



At The Point

The Journal of AS

#6

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BULK RATE
U.S POSTAGE
PAID
SHALLOTTE, NC
PERMIT NO. 126

CHARLES FARGO
4841 HAWKSHEAD PARK
SARASOTA FL 34241

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AT THE POINT is published 10 times a year by Marc Hanna, PO Box 4401, Calabash, NC 28470.

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FAUST PRATTLES FOR A SHORTER TIME THAN USUAL

My fellow ASL players, welcome to another issue of *At The Point*. Yes, believe it or not, the journey across the U.S. was a success (we survived) and we are now holed up on the beach in southern North Carolina or northern South Carolina, take your pick. Ready after several instructive duals with some of the Ohio greats, I look forward to meeting many of you at Avaloncon, in trial by fire or trial by beer (or saki for you Pacific theatre buffs).

I managed to get my hands on a copy of the ASL Annual '91 -- finally. I must have stopped in five or six game stores across the country to no avail. Well -- did you know that the game stores in Wisconsin focus too heavily on the role-playing stuff?

Anyway, a lot of great scenarios from Mr. Jon Mishcon about the Market-Garden engagements. The only problem in some of them are the victory conditions. What is this "sole occupation" piffle? Are we to deduce that this means the same as control as per A26.12? Here, this phrase is used in conjunction with building control; but Jon also uses it in reference to orchard hexes et al. Shall we take it as worded: that someone actually must occupy the hexes and leave good order units in them as required? Note that "control" as defined (also somewhat ambiguously) in the rulebook never requires such occupation, it is (mostly) sufficient to be the "last side" to have entered a hex or building. Whatever. Your tournament directors can thrash it out, after which I suggest they write Mr. Mishcon and ask him to clarify his jargon.

Mr. Nixon exhibits his usual flair for the written word in the latest effort from Avalon Hill; both he and Rex are due a word of congratulations, so.....CONGRATULATIONS!

All readers are encouraged to take a close look at Mark's article about the Incremental Infantry Fire Table ('IIFT'-- as published in the first ASL Annual) in the latest Annual. Be thankful that we have a person like him (and he's certainly

not the only one) that takes appropriate effort to examine such variants and point out their fallacies. Many people originally thought (count honorable Faust among them) that the IIFT was truly incremental simply because it was called "incremental". Oh, it was so neat-- no more making stacks to get that certain FP, no more holding fire on that LMG because its fire didn't get you to that next IPT column-- the IIFT took care of that.

El poppycocko.

It would be great if it were true-- I subscribe to the school of thought that an extra LMG SHOULD make a difference. Unfortunately, the IIFT is simply not incremental enough to really do that. There are certain FP columns on the IFT that just don't add enough oomph to the shot to justify the risk of breaking the LMG. SMART players are back to square one: making a stack that gives you the most for your FP money. Nothing is gained by using the IIFT except increased lethality.

Now, Mr. George Windau, a mathematician of some (ASL) repute, has undertaken a remarkable analysis establishing this and other amazing facts. Hi George! This analysis will be provided in ATP in the near future, so don't just take my word for it. Meanwhile, at least with the newly clarified firelane rules, there IS a reason to fire that LMG. On the minus side, AFVs are no longer allowed to try for dispenser smoke and smoke grenades at the same time, nor are they allowed to lob the latter one hex away. So, those of you simpering about IIFT utilization, imagine how maneuverists feel about that!! Y'all grin and bear it---Faust.

PS: Note that, due to a more condense format, ATP provides the same amount of material in 16 pages as perviously done in 18.

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FAUST'S FORUM

Dear Marc,

[...]

I have obtained Xerox copies of your first four newsletters from my friend ----- [....]. He felt that you would not mind me taking copies since I was going to subscribe, and also wanted to become involved in the scenario design and review program [...].

Sincerely yours, -----

Dear Mr. -----,

It was no small regret felt when I read your letter concerning how you had obtained back issues of At The Point. While I'm sure that Mr. ----- had only the best of intentions in mind, I've realized that such copies do endanger the magazine's long term existence; I'm sure you can appreciate the reasons for this without overblown elucidation on my part. I intend to ask individuals to refrain from doing this in the future, and request that you return these copies to me immediately. Alternatively, please send a check for \$20 which is the price for 4 back issues. Your subscription order will be activated once this matter is resolved.

It is possible that you find my position on this matter somewhat harsh; please understand that I am in a very awkward position. Back issues are \$5 each, several people have gladly paid this price. Why should I ask these forthright individuals (who no doubt have good friends who could make copies for them also, but chose not to get them that way) to subsidize the grey market activity? The back issue revenue is a windfall for At The Point which is instrumental in recouping some of the financial loss involved in its generation; if thwarted in this way, I am forced to raise subscription prices for everyone else.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in prompt resolution of this matter, and thanks again for your intent to subscribe. [...]

READERS:

I don't mind at all if you make a copy of a SINGLE issue as a sample for your friends to peruse. However, I've got to draw the line at wholesale reproduction. It just isn't fair to those others who gladly paid the back issue price, nor those who will have to bear the burden of increased subscription prices---FAUST.

Marc,

Enclosed is another \$15.00 check for my subscription. One thing that I would like to know is how long in real time did the PBM replay take. I would like to get an idea of how long an average scenario takes to PBM. Hopefully, this Fall I will be able to become more active in PBM and PBEM, by then I should be settled in at Graduate School, and have time to devote to these interests.

Best Regards, Kevin Klausmeyer

Hah! You'll be lucky if you have time to ~~at~~ once in Grad School-- at least that's how I felt; of course, I was working full time too.

Anyway, an average PBM game takes about 6 months to complete if both players are reasonably regular with their responses. PBEM can be much shorter; recently, Mike Stachowski and I finished a tournament game of "Silence That Gun" in about three weeks (he beat me, too; an excellent defender, Mike is-- I like to think I'm not a lousy attacker).

All in all, PBEM is the way to go, especially if you have room to keep your games set up.

Marc,

Hey, this "At The Point" 'zine looks great! I think the publishing schedule and the editorial tone are big pluses. Enclosed is \$15 for my first year. I do have a couple of suggestions.

1. Look into a bulk mailing permit. It will save you big \$.
2. Continue to avoid scenario publication. It's very time intensive

and would probably slow down your aggressive pace.

Thanks for putting in the effort.

Pierce Ostrander.

I had always intended to go bulk rate once Amy and I had settled down (my guess is we would need to get a new permit in North Carolina). I hope it will save some money. As for scenarios, we are going to publish them, but I remind all of you that scenarios are not primary to the purpose of ATP, so the schedule will NEVER be held up for the sake of getting a scenario in.

Dear Marc,

[...] Thanks for sending the second issue with the check back and trusting me. Your second issue was superb and I enjoyed everything you did in it, especially the "interruptions" in any article where you think the author's wrong. I hope you continue to do so as it makes the article more interesting when a point is made by you, even if you prove to be wrong sometimes [Faust, wrong?!!!, Never!!].

My only problem with ATP is the letter asking for more ASL scenarios to keep ASL "fresh and interesting". I'm totally against any new scenarios and tho I'll accept ATP and them if printed, I really feel Marc that you'll be making a big mistake in encouraging them.

First off, I have not heard of anyone anywhere who's played every scenario put out by Avalon Hill for just ASL (which includes all Generals, ASL Annuals and modules). I'm leaving out Deluxe ASL, On All Fronts, In Contact scenarios to give you an idea of how low a percentage of ASL players have played all "official" non- DASL scenarios. Say 10%, to be kind. [...]

Really Marc, the ASL system's flooded and new scenarios won't make but a few ATPers jump for joy as [will] better play articles, replays, tactics for beginners and hopefully player's aid charts are more interesting as are the "do you know" rules reviews.

But if you are forced to put in scenarios, how about "MONSTER" sized ones? There are few around if any and most in SL-GI. Tho the hardest to learn and playtest, I feel [them to be] the most attractive to ATPers even if we don't overplay them (as most ASLers can't even play what we got now!). My best recommendation is to have ATPers vote on ATP's content as it'll settle any doubts you have.

Also, why not a tactical problem where readers offer different solutions and you simply print [them]?

Again, Marc, super issue and best to your great mag.

Robert De Condo.

The fact that probably no-one has played all available scenarios is little reason to avoid offering new ones. Who is to say that all scenarios out there now suit the taste of everybody? Only certain ones are "classics" in my mind, and I'll bet everyone has a different idea about what those classics are. Most of us look forward to new scenarios; this is one of the great attractions of the ASL Annual.

