An ASLSK Tutorial

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Players have also asked about printable versions. Although you can find copies of these tutorial articles in PDF format in the ASLSK file sections here on BGG, the ones that are available at the time of this writing are very plain: there's no special text formatting, and my low-resolution 72 dpi illustrations (when included) probably won't print out very clearly. In the past, some players have talked with me about their interest in preparing a high quality PDF version with extensive text formatting and high-resolution illustrations, and one individual even provided me with some sample pages of how his ideas would look. But I don't know if anyone will ever go ahead with a project like this or not.

It would probably be a good idea for anyone who plans to work on a translation or a high quality PDF of the tutorials to put up a post on www.boardgamegeek.com to that effect, to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

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Contents

Preface

This document contains the collected tutorials of Jay Richardson (richfam on www.boardgamegeek.com) for the Advanced Squad Leader Starter Kits#1 through #3. As these tutorials are quite extensive, many people converted the tutorials to a format better suited for hardcopy. This is my try. It is laid out for double sided printing to limit the thickness of the resulting stack of paper.

The five Starter Kit tutorials are included, as well as the 'Explanation of the Rout Phase' and 'Explanation of ROF and Defensive Fire'. I tried to give the tutorials a consistent look and layout. The graphics used are those used by Jay Richardson in his boardgamegeek articles, so they may be lacking in quality when printed, as they were originally created to be viewed on screen. However, the images are largely responsible for this files' size: a higher quality would substantially increase the file size. The way to go here is converting at least the maps to a vector oriented format. I'm using the VASL maps as a starting point, but conversion is slow, especially if a lot of buildings are present in the map. The tracer I own does not do a great job (I doubt any trace would), so it's a lot of manual labour. Don't expect a version with better images anytime soon.

Although not mentioned in the Starter Kit rulebooks, the text and images on the white player aid markers in ASL (and the ASL Starter Kits) are color coded. The color of the text corresponds with the phase at the end of which the marker is to be removed. In the first chapter I color coded the section headings according to the ASL scheme.

All-capital words have been converted to lowercase or initial capital words, except those that have special meaning in ASL (e.g. ATTACKER, DEFENDER, ADJACENT, STUN).

The tutorials are typeset by Peter Kruijt (BGG username: peterk) using the LaTeX typesetting system created by Leslie Lamport and the memoir class. If you find any serious omissions or inconsistencies (with respect to the layout part of this document), feel free to contact me through geekmail.

If you find the tutorials useful, head over to www.boardgamegeek.com and tip or thumb the articles:

An ASLSK Tutorial (Part 1) Squads, Leaders, Basic Sequence of Play http://www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/157922

An ASLSK Tutorial (Part 2) Support Weapons http://www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/166941

An ASLSK Tutorial (Part 3) Infantry in Battle http://www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/169542

An ASLSK Tutorial (Part 4) Ordnance and the To Hit Process http://www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/177157

An ASLSK Tutorial (Part 5) Tanks http://www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/361467

In-depth explanations of specific ASLSK rules:

Explanation of ROF (and Defensive Fire) http://www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/88350

Explanation of the Rout Phase http://www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/122340

Chapter 1

Squads, Leaders, Basic Sequence of Play

There have been numerous requests for a basic, step-by-step tutorial to help beginners figure out how to play the ASL Starter Kits when there is no experienced player available to teach them, so I thought I'd give it a try. This series of tutorials is aimed specifically at those players who, having read (or having attempted to read) the ASLSK rulebook, are left clueless as to how the game actually works. Players who have successfully completed one or more ASLSK scenarios are, of course, also welcome, but I'm not sure how much benefit this will be to them. This will be ASL on a *very* basic level, so it may be terribly boring to anyone who actually knows how to play.

Some notes before we begin:

- This tutorial does not replace the rulebook. I will show you how the rules are used during a game, but you will still need to read the rules to fully understand what all they allow you to do.
- When I first posted this tutorial, no illustrations were included. However, given that there are people reading this tutorial to learn about the ASLSK series before they even purchase a copy of the game, and that individual Starter Kit titles occasionally go out-of-stock for months at a time and thus can be temporarily unavailable to a new player, it's clear that including illustrations would greatly increase the usefulness of this tutorial.
- Although illustrations are included, I still strongly recommend that you get out your boards and counters and follow along that way, if at all possible, because the best way to learn from this tutorial is to actually push the counters around on the map. It's all too easy to simply glance at an illustration without understanding the full implications of what it is showing.
- I intend to provide a lot of background information concerning the rules and components of ASL. For example, to simply point out that an American rifle squad has higher firepower and lower morale than the corresponding German rifle squad is not, I think, very helpful to a beginner. I'd rather take time to explain *why* these squads differ from each other — by explaining what the various numbers represent — because I think it will make more sense when the beginner then sees these squads in action. The game is easier to understand if you can visualize what is occurring on the imaginary battlefield.

In this first instalment, I will review the basic units of the game: squads and leaders. After explaining what these units represent, and how they differ from each other, I will then use a simple tactical situation to illustrate the basic sequence of play in action. Squads and leaders are described in rules 1.2.1, 1.2.2, and 1.2.3.

1.1 The Squads of ASL

A German 1st Line rifle squad has the following values printed on the front of the counter: 4^1-6-7. These are, from left to right, Firepower (FP), Smoke Exponent, Range, and Morale Level. A squad typically represents ten soldiers, although this will vary somewhat depending upon nationality and date.

A squad's FP is primarily based upon its weaponry. In the case of the German 1st Line squad, this would be a light machine gun with a two-man crew, six riflemen with bolt-action rifles, and a sergeant and a corporal who could be armed with either rifles or submachine guns.

To better understand FP, compare a German Elite rifle squad: 4^2-6-8, to a German Conscript rifle squad: 4-3-6. The elite squad is a highly trained, highly motivated unit, while the conscript squad is either a poorly trained unit, or a unit that has suffered casualties to its key personnel. But both squads have the same exact FP... because they have the same equipment.

A squad's range, however, is based on both equipment and training. A German 1st Line squad has the same range as a German Elite squad, 6 hexes, so both squads are capable of effective fire at long range. But the German Conscript squad only has a range of 3 hexes; it has the same basic weapons as the other two squads, but it does not have the coordination (again due to lack of training or casualties to key personnel) to fire effectively at the same range as the better squads.

A Russian 5-2-7 squad has a range of only 2 hexes because it is equipped with submachine guns, which have a much shorter range than rifles. An American paratrooper squad, 7^3-4-7, uses a mixture of carbines and submachine guns, so it gets an intermediate range of 4 hexes. The presence of submachine guns boosts the FP of both of these squads as compared to the equivalent rifle squads of those nations.

