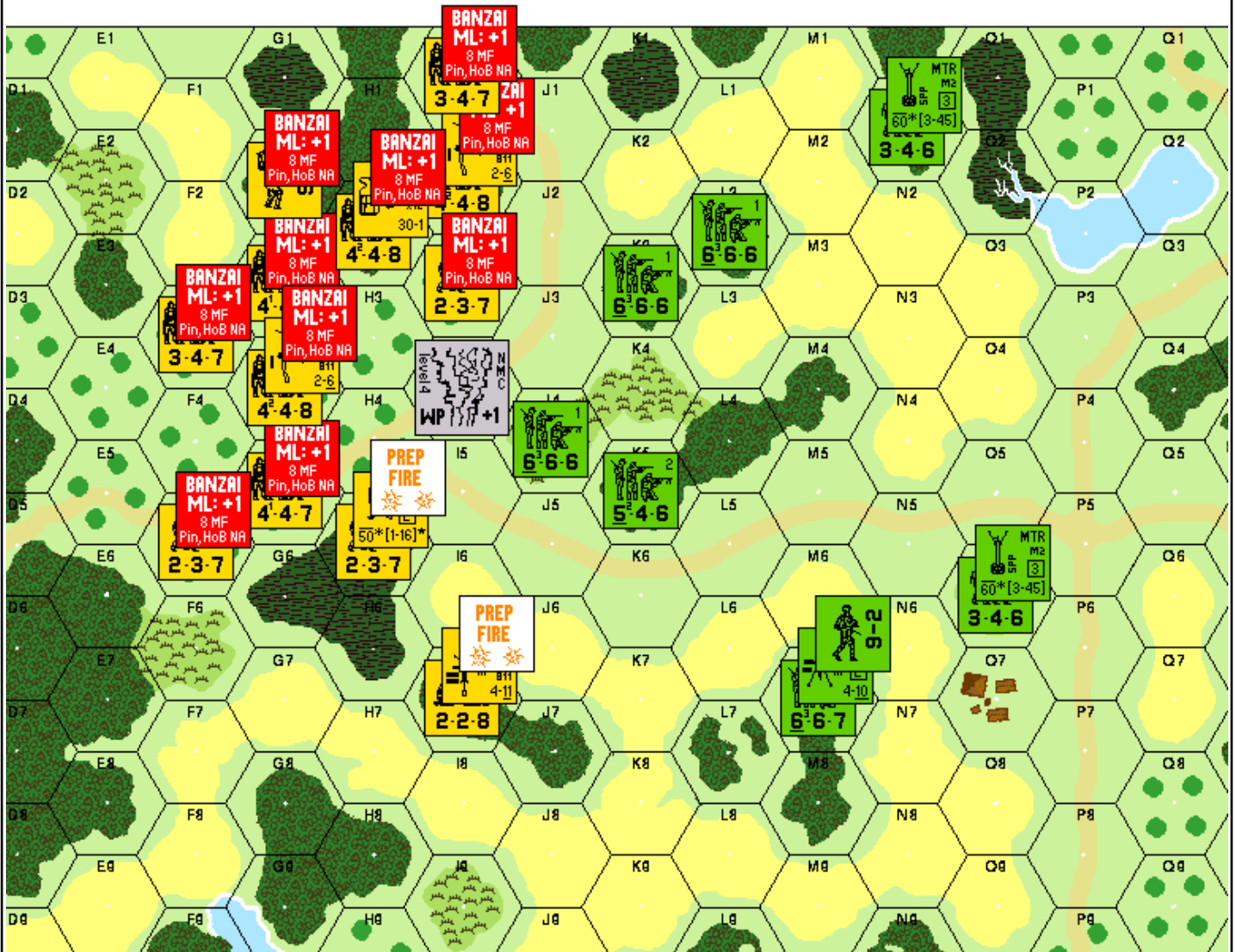


Banzai!!!



The Newsletter of the Texas ASL Club

January, 2008 Volume 13, Number 1

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Banzai!!

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Scuttlebutt

Senigen in the Hall. The shadowy, secretive selection committee for the Texas ASL Club Hall of Fame (TACHOF) has struck again, inducting Mike Senigen to the ranks at Austin's December game day. Although the members do not make their selection criteria public, Mike's inclusion was a no-brainer and long overdue. The grandfather of Texas ASL, Mike started the whole shebang back in the early 1990s. Not content with simply founding the club itself, he created the Texas ASL Team Tournament, which recently celebrated its 15th year. He shepherded the tournament through its early years, and acted as tournament director a total of 10 times. He has also hosted many game days at his place over the years, an often underrated contribution to the health of the club. He has long been one of the best players in Texas (if not *the* best), with multiple tournament wins to his credit. It's difficult to imagine where Texas ASL would be without him, and there is no one more deserving.

As befits the laid-back style of Texas ASL and Austin in particular, Mike received as a token of his membership a mug with the TACHOF logo, ideal for holding a nice latte, or a mocha, or perhaps even a caramel macchiato.

Shostak in the Hall. Even more shadowy & secretively, the selection committee elected Matt Shostak to the Texas ASL Club Hall of Fame at Austin's December 2007 game day. Matt has long been the backbone and rudder of Texas ASL. His moniker of "The Commissar" fits so well. He is always tending to the Texas flock, setting the stage for the best club in the world: rallying its members, helping to set up game days, and mentoring to help perfect their game playing abilities. Regular monthly game days, ASL lunches every other Friday, and the critically acclaimed Banzai!! publication have all done wonders for Texas ASL. Matt deserves credit for the respect surrounding the game and its players that the Texas players show.

As with Mike, Matt also received a mug with the TACHOF logo as a token of his membership in this elite association; ideal for his favorite hot beverage or secret die rolls.

Toe to Toe: PzIIIJ vs. T-34/M41

Matt Shostak



Last issue we had an exciting toe-to-toe encounter between two heavyweights of the eastern front, the Tiger I and the IS-2. For our next matchup, I had thought of going down a weight class or two, and pitting a couple of medium tanks, or even a couple of light tanks, against each other and crunching the numbers. But to me, obviously evenly matched combatants are not quite as interesting for the purposes of this program as are those that are slightly more out of kilter. The former kind of battle is one that I think we can all have an intuitive grasp of how it will turn out, but the latter type can defy our efforts to simply have a good feel for expected results. With that in mind, I thought of another classic pair of eastern front enemies, the PzIIIJ and the T-34/M41. This encounter is fairly common in eastern front scenarios set in 1942 and 1943, such as in SP124 *Expelling the Guards*. These two tanks have distinct advantages and disadvantages against each other, and yet neither can easily dominate. Rate of fire and gunnery (black hit numbers) obviously favor the German tank, while armor clearly favors the Russian. Since my program simply considers engagements at various ranges through the frontal armor facings of each tank, the numbers generated only tell one part of the story. Obviously during play the German player will strive to use mobility to get at the sides of the foe. But still there will be many times that he will find himself stuck facing the frontal armor of his nemesis. I've often wondered, are the chances really as bad for the PzIIIJ in such situations as it seems? Let's find out.