I like your ideas concerning a 'tactical problem' analysis and monster scenarios. Both of these require considerable time in design and testing. Any takers? Sorry, Bob, our small group can't do it all.



ASL MYTHS

#2-- SNIPERS

Eric Baker

Just how deadly are those snipers, anyway? This is a valid question, the answer of which may surprise you. We've all seen or played the scenario where the Sniper is the most effective counter on the map, taking out our opponents leadership cadre with more efficiency than a 150mm OBA concentration. But was it really a reflection of the Sniper's effectiveness, or was it Lady Luck having a bad day?

The following chart shows the odds, as a percent chance of a sniper being activated (that is, with either a sniper dr of 1 or 2), as well as the chance of activation resulting in a KIA on a lone SMC, for each SAN.

SAN	Activation Chance	SMC KIA
2	<1%	<.75%
3	2%	1%
4	2.5%	1.5%
5	3.5%	2%
6	4.5%	2.5%
7	5.5%	3%

As this chart shows, the raw odds of being taken out or otherwise affected by a sniper run from practically non-existent (SAN 2), to about one in twenty (SAN 7). A rule of thumb is: SAN 2 or 3, ignore it and do what you want, SAN 4 or 5, if all that will get you a result is a 2,3 or 4 and the situation isn't desperate, forgo those frivolous shots; SAN 6 or 7, only fire what must be fired, use large fire groups. At the upper range of SAN, you're looking at one in twenty rolls generating a sniper result. Given that you'll be making rolls as a result of your opponents fire (PTC or MC), try to minimize the rolls you can choose to make.

Of course, one way to offset the risk of SAN attacks is to practice good Sniper prevention tactics. Perhaps we'll see an article in ATP on this topic sometime soon.

[Thanks, Eric. Sniper avoidance is a complex issue: for example, making large firegroups often leads to large stacks which, in turn, can mean more rolls due to your opponents fire on those stacks. Some players insist that important stacks (those containing MGs or -2/-3 leaders) should be flanked with half squads destined to absorb sniper fire. I'm not totally convinced that this isn't just a waste of valuable manpower-- those dormant HS could be doing something else. I, too, look forward to a treatise on Sniper prevention.--- FAUST]



INTRODUCING THE EMPEROR'S FINEST

(and the pacific theatre of fun)

Kurt Martin

Please allow me to show my true colors right off the bat. I'm a big fan of the Japanese. But not so much a fan of modern Toyota-toting Japanese as of belligerent 1940's Zero pilots. And not a casual armchair fan. I've been seriously, loudly rooting for them since I was a little kid, when I screamed at the TV, wishing they'd finally bulldoze those damn fighting Seabees, pick off John Wayne, shoot down Robert Conrad and definitely stop getting their butts kicked at Midway. But oh, the of Tora Tora Tora!

Friends and family have learned to just chuckle and go along, since I'm a rational American boy most of the time. Of course, my interest hasn't been limited to military history, so eventually I got to the point where I just had to go and learn Japanese. No problem. I've been thinking that I might be some sort of strangely reincarnated samurai.

In game terms, all of this means that I know the names of obscure Japanese destroyers, will usually choose to play the Japanese side, even when (gasp!) the Germans are still available, and just love to see those yellow counters wiping out the khaki or green ones. And, of course, I fantasize about The Perfect Banzai Charge.

The greatly anticipated release of Code of Bushido with the Japanese OB and the first part of the Pacific rules Chapter C was thus an occasion of great seriousness for me. Here at last were the heroes of the Emperor, lined up in perfect cardboard formation. And what passionate cardboard! Ready to

faithfully recreate the great campaigns of 1941 and '42! Burma! Malaya! The Philippines! I set aside some time to be alone with the Emperor's men. I lifted the pale yellow counters out of the box with great reverence.

But what's with these Scenarios? Where's the passion? Where's the glory? Here we have eight scenarios, (nine, if you count last summer's "Intimate War" in the Annual) but the Japanese are only really on the attack in two or three of them. And none are the stuff of great legends. Of course, we're missing some of the real meat of Pacific legend. Iwo Jima, Tarawa and Guadalcanal were all fought at least largely by Marine forces, who won't show their faces until, I figure, Christmas 1992.

[Try Fall, 1991 if you can believe the rumors...]

But wait! There's much more to the far east battles than coral and jarheads. Far better than Germans driving tanks in pursuit of running Frenchmen, there remain the classic scenes of Pacific Blitz - pushing bicycles through the rain toward Singapore, crawling through a tangle of jungle undergrowth on New Guinea and jubilantly raising that ol' rising sun on Corregidor.

And overall, while the German retreat generally gained speed toward the end, making serious locked-horns battles less likely, the beginning of their decline only saw the Japanese dig in deeper. I know we can all look forward to a new brand of ASL with great, messy scenarios, not ending with New Guinea or Bougainville or Guam, but running right up to the hot summer of 1945 on Okinawa. So if all of the potential Japanese glory didn't come in the box, it will simply be up to me and other loyal fans to design them, be it at the library or in DYO.

Just some of the goodies to enjoy: Enough gnarly terrain and fortifications to make Stalingrad look like open ground - tunnels, caves and pillboxes galore. Beautiful clear fields of fire across rice paddies and beaches full of scrambling Yankees. Choking thick jungles for point blank, bayonet-and-grenade fighting. And with the Japanese Navy unlikely to show up for a last-minute rescue.

(which the gallant defenders would never accept anyway), nothing to do for months on those rocky little islands but dig in deeper for the obligatory last stand. Requiring your enemies to wipe you out to the man really puts the screws on them.

Just a word about the scenarios. We have one against partisans, two against Russians, two against Yankees and three against British. They are good for variety, with one set entirely on desert boards ("Red Star, Red Sun"), one at night ("Shoestring Ridge") and fully four that feature the sort of jungle terrain you might expect from Pacific scenarios. "On The Kokoda Trail" and "The Bushmasters" might be the best of these for showing the Japanese do their classic routines. Missing from the bunch is any sort of quick infantry fight that might be suitable for a tournament.

But hey, let's look at the guys themselves. The Japanese counters are as attractive as we've come to expect with the ASL series. In keeping with the tradition of coloring the infantry counter mix with the same shade as the cloth of that nation's uniforms, the Japanese counters are printed on a dusty yellow background which contrasts nicely with that of the Allies, if you're not too color blind. The leaders look suitably heroic, if a bit stereotypical.

The Japanese only really come in one squad type - your average rifle squad, with a range of four and morale running from 6 to 8. No engineers, no SMG guys. The lack of other than rifle units is a bit of a handicap, and unfortunate for jungle fighting. Of course, next to the complication of the German OB, this can be refreshing.

Looking at the rules for Japanese infantry, we see that one big fact that makes the Japanese so unusual and formidable - their squads don't break. Failing a morale check just means, usually, that there are fewer guys on their feet in the squad, but the survivors do not break. One merely flips the squad's counter over to reveal a reduced-strength, good order squad. Very interesting. These guys might be interesting people to give demo charges to. And the classic Banzai charge is similar to, but much better than any old crummy Human Wave. For one

thing, it only requires a single unit, not an entire line of MMC. A Banzai can be especially effective against cowardly, broken Americans.

[Those same Americans, Good Order, are totally awesome in CC vs these 'heroes', fellas, so don't get any misconceptions...F]

But the Japanese inability to bend means that sooner or later they will snap for good. This makes them a fascinating force to lead, but there can be some difficulty in preventing them from evaporating before the end of the game. In any case, a broken Japanese conscript half squad is about as pitiful as a Russian one.

The Japanese also enjoy several other interesting and historical advantages in ASL. Concealment gain is easier, they are often granted HIP, even as the attacker, and 1st line and elite are stealthy. In a DYO, the Japanese are given purchasing advantages for both snipers (half cost) and fortifications (generally cheaper pillboxes, etc.) Once again, I think we'll see Pacific ASL really shine when scenarios and DYO continue to bring about historical configurations - dug-in, hidden and stealthy heroes of the Empire being rooted out by bumbling but heavily-armed and well-supported Americans, as each side focuses on its strengths. (This is not to mention Japanese Supermen routing all of the Allies with well-coordinated early war combined arms forces.)

With their +4 modifier on the Heat of Battle table, only snake eyes will create a Japanese hero (unless Elite). Needless to say, even Italian hero counters will see more use. The +4 also means that a 'positive' result from heat of battle will only occur 16.7% of the time, that is, on a roll of 4 or less, since 5 and higher will usually send the unit in question berserk.