A squad's Morale Level is probably the single most important number in the game... it is the key to what makes ASL work. This number represents a unit's ability withstand being attacked. The lower the Morale Level, the more likely it is that an attack will cause that unit to break. Broken units (which are flipped over to display their broken side) cannot attack, and move only according to the Rout rules. A German 1st Line squad has a Morale of 7, which is average. A Morale Level of 8 is excellent, and a Morale Level of 6 is poor.

Which brings us to the American 1st Line rifle squad: 6^3-6-6. A Morale Level of 6. So... are the Americans cowards? poorly trained? or what?!

The American Morale Level of 6 represents the tendency of American soldiers to dive into cover when they are fired upon, as opposed to German, British, and Russian soldiers, who would be more likely to return fire when fired upon.

This is not as much of a disadvantage to the Americans as you might think. If you compare the American and German 1st Line squads, the Americans are more likely to break when fired upon (Morale 6 vs 7); but flip these squads over to their broken sides and look at the difference. The broken side of a squad's counter has only one combat value: that squad's broken Morale Level. The American broken Morale is 8, while the German broken Morale is 7... the higher number is better, so the Americans will rally much more easily than the Germans.

What's happening here is this: when an American squad fails a Morale Check and breaks, it likely hasn't really panicked... the troops are simply keeping their heads down. This makes it relatively easy for a leader to rally them and get them back into the fight. A German squad is less likely to break, but when it does break it really is panicked, and it will be more difficult for a leader to rally them from a panicked state.

An American rifle squad would normally have one soldier using a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), which does not quite qualify as a true light machine gun and so never appears as a separate support weapon counter, seven soldiers with M1 Garand semi-automatic rifles, and a sergeant and a corporal armed with either M1s or submachine guns. The American FP advantage over similar German, British, and Russian rifle squads comes from the semi-automatic rifles, which can fire far faster than any bolt-action rifle.

1.2 The Leaders of ASL

A leader counter has two values printed on it: the leader's Morale Level, and his Leadership Modifier. A 9–1 leader, for example, has a Morale of 9, and a Leadership Modifier of –1 (on the leader counters, the connecting hyphen between the two values is always read as a minus sign).

Leaders can range in value from the inept 6+1 to the incredible 10–3, although there are no 10–3's included in ASLSK #1. Leaders are your most important units, and the winner of an ASL/ASLSK scenario is often the player who makes the most effective use of his leaders.

Leaders with negative Leadership Modifiers are almost always found on the front lines in the thick of the fighting. Their Leadership Modifier makes the attack of any squads they are stacked with far more effective, and it also assists those squads in resisting enemy attacks.

Leaders with a Leadership Modifier of zero give little benefit in actual fighting, so they are often used behind the front lines to rally broken troops.

The 6+1 leaders, whose positive Leadership Modifier actually makes any squads stacked with them *less* effective and *more* vulnerable than they would be on their own, are best kept well away from the enemy. They can be used to rally broken troops, although not as effectively as the other leaders. The one thing they can do just as well as any other leader is add additional Movement Factors (MF) to any squads stacked with them.

The 6+1 leaders do not normally represent actual combat leaders. Instead, they often represent marginal leaders such as a poorly trained officer with no actual combat experience (which you might find in a true Conscript unit), or a high-level staff officer (one who fights by looking at a map and issuing orders to the actual combat troops) who suddenly finds himself caught up in a battle situation. This is why most 6+1 leaders carry the rank of Colonel. Occasionally, however, a 6+1 will actually represent an incompetent combat leader.

Leadership is abstracted in ASL. If you actually included a counter for every sergeant and corporal present, you would have far more leaders than squads. The leaders that are present in every squad are assumed to be doing their job competently, so they are factored into the squad's ratings and do not appear as separate leader counters. The leaders that do appear in counter form are the few that perform above average, and who thus might be able to influence the course of the battle. In other words, they are the leaders who make a difference.

The number of leaders that appear for a country in an ASL/ASLSK scenario is based upon how well the tactical leadership of that country performed in real life. The Germans usually get the greatest number of leaders, followed closely by the Americans and the British. The Russians and the Italians get relatively few leaders, reflecting the general poor quality of leadership in their armies. That is, the Russians and the Italians had just as many sergeants as anyone else, but they get fewer actual leaders in a scenario because their leadership was not as effective as that of other nations.

1.3 The Basic Sequence of Play

The ASLSK Sequence of Play — the list of phases and the order in which they occur — can be found on the Quick-Reference Data Card (QRDC). It can also be found in the rulebook in rule 3.0, which presents the basic rules for the phases in the order in which they occur.

In a full ASLSK turn, each player gets a player turn in which he is the ATTACKER and his opponent is the DEFENDER. The Sequence of Play is thus executed twice each turn, with the players switching the ATTACKER/DEFENDER roles the second time. The ATTACKER's units are eligible to move; the DEFENDER's units cannot move, but they may fire at attacking units that do move.

To demonstrate how the Sequence of Play works, I will use a tiny scenario that only lasts one player turn.

Place the following units on board z:

zF5: German 4^1-6-7, 9–1
zF7: US 6^3-6-6
zG7: US 6^3-6-6
zH6: US 6^3-6-6

The Americans will move first, so they are the ATTACKER and the Germans are the DEFENDER. Both sides have an Experience Level Rating (ELR) of 3 (rule 5.1).

To win this scenario, the Americans must capture hex zF5 by the end of their player turn, otherwise the Germans win. This means that the Americans must either eliminate the German squad and leader, or break them and force them to rout away, and then move an American squad into zF5 to gain control of the hex.

The Americans have a lot of advantages here: they outnumber the Germans 3 to 1, and have an 18 to 4 advantage in FP. The German advantages are the excellent defensive terrain of the stone building in zF5, the presence of the 9–1 leader, and the fact that the Americans only have one player turn in which to capture their objective.

The scenario begins with the Rally Phase.

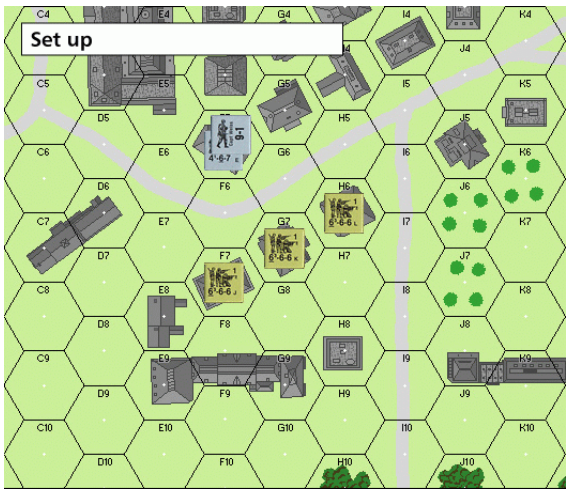

Figure 1.1: Setup for example 1

1.3.1 Rally Phase (rule 3.1)

In the Rally Phase (RPh), both players may attempt to rally their broken units, and recover, transfer, or repair their support weapons.

