

# Banzai!!

## The Newsletter of the Austin ASL Club

### Issue #11

### November 1996

*This newsletter is FREE. Don't let anyone  
charge you for it.*

#### Club Notes and Ladder Standings

| Player       | Points | Record |
|--------------|--------|--------|
| Shostak      | 1262   | 20-5   |
| Smith        | 1261   | 19-7   |
| Seningen     | 1207   | 10-7   |
| Hailey       | 1119   | 8-4    |
| Esparza      | 1062   | 2-0    |
| Purnell      | 1045   | 9-5    |
| Tom Woller   | 1037   | 1-0    |
| Kirk Woller  | 1020   | 9-16   |
| O'Quin       | 1016   | 4-5    |
| Lavan        | 1010   | 2-3    |
| Morgenthaler | 978    | 0-1    |
| Swantek      | 971    | 1-2    |
| Fritz        | 963    | 2-3    |
| Toreki       | 951    | 0-2    |
| Knatcher     | 939    | 0-2    |
| Lester       | 907    | 0-4    |
| Austin       | 905    | 0-3    |
| Hively       | 871    | 5-14   |
| Gerstenberg  | 864    | 5-14   |

**Recent Results**

O'Quin (Germ) def Fritz (Amer) in Under the Noel Trees  
K Woller (Germ) def Fritz (Fren) in Last Defense Line  
K Woller (Russ) def Knatcher (Germ) in Guards  
Counterattack  
Fritz (Russ) def O'Quin (Germ) in Wintergewitter  
O'Quin (Germ) def Fritz (Russ) in Wintergewitter  
Shostak (Germ) def E Gerstenberg (Russ) in Hube's Pocket

If you'd like information about our club, please call Matt at 280- 8414 or Mike at 288-3778.

#### Mr. Smith Goes to Kuwait

Club member Chas Smith, who some of you may know is with the 1<sup>st</sup> Cav, which is what brought him to this area, got the call to ship out to Kuwait a few weeks ago. We'll still try to get him club news by sending this newsletter to his new (hopefully very temporary) address. Chas is interested in hearing from us, especially with regard to playtesting some of his recent scenario creations. Contact Matt Shostak if you'd like to get Chas' address or playtest any of his scenarios. Best of luck, Chas! Keep your head down.

#### Fighting On Two Fronts

##### Matt Shostak

Have you ever found yourself with an odd number of players for your regular gaming session? Don't draw straws and send the short guy home; just find the appropriate scenario. Often the attacking side can be divided up into two groups, allowing three players to get in on the action. What should you look for in a multi-player scenario? First, at least one side must be easily divisible into groups. Second, you probably don't want one where the division is between onboard forces and reinforcements which won't enter until several turns into the game. That would leave the reinforcing player with nothing to do for quite a while. Third, try to find a scenario where the attack comes from two different directions. That way the two players controlling the attack won't get their forces mixed up with each other's, and the lack of coordination that you might get by splitting command will not be as pronounced. Here are a few suggestions for good multi-player scenarios.

**To the Last Man** A large 1945 city fight on deluxe boards, featuring a Russian attack from two sides against a gritty German SS formation, this one scores high on the fun factor and makes a good three or even four player game. Check out Mark Nixon's article on it in the General (Vol. 29, no. 2).

**The Cossacks Are Coming** Yugoslavian partisans get attacked on one side by a Croatian garrison, and on the other by Cossack cavalry, in this 9.5 turn infantry exercise. Simultaneous setup adds some fog of war.

**KP 167** Japanese forces get attacked from two different sides by Americans along a jungle road in Bataan, 1942.

**The Road to Gora** Russian defenders get attacked on opposite sides by Finns in this one from the 1996 Annual. Try out your skis.

**Royal Marines** Two British Commando troops attack stubborn second line Germans through lots of fortifications.

**Breakout** Russians attack Germans from three sides in this scenario depicting part of the Destruction of Army Group Center. Played on deluxe boards, it features some cool toys in a couple of IS-2s and an OT-34.