[Not always negative, either....]

On the other hand, there is the anti-tank hero that only the Japanese can have. Suffice it to say that it's a guy running at the tank to personally do it in. A potent, but limited weapon, rolled for like a Panzerfaust, but otherwise quite dissimilar. This is, of course, a glorious way to go.

(Special note: I accomplished two dreams in my first two Japanese scenarios - I created a hero with my first Heat of Battle, and I took out a tank with my first Tank Hunter. Ii, na?)

An unhappy surprise for fans of the good guys is the DYO cost of Japanese units. Ordnance and vehicles are no bargain, compared with rough equivalents (such as Italian vehicles and Russian guns). And Japanese squads are only outpriced by the Finns, who have a number of advantages such as self-rallying. Add the cost for one (rifle) squad each of elite, 1st line and 2nd line/green/conscript, we find the following nationality totals:

Finns	45	
Allied Minors		26
Japanese	39	
Russians		22
US	33	
Partisans		18
Germans	30	
Italians		18
British	30	
Axis Minors		17

In addition to their high cost, the Japanese 1st line squads are only as strong in firepower and range as Russian 1st line rifle squads, which cost only seven points versus the Japanese cost of 13. This means, of course, that point for point, the various Allies can put a powerful hurt on a force that can't rally and come back.

In their favor on a point comparison, Japanese squads do have a smoke exponent (1 for 1st line, 2 for elite). There is also this little tidbit: Say you have a 458 squad of British in a pillbox. An HMG fires on them and maintains its rate. The 458 breaks. The HMG fires again, the 458 fails its MC and is reduced. On the third shot, the remaining half squad fails and is removed from play. And after the first shot, the enemy was free to run, since the British were broken. The pillbox is going to change hands.

Now if you put a Japanese 448 in there, it will fail its morale checks with the same rolls, but look at the results: After the first failure it becomes a 348 good order reduced squad. After the second it is a 238 good order half squad. After the third it is simply

a broken HS. Finally, the fourth failure evaporates it. This can really make those DYO points go a long way, especially since 'normal' squads often don't have time to rally in short scenarios anyway. And it's going to be plenty frustrating to try to root these guys out of a pillbox in prep fire so as to guarantee safe movement. Just give me that tunnel, pillbox and a few of the Emperor's finest, please.

Heavy support weapons such as MMG and HMG come with a separate 228 crew counter. Naturally, these help compensate for the heavy cost of squads. The crews are also good for lower quality Japanese units that could use the tougher morale units for these important weapons, but there is an attendant rule that penalizes non-crew infantry when using them. Like squads, Japanese gun crews have a reduced-strength side. In this case, when flipped they change from 228 to 128.

With breakdown numbers of 11 for LMG, MMG and HMG, the decent range and firepower of Japanese machine guns may not be in the game for as long as it might. They are pretty portable, though, with even the heavy weighing in at only 4PP. The Japanese also have a great but rare .50 cal, with a 12 breakdown. But most of all, they have the way nifty "knee mortar." This is the jungle infantryman's best friend, equipped as it is with the possibility of fire at range 1, WP, smoke and IR. It's not too heavy and they are allotted one for every four squads. Good fun. In tight terrain, this is the best mortar in the game, challenged only by the American 60.

[The 60mm is really nowhere near as good, having no smoke and a minimum range of '3'. MTR fire is prohibited from dense jungle, but with a minimum range of at most '2', it is possible to set up a line of squads "inside" the jungle to act as spotters adjacent to mortars outside the tree line. For comparative purposes in jungle terrain, I'd prefer to have the British LT MTR, with its minimum range of '2' and war-long smoke capability, than the American version. That is, unless I can get at least '3' of them and apply the benefits of U.S. Ordnance Note #1--Faust]

They are a threat just by being numerous, and with tree bursts likely, they are nothing to sneeze at.

Japanese leaders have the same great but fragile characteristics as most of the SW. A major advantage is their similarity to commissars (raise morale by one, no desperation morale, get angry with units that fail to rally). What little rallying the Japanese player needs to do (since only half squads can break) will be over quickly, one way or the other.

Looking at the following leader exchange table for the Japanese is very revealing, especially when compared to that of other nationalities. Of course, all but the Finns and Japanese share the same table, so our comparison can be quite simple.

H1.82 Leader Exchange Table

DR	Most		
	Nations	Japanese	Finns
2	10-3	10-2	10-1
3	10-2	10-2	10-0
4	9-2	10-1	9-1
5	9-1	10-1	9-0
6	8-1	10-0	8-0
7	8-1	9-1	8-0
8	8-0	9-1	None
9	8-0	9-0	None
10	None	9-0	None
11	None	None	None
12	6+1	8+1	None
Avg.	8.5/-1.0	9.4/-0.7	9.0/-0.33
(Morale/ Modifier)			
Chance:	85%	95%	58%

Chance represents the odds of getting a replacement leader on the table. As we see from this comparison, the Japanese have pretty high leader morale, but are weaker in modifiers. This is pretty clear from just looking at the counters. It is interesting to note that a Japanese 8+1 isn't as awful as it sounds. Certainly it's better than a 6+1, in that due to his commissar-like effect on the men, he's more like a 8-0. The fact that leaders are also allotted to every 4.5 Japanese squad equivalents (or is it 5? Check the rules vs. the section G card),

[Mac-- check G1.66, do we use '4.5' or '5' in DYO??]

second only to the German 4, ensures that plenty of them will be around at the start of a scenario. The fact that any failed morale check makes them check for a (quite possibly fatal) wound suggests that not too many may survive to the end of a scenario. The guys just refuse to duck and cover!

Artillery

With battery access of 5 black, 2 red, the Japanese OBA is the equal of Russian and German, but definitely inferior to the British and American both in access and barrel sizes. But hey, it's much, much less expensive - 1944 Japanese 80+ costs 73 points, '44 British 80+ is 114, and American is 131. A quick look at the OBA availability chart will show this to be a good weapon for the Japanese, if they can use it. And the observer will never run away!

Vehicles and Ordnance

We'll only look at pieces (generally) that have a RF of 1.2 or less at some point during the war. One way of measuring these weapons is to compare them to similar weapons in other nations' OB's, and look at relative DYO cost. Readers may notice that the most glaring deficiency is the lack of AT capability. While many weapons can conjure up a decent TK, at least against light tanks, there is no purpose-built, high TK, special ammo-equipped AT gun. Alas, 'cause the good guys sure could have used one.

[That's what the T-H Heroes are for! Gentlemen, don't forget to use them; when fighting against them, watch out! Against a moving tank these annoying buggers can get a '6' TK or immobilize. That's about a 40% chance....F]

On a less serious note, please don't disparage the Japanese for their lack of creativity in naming their guns and vehicles. If you need help with pronouncing them, just remember that all the vowel sounds are pure (Shi sounds like she, te like tay, so like so, ki like key, etc.) I know you'll get used to calling them Year 41's and all that.

Ordnance

The Type 97 is the classic 81 MTR, with the bonus of White Phosphorus, depletion 5. However, at 32 points, it falls short of the Italian 91 at 28 points, the German at 30, the Russian 82 (all with IR, 88) at 28 and the US (WP8) at 29.

Without going into agonizing detail, this is the sort of point problem with all of the Japanese ordnance. Each piece tends to be just a little more expensive, (as if Japanese industry were working under limitations set by foreign trading partners or something...)

[Wait a minute, Kurt. The extra Point Value is largely due to the crew being tougher than other nationalities....Faust]

The Type 94 Rapid Fire gun is the standard 37L AT. It is no bargain at 31 points. It has no special ammo, and is thus of limited use against the (generally) well-armed Allied tanks it will normally encounter as an AT weapon.

[I dunno--there will be a lot of immobilization shots possible in jungle terrain vs large target tanks...F]

The Type 1 Machine-Moved gun is a 47L AT, for 34 points. It also lacks the special ammo required for a decent TK. And it's about 5 points more expensive than its foreign counterparts.

The Type 92 Infantry gun's 70*, WP5, AP5, H6, M12 and limited mortar capability make it a pretty swell deal at 33 points. This is the ideal rough terrain support gun, and can handle infantry as well as tanks. Similar German, Russian and American weapons cost 34, 30 and 33 points, respectively, but are not nearly as flexible. This gun, combined with its "I won't break" crew and an array of knee mortars, can really make a big mess of pansy American plans.