Nothing usually happens in the very first Rally Phase of a scenario, because no combat or movement has yet occurred. That is the case here: there is nothing to do, so we proceed to the next phase.

1.3.2 Prep Fire Phase (rule 3.2)

In the Prep Fire Phase (PFPh) the ATTACKER may fire at any enemy units that are in Line of Sight (LOS). Any unit that does fire may not move in the Movement Phase or fire in the Advancing Fire Phase.

What the American player would like to do here is fire all three squads at the Germans: 18 FP is a powerful attack. But the victory conditions will not allow this. They have to capture the German hex by the end of their turn, so at least one squad will have to move during the Movement Phase.

The American player decides to fire with the two squads in zF7 and zG7, leaving the squad in zH6 unfired and free to move later. So the American plan is to hammer the German position with as much firepower as possible, and then move up a squad to either occupy the empty hex if the Germans break and rout away, or else advance in an attempt to capture it via Close Combat.

Now, because the two firing squads are adjacent to each other, they can either combine to make a single 12 FP attack as a Fire Group (FG), or they can attack one at a time to make two separate 6 FP attacks. (If they were stacked together in the same hex, they would not be allowed to make two separate attacks on the same target but would have to form a FG and attack together; if they were in separate, non-adjacent hexes, they could not form a FG at all and would have to attack separately.)

You will find a lot of different opinions as to whether it is better to make two weak attacks or one strong attack, but a general rule is that the better the defensive terrain the more need there is to make a single strong attack. If the Germans were in Open Ground (+0 TEM) or maybe even woods (+1 TEM), it is possible that two weak attacks might actually have a better overall chance of breaking them... but since they are in a stone building (+3 TEM) a combined attack is going to give the Americans their best chance.

So the two squads in zF7 and zG7 fire on the Germans with a 12 FP attack. The Terrain Effects Modifier (TEM) of a stone building is +3 (rule 1.1.2), so the attack is rolled on the Infantry Fire Table (IFT) as a 12/+3 (12 FP column, add 3 to the DR).

Figure 1.2: American Prep Fire Phase

The American Dice Roll (DR) is 7, and +3 makes it 10. A 10 on the 12 FP column of the IFT is a PTC (Pin Task Check). Units that suffer a PTC must compare a DR to their Morale Level: if the DR is greater than their Morale, they are pinned, otherwise there is no effect.

The German 9–1 leader rolls his PTC first, because if it is successful he can then assist the German squad with its PTC. The leader rolls a DR 7, which is not greater than his Morale of 9, so he is not pinned. The German squad now rolls its PTC, with a –1 Dice Roll Modifier (DRM) from the Leadership Modifier of the 9–1 leader. The squad's DR is 7, and –1 makes it a 6, which is not greater than its Morale of 7, so it also passes the PTC and is not pinned.

The American attack ultimately has no effect, and both squads in zF7 and zG7 are marked with a Prep Fire counter to remind the players that these two squads cannot move or shoot again.

1.3.3 Movement Phase (rule 3.3)

In the Movement Phase (MPh), the ATTACKER may move his units, and the DEFENDER may fire upon them as they move.

With the failure of their Prep Fire attack, the Americans are in big trouble... but they have no alternative other than to continue with their plan and hope for a miracle. The squad in zH6 will move into zG6. It must stop there, because you can never enter an enemy-occupied hex during the MPh, but if the squad survives the German defensive fire it will be able to enter zF5 in the Advance Phase and initiate Close Combat.

Squads have 4 movement factors (MF). It only costs 1 MF to enter zG6, so they will have plenty of MF to spare. Infantry also has the ability to use a special form of movement called Assault Movement, which can represent crawling or any other slow, careful movement that minimizes one's exposure to enemy fire. If a unit moves no more than one hex, and does not expend all of its MF, it can declare that it is using Assault Movement. Assault Movement provides an extra level of protection from enemy attacks by canceling the First Fire Non-Assault Movement (FFNAM) DRM.

The squad in zH6 only needs to move one hex to become adjacent to the German hex, so the American player declares Assault Movement and spends 1 MF to enter zG6.

After every MF expenditure, the ATTACKER must pause to allow the DEFENDER the opportunity to use Defensive First Fire (rule 3.3.1). So, after the American squad enters zG6, the German player declares a Defensive First Fire shot on it. Defensive First Fire can only be used against a unit that expends MF, and only that unit (or stack, if several units are moving together) can be affected by that Defensive First Fire.

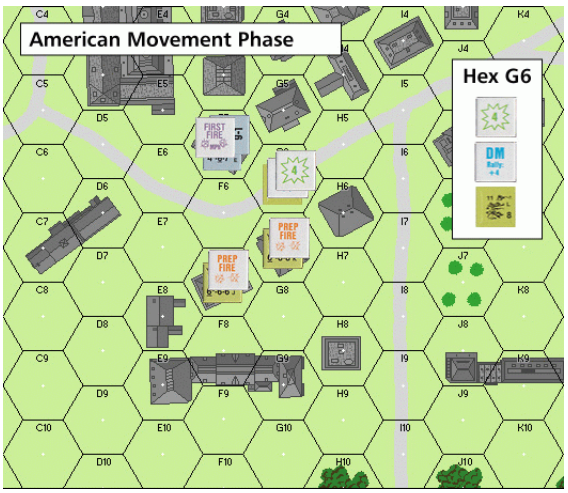

Figure 1.3: American Movement Phase

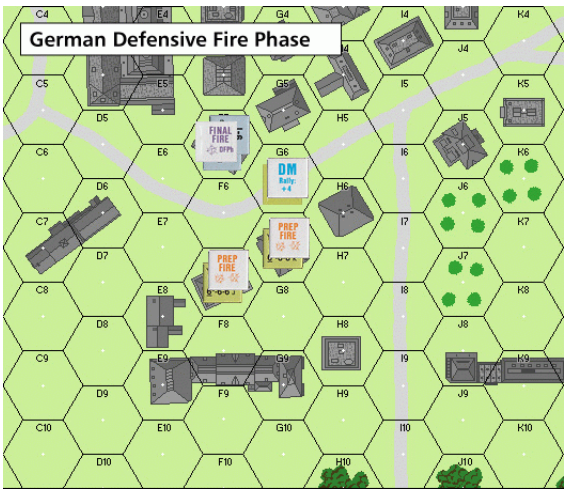

Figure 1.4: German Defensive Fire Phase

The German squad has a FP of 4, which is doubled to 8 because it is Point Blank Fire (PBF) against an adjacent target. FP is doubled in PBF for two reasons:

(a) it is much easier to hit a nearby target; and
(b) when firing into an adjacent hex the range is close enough that hand grenades can be used.