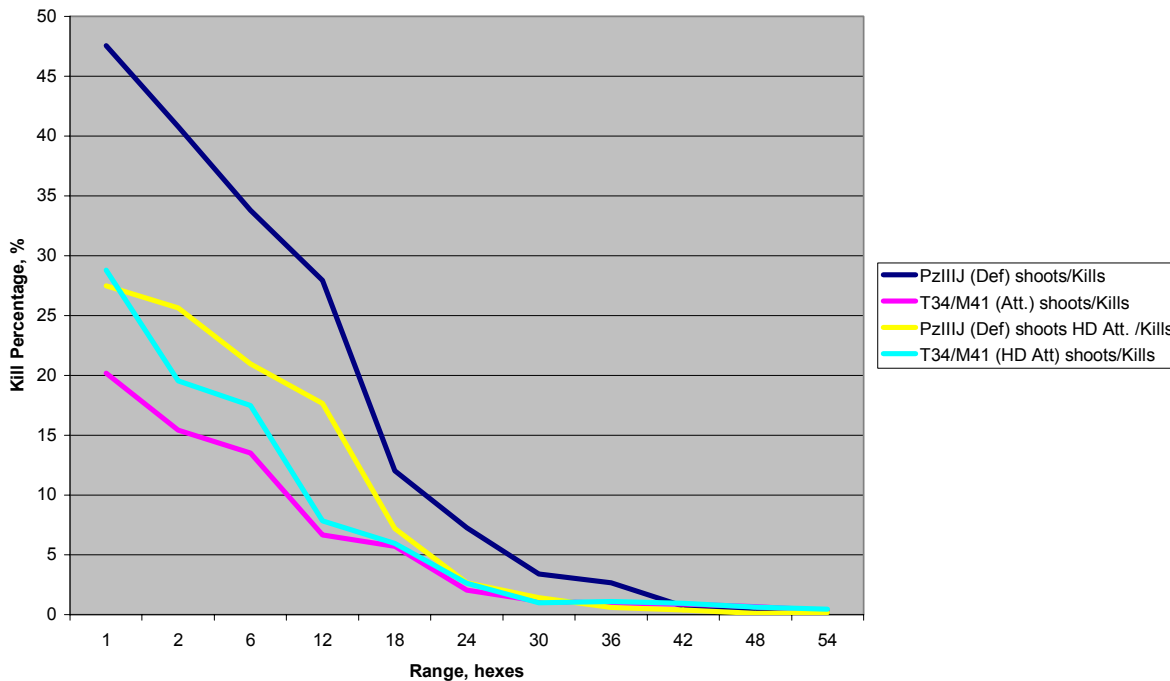
I'll repeat some of what I said last issue when I introduced this series of articles in the first toe-to-toe between the Tiger I and IS-2: Keep in mind that this simulation is a program I wrote a few years ago to analyze tank vs. tank matchups, and the following *disclaimer* applies: *there could still be bugs in this program, although I've worked on it a lot and hope I've eliminated most of them. The numbers presented here are for entertainment purposes only.* It's a very simple program that only considers what happens if an attacking tank moves into the line of sight of a defending tank and stops, with each tank in the front covered arc of the other. The assumptions are that the defender will fire, always trying for APCR or APDS if available, until it runs out of rate. Then the attacking tank will fire back if still able. The program will tally the

various outcomes over a large number of iterations. The program simulates the encounter taking place at every range level (except zero), and also considers the attacker moving in to a non-hull down position, and then again using a hull down position.

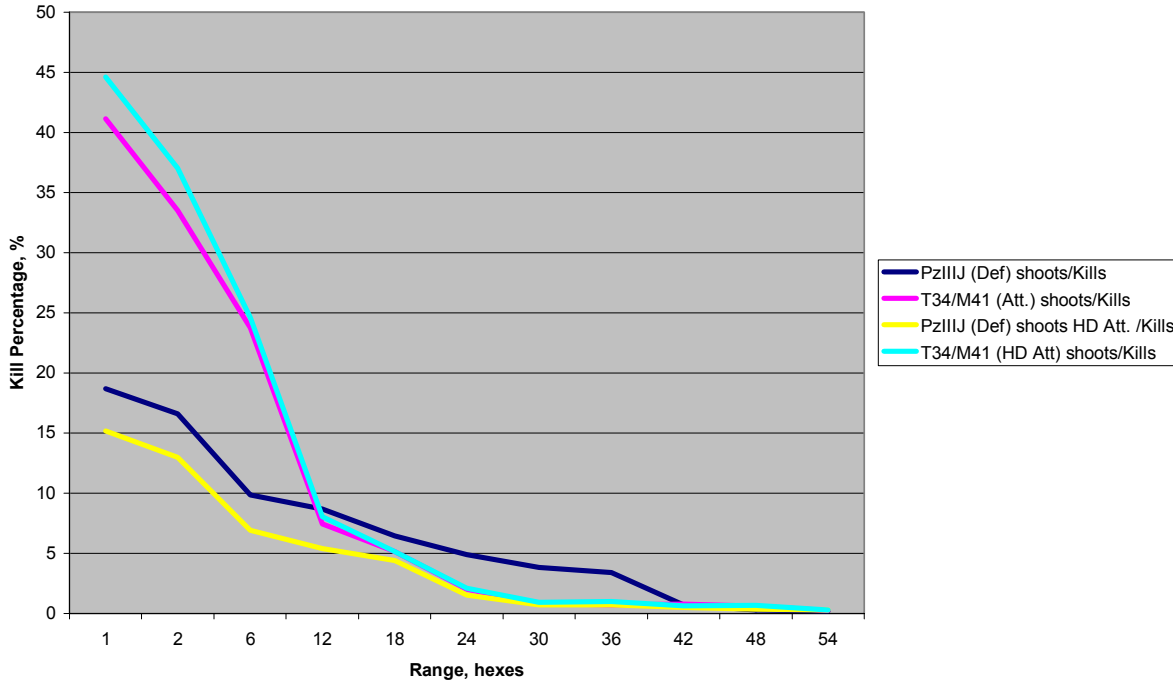
And now for the second toe-to-toe matchup, we see a middleweight fight between two of the workhorse tanks of the Second World War. This will be a 4-round bout

governed by the rules of the Banzai!! newsletter. The 4 rounds are designed to have each combatant attack twice (once non-hull down and once hull down) and each defend twice (non-hull down). In the German corner, weighing in at 21.5 tons, designated the PzKpfw IIIJ, wearing the feldgrau counter, it's a late model *Maaaaaark Threeeeeee Jaay!* In the Soviet corner, wearing the light brown, tipping the scales at a muscular 28.5 tons, it's the ubiquitous, sloped armored, *Teeee Thirty Fooouuuuur!*

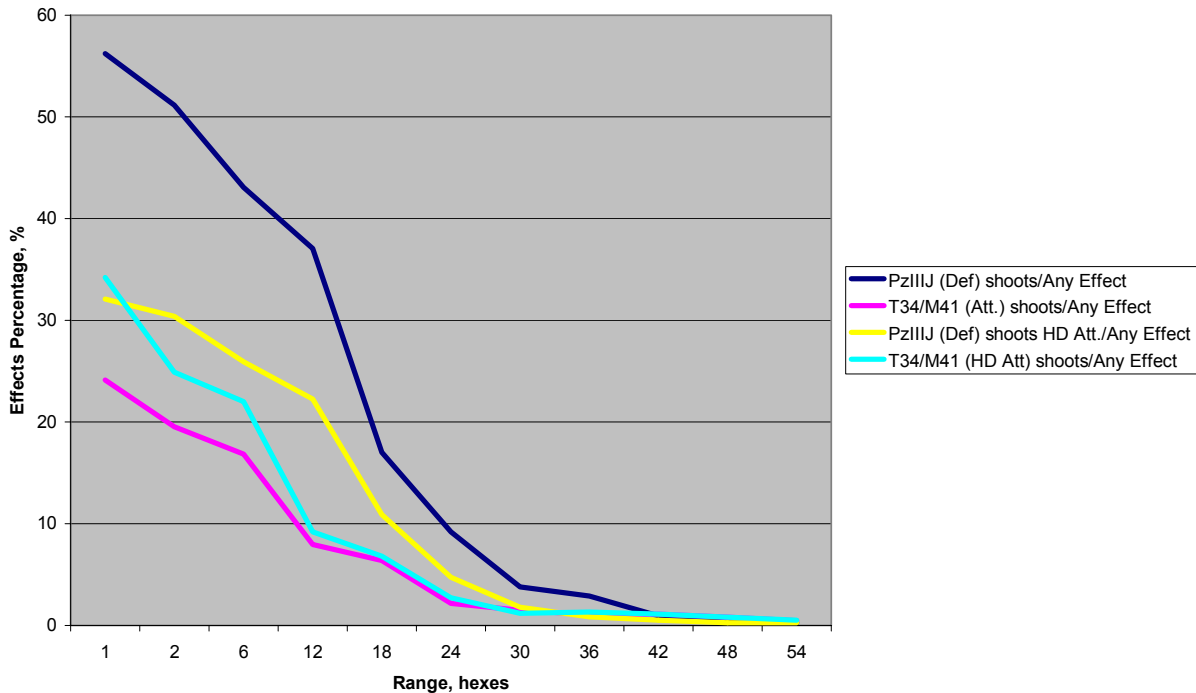
T34/M41, HD and non-HD, Moves On PzIIIJ
Kill Chances (1942)