The Yr 41 Type Mtn Gun is similar, with 75*, WP7, H6, M10 and costs 34, while the Yr 38 Type Field Gun is 75* WP6 but only AP TK 12, and is pretty expensive at 33 points.

The Type 98 H-A Machine Cannon (20L AA, 4IFE) is a bit weak in IFE compared to its British (6) and Russian (6) equivalents, and costs a bit more.

The Type 96 H-A Machine Cannon is a nasty bit of work. Although not too common, these are sure to be serious Marine-choppers on beaches and airfields, where their RF is lower. It comes in three versions - a single mount, double and triple. Each added barrel increases the RF, the cost and the IFE. But imagine the 16FP triple mount, just waiting for those Yankees to cross some open ground 14 hexes away, unsuspecting... The rough German and Russian equivalents are perhaps a bit less expensive, but the no-break Japanese crew is an interesting bonus for such a nasty weapon.

The Type 88 7.5cm Mobile Field High-Angle Gun is, at 41, 12 points more than the British 76, four more than the US 76L and two more than the Russian 76LL. But at least it's a serious AT threat.

Vehicles

Golly, there's no armored personnel carrier here. Oh well, we can go on foot. But just looking at the Japanese AFV, we can see that armor is a real problem. The best you can normally (i.e. without a 1.6 RF) do is the Chi-Ha, with a 3 frontal. Sorry, guys, this is just no contest against a Sherman. Especially given the woozy 57 or 47L MA. The light ground pressure may be nice in rough terrain, but the almost useless Japanese MG's still make these less-than-ideal bets for overruns in most situations. Basically, it's hard to imagine getting much mileage out of these cans. At last, something to make the Italian armor look good.

Type 94 Tankette. Breakdown 11, coaxial - 2FP? Red movement? One man turret? Still too expensive at 23 points. Ditto on the Type 97.

The Type 95 Ha-Go LT would be good for running over broken second line Filipinos in a road hex. But with a 1 armor, 37 MA, 2FP BMG and a cost of 33 points, you might want to buy two elite squads instead.

The Chi-Ro is really just a lumbering pile, hoping to get some hits with its 57* MA on the

infantry target type. Not any kind of AT threat, worthless machine guns. It might be good if opposed by Green Indian troops.

The Type 97 Chi-Ha is just like a real tank without a coaxial MG. Of course, the real tank it's just like is an Italian 14/41, which costs only 36 points, versus the Chi-Ha's 42 (45 with the 47L instead of the silly 57).

Conclusion

One thing to check on all these Japanese tanks is the reverse side. For the most part, they don't have radios. Bummer. But smoke dispensers are a good thing for vehicles that can't take much enemy fire. Generally, when it comes to Japanese AFV, maybe the best bet is to hope some of your crews survive to fight on as infantry. One bonus is that in most scenarios featuring much Japanese armor they'll be more or less unopposed.

[Precisely. Any of the above are just dandy against unsupported infantry--for cutting rout paths, plunging themselves into enemy infantry stacks to "freeze" their fire, armored assaults. If you can scare the American into buying those Shermans, he'll have to pay 70 points for his armor-- which are easily opened up by an A-T hero. Perhaps, relatively, they are a little pricey, but I don't suggest that the readership discard their DYO Japanese AFV purchases out of hand--Faust]

But hey, you have the hardest-marching guys in the world, ready to carry that satchel charge right up to the enemy and set it off, so who needs trucks or AT guns or tanks?

Last Notes

The individual Japanese soldier was the ideal in many ways: unwavering on the attack, resolute in defense and utterly true to his orders. Japanese strategic and tactical leadership, however, was sometimes abysmal. Fortunately, in ASL it is the players who supply the tactics, so at last the Japanese soldier is relieved of his one great historical weakness and allowed to shine as he should.

The Japanese in ASL are tough but brittle. They are generally

decently equipped, as long as you don't need armored transport or armor. They are powerful in stealth, concealment and fortifications. Now I know many of you ASL guys would just as soon do without the cheap support weapons, Molotov armor and foolhardy leaders, but there's no doubting the raw sincerity of sprinting Japanese with fixed bayonets. You gotta love 'em.

So off to the Pacific with you, Yankees. Get ready to be hot and scared and wondering what we Japanese are up to today. Stay alert, because we might be anywhere. Be prepared for us to dish it out and don't forget that we can take it. Yes, sir, you gotta love the Japanese. Banzai, I say. Then repeat as necessary. And should you and I get to play each other some day, be careful if I start to address you solely in the mother tongue - Japanese.



AREA AND ASL

Ronald Berger

"...I recently rushed to join AREA once I saw how much more important and relevant it has become since AH gave it much needed impetus several years ago. It seems that the general consensus is that people are in A.R.E.A. for many good reasons, and point ratings is not the most important of these."

This quote, taken out-of-context from a GENIE BB posting by Marc Hanna, best sums up the new feeling that the A.R.E.A. rating system has developed. I have been a member of A.R.E.A. for the last decade, joining in the early 1980's and first being listed on the Top 50 in 1984. The surest thing that you will gain from joining this "club" is an indication of the level of ability and maturity of your PB(e)M opponents.

Once your point rating is "verified", and you have the 'alpha' portion of the rating established, opponents will know at a glance who has many PB(e)M games completed, and who plays as a "gentleman". With the new specific

numbers you will find people interested in the game you want to play. I will stay with my hard earned "non"-specific rating since I choose to compete in many different Avalon Hill games.

Many players have very limited FTF playing time and without PB(e)M would be playing solitaire most of the time. This is perhaps the most compelling reason for PB(e)M and A.R.E.A. Due to the efforts of Russ Gifford and many others we are seeing the beginning of an explosion in ASL play, mediated by PB(e)M and A.R.E.A.

A yearly tournament is taking place on Compuserve as well as on GENIE; it has been fun to get in on the action early. My best opponent is a physician in Pennsylvania named Phil Pomerantz. I never would have played this excellent opponent if it were not for AREA and PB(e)M. By joining the action you will have the opportunity to face some high calibre ASL players without having to leave the comforts of home and be able to play at your convenience. For a lifetime fee of \$8, you can not go wrong!



RB CAMPAIGN GAME POINTERS

PART 2- GERMANS

Samuel Rockwell

To follow are points for a German Player to consider while playing a Red Barricades Campaign Game.

1. DO NOT play the attrition game! Every 1/2 squad you have is precious. Don't lose them unnecessarily. Avoid CC if possible (unless the odds are overwhelmingly in your favor); the Soviet player would love to trade squad for squad at any opportunity. Sacrifice armor instead. Remember, it won't do you much good to approach the second week of November with armor and guns on the books, but little or no infantry.

2. Hold off buying more than 1 company of 8-3-8s until you are fighting for the central factory area, but buy 1 company as soon as possible to get the demo's and FT's. You will need all the 8-3-8s you can come up with to kick the fanatic Soviets out of those fortified factories.

3. Try and get high ground, before the Soviets can burn it down, then fortify it and think about placing guns in upper levels. Additionally, buy a HW Platoon and place a MG nest up there.

[Good for spotting for those 81mm MTRs, too....F]

That way you can place 3 or even 4 HMGs, each manned by a crew with a -2 leader and a gun in the location without overstacking penalties. This would allow you to replace the gun crew if it breaks and would make it more difficult to a sniper to take out the leader.

4. If a scenario ends with you having a toe hold in a factory and you have the Initiative in the next scenario...above all else, finish taking that factory; otherwise, you will pay twice or three times to take the same ground. Even if other targets look more tempting, make sure you clean out that factory first, assuming that your flanks are secure.

5. On any day which you are going to attack and the generated weather is clear, buy Stukas. There will be enough cloudy days when you won't be able to.

6. Concentrate each day's attack on one factory or strong point and pay the price to take it. Elsewhere, set up on the defensive, but then probe to find out where the Soviet weak points are (they will have some) and attack after turn 2-3. By that time you will see how your major attack is doing, where the enemy is weak and where he is counterattacking. Use HIP to disguise a secondary attack, or part of your defense.

7. Keep the overall VC in mind. Don't throw a few squads away in order to try and take the extra 2-3 locations that you would need to win that day's scenario. As a matter of fact, it doesn't always pay to win, especially if it gives the Soviet player an extra -1 or -2 DRM to his rolls for reinforcement

points. This does not mean that you should stop an attack that is going well, just don't push it if it is not there.