The German 9–1 leader will add a –1 DRM to the shot, but he has no FP of his own. Leaders, of course, did carry weapons and so are always considered 'armed' but they have no effective FP except in Close Combat situations. At this scale, the FP of a single soldier is too small to justify giving him a FP point.

The American squad moved into Open Ground (a road hex) so there is no TEM. There are two other DRMs that can affect Defensive First Fire shots: First Fire Movement in Open Ground (FFMO), and First Fire Non-Assault Movement (FFNAM). A –1 DRM for FFMO will apply, but the use of Assault Movement cancels the FFNAM DRM.

The German defensive shot is thus 8/–2. The DR is 7, which is reduced to 5 by the –2 DRM. A 5 on the 8 FP column of the IFT is a 2MC. This requires the American squad to take a Morale Check (MC) with a +2 DRM.

The DR for the American MC is 7, which is increased to 9 by the +2 DRM. The American squad fails its MC and is broken, because 9 is greater than its Morale of 6. Flip the American squad over to its broken side and place a Desperation Morale (DM) counter on it. The American squad is not replaced by a lower quality 2nd Line squad, because 9 is not greater than its Morale, 6, plus its ELR, 3, (see rule 5.0).

Casualties in ASL are handled in a somewhat abstract manner, in order to avoid having to track casualties on a man by man basis:

- A squad that breaks can be thought of as having suffered light casualties.
- A squad that breaks and is replaced by a lower quality squad can be thought of as having suffered casualties among key personnel, causing it to become less effective.
- A squad that is casualty reduced (K result) to a half squad (HS) has suffered heavy casualties.
- A squad that is eliminated due to a Killed in Action (KIA) result has suffered catastrophic casualties.

A First Fire counter is placed on the German stack, and a Residual FP counter equal to one-half of the attack's IFT FP column (4 FP) is placed in the American squad's hex.

When a unit fires in ASL, it is, with only a few exceptions, actually firing throughout the entire player turn. If a unit moves into a hex and is fired upon, and then later in the turn another unit moves into the same hex, that second unit can possibly run into some of the bullets that are being aimed at the first unit. Residual FP is how ASL handles this possibility: if you move a unit into a hex containing a Residual FP counter, you will be attacked immediately by that Residual FP, prior to any separate attacks that might be aimed specifically at you.

The Germans cannot fire on the Americans again at this time, because the American squad only expended 1 MF, although if there were other German units with a LOS to the American squad, each of them could also make a single Defensive First Fire attack. Every time an attacking unit expends MF, it can possibly receive a Defensive First Fire attack from many different defending units... and if it expends more than 1 MF, each defending unit may be able to fire multiple times.

There are no more American units eligible to move, so the MPh is over. Remove the Residual FP counter.

1.3.4 Defensive Fire Phase (rule 3.4)

In the Defensive Fire Phase (DFPh), the DEFENDER's units may fire on the ATTACKER's units. Firing in the DFPh is normally conducted in the same way as firing in the Prep Fire Phase, but there are some restrictions. If a unit begins the DFPh marked with a Final Fire counter, it may not fire at all; if it begins the DFPh marked with a First Fire counter, it may only fire at adjacent targets at one-half of its normal FP.

The German player decides to fire again at the adjacent broken American squad. The German squad's FP is 2 (one-half of 4), which is then doubled back to 4 by PBF. The 9–1 leader again adds a –1 DRM, but FFMO and FFNAM do not apply (they only apply during the MPh). The shot is a 4/–1, and the DR is 7, resulting in a NMC (Normal Morale Check).

The NMC DR is 7, which is less than the American squad's broken side Morale of 8, so the NMC is passed with no further ill effects to the American squad.

The First Fire counter on the German stack is flipped over to the Final Fire side, which signifies that they cannot fire any more during this DFPh. There are no other German units capable of firing, so the DFPh is over and the Final Fire counter is removed.

1.3.5 Advancing Fire Phase (rule 3.5)

In the Advancing Fire Phase (AFPh), any attacking units that did not fire in the Prep Fire Phase may fire with one-half of their FP, plus a 1 FP bonus if they are Assault Fire capable (i.e., their FP number is underlined).

Advancing Fire is less effective than Prep Fire, because units that are moving cannot fire with the volume or accuracy of units that do not move. Units that have the Assault Fire bonus are equipped with semi-automatic rifles and/or submachine guns — weapons that are easy to fire while moving — and have trained in using them in that manner.

The two unbroken American units are marked with Prep Fire counters, so no Advancing Fire is possible at this time. The AFPh ends, and the Prep Fire counters are removed.

1.3.6 Rout Phase (rule 3.6)

In the Rout Phase (RtPh), broken units may, or must (depending upon the situation), rout away from the enemy and attempt to get back into cover. The broken American squad in zG6 has a DM counter on it, which allows it to rout (although the DM itself does not force the squad to rout), and it is also adjacent to an unbroken enemy unit... which forces it to rout.

The broken squad must rout to the nearest woods of building hex that does not require it to move closer, or adjacent to, an Known Enemy Unit. With these restrictions, the only legal rout destinations it has are zG7 and zH6, both of which are 2 MF away. The American player can choose to rout to either of these hexes.

In many situations, it will be best to rout a broken unit as far away as possible from the enemy. The American player decides to do just that: the broken unit routs to zG7-zF7-zE8. It takes 6 MF to reach zE8, which is all that the routing unit has, so it must stop there. The routing unit could have stopped in zG7 — or it could have routed to zH6 and stopped there — but once a routing unit enters a woods or building hex it may continue to rout into adjacent woods or building hexes, if it wishes.