## The 96 Annual

### Matt Shostak

Avalon Hill has recently released the 1996 ASL Annual, and it could be the best one ever. This Annual, more than any previous one, focuses on the play of the game, and thus will be welcome reading by beginners and grognards alike. Gone are the historical/academic articles, which, although interesting in their own right, did not help one become a better player, and, arguably, contained information that could usually be found elsewhere by anyone with enough interest to pursue the topic. In their place are articles aimed at improving the reader's play of the game. Not only are the articles quite good, but the scenarios appear to be a good group as well, both with respect to balance and interest level, although the final word on balance will wait until they have achieved a significant number of playings.

More importantly, however, is how the Annual fits together as a whole. As they did with Backblast, the MMP team has yet again paired quality articles with scenarios that highlight a particular topic. For example, the very first article, Tim Hundsdoerfer's *The Weather Outside is Frightful* explains some of the intricacies of extreme winter and the snow rules. Accompanying it is *The Road to Gora*, a Russian-Finn scenario for players to practice those very rules. Also included with the article is a very handy chart outlining which winter rules come into play during each phase of a game turn. There are smaller sidebars on falling snow hindrance, ski usage, and a list of scenarios using the winter rules. Now that is quality.

It does not stop there either. The very next article, Ole Boe's *Stop and Go Traffic*, attempts to explain the various states vehicles can find themselves in: moving, motion, and non-stopped. I suspect every player can gain something from this article. For me, it helped solidify my knowledge on a rules topic that had always given me trouble. Again, the article is assisted by a chart and a sidebar. The next article on double time, CX, and portage didn't do as much for me, perhaps because I already feel pretty comfortable with that rules section, but nevertheless it contains some useful information, and - you guessed it - a helpful chart and sidebar.

Next up is a group of four scenarios from the Atlanticon '93 ASL Team Tournament, with analysis on each by Jim Stahler. Ah, now this is the true main course of an ASL publication as far as I'm concerned, the scenario analysis. To me, that's the best. Isn't it what we all like to do when we're just shooting the breeze about ASL, talk about scenarios, arguing about what is the best way to attack or defend? Here you get some insight into the thinking process of an expert. More scenario analysis awaits at the end of the Annual, where Mark Nixon reviews four scenarios from Croix de Guerre. Always fun to read, Mark's articles can get me interested in a scenario I'd never considered before, and of course this one left me hungry for his thoughts on the rest of the module's offerings. Taken together, these two scenario analysis articles add a lot to the quality of the Annual.

Yet another rules article, this time on gliders, by the famous Curt Schilling, continues the Annual's emphasis on learning to play the game. Curt does a good job, too. He's got me convinced that gliders aren't too hard. There's even a small quiz within the article to help you sharpen your knowledge. Guess what? Right next to the article is a glider scenario!

Dade Cariaga's *Spelunking 101* talks about setup tips for caves and cave complexes, with particular attention paid to part of the setup for *Sea of Tranquility*. I just love reading these kinds of articles,

and Dade does another good job. I know the setup must be pretty good also. Dade put it to the test at Wild West Fest 96 and won.

But that's not all. A comprehensive Q&A and Errata is placed conveniently in the center of the booklet so that it can be removed more easily if desired. Area news, the Chronology of War, Errata for KGP II, and Editors' Notes round out the articles.

Because of its heavy emphasis on the play of the game, rather than historical articles, I think this annual will be well liked by players wishing to improve their skills. And isn't that all of us?

## Kursk is On

The Big One, a monster event featuring four mid-to-large interrelated scenarios played side by side by two teams of four, has received enough interest from club members for it to get the go-ahead. The event will take place on Saturday, Nov. 16, starting at 10:00 am, at Matt Shostak's place. As DYO scenarios, this event will have a premium on fun, fog of war, neat toys, mayhem, and camaraderie. Here is how the teams will be divided:

| Scenario                                      | German       | Russian        |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| <i>The Men Who Would Be Kings of the Hill</i> | Kirk Woller  | Greg Swantek   |
| <i>The Aunt of All Tank Battles</i>           | David Hailey | Mike Seningen  |
| <i>Into the Woods</i>                         | Bob Purnell  | E Gerstenberg  |
| <i>A Peaceful Little Village</i>              | Jim Knatcher | Thomas Salazar |

### First Alternate: Jack O'Quin.

Jack will fill in as needed, or, if a 10th player signs up, will play that player in one of the above four scenarios. So there's still room if you want to get in on this thing. It promises to be a blast. Call Matt Shostak (280-8414) for more information.

