

Hit the Beach!

The Newsletter for Southern California ASL Players

Volume 4, Number 1
Jan 1999



Editor's Corner:

by Matt Romey



(Note, this was written before the West Coast Melee, but was not sent out till February. Sorry for the delay. I expect to get another newsletter out in February. -Ed.)

As many of you already know, our founder and president, Kent Smoak, passed away on December 15, 1998 of Adult Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia. I can not think of the words to express my grief at this tragic loss, and assume others feel similarly. Suffice it to say that without Kent there would never have been a SoCal ASL Club, or a West Coast Melee, and many of us would not have made some of the great friendships that have resulted. He shall be missed by us all, I am certain. I have included some excerpts from the pamphlet at his funeral on page 2.

As a tribute to Kent's memory, we have changed the name of our annual tournament to *The Kent Smoak Memorial West Coast Melee*.

A new president. Rodney Kinney has graciously offered to take up the reigns of the SoCal ASL Club Presidency. He finished up the arrangements for this year's West Coast Melee, and has taken control of the club funds. I hope to have more information regarding club business next month. Stay tuned.

Open gaming. There are no scheduled open gaming sessions as of now, but there has been a suggestion for regular open gaming at two spots. First, we hope to have a monthly meeting at Brookhurst hobby in Garden Grove set up very soon. This is a central location for most of Orange County and Southern LA county. Second, Dave Rosner has also offered the use of the recreation facility at his condo on a periodic basis. We'll have to solidify this, but I believe that he was hoping to hold an open gaming ever 2-3 months. This is central to those in the valley and northern LA. Stay tuned for more details.

Newsletter. I am stepping forward as editor of the newsletter. I hope to get one out every month. I can't do it all without submissions, however. I beg of you! *Please help me out and send some submissions!* Email is the preferred method at maromey@mmm.com. Otherwise, call me at (949)-723-1665.

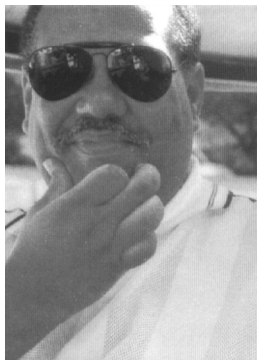
Challenge Ladder. Robert Hammond has volunteered to coordinate it from now on. He has decided to make it last for one year, with West Coast Melee being the cutoff date. Thus, February marks the beginning of a new Challenge year, so WCM games can count for challenge points! Get playing!

Here are the rules:

- 1) Only games against current SoCal ASL Club members count.
- 2) All club tournament games count.
- 3) All play between members count unless agreed against beforehand.
- 4) You can play the same opponent only twice during the same calendar month. However, tournament games do not count for this rule.
- 5) There is no limit on the total amount of games per calendar month.
- 6) A minimum of 12 games must be played against 10 different opponents during the Challenge Cup period to be eligible for an award.
- 7) Team play is ineligible.
- 8) There will two winners, one the for "Finesse Champion" the other for "Gonzo Champion".
 - The Gonzo competition encourages frequent play: 5 points for a win, 1 point for a loss.
 - The Finesse contest goes to him with the "best" record. "Best" is determined by a probability formula: whose record would be hardest to achieve by flipping coins (for example, a 10-3 record is better by this measure than a 6-1 record).
 - Both awards will be based off the same game record:
- 9) Any questions or disagreements with standings, contact the Challenge Cup meister, preferably in writing.

See page 2 for last year's results

Memories of Kent



KENT SEVIL SMOAK entered the world on December 10, 1952. He attended Los Angeles High School where he began his passion for photography with the school newspaper.

Kent obtained a BA from Pepperdine university in Journalism and Ethnic Studies. He was featured in "Who's Who" among students in American Universities and Colleges for the Dean's List, State Competition, Best Column Award, Best Photographer and Sports Photography honorable Mention.

