(5.2) In all other respects cloaked units are treated as they would be in a face to face match. Note that once a unit loses cloaked status, it may not be regained.

(6) Bore Sighting

(6.1) At the start of the scenario, all those weapons that may be Bore Sighted do not immediately choose a Bore Sighted location. Rather, provided a Bore Sighted location has not already been chosen and the weapon is still eligible to fire at a Bore Sighted location, each time that unit fires, it is allowed to roll a third die. If that die is a 1 or a 2, the target location is considered to be the Bore Sighted location for that weapon for that shot, and for all subsequent shots. If the third die is a 3, 4, or 5, the target location is not (yet) considered to be the Bore Sighted location of that weapon. If the third die is a 6, that location is not Bore Sighted, and a direction die and a distance die are rolled. If the resulting hex contains a location that could be a Bore Sighted hex for that weapon, it becomes that weapon's Bore Sighted hex. If this hex contains no location that could be Bore Sighted by that weapon, the Bore Sighted location of that weapon remains undetermined.

(6.2) If a unit is allowed to throw a third die to determine a Bore Sighted location, it is not required to do so.

(6.3) If a firing stack contains more than one weapon eligible to throw a third die to determine its boresighted hex, an different die may be thrown for each weapon that fires. If the player desires, two or more weapons may use the same die for the determination of their boresighted location, however any such grouping must be decided upon before the additional die or dice are thrown.

(7) Pre--Registered Hexes

(7.1) After a player places an AR but before a player makes an accuracy roll for an OBA module that has been granted a pre-registered hex that has not yet been determined, they may roll a single die. If that die is a 1 or a 2, then the AR hex is considered the pre-registered hex for that OBA module for the upcoming accuracy roll and for the remainder of the scenario. If the roll is a 3, 4 or 5, the pre-registered hex of that OBA module remains undetermined. If the roll is a 6, a direction die and a distance die are rolled. If the resulting hex could be pre-registered by that OBA module, it is considered to be that module's pre-registered hex. In either case, the location of the AR may not be shifted after the die roll.

(7.2) A player that is allowed to throw a die to determine a pre--registered hex is not required to do so.

(8) Conclusion

These ideas have been developed over a period of years as I have played a large number of solitaire games of ASL. Nearly every idea herein has been playtested one or more times by me, although some of the more esoteric variants have only seen the game board once, and not necessarily in this form.

These ideas have been refined with the help of players from the ASL e-mail list. In particular, the author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Rodney Kinney, Tim S. Hundsdorfer, Petteri Pulkkinen, Alain Bogaert and Karsten Droste.

Keep in mind that all of these ideas are not "rules" but rather suggestions, so please feel free to modify them to suit your own tastes. The advantage of playing solitaire is that you can modify the game in whatever fashion that you see fit.

Although this document is in a final form, comments, suggestions, corrections and other ideas that may be useful are welcome. Please contact me at the address below.

Finally, a word about copyrights. This work is copyright 1994 by Mike O'Leary, and all rights are reserved. The ASL community may freely make and distribute non--commercial copies of this document, provided it remains unchanged and this notice appears in all future copies.

Mike O'Leary moleary@math.nwu.edu

Sender: moleary@math.nwu.edu

I have written a fairly complete set of solitaire rules; i.e. games where one plays both sides but needs a mechanism to take care of HIP, minefields, etc. The system has been playtested by about a dozen people, so I think that it is not so bad. I would however be wary of using solely solitaire play to balance a scenario that you are writing; my system has not been playtested sufficiently to claim that a FTF scenario is balanced if and only if the solitaire version is balanced.

Without further ado, I include the (text) version of my rules. Should you desire, I can send you a PostScript version as well.

Good Luck

Mike O'Leary

Included file follows

Solitaire Play of ASL

Mike O'Leary

Summary:

A scheme is presented to allow a solitaire gamer to play scenarios that involve HIP units, dummy stacks, minefields, and other features while losing as little of the ``fog of war" as possible for a solitaire gamer.