## Scenario Gourmets

### Tim Hundsdorfer

*(Tim put this idea together for his own club's newsletter and kindly gave Banzai permission to use it as well. Thanks, Tim. -ed.)*

Before you pick out a scenario, check it against our list of cherries and dogs:

- ++ ya gotta play it
- + play it
- don't play it
- don't play it, even under the influence

These are the opinions of the Wild West guys. More in-depth analysis is also available for our favorite scenarios.

Reviewer: (MS) Matt Shostak (TH) Tim Hundsdorfer, (TEDMS) Marty Snow, (TW) Tim Wilson, (DC) Dade Cariaga, (TR) Tom Repetti

|                                  |    |              |
|----------------------------------|----|--------------|
| Abandon Ship                     | +  | (TEDMS)      |
|                                  | -  | (TW, TR)     |
| Acts of Defiance                 | ++ | (MS, DC)     |
| Alligator Creek                  | —  | (TEDMS)      |
| Ambush!                          | -  | (MS)         |
| The Army at the End of the World | +  | (MS)         |
| Beyond the Pakfronts             | +  | (MS)         |
| Black Friday                     | +  | (MS, TH)     |
| Blocking Action at Lipki         | ++ | (MS, TW, DC) |
| Boom Town                        | —  | (DC)         |
| The Bridge at Cheneaux           | +  | (TW)         |
| Carnage in the Night             | ++ | (TW)         |
| Chance dune Affaire              | +  | (MS, DC)     |
|                                  | ++ | (TH)         |
| Cibik's Ridge                    | ++ | (TR)         |
| To Clear a Roadblock             | +  | (MS)         |
| The Corridor                     | +  | (MS)         |
| Crossing the Gnoli Tikish        | ++ | (TW, DC)     |
| Cushman's Pocket                 | +  | (DC)         |
| Cutting out a Strongpoint        | ++ | (TW)         |
| Dangerous Crossroads             | +  | (TW)         |
| Double or Nothing!               | +  | (MS)         |
|                                  | -  | (TW)         |
| Dorsett Wood in the Rain         | -  | (TH)         |
|                                  | +  | (TW, TR)     |
| Drive for Tzierchung             | +  | (DC)         |
| Eye of the Tiger                 | ++ | (TW, TR)     |
| Faugh A'Ballagh                  | -  | (TW)         |
|                                  | +  | (TR)         |
| Franzen's Roadblock              | +  | (TH)         |
| Forests of the North             | —  | (TH)         |
| High Danger                      | —  | (MS)         |
| In Front of the Storm            | +  | (MS, TW)     |
|                                  | ++ | (DC)         |
| The Long Road                    | +  | (MS)         |
|                                  | -  | (DC)         |
| Mayhem in Manila                 | +  | (DC)         |
| Nel Nome Di Roma                 | +  | (MS)         |
|                                  | ++ | (TH, TW)     |
| Ninety Minute War                | +  | (MS, DC)     |
| The Noose                        | ++ | (DC)         |
| Operation Nordwind               | +  | (TW)         |
| On Silent Wings                  | -  | (DC)         |
| A Parting Blow                   | —  | (TW)         |
| Peipers Last Gasp                | +  | (TH)         |
| Pyrrhic Victory                  | +  | (TW)         |
| The Red Wave                     | ++ | (DC)         |

|                            |    |              |
|----------------------------|----|--------------|
| Road to Gora               | ++ | (TH, TEDMS)  |
|                            | +  | (DC)         |
| Rockets Red Glare          | +  | (TR)         |
| Scouts Out                 | -  | (TW, DC, TR) |
| Sea of Tranquility         | +  | (DC)         |
| Smith and Weston           | ++ | (DC)         |
|                            | +  | (TR)         |
| Shanghai in Flames         | +  | (TW, DC)     |
| Smoke the Kents            | +  | (DC)         |
| Soldiers of Construction   | +  | (MS)         |
| Stand and Die              | ++ | (TEDMS)      |
|                            | +  | (DC)         |
| Steel Eyed Boys            | -  | (TW)         |
| Surrender or Die           | -  | (MS)         |
| They're Coming             | -  | (TW)         |
| Victoria Cross             | +  | (MS)         |
| Will to Fight...Eradicated | +  | (MS)         |
| Wintergewitter             | ++ | (MS, TH)     |
| Witch's Cauldron           | +  | (TEDMS)      |