8. During a Soviet night attack, remember that you cannot form a multi-location FG, so concentrate your forces to blunt any Soviet attacks....try and avoid CC at all costs, if you can.

9. Try to build up reserve CPPs so that on 11/10 and 11/11 you can buy the 4 Or 5 companies that the historical modifier allows and that way overload the Soviet defenders.

10. Try to keep the sniper at a '6', but don't spend the point to go for a '7' since it will always go down and you will need those extra points later on.

11. As soon as possible, attack the bread factory area to force the Soviet player to spread his forces as thin as possible and thereby weaken the central factory area.

12. Don't hold off too long to go for that central group of factories. If the Soviet player is any good at all it will be very tough, but you will have to take them eventually and the sooner you do the sooner you can figure out how to take the area BEHIND the factories.

13. Use your LI MTRs to mask how strong (or how weak) a concealed stack is. Keep most dismantled, because unless the Soviet sniper is pinned it usually does not pay to use them; further, you can rout with them. Note that these mortars can be useful on the rooftops shooting at a unit moving in the open.

14. Once you get a firebase in an upper level location that you know you will use for several days, set a couple of selective fires to improve your LOS. For example, get rid of a couple of single story wooden or stone buildings that, once rubble, would vastly improve your LOS.

[I guess I've never liked the kindling rules because, when I play, I never seem to think in terms of this kind of deliberate destruction. Some of the grognards also have pointed out that, in most cases, any lowly squad leader would probably be stripped of rank after deciding, "in situ", to torch

buildings of his choice for tactical reasons on the field of battle. Frankly, this tactic that Sam proposes strikes me as very dangerous, flames in RB don't just go out when you want them to, but can burn entire stretches, last for days, and even return to "reburn" that terrain you originally set fire to, hindering your LOS for those "several days" that you wanted that hot LOS for in the first place....Faust]

15. Use a couple of HS as "sniper absorbers" by placing them near your MG nests; that way there is less chance that your -2 or -3 leader will be taken out by snipers.

16. Always keep in mind where the sewer entrance locations are. Remember that the Soviets are not the only ones who can use them.



BLOODY RUBBLE: THE SCENARIOS OF RED BARRICADES

(PART 2)

ASL SCENARIO RB2: "BLOOD AND GUTS"

Guy Chaney

Rating: 60% Pro-German

Russian Adv.: Mines, .50c HMG

Russian Disadv.: Unknown VC

German Adv.: 10-3, StuGs

German Disadv.: Rain

The unknown VC in this scenario can create a game within a game as the Russian player tries to figure out what the German is going for. He can bet the farm on which one is picked and virtually guarantee a victory by defending it with his entire force. This is too risky for me, however (why not just flip a coin and save yourself five hours?). The Russian will usually try to defend both objectives, and at some point will shift forces to-

ward the real one when it becomes apparent which VC the enemy is trying for. During the attack, the German player may try not to give away his objective too early to prevent the foe from totally stripping one side of the board to reinforce the other. Then again, he might mass his force and attempt to crush the defense before reinforcements of any type can get into effective position. An interesting situation.

GERMAN ATTACK

The first point of business is picking your VC. It is a foregone conclusion that building 018 will fall to the Germans.

[HEY--nothing is foregone in ASL..]

Therefore, VC (a) will involve capturing factory S18 and the five stone rubble locations beside it. VC (b) requires the capture of K22 and probably I22 in conjunction with 018. Both options have considerations both for and against which must be weighed before the appropriate VC is selected. When attacking the factory, you enjoy the luxury of owning stone locations ADJACENT to the objective. If they can drive the Russians from the rubble, they will have such locations on two sides of the factory. These obviously provide excellent jumping off points for an assault on factory S18.

This is, however, very defensible. It is completely fortified, gutted, and has six hexes which are immune to fire at scenario start. It is also an easier destination for the Soviet reinforcements than is K22. I feel that the Soviet will be more comfortable defending here than at the latter building.

Attacking K22 has its good and bad points. Both it and I22 are much more exposed to fire than the factory. Once building 018 has fallen, nearly every location can be fired on by German units from good stone cover, making the Russian hold on the buildings a bit more tenuous. Another consideration is that not all upper levels of these buildings can be fortified; true also for some ground locations in tunnels are selected by the defender. The approaches for Russian reinforcements are also more easily interdicted.

On the down side, Germans attempting to get at these buildings must cross the road running along hexrow 21. This area provides little cover; worse, the rain prevents smoke while it falls. Once in the buildings themselves, however, smoke grenades can be used inside--- the same is not true for the gutted, roofless factory.

I have seen the Germans win and lose using either option, so, in the end, it seems to be a matter of personal preference. I have tried to point out the highlights of each option. When faced with a scenario containing multiple VC, being able to weigh the pros and cons of each and knowing how they will affect play is a good portion of the battle. I prefer option (b). The Germans hold more advantages on this side, and can better force their will on the Russians, controlling the flow of the game.

One point to consider is that the VC call for an automatic win for the Soviets if they can gain control of either factory Q14 or L17. There is not much chance of this happening, these buildings are so huge that capturing either would require a large number of turns, as long as the German remembers to avoid completely stripping either of its defenses.

When setting up, deploy some forces against both objectives. One group is in place only to prevent a Russian automatic win, but keeps the enemy guessing as to your true intentions, if only for a short time. It is probably not realistic to expect avoiding this for long, but you do want to prevent a complete shift starting on the first turn. Even a small force across from the unwanted objective prevents a total withdrawal early in the game.

[Seems like too small a force will be very suspect and won't really gain the Germans a thing...Faust]

In choosing fortified hexes I like H19, K20, M20, R16, S16 and P17. The Germans should strive to get forces in position to interdict any Russian units which try to reinforce the objective area. Building O18 is perfect for this purpose and is first on the German hit list. Use 838s and FTs on the first turn. Once it falls, 467s with MMGs/LMGs and a -1 leader on level 2 can

bisect the board and tremendously hinder the flow of infantry to the threatened area.

The five rubble hexes in rows O, P, Q are the next target. The Russian will be worried about the factory, while you have placed a force between it and K22/I22, and S18 will be pretty well isolated. It can now be assaulted (option (a)), or isolated as needed to pursue option (b).

When attacking K22/I22, I like to put the 10-3, 3*548, 2*HMG and one LMG in H19. This has 30FP with HMG ROF to pound I22, J21 and J22; the enemy shouldn't be able to take this for long. Any return fire must overcome a +4 TEM and a 10-3 to aid MC to 8 morale squads. If all goes well the Russians will soon run out of firegroups with which to shoot back.

As for the Russian minefields, search from K20 on turn one; K21 is a prime mine hex. R17 and S17 are good hexes to search also. I prefer not to search any hex containing a Russian unit though, as this is akin to suicide for the searching unit if anyone is found. Just go ahead and move some half squads into suspect hexes. This will reveal the presence of minefields, also stripping concealment from at least one defender. The chance of being K/d by a minefield is much less than that of search casualties (if a hex also containing a squad is searched). The moving unit will also not be TI, while searchers would be.

StuGs can be used to create trail-breaks through the mines when they are found. It may be prudent, however, to keep the armor back a bit until the 76L artillery piece is located. Remember, this is small enough to hide in a fortified building location on any level, but it cannot be set up in rubble. Wait for the 10-3 stack to clear the front line locations before bringing up the StuGs. The 9-2 armor leader with his 75mm gun is a powerful combination, it would be a waste to lose him to a cheap shot early. If by chance the rain stops, use that StuG smoke capability--start pumping smoke rounds, throw grenades, and charge.

RUSSIAN DEFENSE

The biggest headache here is not knowing where the attack is going;

both approaches hold advantages for the Germans so you can't be sure where the Hun will come. Both objectives must be defended, and the Russian can't be caught with either side too lightly defended. Reinforcing is possible, but it will take time, so the initial set up must hold the Germans off for a few turns.

I feel that I22/K22 is more difficult to hold than the S18 factory, and will therefore favor it in the defense, which is more easily reached by reinforcements and should be able to hold out until help arrives.

The biggest problem with I22/K22 defense is the killer German stack inevitably present in H19 if they are coming this way. The presence of a 10-3 in this hex is almost a dead giveaway that they have chosen option (b).

Note that the scenario set up conditions are a bit vague as to the path of alternate hexgrain O21-G21. The main point of contention is the Russian ability to place a squad in H20, limiting the Germans to one squad in H19. We play that set up in H20 is not allowed.