His interests were wide spread. He enjoyed scuba diving, photography and ASL War Games. He was an avid traveler who explored many parts of the world with his camera in hand. Kent was a Senior Systems Analyst with united Airlines for 26 years. Most of his life was spent in Los Angeles, except for 15 years in the windy city of Chicago.

Kent leaves to cherish his memories: his parents, Ruby and Sevel Smoak; a sister, Kimberly Berry; nieces, nephews, god-children and a host of relatives and friends. He will truly be missed by all who knew him.



Kent and ASL

ASL is the ultimate war game as not other can match its combination of beauty, detail and excitement. Kent came to us from Chicago, saw our club in a shambles and took the reigns to organize us into a premier ASL Club. As our club president, Kent was greatly respected for his steadfast leadership and rantastic organizational abilities. We will always be grateful to Kent and to have known him. His dedication and hard work brought a lot of us together that share common interests, several of which I am pleased to call my friends. Kent will b e sorely missed and we will all remember him fondly - and as a friend.

ASL Southern California Chapter

1998 Challenge Ladder Results

Congrdulations to Robert Hammond, 1998's winner! The slate is now wiped clean for next year (see page 1 for details). Good luck everybody!

NAME	GAMES (RECORD)	POINTS
Mr. Kent Smoak	11 (6-5)	36
R.Hammond*	27 (13-14)	79
C.Hammond	16 (7-9)	44
Rodney Kinney	10 (7-3)	38
Scott Thompson	09 (5-4)	29
Cloyde Angell	07 (4-3)	23
Bryan Earll	07 (4-3)	23
Paul Simonsen	07 (4-3)	23
Herman Frettlahr	06 (4-2)	22
Karl Johnson	09 (3-6)	21
Sheldon Ryland	04 (4-0)	20
Ed Zeman	04 (4-0)	20
Joe Concepcion	06 (3-3)	18
John Knowles	04 (3-1)	16
Douglas Creutz	04 (3-1)	16
Chris Nielsen	04 (3-1)	16
B.Liesemeyer	03 (3-0)	15
Dave Reinking	06 (2-4)	14
Robert Feinstein	04 (2-2)	12
Jim Aikens	03 (2-1)	11
Ron Mosher	03 (2-1)	11
Randy Rossi	03 (2-1)	11
Dan Plachta	03 (2-1)	11
Dave Coleman	05 (1-4)	09
Brian Abela	03 (1-2)	07
Mark Neukom	02 (1-1)	06
Chris Castellana	04 (0-4)	04
David Nicholas	03 (0-3)	03
Bruce Kirkaldy	03 (0-3)	03
Robert ST. Clair	02 (0-2)	02
Eric Morton	02 (0-2)	02
Francis Hardiman	01 (0-1)	01
Matt Romey	01 (0-1)	01
Chris Taylor	01 (0-1)	01
Eric Visnowski	01 (0-1)	01

* = Challenge Ladder winner

See page 1 for this years new Challenge Ladder rules!

Scenario Analysis:

By
Matt Romey



ASL 84: Round One

Rating: 55% Pro-German

Red Barricades in Warsaw ... in '39?! That's about what this amounts to, as the crafty but brittle Germans have to play smash-mouth ASL against dug-in defenders, taking Warsaw house by house, room by room. Who'd 'a thunk it coming from the Poles, who give out as much as they take? A true slugfest!

Polish:

Advantages: Fortifications, AT Guns, HIP
Disadvantages: Immobility, VC, time.

The crux for the Poles in this scenario is to choose ahead of time where your last stand will be. This requires counting the VC buildings, and falling back to a pre-planned area containing enough building hexes to guarantee a victory. There are 35 buildings on in the VC area, distinctly separated between two boards, 45 (20 hexes) and 20 (15 hexes). The German needs to control 18 building hexes to win. You can do the math, but assuming you lose only three hexes of board 45 (pretty likely) you need to control some of both boards to win.