## In Depth Look at the Best

In the last issue of the Digest, the Wild West Dudes gave their assessment of a couple of dozen recently played scenarios. The response to this was, well, enthusiastic. I suspect with the huge numbers of scenarios out there, people are looking for something of quality to fill up an evening of ASL. At any rate, here are our picks for a few "can't miss" suggestions:

Key: TEDMS: Marty Snow, MS: Matt Shostak, DC: Dade Cariaga, TR: Tom Repetti, TW: Tim Wilson, TH: Tim Hundsdorfer

### The Best

#### Acts of Defiance (Critical Hit)

TEDMS: Any scenario where the attacker encircles the defending forces gets my vote almost automatically. This one has big guns on both sides, and plenty of chrome (goliaths, Hitler Youth in sewer, etc.).

DC: Germans come on like gangbusters, but the Russians are tenacious. Lots of neat toys, and ya gotta love those 548s. The 838s get bridge duty. The Russian .50-cal should cut a firelane all the way down hexrow Y to hinder German lateral movement.

MS: This is a great scenario. It has neat toys, and both sides get to do some attacking. The one knock on it may be, according to someone I talked to, that it comes down to whether the Russian reinforcements can cross the bridge. If none get across, they lose. If some get across, they win. I don't know if I completely agree with that. Either way, I still think it's great.

TR: I didn't play this recently, but it's definitely in my top 5. Two heavyweights going toe-to-toe throwing haymakers at each other. Toys galore, lotsa things going boom, and the Repetti Maneuver of putting two goliaths on a bridge to blow it - what more can you ask for?

TW: This is a true classic. Great toys, both sides get to attack and it is small enough that every unit/move counts, but still large enough that you can recover from "duck dice(tm)."

### **Blocking Action at Lipki (Annual)**

DC: Nail-biter. It's a test of nerves for both sides.

MS: I like this one because of the armored dance that goes on. I have no idea about balance - the Germans have won every time I've played, but it always seems like they have gotten lucky to do so. The dance I'm referring to is how the Russian behemoths move up, with frontal armor facing the German tanks. The German tanks go into motion because they can't win a frontal duel, pop smoke, and try to find a better spot. Then it starts all over again. Very different from the '44-'45 stuff where whatever you hit is automatically dead. Russians also need to deal with platoon movement and protect their speedy BTs, which can't get into a duel with the German tanks.

TR: Youse put on a clinic against me in this one, showed me how to use the T-34 and KV-2 to crack open the German defense lines one after another. All I could do was sit and watch in growing appreciation as the Russian juggernaut ground inexorably onward. I really don't know what the Germans can do if the Russian attacks this way. A great place to learn defensive tank tactics like blowing smoke, kicking into motion, etc.

TW: I like the "armored dance" description. I've seen this one go either way. Germans have to be pretty cagey. Russians have to use their big tanks to win the game, but they can't throw the BTs away.

### **Crossing the Gniloi Tikitsch (96 Annual)**

DC: The Germans are murderous with LOTS of toys, but the Russians are stubborn on defense. The Germans have to deal with each and every Russian unit, push like hell, AND conserve their force. But they're good enough to do it.

TW: Blood bath with an amazing German OB. The German's worst enemy is time, so they have to push really hard, but with finesse.

### **Eye of the Tiger (WCW Pack)**

TR: Really nice combined-arms fight. Nice toys on both sides, challenging VC's, very spirited infantry and armor battles. And Naval OBA throwing shells the size of Volkswagens. Very much in the spirit of Wintergewitter, but even more demanding in the sense that the defender can't skulk as much as he can in Wintergewitter.

TW: IMHO this is perhaps one of the perfect tournament scenarios. Quite a bit is going on in a small space.

### **Road to Gora (96 Annual)**

TH: Gora is an excellent three player scenario and essentially boils down to a wild fight in the woods. Lots of different options for both sides, good tactical situations and a great medium to learn winter rules.

TEDMS: I really think the key to this scenario is maneuver. This is quite rare in an all-infantry scenario. And like above, encirclement is kewl!

DC: As the Russian, just remember, it doesn't matter how many of your men die, as long as they take somebody with them.

### **Wintergewitter (Annual)**

TH: Basic Eastern Front. Good, basic selection of vehicles and an interesting town defense/attack scenario. Options for both sides, and an interesting play for either side. Good replay value.