[Since you feel the scenario is 60% pro-German, and further, H20 DOES lie in the specified hex grain, it seems to me that is definitely should be allowed....F]

How can we defeat a German stack in H19 containing a 10-3? It is not easy. First, try the trick of placing six '?' counters in J21, level 2, simulating a juicy, multi-squad, multi-armed target. It may just draw the 10-3 fire (four hexes away!). The bright yellow second level counter sometimes has a hypnotic effect on the enemy, causing him to fire at it wildly.

[You should see what it does to the American player in "Intimate War"--- already one of the weirdest scenarios to date....]

Hope the 10-3 doesn't get ROF on turn 1. Then, arrange a good fire group to plaster H19 with return fire. If the Germans can be kicked out of H19, the Soviet left flank is much more secure. Squads in all levels of J21, J22 and ground and first level of I22 plus an LMG make a 30FP FG.

If the 10-3 shows up attacking the factory, it's most likely that is where he is headed. A good spot for the gun is the fortified ground level of J22. From here, it can fire on H19, has LOS to many hexes in rows G,H and I and provides direct point blank defense of I22 and K22.

The ground level in I23 is also a good location to fortify. It cannot be seen from initial German set up hexes, and is a good position from which to fire on Germans entering I22 and J22. Put 2*628, 2*LMG and an 8-0 here; they can gain '?' prior to the start of play. Also, the Russian can retreat units here to gain '?' until the enemy has LOS to it. This tactic can be used to shuffle concealed units to the front line.

In the center of the defense, P21 is another good hex to fortify. Place the main Russian stack here: 10-2, 2*458 and 2*HMG. From here, the 10-2 can cover all the hexes which are assaulting K22. It can also hit H19, upper levels of O18, hexes M20 and K20, and two of the rubble hexes. A tremendous field of fire on this cluttered map! Despite this, it is not tremendously exposed. The +4 TEM and debris hindrances will help reduce the effect of German prep. Of course, this stack will begin the game concealed, an additional 458 is placed in P22 to retrieve the MGs if one does break and rout.

From P21, tunnels to S20 and M22, M22 to J22 connect the factory and K22 to the 10-2 stack. By using the tunnels, this FG can emerge concealed in the factory in one turn, or J22 in two turns. The tunnels allow the Russians to move across the battlefield without getting shot to pieces in the process.

[Assuming they don't get shot up in the tunnel exit hexes. Also, remember that only your IPC can be carried in a tunnel! No Russian HMGs, with the possible exception of a dismantled 50 cal, will ever be legally moving through tunnels!...Faust]

The .50 cal HMG start in S20., It is ready to defend the factory or move to P21 depending upon the German objective. Having a tunnel helps insure that the best weapon does not get stuck in the factory if the Germans do not attack there.

The basements of K23 or J22 make good rally hexes and one or the other should contain a 10-0 commissar. The 9-0 goes in the factory. The ability to rally squads and avoid DM penalties merits the selection of two commissars, one for each side of the map.

Place a mix of 458s and 447s in K22, K23 and M22, all concealed; perhaps another in M23. The rest of the units go into the factory. Keep the commissar away from the front lines so he will be available to rally broken squads. Avoid P18 at start, it will be too hot. Have squads in R18 and S17 at start to deny them to the Germans, but be concealed. Also place 6AP mines in both hexes; if nothing else, this helps to prevent the Germans from getting into the factory concealed (something the Russians definitely do not want to happen).

Be wary of the German trying to send a half squad into the factory while declaring a mine clearance attempt. This is a very devious trick. It allows a trailbreak to be placed into the minefield hex, allowing Germans to enter the factory free from mine attack if the clearing unit remains in good order. Once inside, the Huns skirt the minefield by crossing building hexsides.

[Absolutely not. Only those units PERFORMING CLEARANCE ATTEMPTS can make use of the partial minefield TB--NOWHERE is it said that ANY infantry may use a partial TB through an uncleared minefield with impunity-- and anyway, B24.74 states that such CLEARING units can only exit via the hexside through which they entered without threat of mine attack. True, B28.44 states that units which exit a minefield through a building hexside are not attacked, but E.2 does not apply because this is not a contradiction: minefield clearance is a specific case. Finally, this tactic is simply not realistic! Rules must be interpreted with this in mind. The infantry should be required to perform a successful clearance DR to simulate the clearance from the edge of the hex to the edge of the building, at which point a full trailbreak is placed as usual. I do agree that the German must be closely watched if they try this cheesy trick,

because they might just try others...F]

Immediately blast any unit attempting to create a trailbreak for his buddies. S18 is a good spot for a three squad firegroup, a couple of MGs, and a 7-0 (to prevent cowering).

The other mines are K21 and J21, 6 factors each. These shield the front of K22 and complicate the German assault. Mines are now in place at both German objectives. I feel it is better to insure that the mines will affect the German attack somehow..

Try to prevent the Germans from moving into the buildings in hexrow V on turn one, from there they can threaten your right flank. One German tactic is running units straight out into shellholes T16 and U16. If the Russians first fire everyone at them, other Germans can then move through rows T and U "further back" and into the row V buildings. Any first-fired Russians are prevented from using subsequent first fire by the adjacent enemy. Be careful when assigning fire attacks so that the Germans cannot pull this move without being shot at. A half squad running up adjacent to you at the start of the movement phase is a signal that this tactic may be unfolding! be careful, and choose your shots wisely. The correct placement of firelanes and normal residual firepower can save the defender in this situation.

Deeper in the factory, the MOL-P waits in the S20 tunnel hex with the 50 cal. From here it can move west, or stay put if the tanks assault the factory.

The appearance of the German AFVs is a second key in deducing the German objective. If the StuGs and the 10-3 are working the same side of the map, the Soviet player can be almost sure of the objective; however, a wily German may enter his assault guns to fool the Russians into redeploying.

Send the reinforcements to the threatened side. The 9-1 and three squads with LMG, FT and DC rush ahead picking a side. The others can wait until turn 2 to commit. Move up through the P21 factory as far as possible.

The Russian defense is set. As in all analyses, it is only a model, and can vary due to your opponent and what you know about him. I feel it is a good one and uses principals important in any set up. Tunnels are particularly important in this scenario, however. The Russians are at their most vulnerable at the very start of this scenario; they need time to consolidate and reinforce. The tunnels make moving from side to side possible.

WRAP UP

This is a good scenario, fun to play with immediate action. The proximity of the forces makes for non-stop fireworks beginning on turn one. Both OBs contain powerful weapons and quality infantry. I favor the Germans slightly due to the presence of the 10-3 and two 9-2s. Brute force is required in this scenario, but one must understand the subtleties of the game to get into position and employ it effectively.

The varied VC add to my enjoyment of "Blood and Guts." As in many scenarios, some cat and mouse, bait and trap goes on throughout. This "game within a game" is another thing we all know and love about ASL.

The balance provisions for each side are good. Allowing the Germans to ignore SSR #3 will give them a toehold in the factory on turn 1, but does not help in the assault on I22/K22 (unless we are misinterpreting the set-up restrictions [you are...]). For the Russians, fanaticism in the factories is very nice, stiffening the defense of S18 considerably, and can indirectly aid K22 by allowing placement of fewer units in S18 initially.

[Thank you very much, Guy. Your tactical tips are very instructive and, I understand that you can make good use of them. Folks, I've heard, unofficially, that Guy has been winning all the major ASL tournaments recently....I look forward to meeting him at Avaloncon. Guy's next effort in the series will cover RB3....Faust]



RUSSIAN CPP MANAGEMENT

THOMAS NORTON

The player who has the Russian in the campaign game of "Red Barricades" is in for one of the greatest challenges in his Squad Leader career.

While it is true that the Russian must take every positional advantage possible from the terrain available (to help offset superior German firepower); this alone will not stop the enemy. Most, if not all, experienced ASL players will have the necessary experience and skill to recognize the best avenues of approach for the Germans; further, the typical attacker will sense those same potential strongpoints and take appropriate steps to reduce them. That is they ebb and flow which typifies a day of RB action.

There is one area, however, where the Russian controls his own destiny. A successful defender is one who has learned to squeeze every Campaign Purchase Point (CPP) to the absolute limit.

CPP management is absolutely critical for the Russian to end the campaign controlling "Stalingrad." If these are spent unwisely, all the defensible positions in the world cannot save him.