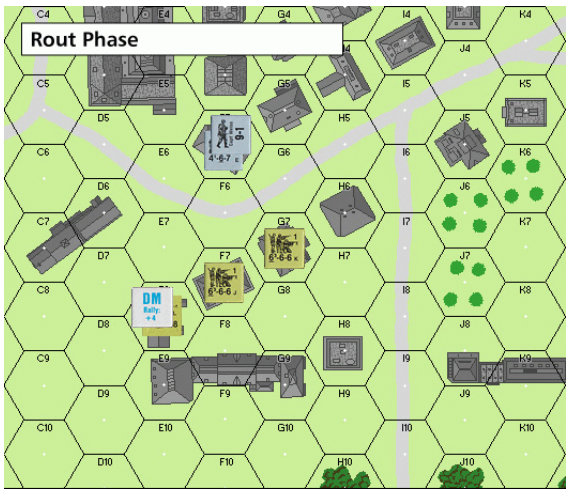

Figure 1.5: Rout Phase

1.3.7 Advance Phase (rule 3.7)

In the Advance Phase (APh) the ATTACKER may move his unpinned and unbroken units into an adjacent hex... even if that hex is occupied by enemy units. Advancing into an enemy-occupied hex creates a Close Combat (CC) situation.

After the failure of their Prep Fire, the American plan had been to advance into zF5 and defeat the German defenders in CC to capture the hex. Unfortunately, the squad that was to do this broke under defensive fire and ran, ending up in zE8.

The two American squads that Prep Fired could advance... but they are too far away from the objective hex to reach it.

1.3.8 Close Combat Phase (rule 3.8)

The final phase of the player turn is the Close Combat Phase (CCPh). This is when any CC battles are resolved.

There aren't any CC situations, so the player turn is over and the Americans have lost: they failed to capture hex zF5 from the Germans.

1.4 The 'Rule of 7'

You probably noticed that every DR in that short battle was a 7. While having every DR turn up identical is not realistic at all, I did it that way to illustrate an important point...

A key to playing ASL well is to be able to accurately assess the risk involved in various moves. Risk assessment is very difficult in ASL. The combat resolution mechanics cannot be easily analyzed or reduced to simple percentages, because of the dual DRs: the firer rolls to see what effect his shot has, and then the targets roll to see how they react to that effect. Any given shot will have a wide variety of possible results. You can, for example, unleash a powerful 36 FP shot only to see it have no effect whatsoever on its target... while a feeble 2 FP shot could potentially break almost any target.

So how can you tell a good risk from a bad one? How do you avoid just moving units around and hoping for good luck?

One technique that I have found useful is what I call the 'Rule of 7.' When you make a DR, 7 is the single most likely number to be rolled... it's right in the middle of the bell curve of DR results. If you roll lower than 7, you're having good luck; if you roll higher than 7, you're having bad luck; and if you roll exactly 7, your luck is neutral.

This fact can be applied to risk analysis during an ASL/ASLSK game: just assume that every DR will be a 7, and see what the results would be. If the results are in your favor with DRs of 7, then the move is low risk. And if the results are unfavorable with DRs of 7, then the move is high risk.

In the previous battle, the American plan was to Prep Fire two squads and use the third squad to directly assault the German position. Analyzing this plan with the Rule of 7 suggests that it will have little chance of being successful:

- On a DR of 7, the American Prep Fire will only result in a PTC... but that's not good enough, because the Americans want to break the German defenders rather than just pin them. So the Americans will need to be lucky with their Prep Fire DR (they need to roll less than 7).
- With DRs of 7, the German units passed their PTCs with a comfortable margin. This shows that, even if the American Prep Fire gets a NMC or 1MC result, the Germans will have to be unlucky (roll more than 7) to actually break.

So the Rule of 7 clearly shows that for this American plan to be successful, the Americans would have to be lucky at the same time that the Germans are unlucky. That combination won't happen too often, so the plan is much more likely to fail than to succeed.

Now, the Rule of 7 is not a magical shortcut to ASL mastery... but can be a useful tool for experienced players and beginners alike. When in doubt, ask yourself who would win if all of the DRs were a 7; the answer will tell you a lot about which side is favored in that situation.

1.5 A Rematch

The primary purpose of this tutorial is to provide a highly detailed look at the ASLSK rules in action... and not necessarily to teach proper ASL tactics. But there's no reason that we can't combine the two! The original American plan wasn't too good, so let's play that battle again with a better plan, which will also give me the opportunity to demonstrate some additional ASLSK rules.

The Americans don't have enough FP available for their Prep Fire to have a good chance of being effective, so a better plan would be to forego Prep Fire and have all three American squads assault the German hex. In addition, the American squads all have a Smoke Exponent of 3, which is very good, so if they can place a smoke screen to cover their assault their chances of success should improve substantially.

Reset the units to their starting locations and let's see what happens...

1.5.1 Rally Phase

No activity.

1.5.2 Prep Fire Phase

No activity.

1.5.3 Movement Phase

What each American squad would like to do is:

(A) place smoke grenades into the Open Ground street hex between them and the German hex, and then
(B) Assault Move into that hex under the cover of the smoke.

But this won't work. It costs 2 MF to place smoke grenades into an adjacent hex, and it costs 2 more MF to then move into that hex (1 MF for Open Ground + 1 MF extra for smoke). That's a total of 4 MF, which means that they could not use Assault Movement. You can only use Assault Movement if you expend less than your total MF allowance, so the Americans must limit their MF expenditure to 3 MF in order to be able to use Assault Movement.

The Americans can't declare Double Time to get the extra MFs they need, because combining Double Time and Assault Movement is illegal. (The prohibition against this is not actually in either the ASLSK #1 or #2 rulebook... but it is in the ASLSK #3 rulebook, and the full ASL rulebook as well. If a revised ASLSK #1 rulebook is ever published that incorporates all known errata, the prohibition would certainly be included.)

The inability of a single squad to use Assault Movement to both place smoke in an adjacent hex and then move into it will force the Americans to be a bit more creative in their attack...

1.5.4 The First Move

The American player announces that the squad in zF7 will use normal movement (4 MF available). The squad starts by expending 2 MF to place smoke in the adjacent hex zF6. The smoke die roll (dr) is 4, which is greater than the Smoke Exponent of 3, so the smoke placement attempt is unsuccessful.

The American player now pauses to allow the German player the opportunity to use Defensive First Fire against the moving American squad. Note that any expenditure of MF counts as 'moving' even if the unit did not actually enter a new hex. At a range of two hexes, the German FP would be 4; the DRMs are –1 leadership, –1 FFNAM, +3 stone building. So the defensive fire would be a 4/+1 shot... not a very good shot (there would be no effect on a DR of 7), so the German player declines to fire.

The American squad now expends 1 MF to enter zE7, and again the Germans have an opportunity to fire. The DRMs would now be –1 leadership, –1 FFMO, and –1 FFNAM, so the shot would be a 4/–3, which is a pretty good shot (1MC on a DR of 7). But again the Germans decline to shoot. They will hold their fire until an American squad moves adjacent, when PBF will double their FP.