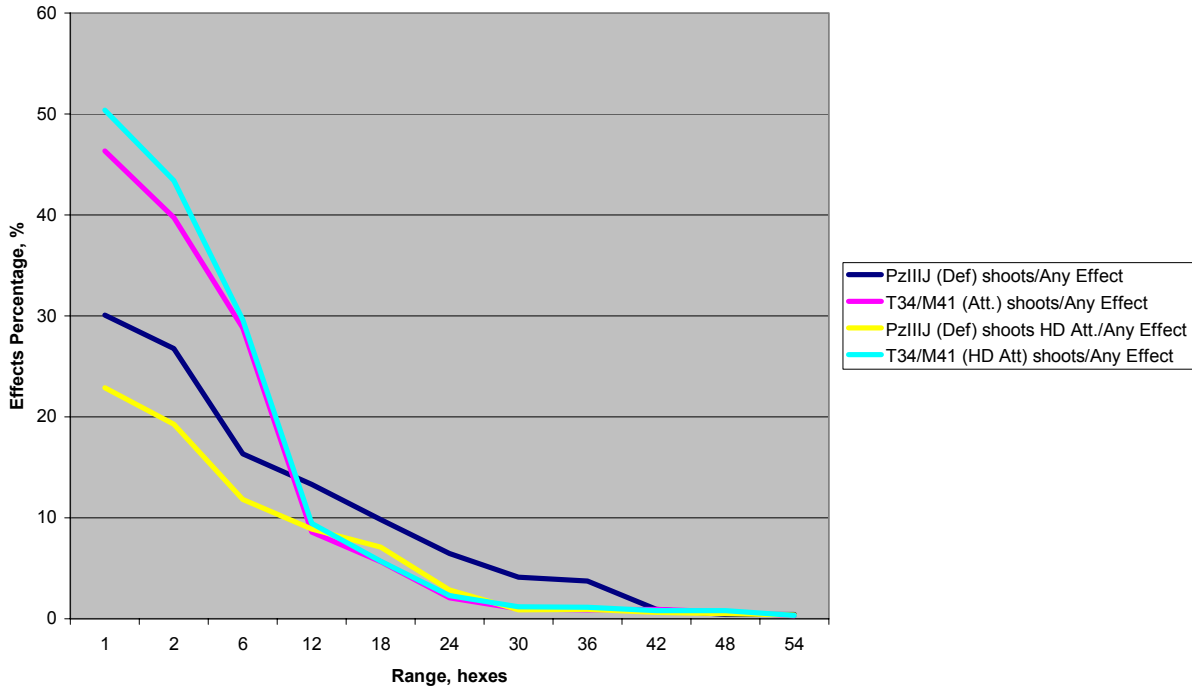
T34/M41, HD and non-HD, Moves On PzIIIJ
Kill Chances (late-1944)



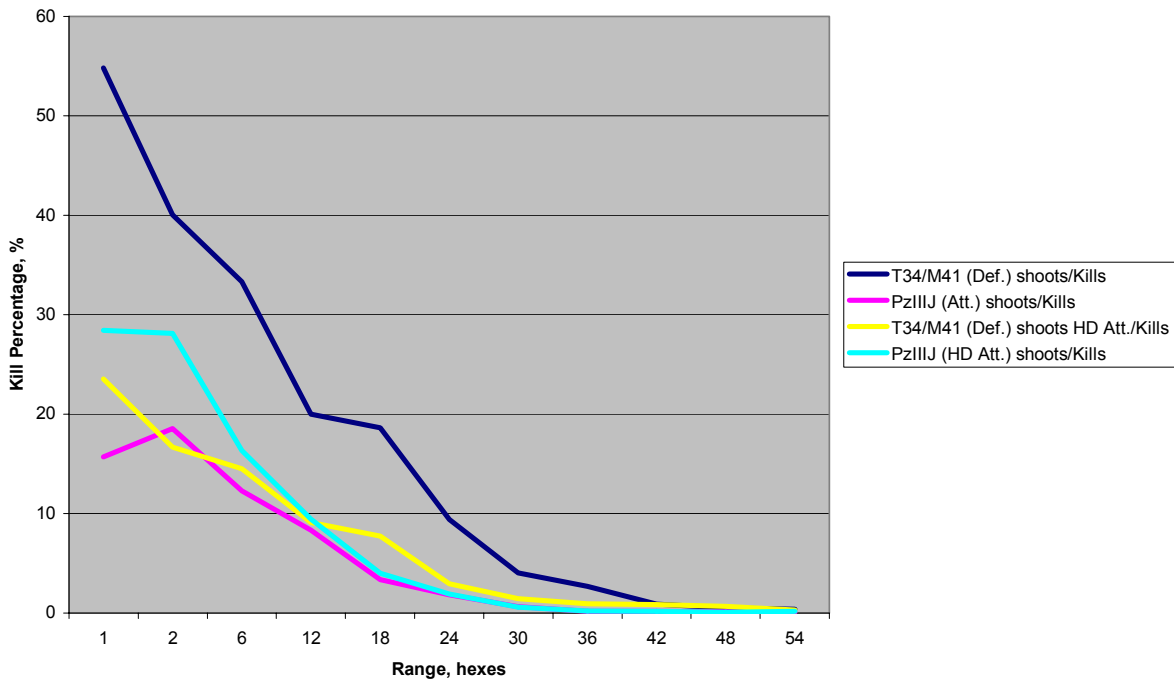
T34/M41, HD and Non-HD, Moves on PzIIIJ
All Effects - Kill, Immob, Shock, Abandon (1942)



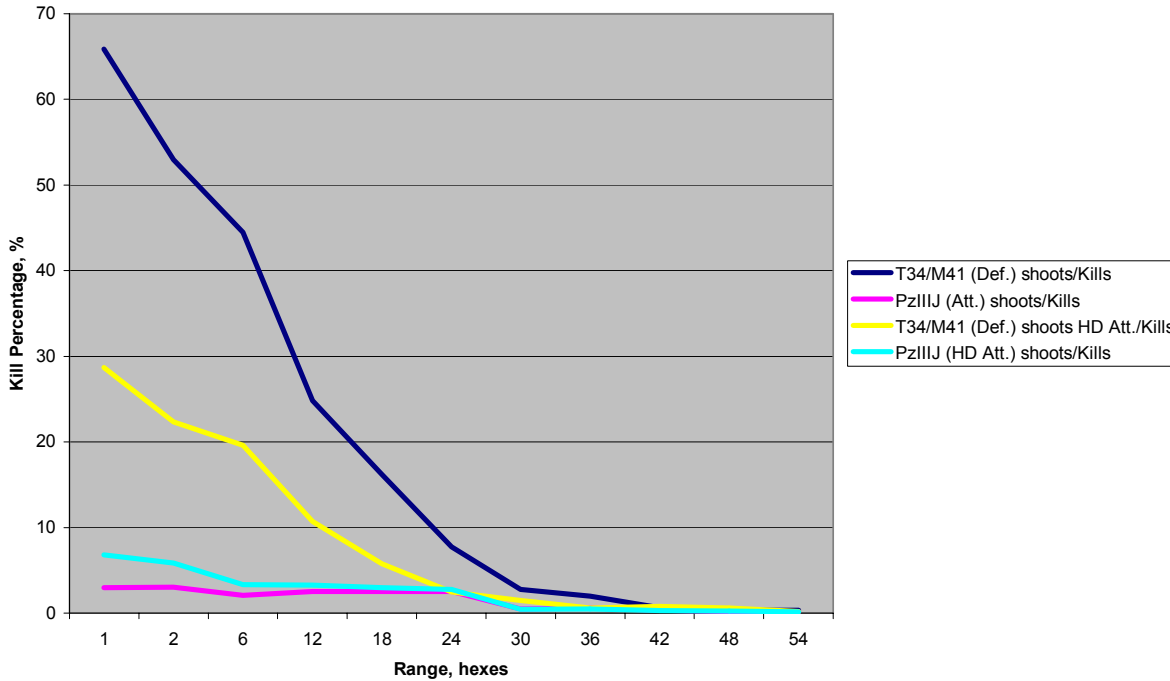
**T34/M41, HD and Non-HD, Moves on PzIIIJ
All Effects - Kill, Immob, Shock, Abandon (late-1944)**