It does not take the Russian player long to memorize page 0-18 of the rules. As each CG unfolds, he knows what it will cost to buy what he needs without ever looking. The problem is that CPP is like money, you never seem to have enough to buy what you want! The obvious solution is to buy the most you can for the least amount. Doing it right is the key to victory.

German firepower has a ferocious appetite for Russian infantry units. Often, the defender finds himself looking at how many companies starting with the ID letter of "I" can be bought.

The Russian must implement two resources to maximize his CPP value in the deployment of infantry units:

First, recognize the "value" of Militia Companies. Yes, I am

talking about 426 squads. They are extremely important to management of Russian CPP.

A Mil Coy costs 4 CPP, which is the same as a SMG Coy. However, you get more from the Militia! If you need hose troops to man the Barricades today, that SMG Coy would cost you 6 CPP (+2 CPP for on board deployment, 011.6194a). For the cost of one SMG Coy purchased at this cost, the Russian may be able to bring in TWO Mil Coys (see point two, below). Moreover, a Mil Coy is always available for same day deployment at a cost of 4 CPP.

It is true that you do not get an HMG with a Mil Coy, but how many does a SMG Coy get?! Best of all, there is no additional modifier for checking depletion of a Mil Coy, so there is as much chance for it to receive 12 squads as the SMG Coy can receive 9.

The major disadvantage is the lack of leadership the Mil Coy will bring with it. Generally, the SMG Coy will bring one more leader than the former. Despite this, the low cost in CPP makes the Militia the unit of choice in those long days of October, 1942.

The second resource the Russian must exploit to get the most out of his CPP is found in rule 011.6194b. A unit purchased as a Reserve Coy will cost one CPP less. Such a Coy is permitted to set up on the map, albeit in a special cloaked and dispersed manner with limited maneuverability. However, this really is not all bad for the Russian defense in that these Reserves often give needed depth to the Russian front.

If the Russian pours his Mil Coys initially in reserve, these units often set up in the factory buildings, thus becoming Fanatic. This goes a long way in giving the Militia some backbone against the German.

Thus, whenever possible, the Russian player should look to bring his infantry in by reserve, saving 1 CPP with every company purchased, and producing "interest" in the form of better quality infantry units and some much needed artillery.

[Thomas just dents the surface of this kind of analysis for the first HASL CG. The other day, I lis-

tened in on a conversation between "Fish" Conner (I still don't think I know him well enough to call him by his famous nickname) and "ActionBurke". Some other ASL Fanatic they know has analyzed how many Russian squads need to be eliminated per day at a particular cost in German squads in order to assure a German Victory. The interesting thing about this sort of analysis is its long term view. Without proper foresight in the Campaign Games, victory is most uncertain, for either player....Faust.]



BIG GAME HUNTING— WITH SHERMANS

Robert Banozic

Somewhere in Western Europe, December, 1944: You are in command of an American force which has been ordered to capture a village (or exit the board, or pile up Casualty VP, or whatever). But standing in your way are some hard-bitten German veterans, supported by Panthers and/or Tigers. All you've got to confront these is a bunch of 75mm Shermans (as usual). They're raw meat for these Panzers...unless, maybe, you go onto the offensive and hunt down the big cats.

Huh? Aren't those Shermans doomed as soon as they roll into LOS of the thicker-skinned, more powerfully armed German tanks? Not if you can get a hit with a flank or rear shot first. Given the mechanics of Gun Duels and the special characteristics of these American tanks, you have a good chance of pulling this off.

Check out American Vehicle Note 'R'. For Gun Duel purposes only, these AFVs have their firer-based TH DRM halved (FRD). Now assume that, as the American, you can roll around to the side target facing of

that panzer. If the German is BU, and even if he must change his TCA by only one hexside in order to Defensive First Fire, he will have a Firer-based DRM of +3 (Case A plus Case I). Your 75mm Sherman, however, will only have a +2 for Gun Duel purposes, even if BU (Case C plus case I = +5, halved FRD = +2). This allows you to squeeze in your shot before the German can even change CA (C2.2401), with a generally good chance to kill, shock or immobilize the enemy if you get a hit. If you can keep a few MPs in reserve, you might be able to run away and hide if you come up dry and the German happens to miss.

Of course, whether you will want to use this capability in an actual scenario will depend on a calculation of all the variables in a given situation, not the least of which will be your Sherman's chances of getting a hit in Bounding First Fire (and Gyrostabilizers really help here, folks). If you've got a reasonable chance, consider it seriously! Watch the German sweat as you take your TH roll before he can even swing the turret of his vaunted panzer....



SCENARIOS IN AT THE POINT

This issue marks the first in which we will present scenarios for your ASL playing pleasure. Those enclosed in this issue have been lent to At The Point courtesy of ASL News, published by Philip Leonard, one of the European participants in this great hobby. His magazine is

highly recommended and it is suggested that you subscribe.

At The Point and ASL News have come to an agreement whereby each of us will act as distributors for the other's magazine. That is, we will distribute ASL News from ATP Headquarters to all USA subscribers of Philip's magazine; likewise, he has volunteered to to the same for European clientele of ATP. Those of you who are interested in subscribing to ASL News must first contact Philippe and arrange a subscription:

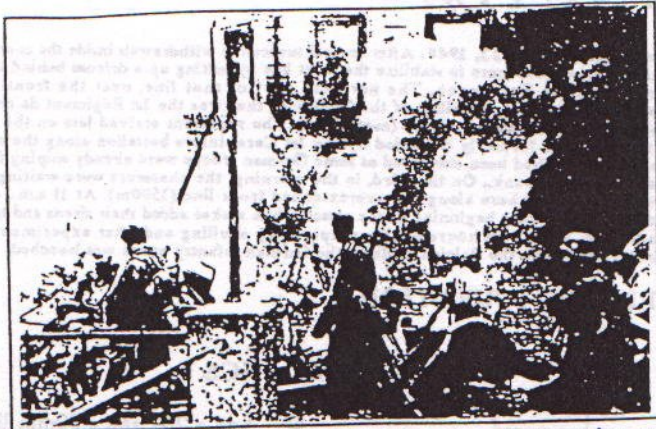
Philip Leonard
28 Avenue Seghers
B-1080 Bruxelles, Belgium

NEXT ISSUE!

1. Nixon's at it again!! More Rules Snapshots...brush up on your rules interpretations for Oktoberfest.
2. Bruce Bakken on Panzer Tactics. Part One: Mobility.
3. Point Replay!! Will Faust publish the results featuring himself as a player in "The Eastern Gate?" Can Sgt Hana live up to his proclaimed reputation?? Stay tuned, ASLers....

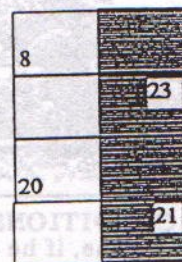
Faust.

THE SHORTEST WAY



Kalinin, Russia, October 14, 1941. Overrunning all the shattered Russian defenses, the 1st Panzer Division had taken Subzoff on October 11 and Staritz on the 12th; the Volga had been reached although all the bridges had been blown up before the Germans could intervene. The remaining fuel and ammunition were at once gathered to send Eckinger's Bat forward with armor support. Sharing the same roads as the panic-stricken Soviet troops during day and night and surrounded by the relics of the retreating Red Army, the German spearhead finally reached the outskirts of Kalinin, an industrial city, 90 miles to the north west of Moscow. On October 14, order was given to launch the attack and to take the road bridge across the Volga at 2 kilometers inside the city.

BOARD CONFIGURATION :



Only hexrows A to P are playable on boards 8 and 20 while only hexrows R to GG are playable on boards 23 and 21

VICTORY CONDITIONS : the German player wins at the end of any *game turn* if he has Good Order units/mobile vehicles on the Northern side of the river, on board 8, which potential exit value would be at least 15 VPs.