Why did the American squad move to zE7 instead of zF6? They do not want more than one of their assaulting squads to enter a hex. The German defensive fire is going to be devastating enough as it is... moving two or more squads into the same hex will just make it even worse: first squad enters a hex; Germans fire and leave Residual FP; then the second squad enters the hex, gets attacked first by the Residual FP from the first attack, and then by another German attack directed specifically at them. With three assaulting squads, the American player will want to move each of them into a different hex so that they can avoid any Residual FP attacks.

The American squad now expends its last MF to enter zE6, and finally the Germans open fire: 4 FP doubled to 8 FP because of PBF, and a -3 DRM from leadership, FFMO, and FFNAM, the shot is 8/–3. The German DR is 8, so 5 on the 8 FP column of the IFT is a 2MC.

The American Morale Level is 6, and their Morale Check DR is 8, which is increased to 10 because of the 2MC. 10 is greater than 6, so the American squad is broken; and 10 is also greater than 6 + 3 (Morale + ELR), so the 1st Line 6^3-6-6 squad is replaced by a broken 2nd Line 5^2-4-6 squad (rule 5.1). A DM counter is placed on top of the broken squad, and a 4 Residual FP counter is placed on top of the stack. A First Fire counter is placed on top of the German units.

You might be wondering what the Smoke Exponent number represents, especially since it is often a low number that makes the successful use of smoke grenades difficult. First, notice that only a full squad can attempt to use smoke grenades (half squads and leaders can never place smoke). This indicates that a successful smoke screen is not the result of a single smoke grenade, but rather requires a lot of them. Then, given the large size of each hex (40 meters) and the short duration of a WWII smoke grenade (about 30 seconds, or one-fourth of a two minute turn), it becomes clear that, to place a useful smoke screen, you have to throw a lot of smoke grenades, very quickly, and spread them out to cover the entire hex.

American squads have much higher Smoke Exponents than German squads simply because American soldiers were well-supplied with all types of munitions. The Smoke Exponents that are printed on the counters are only for regular soldiers, who would not normally carry lots of smoke grenades; if a scenario were to designate

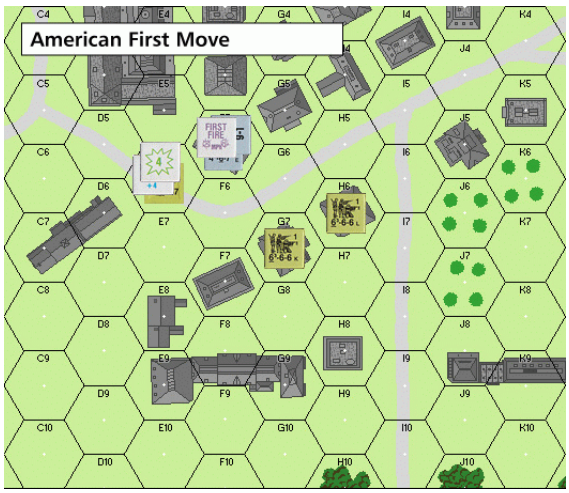

Figure 1.6: Rematch: American first move

a squad as being specially trained assault engineers, those engineers will usually be given a Smoke Exponent much higher than that printed on the counter (usually a 4 or a 5).

When you make a smoke dr, you are checking several things: does the squad actually have enough smoke grenades on hand? do they have them ready to use with each soldier understanding where he needs to throw his grenade? and did they execute the placement attempt correctly to create a usable smoke screen?

1.5.5 The Second Move

The American player now declares that the squad in zG7 will use Assault Movement (3 MF maximum), and will expend 2 MF to place smoke into zG6. The smoke dr is 2, so a +2 Smoke counter is placed in zG6.

The Germans cannot fire at this squad... yet. The German units have a First Fire counter on them, so their next shot will be a Subsequent First Fire (SFF) shot. A moving unit can never be fired upon with SFF if there is another friendly unit closer to the defending unit. In this case, the broken squad in zE6 is adjacent to the Germans, so they will only be able to make a SFF shot against a unit that moves adjacent to them.

The American squad then spends its last MF to enter zF6, and the Germans announce a Subsequent First Fire shot against them. SFF shots are taken at one-half FP, so the shot is 4 FP, cut in half to 2 FP because of SFF, doubled back to 4 FP because of PBF, and DRMs of –1 leadership and –1 FFMO (Assault Movement cancels the –1 FFNAM DRM), a 4/–2. The DR is 7, which is a 1MC (5 on the 4 FP column).

The American Morale Check DR is 8, increased to 9 by the 1MC, so the squad breaks but is not replaced by a lower quality unit. Flip the American squad to its broken side, place a DM on it, place a 2 Residual FP on the stack, and flip the First Fire counter on the Germans over to its Final Fire side.

1.5.6 The Third Move

The American player now announces that the squad in zH6 will move using Assault Movement. It expends 2 MF to enter zG6 (1 MF for Open Ground + 1 MF for smoke).

The German squad has used its one allowed First Fire shot, and its one allowed Subsequent First Fire shot, so for the remainder of the American MPh it can only make Final Protective Fire (FPF) shots. Unlike First Fire and Subsequent First Fire attacks, there is no limit to the number of FPF attacks a defending squad can make, but FPF can only be used against units moving adjacent to the defending squad.

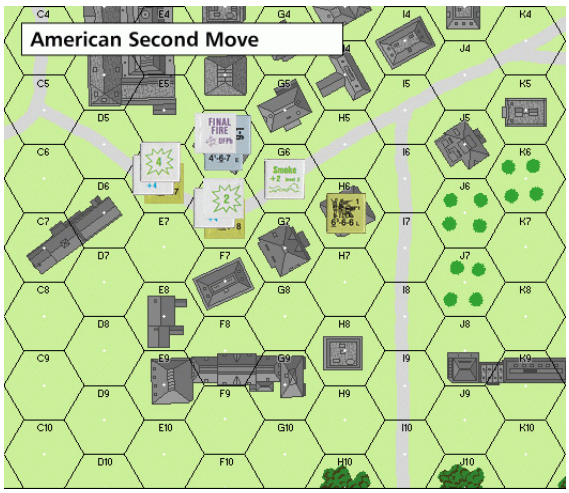

Figure 1.7: Rematch: American second move

If the Germans fire at this third American squad, the shot will be 4 FP, cut in half to 2 FP because of FPF, doubled back to 4 FP because of PBF, and DRMs of –1 leadership and +2 smoke (the smoke cancels FFMO, and Assault Movement cancels FFNAM). The shot would be a 4/+1... but the DR for the shot will also be a NMC roll for the German squad and leader. Defending units that use FPF are close to panicking just from the proximity of so many enemy units, so there is a risk involved.