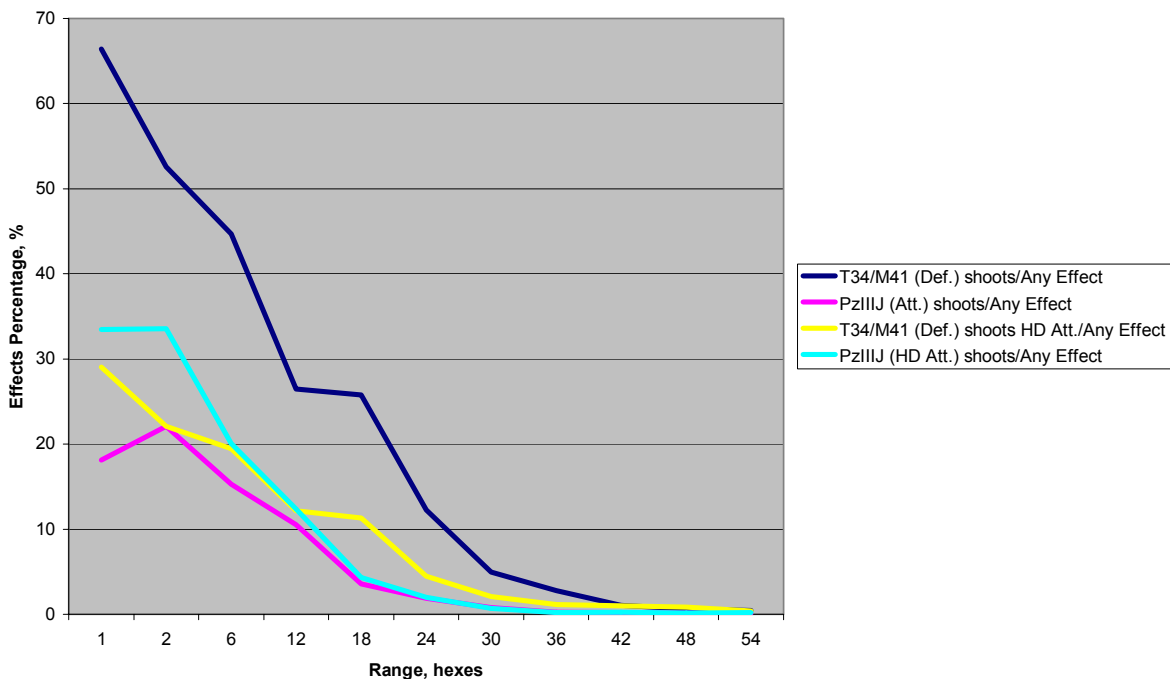
**PzIIIJ, HD and Non-HD, Moves on T34/M41
Kill Chances (1942)**



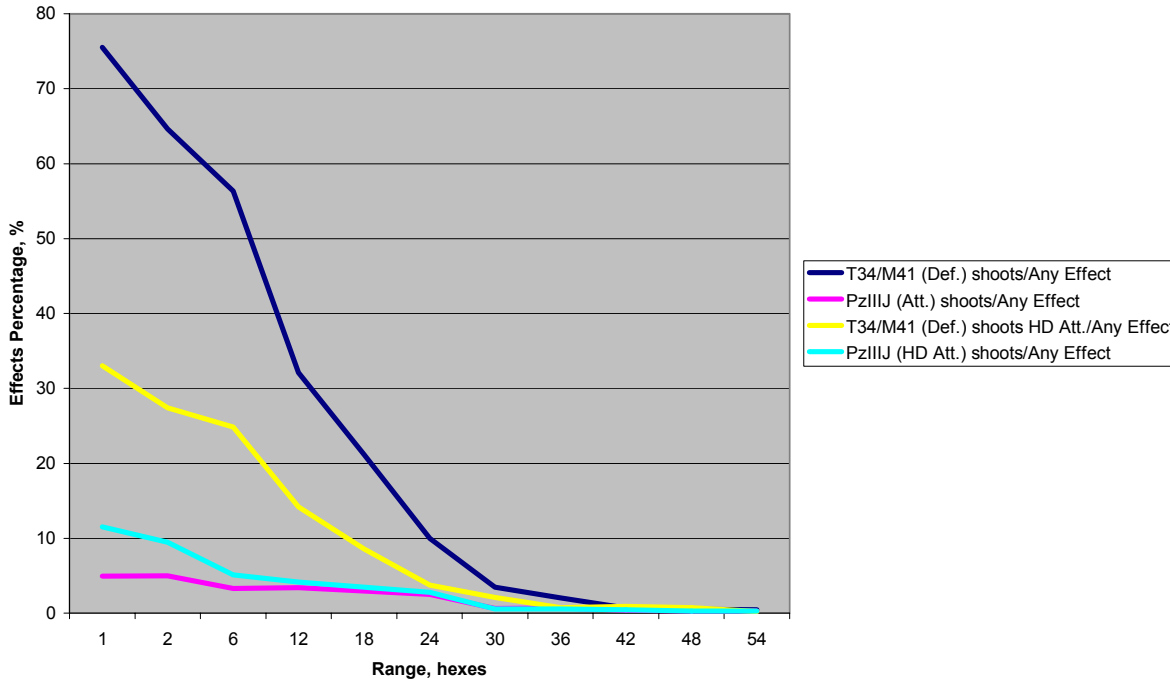
**PzIIIJ, HD and Non-HD, Moves on T34/M41
Kill Chances (late-1944)**



**PzIIIJ, HD and Non-HD, Moves on T34/M41
All Effects - Kill, Immob, Shock, Abandon (1942)**



**PzIIIJ, HD and Non-HD, Moves on T34/M41
All Effects - Kill, Immob, Shock, Abandon (late-1944)**



This simulation really highlights the importance of APCR for the PzIIIJ to compete with the T34. If the year is 1942 when the German tank has a healthy APCR number of 6, it does fairly well against the Russian monster. For instance, let's have the Soviet tank move to a 1-hex range, non-hull down, and stop. If it is 1942, the T34 will survive defensive fire unhurt about 44% of the time, but if it is 1944 when there is no longer APCR available for the German tank, that number climbs to about 70%. That's huge. The PzIIIJ survives unharmed through the advancing fire phase in this range 1 example only about 54% of the time in 1944, but 76% in 1942. Or in other words, the odds of the T34/M41 being able to drive right up point blank to the PzIIIJ and being able to harm it in some way is about 46% in 1944 but only 24% in 1942, while it only has a risk to itself of 30% in 1944 and 56% in 1942. Also influencing this is the T-34's APCR availability climbing from 4 in 1942 to 6 in 1944. Keep in mind though, that this simulation does not consider what happens in subsequent turns. So presuming the German tank survived, it would get the first shot in the next Prep Fire phase. I would have to write a *cage match* style of simulation to test that, where the program would keep running until a winner emerged or both tanks broke their guns.

Naturally the German player will not want to play into Russian hands and will seek to do battle on his own terms.

Note the big jumps between the range 6 column and the range 12 column, for instance. The numbers for the German shooter do not change significantly there, but the Russian numbers drop off quite a bit. Although this isn't news to any ASL players beyond true beginners, it's still interesting to see the actual numbers and the extent of the drop-off. For the situation where the T34 is the attacker and moves to a 6-hex range (non-hull down) of the Mark III, you can see that the German tank will harm it about 16% of the time in 1944, and 43% in 1942. Extend that range to 12 hexes, and that number drops to about 13% (1944) and 37% (1942), not a very large drop. However, when the attacking T34 shoots back, the German tank remains unharmed about 71% of the time at 6 hexes, and a whopping 91% of the time at 12 hexes (1944). In 1942 those numbers would be 83% and 92% respectively.

Flip the situation and consider the PzIIIJ as the attacker, at 6 and 12 hex range, again with neither hull down. The German tank will be unharmed approximately 44% of the time at 6 hexes, and 68% of the time at 12 hexes in 1944, while in 1942 those numbers would be 45% and 74% respectively, the difference in survivability being explained by the higher Russian APCR number in 1944 (6) vs. 1942 (4). Meanwhile the Russian tank will be unharmed in this encounter 96% of the time at both ranges in 1944, and 85%

and 90% in 1942, respectively. So as the German player, clearly it is better to stay a little farther away if possible.

As expected, the numbers show how useful getting hull down is for both players. However, it is more pronounced for the German tank. The Russian tank has only 8 frontal armor factors in the turret compared to 11 on the hull. Since the kill number of the German 50L gun is only 13 anyway, in general that means the German player is always hoping for a turret hit, especially if no APCR is available as in 1944. We see that borne out in the simulation, for if the T34 moves to a 1-hex range non-hull down it survives about 70% of the time unharmed, compared to 77% if hull down (1944) and 56% non-hull down survivability vs. 68% survivability when hull down (1942). Flip it now, and put the German tank on the attack. At range 1, non-hull down, it survives Russian defensive fire unharmed only about 24% of the time in 1944. If hull down, however, the number climbs to 67%! This is due not only to the lessened hit chances, but also the superior turret armor (6 vs. 4). Going hull down at 1-hex range also doubles the German chances of harming the Russian tank, from about 5% to about 11%. Although neither is very good, it's still very telling. The German tank has to survive defensive fire to even have a chance, and going hull down makes a big difference. In 1942 you can see that if the German tank survives to be able to take an advancing fire shot, it has much better chances of harming its Russian opponent here: 18% if it cannot get hull down and 33% if it can.