You don't have enough to defend it all, however. In fact, you can't. Since you don't know where the German will attack, it then becomes necessary to defend a portion of the map to the hilt, and create decoys on the less defended sites to confuse the German as to the location of your true resistance. Board 45 looks like the most likely location for this stand, as it has more buildings, although I'm sure a case can be made for setting up heavy on board 20 as well.

The Poles have tons of fortifications, most important being the fortified buildings. You are sort of limited by SSR5, which ties them to the AT Guns, but there's enough for everybody to get some nice defensible terrain. I would recommend placing the wire so that it is placed in a row in front of fortified buildings. This further strengthens your strongpoints. If you spread the wire

out, you allow the German to either bypass them or clear them at his leisure. For instance, fortifying the 45Y7 block, and placing wire from 45Y9 to 45Z6 creates an intimidating nut to crack.

This block also exemplifies the drawback to the Polish position on board 45 – once the Poles are stuck in a block, it is very difficult to get out. Broken Polish units are going to have little chance of routing to safety. Thus, hedgehogs set to die in place is the order of the day. Any pickets set up front will be steamrollered by the German's superior firepower.

The roadblocks are probably better used to block LOS than to stop AFVs. The AA7/Z6 hexsides and the AA10/Z9 are nice spots. This allows for a little more leeway with lateral movement once the fight is engaged.

Germans:

Advantages: armor, engineers, initiative
Disadvantages: CVP cap, B11 MAs.

These Germans are set to put the serious hurt on the Poles in this scenario. If not for the Polish fortifications and AT Guns, this would be a total walkover. I have listed initiative as an advantage, because what happens in this scenario is similar to what happens in many other city scenarios. The defender must spread out, thus is overwhelmed numerically, trying to inflict punishment against attackers in stone buildings. Because his units are spread out, he must do this without use of heavy, concentrated fire. Thus, the German can pick and choose before play where to attack, and be assured of immediate local superiority.

I would recommend as the Germans to set up some serious VC building goals early on, and stick to them. I wouldn't bother too much with a broad front attack; only send flankers out to interdict movement from board to board. Set up some kill stacks, but send everybody else out on hunting expeditions. Move, search, probe with fire, surround lone Polish units and force them to surrender.

There sure are a lot of AFVs (11 in all) but the preponderance of B11s means many will be out of commission by the end game. It's best not to attempt repair of MAs as Recalled AFVs count towards the CVP cap. Many may be wary of this CVP cap, but you will really have to lose a lot of AFVs to start approaching it. Try taking it easy with the AFVs for the first few turns; lay low and let the infantry weed out the AT Guns. In the last half of the game, the vehicles can swoop in and cut route paths as well as sleaze-freeze the defenders.

The DCs are best used for clearing wire, which is critical towards opening up lanes of advance at the Polish choke points. Placing from a stone building is low risk, considering it is an action in

the building, and only costs 1 MF to place in open ground. An effects DR of 5 eliminates the wire, which is good enough odds for me considering there are three of them in the OB.

I like this scenario because both sides have a variety of strategies to try out. There is room for error (and creativity) on both sides. Despite the slight pro-German bias, I consider it a good tournament scenario, because most likely the better player will win.



ASL 90: Pride and Joy

Rating: 80% Pro-Italian

Numerous Italians defend against a hoard of Greek cavalry, stumbling pea-shooter tanks, and horse-drawn AT Guns pulled in on sleds. The monster scenario of the Doomed Battalions module, this one screams to be played.

Italians:

Advantages: Numbers, stone buildings, MGs, INF Gun
Disadvantages: Conscript reinforcements.

I think that this scenario is yet another example of overcompensating for the Italians in an ASL scenario. Despite their usual brittleness and low ELR, the Italians in this scenario are armed to the teeth, and are going to be very hard to dislodge from the board 43 VC area.