Now the question is: should the Germans take this FPF shot?

This is a situation in which the Rule of 7 is not much help: it suggests that the FPF will be ineffective, neither breaking or pinning the Americans nor breaking the Germans. But, in this particular situation, if the Germans fire and are lucky enough to pin or break the Americans, they will win the scenario; if they are unlucky enough to break themselves, they will lose the scenario. If the Germans decline to fire, the American squad will advance into the hex and the scenario will be decided in Close Combat. In theory, given enough time, you could eventually figure out which course of action gives the Germans the greatest chance of victory, but in an actual game situation it's just a judgment call.

For the purposes of this tutorial, however, the Germans will take that FPF shot, a 4/+1. The German DR is 4, but this is a doubles roll (2,2) which triggers cowering.

Cowering in ASL originally confuses a lot of players, because you normally think of cowering as something that occurs when you are fired upon, rather than when you are firing. In other words, how can being ordered to fire on the enemy cause you to cower? But most actions in a turn of ASL are actually occurring simultaneously, even though the turn itself is broken into sequential steps for ease of play. So while the Germans are firing at the Americans, the Americans are also firing as they approach the German position (even though such firing will not be resolved until the AFPh). In most situations, you can't fire at the enemy without exposing yourself to their fire, so when you roll doubles some of your soldiers have decided that they would just as soon stay under cover this turn and not be shot at, which reduces your firing effectiveness by requiring you to resolve the shot using the next lowest IFT column.

In this case, however, there is a leader present. Whenever a leader is directing the fire, cowering does not occur. This is true even if the leader has a Leadership Modifier of 0 or +1 (or even a +2 from a wounded 6+1!). The German FPF shot, then, remains a 4/+1, and the DR of 4 results in a 1MC.

The American squad's Morale Check DR is also a 4, which is increased to 5 by the 1MC. 5 is less than their Morale Level of 6, so they pass the 1MC.

Because this was a FPF shot, the Germans also have to use their original 4 DR as a NMC for both the leader and the squad, but they both pass this NMC easily. (The leader's Morale is 9, and the squad's Morale is 7 with a –1 DRM from the leader if he doesn't pin or break.)

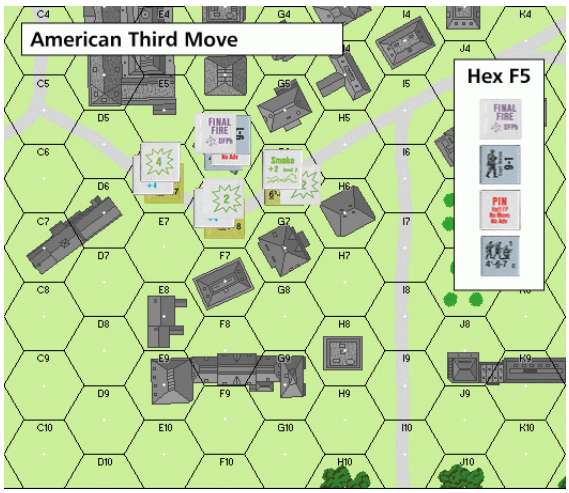

Figure 1.8: Rematch: American third move

Now the Germans have the opportunity to take a second FPF shot at the Americans. The American squad expended 2 MF to enter the smoke hex, so the Germans are allowed to fire at them twice, one shot for each MF expended. This again brings up the question of whether the Germans should take this shot... but since they took the first FPF shot, they might as well take the second one, since multiple FPF shots do not involve any additional penalties to the firer other than the multiple NMCs.

This second FPF shot remains a 4/+1, and the DR is 8. This fails to have any effect at all on the American squad (9 on the 4 FP column of the IFT).

The DR 8 is then applied as a NMC to the Germans. The leader passes this NMC, because his Morale of 9 is greater than 8. The leader's –1 Leadership Modifier then reduces the 8 to a 7, which is applied to the German squad. 7 equals the squad's Morale Level of 7, so the squad is pinned. Place a Pin counter on top of the squad, but under the leader, to show that the squad is pinned but the leader is not.

And, finally, place a 2 Residual FP counter on top of the American squad. Residual FP is not cumulative, so even though the Germans fired into that hex twice, only 2 Residual FP is placed. The only way for that 2 Residual FP to be increased would be if a stronger attack would later target that hex. That is, a dozen 4 FP attacks could hit a hex, and only 2 Residual FP would be placed there; but then if an 8 FP attack hit that hex, the 2 Residual FP would be replaced by a 4 Residual FP counter.

At this point, the MPh is complete. There are no more American units to move (the Americans cannot enter the German-occupied hex during the MPh), and there are no more First Fire, SFF, or FPF shots to resolve. Remove the smoke counter and the Residual FP counters.

1.5.7 Defensive Fire Phase

The German units have a Final Fire counter on them, so they are not allowed to fire in the DFPh. Remove the Final Fire counter.

1.5.8 Advancing Fire Phase

The unbroken American squad in zG6 can now fire on the Germans, although all shots in the AFPh are at one-half strength, because moving units cannot fire as effectively as stationary units.

The FP for this shot is 6, cut in half to 3 FP because it is the AFPh, doubled back to 6 FP because of PBF, increased to 7 FP because of the assault fire bonus (underlined FP factor). The 6 FP column of the IFT must be used,

Figure 1.9: Rematch: American Advancing Fire Phase

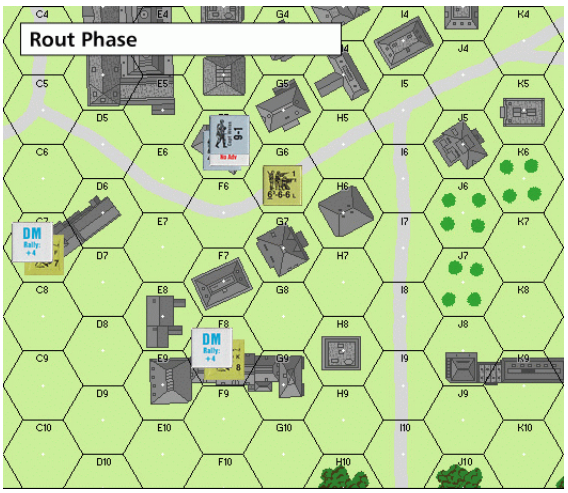

Figure 1.10: Rematch: Rout Phase

because the FP is less than 8, and there is a +3 TEM DRM because of the stone building, so the shot is 6/+3. The DR is 11, which has no effect.

1.5.9 Rout Phase

The two broken American squads are adjacent to a Known unbroken enemy unit and must rout. The squad in zE6 will spend 4 MF to rout to zD6 (mandatory) and then zC7 (optional). The squad in zF6 will spend 4 MF to rout to zF7 (must rout to zF7 or zG7) and then zF8 (optional).