Clearly the PzIIIJ is at a disadvantage against the T-34/M41 in a frontal encounter. Is it hopeless? Well, in 1944 it may not be hopeless but it is rough. In 1942 the T34 should really be wary because APCR acts as a great equalizer for the German. If you are the kind of player who always forgets to try APCR, then you are at a distinct disadvantage if you play the Germans in a 1942 scenario featuring these two tanks.

There are many other things to consider in evaluating the relative merits of these vehicles, however. I like this matchup because it requires the German player to be skillful in maneuver to try to gain an advantage. The PzIIIJ can kill the T-34/M41, but it is not easy. Let's compare attributes in a table as we did in the last installment between the Tiger and the Stalin. The basic penetration of the guns is about even, with a basic to kill number of 13 for each. In relative terms the T-34 comes out way ahead because its armor edge is so large. For shooting at infantry, the bigger gun of the T-34 is better because it will hit on the 12 column instead of the 6 column. But the German tank has a big edge in rate of fire (2 vs. 0) and accuracy, which will only matter at ranges beyond 6 hexes. The PzIIIJ has a slight edge in machine gun firepower. It also has a slight edge in special ammo, because it has ever so slightly higher APCR numbers, and the kill numbers for that APCR are higher. However, beyond 1943 it has no APCR at all, while the Russian tank still does, so that swings the balance to the

T-34 in a big way in 1944. Still, I expect most of these battles to occur in the 1942-43 timeframe. Lastly, the T-34/M41 is faster but has mechanical reliability problems which may hamper it somewhat. The lack of a radio prior to 1943 is obviously a big handicap for the Russian combatant.

Attribute	PzIIIJ	T-34/M41
Gun Penetration	even	even
Gun Size		X
Rate of Fire	X	
Accuracy	X	
Armor		X
Machine Guns	X	
Target Size	even	even
Close Defense	none	none
Morale	even	even
Special Ammo	X (pre-1944)	X (1944+)
Speed		X
Mech. Reliability	X	
Radio	Yes	Only 1943+

Player Profile: Matt Schwoebel

Banzai: Tell us a little bit about your gaming background. How long have you been gaming? What was your first game? Are there any particular games that stood out over the years?

Matt Schwoebel: *Probably started back in late elementary school. I remember being fond of that simplest of war games at the time – Stratego. I've played many games a few times, but nothing really stands out compared to ASL.*

Banzai: When and how did you discover ASL?

MS: *My brother Aaron bought his first ASL gear in high school. We played a tiny amount, poorly, before college intervened. When I moved to Austin 10 years ago we started playing again. Aaron discovered the CTASL club and we started playing with (Jeff) Toreki. After many painful lessons, tournaments and game days followed.*

Banzai: What nationality do you enjoy playing the most?

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MS: *The Gurkhas. Gotta love deadly hand-to-hand, no cowering, stealth, and commando climbing. I have three books on them if anyone wants to borrow one...*

Banzai: Describe your favorite kind of scenario.

MS: *PTO. It feels more like chess to me. Maneuver over firepower, finesse over brute force. Well, until the last turn of deadly hand-to-hand. I think combined arms tactics are the toughest to learn in ASL. PTO with its 'dicey' melees gives a moderately skilled player a better chance against a more experienced player compared to ETO late war slugfests.*

Banzai: What would you say are your ASL strengths and weaknesses?

MS: *I'm definitely stronger in a mainly infantry fight either attacking or defending. I have a decent chance against the better players in an infantry-oriented scenario (PTO or ETO). Still feel I have a ways to go in large armor battles and my ability to get artillery on an objective at the right time is abysmal.*

Banzai: What is the best part of ASL, and what is the worst?

MS: *The worst part is losing a lop-sided game after 8 hours or making critical mistakes in a close game. The camaraderie with fellow war gamers is the best part. A close second is the intellectual challenge of ASL.*

Banzai: What are you most looking forward to with regard to ASL?

MS: *Someday, I want to see a Burma Campaign game. The Japanese are always fun to play. The Allied player would have access to such diverse forces – American-equipped Chinese, Chindits, Gurkhas, British Indian Army troops, Merrill's Marauders, local Partisans, and more.*

Banzai: You're playing the Russians in a 1941 scenario, facing a German combined arms attack featuring several AFVs. Would you rather have a KV-2 or a platoon of two BT-7 M37s and two BT-7As?

MS: *My ability to lose AFVs is not quite legendary, but close. I'd take the 4 lighter, faster tanks.*

Banzai: What was your most enjoyable ASL moment? How about your worst, funniest, coolest, and/or craziest?

MS: *One of the craziest is elsewhere in this Banzai! The best was a win in Retribution against Walter. I had some of the worst luck as the attacker in the first 3 turns, but kept to my game plan, took good risks, and won. One of the worst was doing everything right against Eric in the first scenario we played and still losing (Assault on the Hotel Continental). I read his set-up, cutoff his forward forces, made it into the victory building early, yet one encircled squad held out against a tremendous weight of fire to survive. It is Schwoebel family tradition to have our worst ASL moment against Eric.*

Banzai: What area of your play would you like to improve on most over the next year?

MS: *Do something positive with OBA. Play a large combined-arms scenario and win. Maybe try a Caves scenario, although that might wait for next year.*

Banzai: You get choice of sides in a scenario. Would you rather have the side with a single behemoth tank like a Panther or Tiger, or the side facing them with larger numbers (say 4) or less stout vehicles like Shermans or T-34s?

MS: *As long as the scenario offers room to maneuver out of LOS, I'd say the group of lesser tanks. I'm really good at losing tanks, so the more the merrier.*

Banzai: Is there a game piece that you'd really like to use but can't find a scenario where it appears? If so, what is it?

MS: *No.*

Banzai: You get to choose your side in a scenario set in the battle for France in 1940. Both sides have combined arms and a decent allotment of tanks. Would you rather command the French side to use their Char B1-bis, Somuas, and Renault tanks, or the Germans, with their PzIs and PzIIs, and a few PzIVs and Pz38ts?

MS: *I'd take the thick armor of the French tanks over the speed of the German tanks. Although the French tanks have inferior MGs for taking on infantry... No, I'll stick with the significant armor advantage, which forgives the occasional tactical mistake.*

Banzai: Late war heavy metal scenarios: overrated or underrated?

MS: *Overrated and in my mind overplayed. To me, it's sometimes more fun to take on the challenge of playing 6 morale Italians than to always play 8 morale elite troops with heavy armor. I had a lot of fun playing Tom Gillis in*

Bridge to Nowhere, where the challenge was figuring out what to do when NONE of your squads would pass a morale check.

Banzai: Now that *Armies of Oblivion* has been out for a while, have you had a chance to generate some impressions about playing the Axis Minors?

MS: Sadly, I haven't played enough AOO scenarios to form an opinion yet! Will add that to my want to play list, especially some good Hungarian vs. Rumanian neighborly love.

Banzai: The Japanese knee mortar: overrated or underrated?

MS: Good when it can be used. Many PTO scenarios have dense terrain though, making it less effective. It is nice to have smoke and WP.

Banzai: What advice would you give to players who are just starting out, and what advice would you give to ASL clubs in trying to attract and retain new players?

MS: Don't worry about losing your first several games. Rules knowledge comes with time and playing more experienced players. If you are in doubt, always look up the rule.

Banzai: What's your favorite AFV (or other game piece) in ASL and why?

MS: Don't think I have a particular favorite. Always have liked the Panther and the Hellcat for AFVs. For squads, the 6-4-8 Gurkha or 6-5-8 SS or 7-6-8 Marine are fun. And you can never leave out those 3-3-6 Italians.

Banzai: We'll get to your favorite ASL scenarios in another issue, so how about telling us what your other favorite games are?

MS: I really don't game that much outside of ASL. When Jeff Taylor lived in Texas, I enjoyed going to his place and using a d100 to randomly pick one war game out of his impressive collection.

Banzai: Who are your favorite opponents to play and why?

MS: I like playing Zeb Doyle, Eric Gerstenberg (if he stops avoiding me), Walter Eardley for tourney play, and Mike Rose out in Kansas for a foreigner. Zeb is gracious and I learn something every time, plus he brings beer. Eric's dogged determination wins him scenarios and that's a trait

I need to mimic. Walter and I have matched up at a few tournaments and I've thoroughly enjoyed the games. Mike Rose is my nemesis. We trash talk before a tournament. I'm 0 for Kansas though, so perhaps I should be quieter and study ASL more.

Banzai: What were your worst and best runs of luck?

MS: I can't remember a particularly good or bad streak... It happens often, but usually not for an entire game. I did manage in a recent game against Zeb to not even stripe a single Japanese squad in the first four turns or so. In a different game I had an HMG go on a rate tear and shred several of Zeb's squads in the crucial last turn.