MS: The Russians have to be good skulkers with their infantry, and yet they also have to be good and sometimes aggressive with their tanks. A lot depends on how successful the Germans are with their APCR ammo. This one always seems to come down to the end, and it requires a lot of skill to play well, regardless of which side you have.

TR: I just had to comment. I've played it twice and we've discussed WgW many times among ourselves. I've never seen a scenario that invites such spirited debate or such a wide variety of tactical approaches. Five experienced players will give you five different opinions on what to do. Just an absolute classic. Requires the Germans to be a bit more proficient with the combined arms than the Russians, and whoever's got the last tank standing has the upper hand, but I'd gladly play this one either side any day of the week.

TW: I agree with all of the above. Try this one using a chess clock! It plays fast and furious. You can finish it in under an hour. Play it four times in a night.

### **Nel Nome Di Roma (Tactiques)**

TH: Good news: Tactiques scenarios kick ass. Bad news: Pick up your high school French book, cause these babies Ne Parlent Anglais. Nel Nome would be a classic if more players were willing to tackle the French. Italians have a Russian town surrounded, but getting the Russians in a stranglehold will prove difficult with these brittle troops. Best board 10 scenario ever. Great action. Maneuver with infantry is a challenge, but with Italian troops your head will whirl. One of the reasons Tactiques will be sorely missed. Excellent scenarios like Nel Nome Di Roma. A great challenge—attacking with Italians. Nice board layout makes this one an interesting play. Also, the ready made noose around the Russian neck that give the Italians a chance. I'd learn French JUST to play this scenario.

## After Action Report Guards Counterattack

### Jim Knatcher

This scenario, played on Board 1 (Rows A-P), affords a player the opportunity to work on basic infantry tactics. Kirk Woller played as the Russian attacker and I was the German defender. The Victory Conditions state that the Russians must take two more stone buildings than what they have at start or have a 3:1 ratio of Russian/German squads. The Germans win by avoiding the Russian Victory Conditions.

The basic setup for both sides is predetermined with all units setting up in buildings. The Germans initially have buildings M9, L6, I7, K5, and F5. The Russians control buildings N4, M2, J2, and F3.

In the initial Prep Fire Phase, Kirk fired most of his units in an attempt to soften the defenses. This was largely ineffective except for building F5. The Russians broke the units in F5 and they routed to H7. There was no unit in F6 (OOPS!) which allowed him to move to E6 freely. This was a critical mistake for the Germans. Building F5 fell quickly except for a CC in H5.

The units in Building L6 survived fire from Building N4 for the entire scenario. I even received a Heroic Leader during the attacks. Hex L7 was a nice rally point for broken troops. By the same token, I never dented the defenses of Building N4.

Building K5 was much more exciting. I had a German squad go Berserk and attack J2. This was thwarted by two Russian squads. Later, the Russians got a berserk squad, and, as it made its way across the street to K4, was shot at by a MMC/LMG combo which actually forced it to break. The Russians were able to advance on Building K5 from M2 after breaking the unit in K4. The Russians were still able to move on Building K5. There was a CC in J4 that stalemated. I and the Russians added units and we both succeeded in the next Turn. This left me open to take the now empty buildings F3 and J2 in the last turn.

Meanwhile, with building F5 taken, the Russians were able to concentrate fire on H7 and I7. The Germans ended up having everything dead or broken and retreating toward K8. The HMG in M9 moved up to K7 to support the units in I7 with little toward K8. The HMG in M9 moved up to K7 to support the units in I7 with little effect.

We went into the last turn with the Russians having the VC but with the Germans threatening that with a possible move to J2 and P3. I had a leader and two full broken squads that would have had a good chance to rally (no DM, 9-2 leader) but I rolled the Russian sniper. He rolled a one and I Yahtzee'd (rolled three Aces) which forced me to watch that hope dwindle.

The Russians were able to work units to J2 and P3, securing those buildings. My last chance was to force something in I7 which failed miserably. GAME OVER! Russian (Kirk Woller) won.

### Coming Soon...

Nothing. Not if I don't get some more articles, which primarily come from the readership. Give something back to ASL. Write something for *Banzai*.

### The *Banzai* Staff

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**Schedule:** *Banzai* is published whenever the editor feels like it.