I believe I have a framework for an optimum setup for the Italians that is practically unbeatable. If someone wants to prove me wrong, I would gladly take up the challenge; but I just don't see it happening. Here's what I would do:

Setup all your dummies and a few pickets (1-3 squads plus one LMG) on board 2 and/or the northern board edge, to choke up the approach to board 43. These guys will die, so get as many -2 mounted shots as possible before their demise. Hopefully they will slow things down a bit. Put 2-3 more squads on the edge of the board 17 orchard to block the direct route to the walled complex. Keep them concealed as long as possible to keep the threat of multiple -2 shots in board 17 a reality.

I like 2W4 as a spot for the HIP Gun, which will enable it to either place a tasty resid in 2V4, which

Continued on page 4

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can't be bypassed, or to fire on unsuspecting stacks of cavalry that think they are safe out of LOS of all Italians. Other than that placing, somewhere on board 43 with an open range of fire would be a nice place for the Gun too.

Now here is the crux of the defense: 1. Put at least 3-4 entrenchments in/adjacent to the road next to the woods on board 43 (P4-R3). Place a few squads in here, but leave room for the reinforcements, because they will do the bulk of the defending here. Make buku entrenchment attempts once the game starts. Don't forget to place a leader in this area. 2. Place just about everybody else in the walled compound on board 43, including the HMG, at least one MMG, the 8-1 and the bulk of the elite squads.

The key here is to ignore the building VC, and concentrate on the Greek obligation of clearing the board 43 road of infantry. That's a tall order even for the best of troops, and 10 turns is not as long as you think. Maybe I'm missing something, but I just don't see how the Greeks can crack this defense. Chuck Hammond and I played this twice, and both times it wasn't even close. As he said "that scenario is f*&#ing unwinnable (for the Greeks)."

Greeks:

Advantages: Morale, mobility, cavalry charge.

Disadvantages: Mounted -2 DRM, tough VC, Ammo shortage.

These may look like good troops, but even with a Morale of 8 they are not up to the task. The only possible way to have a chance in this scenario is to stay on the horses. In most scenarios featuring cavalry, it is wise to ditch the horses and go it on foot. But there just isn't enough time or cover to try that in this situation, so you must stay mounted. Use your mobility to your advantage; act like a wild man with your cavalry and attempt to get close enough to engage the enemy. Use charges whenever possible. Deploy squads and charge with half-squads, charge with leaders, charge wave after wave in hopes of getting somebody in the enemy's hex, so he can't fire out, then move in for the kill. You'll take heavy casualties, but you are sure to lose the game otherwise. I still haven't figured out how to root out the board 43 walled complex, so good luck.

These AFVs are just about the worst you will ever see in ASL. Red MP of 13, breakdown of 11 (with ammo shortage makes it a circled 10), radioless with inexperienced crews (so they need to roll 6 or less to use non-platoon movement), can not fire while CE, and are recalled if stunned.

They are basically useless except for late game sleaze freezes, so try to keep them around for a while. I wouldn't bother to fire the MA (it's only a 4 FP anyway) nor would I stop them for fear of the dreaded 12 mechanical reliability DR.

The ART Guns aren't much better. They really do belong on the top of hill 621 in order to gain adequate LOS to the battlefield, but the can't possibly be unhooked till the top of turn five. Thus they will only be in action for the last half of the game, which is too late to take advantage of the early game period in which the Italians are outnumbered. Plus, the Guns suffer Ammo Shortage, thus they have a circled 10 breakdown as well. (There just isn't much good to say about this force, is there?)

After all this, though, I must say that this scenario is still worth taking a look at. Even though I believe it to be lopsided, it still offers some interesting choices for either side. We don't see scenarios like this anymore; one that is so big and furious that anything can happen - who knows, maybe someone will take my 80% pro-Italian rating and cram it down my throat some day. This scenario is big enough and wild enough for it to happen. Anyone game?

- Next month: A review of ASL Journal #1



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