Banzai: Which scenarios have you played the most times?

MS: Red Barricades campaign game is the best ASL available. Otherwise, I prefer not to replay scenarios.

Banzai: What are your other interests outside of gaming?

MS: Reading books (history, military, linguistic), writing fiction, TV watching, cat petting, and drinking iced mocha lattes (non-fat, no- whip)

Banzai: Any final comments to wrap up?

MS: Nope, thanks for the interview!

Carpe DM

Dan Preston



"No Prisoners!" You know, if that Turkish column in *Lawrence of Arabia* had been better-organized and led, Lawrence and his Arab Army might have had a real problem. Lawrence and his mounted troops went thundering through the remnants of the Turkish unit, past automatic weapons and field guns abandoned by their panicked enemy, most of whom had their hands up.

We've all done it before. Some opposing broken unit runs out of places to rout to and "is eliminated for failure to rout". Which simply means that the opposing unit is in a position to surrender, and we choose to invoke no quarter and consider it eliminated.

What is usually a casual decision to avoid annoying non-combat related logistics could turn and bite a player under certain circumstances. Here, once over lightly, are a few examples of situations where taking prisoners can and will

contribute to victory. Or at least, keep us out of a jam because of a (bad) decision made out of habit.

1. Victory Conditions. (A26.222) Ok, this is a no-brainer. VC that requires a side to accumulate a certain number of CVP can be boosted considerably by taking prisoners. Prisoners are worth twice as much at game end. Duh.

2. Prisoner Interrogation. (E2) Also easy. You capture enemy units, roll for interrogation, and HIP and concealed units and Fortifications are revealed. The more units you capture, the more you can question.

3. Mopping Up. (A12.153) This is a little used rule that can be very useful. According to the rules, if you have a MMC that is within two hexes of every location of that building (or two or more MMCs working together), then you can declare "Mopping Up". In that case, every HIP unit in the entire building is placed on board under a concealment counter, all phony "?" are removed, and all other concealed units are unaffected. (You may not use Mopping Up if the building contains any unconcealed, unbroken enemy units). Now, here is the fun part. All broken units in the building now surrender to your MMCs. This even works if the stairwells are gone. In addition, you can now claim Control of the building you just Mopped Up. Now for the down side. You cannot use this rule if No Quarter is in effect. If you have a lot of multi-hex buildings to clear in a short time, this can be a game winner. You don't want to spend the last turn chasing those brookies up and down the stairs.

4. Half-hearted enemy. Vichy French and Italians fighting opponents like the British and Americans are not really the kind of bloodthirsty enemies that inspire gripping war tales. These opponents usually have a low ELR and are looking for an excuse to surrender. Shoot a bunch of them with their hands up and you might not like what happens in the following turns.

5. Close quarters fighting. Some scenarios come down to the last few turns with the opposing sides grappling at very close quarters with little room to move, much less to rout. Under such circumstances, coaxing broken units out of their holes will speed victory. Enemy units that low crawl or risk interdiction can and do rally. You will really kick yourself if one of them does so and wins the game for your opponent just because you gunned down some of his chums in an earlier turn.

6. Battlefield Integrity. (A16) All right, this is a stretch. Who has ever used this rule? If you are using BI, surrendering units that are rejected are worth nothing for your side. In a pinch, those lost VPs might make the difference.

7. Plentiful transport and throwaway guards. The US Army comes to mind. Have a lot of empty trucks and AFV crews or green half squads lying around? Use those second-rate MMCs as guards and transport those prisoners right off the

board. No need to bother your hard-core units winning the war with such a mundane task.

8. Small initial defense. Some scenarios start with a modest initial defending force that gets a large reinforcement group later on. Once again, No Quarter will harden their resolve. The low crawlers may still be alive and low crawling when the cavalry arrives, instead of in custody. Then, the shoe will be on the other foot.

In conclusion, No Quarter may be invoked, and may be an SSR anyway. War is an ugly business, but we should take all the advantages we can get. Prisoners can be a valuable commodity, more than worth the trouble of guarding and transporting them. But consider what your situation will be like next turn, or the final turn, and don't let a casual decision be your undoing. A rule, like any rule, will figure into a winning strategy, or a failed one.

Favorite Scenarios



Rick Reinesch

As part of being profiled in *Banzai!!* you get to list your favorite scenarios. I generally never play a scenario more than once; there are too many great scenarios out there to be playing the same ones repeatedly. But there are definitely a few that, given the desire, I would play again in a heartbeat. I chose these scenarios because they were a lot of fun to play and they provided me with a multitude of challenges. They tend to be larger combined arms encounters, which are my favorite kind of scenario. While ROAR may not show all of these scenarios as balanced, they provided a lot of enjoyment; and that's why I play this game. Most of them went down to the wire when I played them with the victor usually being decided during the last player turn. And no, I didn't win all of them; in fact I don't believe I won any of the ones listed. But they provided some great memories and great camaraderie.

(CH8) The Predators

This one is probably my favorite scenario and one of the few that I've actually played more than once. You can't go wrong with a scenario where the Germans get 5 Tigers. But the defending Russians are not without their own ways to deal with them. The Russians get anti-tank trenches and minefields to help channel the attack, AT guns and SU-152s to deal with the Tigers, and OBA to help neutralize the infantry and softer-skinned vehicles. The objective of the Germans is to capture the high ground at the back of the Russian setup area. With the right setup of the trenches, this one gets down and gnarly real quick as the attack funnels down to less than 10 hexes in width. It was brutal and it was fun.

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(SP109) Olboeter's Escape

A big combined arms battle with lots of toys on both sides. The Germans are attempting to get off the board with enough VP to achieve victory, but standing in their way is the 1st Polish Armored Division. A few Tigers and Panthers tangling up with Fireflies on the defense, along with multiple attack and defense options, OBA, and HIP Shermans make this one an interesting affair for both sides. It came down to a bull rush on the last turn. A better placement of an AT gun or a couple of critical DRs either way (having my Sherman needing an 8 to immobilize his Tiger and not getting it! Or having his sniper recall both of my Fireflies at the beginning of the game) could have given me the victory in this one.

(CH48) Double or Nothing!

Another big combined arms eastern front match up, this one had more swings to it in a shorter amount of time at the end of the game than any other I can remember. German SS are trying to kill more Russians than they lose and exiting enough VP off the board. There is a frozen river in the way, but it is unable to support the weight of the armor. So if you are going to get VP off the board, it has to be the infantry. This one had the classic experience of a Russian squad guarding the exit area going berserk and charging across the frozen river at the Germans. And on the last turn I went from losing the scenario in Prep, to winning it in DFF, to losing it again in Advancing Fire. It was a thrill ride for both my opponent and me.

(CH22) Schwerepunkt

A big east front combined arms affair that has the Germans on the defensive this time. The Germans are basically trying to defend the Board 24 village and delay the Russian onslaught long enough to keep them from exiting enough VP for the win. This one was decided by some crazy last stands by the Germans and some incredible shots by the Russians during the game. It came down to a final rush for the board edge on the last turn. An out-of-place 88 AT gun (there seems to be a theme with that for me) was a big factor in swinging the victory to my opponent.

(A74) Valhalla Bound

This is a classic matchup out of *Annual 95*, which has some really great scenarios, but I believe this one is the best (sorry you *Wintergewitter* fans out there). Before the game, the Germans are required to secretly select either to capture buildings or to exit VP. In playing Matt Shostak in this one, he was going for the building capture VC, and at one point I'd stopped him cold. He took a big chance and sent practically every AFV on an end run around the town with enough VP to possibly exit and win, leading me to believe that that was the victory condition he'd selected. I eased off from stopping the capture victory condition and that allowed him to push forward and win. It was a terrific and gutsy move on his part. It was a swirling game, it was

hardnosed slugfest, and for me it was a classic playing of one of the many scenarios that Matt and I have done over the years.

(SP115) The Five Pound Prize

This is a great tourney-sized scenario that packs a lot of action into a small area. The Germans are trying to capture enough buildings on either side of a stream for the win. The Germans come on with armor support, but the British get their own armor reinforcements in the form of a Firefly among other AFVs. My playing of this one came down to the last CC roll for control of the last building needed for the win. This one was a lot of fun to play.