TURN RECORD CHART :

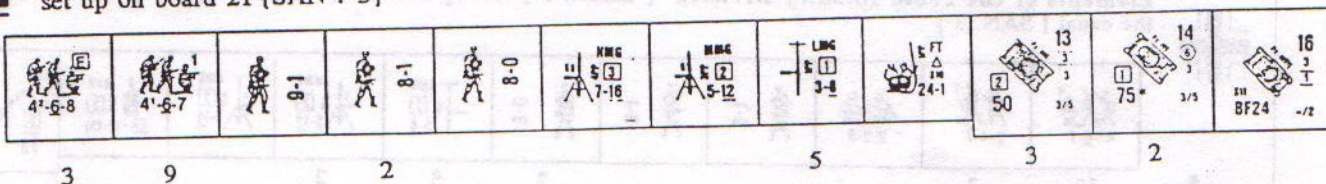
German moves first ♣	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	END
Russian sets up first ★									

BALANCE :

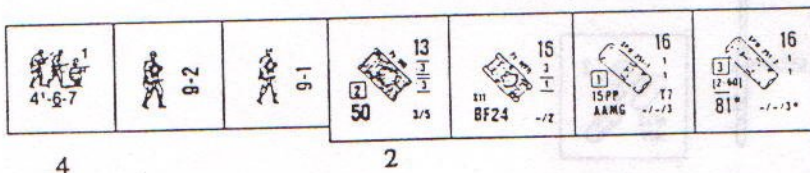
- ★ In the Victory conditions, change 15 VPS to 20 VPs
- ♣ In the Victory Conditions, change 15 VPs to 10 VPS



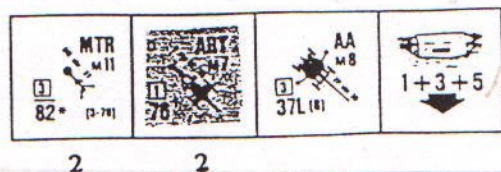
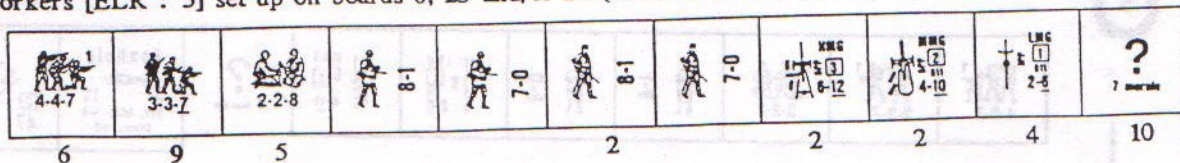
Reinforced elements of 1st Co, Kradschützen Bat 1 [ELR : 3]
set up on board 21 {SAN : 3}



reinforced 3rd Co, I/Schutzen Regiment 113 enter on west edge south of 23GG4 as per SSR 3



Elements of Moskow AA defenses, motor-cycle Cies, MG squads [ELR : 2] and Kalinin factory workers [ELR : 5] set up on boards 8, 23 and/or 20 (see also SSR 4) {SAN : 4}

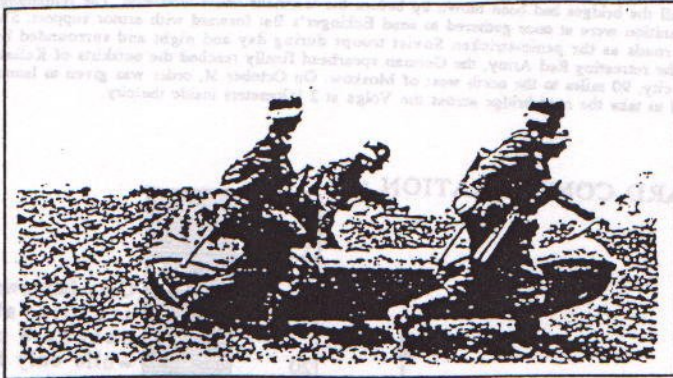


SCENARIO SPECIAL RULES :

1. EC are wet with no wind at start
2. No unit may enter any water obstacle hex except on a bridge. A two-lane stone bridge goes from 815 to 819. Buildings 20C6 and 20H3 are factories.
3. Starting on turn 2, the German player may make a dr at start of his RPh to enter his reinforcements. If the dr < turn number, his reinforcements must enter on that player turn.
4. All Russian partisan units must set up in the factories.
5. Rooftops are usable. Hex 23Y7 is open ground (level 0).
6. Hex 814 is an open ground hex with no orchard nor any hedge on any hexside but it is crossed by a paved road hex linking 813 and 815

AFTERMATH : The attack was considerably slowed by the furious resistance of the Russians. Despite the use of flamethrower tanks and firers on the rooftops to reduce the enemy strongholds, the frontal assault stalled. The workers of the factories who had formed militia engaged the Germans into heavy street fighting while Russian antitank guns and mortars inflicted ever increasing casualties to the attackers. Meanwhile, the few elements of the SPW bat led by Eckinger who was reputed for always using the shortest way infiltrated the western suburbs and came suddenly in sight of the 250 meters long bridge across the Volga. Without waiting for the other fighting German units far back inside the city, the lone infantry Co supported by two Pz III, one FlammPz and some SPWs assaulted the enemy MG nests before being suddenly stopped by an unexpected obstacle : a canal was separating them from the objective. After having found a small bridge, German mortars quickly fired a smoke screen and the canal was crossed in front of a Stadium where some Soviet field artillery and antitank guns were located. The 36 remaining men of Oblt. Feig's Co stormed the Volga bridge while the dispirited enemies fled. The demolition charges wires were cut off and Eckinger's SPW followed by a Pz III came in time to secure the bridgehead. It was to be the lone Volga bridge to be won by the Germans during the whole war.

LONG MINUTES



VICTORY CONDITIONS : the German player wins, at the end of the game, if he maintains at least 3 GO squads (or equivalent) on the western side of the canal.

Selzaete, Belgium, May 23, 1940. After several successive withdrawals inside the country, the Belgian Army tried once more to stabilize the front line by setting up a defense behind the canal going from Gand to Terneuzen. The northern part of that line, near the frontier with the Netherlands, was the responsibility of the 2e Guides that was the 1st Régiment de chasseurs portés of the Belgian Cavalry Corps (motorized). The regiment arrived late on the 22nd occupy the positions formerly defended by the 1st Carabiniers battalion along the canal, Selzaete. The bridges had been destroyed as some German troops were already sniping from the houses of the eastern bank. On the 23rd, in the morning, the chasseurs were waiting for the assault to come, somewhere along the overextended front line (1500m). At 11 a.m., a heavy bombardment signaled the beginning of the attack while stukas added their sirens and bombs to the hammering. After two hours of this preparatory shelling and after experimenting the counterbattery fire from the Belgian artillery, the German infantry attack was launched.

BOARD CONFIGURATION :



BALANCE :

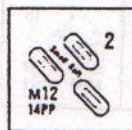
- ⊙ Add a 257 and a 50mm light mortar to the Belgians
- ⊕ Exchange one German 8-0 for 8-1

Only hexrows R to GG are playable

TURN RECORD CHART

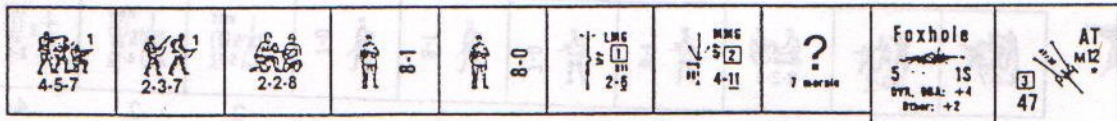
German moves first ⊕	1	2	3	4	5	6	END
Belgian sets up first ⊙							

Elements of the 256th Infantry Division [ELR : 3] set up east of the canal, at least 2 hexes away from the canal [SAN : 3]



9

Elements of the 2nd escadron, 1st groupe, 2e Guides [ELR : 3] set up west of the canal [SAN : 3]



9

4

2

3

4

8

4

see SSR 5

SPECIAL RULES :

1. EC are moderate with a mild breeze blowing from the north-east.
2. The canal is deep and flowing to the north. Current is slow. There are no bridges.
3. All the hexes at the south-east of X0, X1 and R4 (all included) are at level 1. The hedge running all along that perimeter does exist and also delimitates the crest line. These hedges are considered hillside hedges (F 10). Woods still exist in that zone.
4. The optional rule described in footnote 18 page A42 must be used.
5. Use an Italian 47mm AT gun counter to represent the Belgian 47mm FRC gun. All features are considered identical.
6. The Belgian player may use HTP for 1 squad (+ any SW/leader)

AFTERMATH : from the houses and factories of the eastern bank, all along the canal, the Germans opened fire. However most of this firing was intended to keep the defenders busy while the real crossing attempt took place at the southern end of the positions in front of the last houses of the village near the dunes. About a hundred German riflemen carrying small boats ran towards the canal while others tried to silence the Belgian positions with MG fire. The backfire from the FMs (automatic rifles) supported by one MG section forced the Germans to withdraw and to abandon their boats. Later in the afternoon after renewed artillery fire and still another unsuccessful assault, the attackers eventually succeeded their crossing farther in the south. A furious