Style Points

Matt Shostak



It was early in my game of *Fangs of Transylvania* against Rick Reinesch. I drove a halftrack out to scout for surprises, and survived a shot from a light mortar. He then revealed his 40L antitank gun on this flank because my halftrack was about to enter his hex. He shot and hit. The result; a 40L round plugged into the radiator (i.e. a dud). I promptly overran the crew, to no effect, remaining in motion in the location. In his next turn he missed again, and nothing happened in close combat. In my following player turn the halftrack exited the hex through the other side, and the crew turned the gun and fired again, still missing. I moved the halftrack one more hex away, putting an orchard hindrance between us, and the crew intensive fired, missing one more time. Now the halftrack circled around to come at the gun from outside its covered arc and overran it again. The crew tried an overrun prevention shot, and not only missed but broke. The halftrack continued to drive out of the hex again in such a way that the crew would die for failure to rout. It was mighty frustrating for Rick, but sweet for me. To add insult to injury, a couple of turns later in the same game, I had to deal with his other 40L antitank gun on the other flank. A StuG dropped a smoke round on it, and then another halftrack trundled over to it and overran the crew, to no effect, but remained in the location in motion. The crew whiffed in close combat, but the halftrack managed to dispatch the crew at 1:4 odds.

Favorite Scenarios

Glenn Schools



(AP7) Directive Number Three

This scenario has 18 Russian tanks vs. 15 German tanks with a little infantry thrown in. The battlefield is mostly

grain with a little woods and brush scattered about. At the start, both sides advance ½ of their movement out of sight of the opposing player. A die roll then determines who moves first and then you have 33 tanks blasting away at each other. The Russians have to get 65 exit/casualty points to win. They will have to stand and fight or make a run for the north edge of the board or a combination of both. The Russian infantry can try to make a run for the exit but with 19 German vehicles on the board, that option is a little iffy. This is one of the few that I have won over Jim Ferrell. An immobilized T-34 in the middle of a wheat field with a crew that refused to bail took out 5 German tanks.

(E) Hill 621

This one takes me back to my *Squad Leader* days. When you sit down to play it you will be playing ASL for a while. The Germans are challenged by having most of their assets coming on board in turns 1, 2, 4 and 5. The Russians have the majority of their assets on board at the start with powerful forces coming on turns 2 and 5. There is a variety of ways that both sides can play this scenario making it a good candidate for repeated play.

(115) Huns of Steel

This one has 3 different modes of transportation. You've got motorcycles, horses and tanks. The Hungarians field a collection of armored vehicles ranging from MKIVF2s to Toldi Is. The infantry forces are just about equal in number but the Russians have a greater edge in SW. The Hungarians must clear 2 areas of Russians to win. The Russians win by denying the Hungarian victory conditions. The Hungarians have to get across the board past the wire and roadblocks and get in a good firing position before the Russian armor comes onboard. The Hungarians must get the T-34s in a crossfire to have a chance of hurting them. The Russians could possibly fortify the village around 43N8 and wait for their armor to arrive.

(T1) Gavin Take

This infantry-only scenario has two groups of paratroopers entering the board with the goal of exiting one squad equivalent through 3Q10. For each squad equivalent the Germans exit via 3Q10 the Americans have to exit another squad equivalent. The Americans have a firepower and leader advantage. The Germans have SW and the knowledge of the hex the Americans have to exit to win. Lots of ways both sides can play this.

(T6) The Dead of Winter

This is a little combined arms scenario in Russia. The Russians have to exit 20 VP off the board. The only advantage the Germans have is the knowledge of where the Russians have to go. Proper placement of the MKIV and the antitank gun is key for the Germans to win. I have won playing this one as the Russians. I would like to play it as the Germans.

(J106) Marders Not Martyrs

This one is an infantry/armor mix. The Russians must get units off the board and the Germans must stop them. There is a variety of ways for both sides to set up to use the wheat, orchard, woods, buildings and elevation to advantage. For the Russians, getting tanks off the board is not too hard, but the Russian also must get some infantry off the board to win. Jim Ferrell beat me once with a triple ROF from a Marder. I would like to play it again and see if I can give the other Marder a chance to shoot.

(NFNH-12) The Grim Reapers

This has 8 HIP German tanks including 2 Tigers playing hide and seek with 18 Russian T-34s. The Russians try to find and kill 3 German tanks and exit 3 tanks off the board. I have played the Germans and would like to try it as the Russians.

(NFNH-14) The Bitter End

This is the tank battle that John Hyler would play. The Germans start with HIP infantry on boards 40 and 43 with 2 88LL antitank guns and one of the stoutest groups of German armor I have ever seen: 15 tanks including 2 Panthers and 2 JgdPz Vs entering turn 1. The Germans must stop another powerful group of 36 Russian tanks including 15 with 122L gun tubes. The victor is the one who gets the most vehicles across the river on board 40.

(TAP #6) Viku Baptism

This scenario is out of the *Total Axis Pack* from *Critical Hit*. It has no activity in ROAR yet. It has a Finnish combined arms force attacking Russians. The key to this scenario is after setup the Russian player rolls a die to determine the status of each of the 10 T-26s as CS, BU or abandoned. This is a challenge to both players as the force structure is unknown until the very start of the game. If the Russian player is fortunate enough to get a good number of his tanks crewed up at the start of turn 1, the Finns have a real challenge facing them.

(AP19) Winter of Their Discontent

This scenario is out of *A Few Returned*. The Axis player purchases the counterattack groups with the purchase cost going to the Russian player. The groups vary in composition and turn entry. The Russians can set up on board or enter the north edge at the cost of 1 VP per unit. (You need to watch for this for it is not in the Special Rules Section as it should be). With all of these different options the scenario can have a different twist to it every time it's played.

Banzai!!

January, 2008 Volume 13, Number 1

This Happened to Me

I was playing Rick Reinesch in *Shelling the Sivash*. His defense had blunted my attack pretty well, particularly the tanks. I had little choice but to engage his StuG and Marder head-on with my SU-122 and a pair of T-34s. He quickly dispatched the first two, retaining rate once with his StuG. My last T-34 charged around to the flank of his Marder and stopped. Rick declared intensive fire and I declared a gun duel. Both gun duel modifiers were +5 so the lower roll would shoot first. He rolled a 3 and I rolled a 6, so his shot struck home first. Fortunately he rolled a dud and therefore my shot counted, brewing up the Marder. He quickly avenged this loss when a half squad moved up and roasted my last T-34 with a panzerfaust. Realizing that the game was slipping away, I had to make a break for it early, before his repositioning forces could block my exit. I needed to exit 8 points of infantry to win, and although I had three turns left, I had to go now. I ran many units forward to soak up firepower, and Rick laid a couple of firelanes and a lot of residual. I even deliberately ran a couple of units straight down a fire lane in hopes of breaking his machine gun. Next my 9-2 leader made a break for it, running through a couple of 2FP fire lanes, and a small residual or two, then surviving an 8 down 1 and a 4 down 2 to reach the final hex from which he could advance off the board. Finally my last group of a 9-1 and three 4-5-8 squads had to make their break. Their first step was into the fire lane, 2 down 2, which resulted in a PTC. Fortunately, only one squad pinned. There was no more room for error, as I needed the 6 points these 2 squads and leader accounted for. They endured a 2 plus 1 residual and a 4 plus 1 final protective fire shot to make it to the exit hex. Together with the 9-2, they made up 9 points; just enough for the lucky win. – *Matt Shostak*

My recent comments about killing Roy's leaders and the exploits of Sgt. Gerstenberg has me thinking about some other cool SMC kills that have occurred in various scenarios, and I'm wondering if anyone else has any fun stories to share. I've already mentioned a few of Roy's deaths, including the platoon of 6-6-7s with the 9-2 that fell prey to a thrown DC after their own OBA rubble a building that opened an LOS cutting off their rout paths, but here's my coolest SMC death story ever:

It all started in Berlin, 1945, where my Russians were trying to clear Himmler's House of some very tough SS played by Eric Gerstenberg. In the scenario, the SS are all Fanatic and all leaders act as commissars, so breaking those 6-5-9s doesn't really accomplish anything aside from pushing them back a hex when they rout and auto-rally. Despite that, by sheer weight of numbers and lots of CC, I was slowly able to clear the building with most of the SS taking refuge on the roof. Eventually, a final pocket of resistance coalesced around Eric's personal 9-1 leader

counter. I pushed some troops onto the roof myself, taking hideous casualties from the 6-5-9/HMG stacked with 'Oberstumbahnfuehrer Gerstenberg', but my Soviets finally managed to break the SS squad and kill it for failure to rout. The 9-1 Gerstenberg caught the HMG as it fell from the cold dead hands of his men, but it left him looking like the protagonist of a zombie horror movie: trapped alone on the roof and the building below him swarming with brain-washed will-less individuals. In my next turn, I ran four or five squads at him but Gerstenberg went on an ROF tear and broke every single one of them. It did distract him long enough for me to get a ground-level kill-stack adjacent however, although he shrugged off the 3MC my 16-1 AFPh shot generated.

In the German PFPh, with nowhere to run to, Gerstenberg turned the HMG on my kill stack and actually broke two squads with a flurry of 6+3 shots, but I was still able to throw a 20-1 back at him. The resulting K/ wounded but didn't break the intrepid SMC, leaving him still in control of the building going into my last player turn. This time I opportunity fired my kill stack, allowing me to move some 6-2-8s in to add to the AFPh shot. Since I still had plenty of bodies, I again ran several squads at Gerstenberg to try for some CC, but again he mowed them all down. He'd now taken out nine squads in three fire phases by himself, and had set up a situation where I had a single AFPh shot at him to try for the win. If I missed that, Gerstenberg would singlehandedly cost me the game. It was with great satisfaction that my final 30-1 shot rolled a 4 and sent his bullet-ridden body plummeting off the roof and into the Spree far, far below.

Anyone have a story that can top that? – *Zeb Doyle*

Don't know if I can top that one, but this was an amusing SMC demise (at least from my perspective), from the same scenario, *Himmler's House*. Mike Seningen moved a Russian 9-2 and three 6-2-8s all with LMGs adjacent to the rear stairwell in the Haus, threatening to cut off my ability to use the stairs and end the game a couple of turns early. All I had defending was a 4-4-7/lmg. I had shot at one of the 6-2-8s as it entered the hex, but that shot and the subsequent residual rolls on the other entering units had no effect. During Defensive Fire, I Final Fired the 4-4-7 (with sustained fire from the LMG), for a 6+3 shot, NMC result, the Russian 9-2 goes berserk, and takes all three squads with him. I routed my 4-4-7 away. During CCPh of my half-turn, a German broken conscript HS successfully withdraws from Melee to a location outside the building, but adjacent to the stack of 'zerk Russkis. In his next turn the Berserkers all come charging right back out of the building into the open ground hex where the HS was, and get nailed by several -2 shots and the stack withered completely away. We could only imagine the words of the 9-2: "Go take the stairwell, no wait, go back outside and

kill those G#\$%amn broken Volksgrenadiers. URRRAH!!!"
-- Jeff Toreki

Jeff Toreki used a similar method to eliminate my kill stack, although it was a much slower and more painful death. I was the US player assaulting a fortified German hill with barbed wire o'plenty (and not the Pam Anderson kind). Had a stack with a 10-2, 3 x 6-6-7, HMG, and 2 x MMG in the only building on an adjacent hill. This stack successfully kept the German defenders' heads down on Turn 1 while the rest of the Americans made for the wire. Then Jeff rolled some Toreki attack that ended up with an NMC (2+1 or such). The leader of course went beserk and took the 3 squads with him. They proceeded to drop heavy items, charge down one hill, up another, under barbed wire, and then up the hill. A single half-squad did make it beyond the wire only to be eliminated. It was the longest, most agonizing berserk charge I've seen. After that the Germans took their time picking off poor unfortunate squads attempting to slip under wire with zero covering fire. – Matt Schwoebel

Russian 10-2s are rare in any scenario and I managed to get one in RB. He was one of two leaders from my original companies (how do I know? I have kept track of my squads, SW, and leaders). I think that he started out as a 9-1, but became a 9-2 very quickly. This last refit phase I rolled a three on leader battle hardening and decided to promote him. I probably would have been better off taking a lower ranking leader, but I thought "man how often do you get to play with one of those?"

So I put him on a factory roof with (4-5-8 + HMG) x 3. I know that you are thinking "what a crazy thing to do?" But it was in a place where they could really put the pressure on the Germans and not really get too much back in return. PFPh had them cutting up a German Death Star Kill Stack, but only with one round of rate. Then in DFPh a 16+1 scored a NMC on my stack. I said, "pfft, whatever." And then rolled a 12 on the NMC, followed up with a wound of 6. He got satanized! – Roy Casagrande

I was playing Mike Denson in *Setting the Stage*. In the early stages of the game, he had a whole lot of SS troops bunched up in front of the farm house on my right flank. I had artillery coming down nearby, and wanted to correct the fire right on top of this juicy target. It would be a tough line of sight, but it was worth it to try because I could potentially hit so many troops at once. I decided to go for it, and the 7-0 leader promptly cranked up the field phone, only to hear dead silence. Someone must have cut the line.
– Matt Shostak

Rules Tip

Matt Shostak

A unit that is pinned is no longer subject to FFNAM/FFMO modifiers. However, if it subsequently breaks again before it ends its movement phase, it can be subject to those modifiers again, if applicable (A7.83).



2008 Texas ASL Team Tournament

Rick Reinesch

We are five months out and the planning is well underway. This year promises to be just as much fun as last year, so start making those plans now to attend the 16th Annual Texas ASL Team Tournament in Austin, TX, June 19-22, 2008. Last year we had 47 players from points all over the country participating. The website has been updated with the latest and greatest information on the tournament activities, the hotel and the registration fees. Make sure and preregister; you never know what goodies I will come up with for those doing so.

As in previous years, Thursday's games will be informal gaming, with those games counting toward the Major Johnson award. On Friday morning, we will launch the formal phase of the tournament where we will track wins and losses over the weekend to crown the team and individual winners. Our tournament runs an open format; players are free to match themselves with anyone, and play any mutually agreeable scenario.

Registration this year is \$36 for the Thursday-Sunday gaming, \$31 for Friday-Sunday; and \$21 for Saturday only. Your entrance fee includes participation in any Mini-Tournaments should you desire to enter. Make sure to meet the June 5th registration deadline to avoid the \$10.00 surcharge for late registration.

You can check everything out by following the ASL Team Tourney link from the Texas ASL home page at <http://www.texas-asl.com>.

Club Notes

Biweekly Lunch Gathering

Don't forget to join us every other Friday at 1300 hours down at Schlotsky's on South Lamar and Toomey (just south of Riverside Drive). The club sends out email reminders, or you can call Matt or Sam for information on the next get-together.



Banzai!!

Game Days

The Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas/Ft. Worth groups have remained active, hosting various gatherings for club members to get together and knock cardboard heads. If you missed any of these you missed a lot of fun. It's like a tournament atmosphere for a day. The Austin group meets on the first Saturday of every month. The San Antonio guys on the third Saturday of every month. To stay informed of upcoming club events, join our email group. You can post a message at central-texas-asl@yahoogroups.com or you can point your browser to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/central-texas-asl> and take a look. For those still not connected, give Matt, Rick, or Sam a call for club information.

Tactical Tips

Rick Reinesch



Everyone is aware the standard movement allotment for MMCs is 4 MF. You can go 2 MFs farther by moving with a leader, but leaders can't be everywhere to give all of your MMCs that nice bonus. So here are a few things you can do to get a few more hexes of movement out those Infantry units.

In your movement phase, CX that MMC and move it up to 6 MFs; ending your movement stacked with a leader. Then in the rout phase, voluntarily break the squad and rout them,

along with the leader, to where you need to go, and then rally them next turn. The voluntary break rules will limit when you can do this (A10.41), but it is possible to move an MMC up to 12 MF in one turn, and the leader gets extra MFs in accompanying the broken units. Variations of this (start the unit's MPh stacked with a leader, road bonus) could get you even farther.

Do you have troops with a high morale, or perhaps you are feeling lucky? Don't spend a quarter of your AFV's movement points unloading their riders. Move up to the full MP allotment of the vehicle then swing the turret around to force the Riders to Bail Out. Sure they'll have to take an MC. But if they pass, they'll be right where you wanted them, a turn or more ahead of schedule. You'll need to be feeling particularly lucky if the unit is carrying a SW. Any SW carried by a Bailing Out Rider is eliminated if the carrying unit breaks prior to or after Bail Out. Even if the carrying unit does not break as a result of Bailing Out, its SW must be removed from the AFV and checked for malfunction [dr 1-3 = ok; dr 4-6 = malfunction (or elimination if an X# SW)].

So what to do with that wounded 8-1 leader who's 3 MF won't allow him to move with the speed of the rest of the Infantry? Have a HS carry him. He is not light at 5PP but still provides a 2MF bonus. So at least he can now keep up with the rest of the units, and he still provides all of the benefits of leadership.

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Thanks to Rodney Kinney for VASL, Carl Fung for his VASL counter images, and the VASL Map Cabals for their VASL map images. We use a combination of VASL counter and map images for scenario layouts with permission of use for that purpose.

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