This scenario is only one-half turn long, so it does not really matter which rout paths are taken. But these rout paths were chosen to get the broken units out of any German LOS, which would make it somewhat easier to rally them if there were more turns to be played, because the Germans would not be able to keep putting them under DM by firing on them.

If your situation in the scenario you are playing is that you are defending and possibly retreating, then you will usually want to rout your broken troops as far away from the enemy as possible. If you are the overall attacker in the scenario, you will usually want to rout your troops far enough to get out of enemy LOS, but no farther, so that when they rally they can get back into the fight quickly.

1.5.10 Advance Phase

The American squad in zG6 advances into the German-occupied hex zF5. Place a Close Combat (CC) counter on that hex. The broken American squads cannot advance.

1.5.11 Close Combat Phase

Close Combat is simultaneous unless an ambush occurs. Whenever a unit advances into CC with an enemy in a building or woods hex (unless a Melee counter was already present) there is a chance that an ambush may occur.

To see if an ambush occurs, both players make a dr. The Americans have no drms, and roll a 3. The Germans have a +1 die roll modifier (drm) for being pinned, and a –1 drm for a directing leader, so the two drms will cancel each other. The Germans roll a 4. Neither side rolled 3 less than the other, so no ambush occurs.

Figure 1.11: Rematch: American Advance Phase

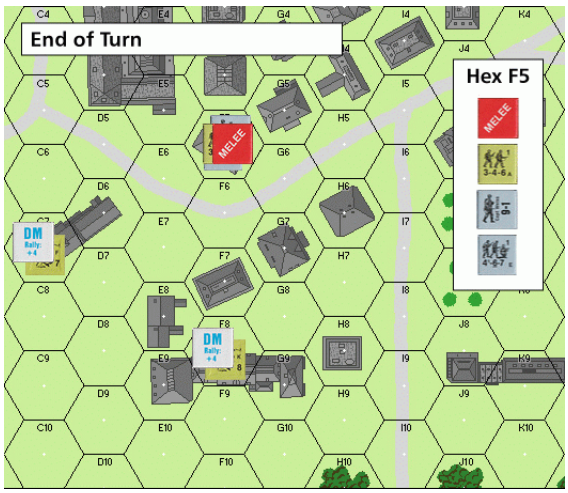

Figure 1.12: Rematch: End of Turn

Both players must designate their CC attacks before any are resolved. The American player designates his CC attacks first, because he is currently the ATTACKER.

The American squad declares that it will attack both German units. A leader in CC will normally attack and defend in combination with the squad on which it is stacked, unless the leader decides to make a CC attack by himself (in which case he could be attacked by himself). What the German leader is going to do does not matter in this situation... the American squad must attack and kill both German units, while surviving their attack, in order to win the scenario. Leaders have a FP of 1 in CC, so the American CC attack will be 6 to 5, which is 1-1 odds.

When figuring the CC Odds Ratio to use, always round in favor of the defending unit. So the Americans would need 7.5 FP to get 3-2 odds, and 10 FP to get 2-1 odds, etc. Terrain has no effect on CC, except to allow or prohibit the possibility of an ambush (that is, there are no TEM DRMs in CC).

The German CC attack will be at 1-2 odds. The German squad's CC FP is cut in half to 2 FP because it is pinned, but the leader's 1 FP makes the attack 3 to 6 (the Germans would need at least 6 FP to get 1-1 odds). Note that pinned units in CC defend at full strength, but attack at half strength.

Combining their CC FP to get a 1-2 attack, with a –1 DRM from the leader's Leadership Modifier, gives the Germans their best chance of killing the American squad. If they attacked separately, at 1-4 (2 to 6) and 1-6 (1 to 6) with no leadership (a leader cannot 'lead' himself), their chances of success would be very poor.

The American CC DR is 8, which is greater than the 1-1 CC Kill Number of 5, so there is no effect.

The German CC DR is 5, and the –1 leadership DRM makes it a 4, which is equal to the 1-2 CC Kill Number. The American squad suffers Casualty Reduction and is replaced by a 3-4-6 HS, but it is not broken.

Note that even if the American CC attack had killed the German units, the German CC attack would still be resolved, because all CC combat is simultaneous if there is no ambush.

The Pin counter is removed, and a Melee counter is placed on the stack because there are still units from both sides present, and at least one of them is unbroken.

The player turn is now over, and the Americans have again lost. The presence of any German unit in zF5, even if it was only a broken one, prevents the Americans from capturing that hex (see 'Control' in the list of Definitions).

In truth, this is a very tough situation for the Americans to win... but they came much closer with this second plan. They really need more turns to work with, and possibly a leader of their own. But it can often be fun, as well as instructive, to try to find a way to win when the odds are against you.

Chapter 2

Support Weapons

This chapter assumes that the reader has read, and understood, the previous chapter. Rules and concepts discussed in that chapter will be used here with little or no explanation.

In this chapter I am going to use the tactical situation presented in chapter 1 — three American squads attacking a stone building defended by one German squad and a leader — to show how the Support Weapons introduced in ASLSK #1 are used. The primary reason for using the same tactical situation is that this will clearly show the dramatic difference in game play that occurs when Support Weapons are available.

2.1 Support Weapons

Support Weapons (SW) are provided as separate counters and represent weapons that are not normally part of any squad's regular equipment. Demolition Charges and Flamethrowers are specialized weapons that were provided only when the tactical situation required them, and medium Machine Guns and heavy Machine Guns were never available in enough numbers to equip every squad.

Some people argue that most, or even all, of these weapons actually required specially trained crews, so that regular infantry squads either should not be able to use them, or should use them only with a penalty. But, regardless of how valid that argument might be, ASL takes the simplified approach of allowing any infantry squad to use any Support Weapon.

The light Machine Gun (LMG) is a special case, in that it was included in most rifle squads' standard equipment, but it is also provided as a SW counter. There are two ways to look at this. Assume a scenario in which the Germans have five rifle squads, each of which has an inherent LMG already factored into its firepower, and two additional LMG counters. The two SW LMGs can be viewed either as additional LMGs provided to the five squads to give them more firepower... or they can be viewed as those LMG-equipped soldiers within the rifle squads that have the potential to perform exceptionally well, and so could have an effect on the battle beyond that of simply being part of a squad's FP, thus warranting the weapons' appearance as separate SW counters (this is exactly how ASL treats leaders, as discussed in the previous chapter).

SWs cannot attack on their own; they must be possessed by an infantry unit in order to attack.

ASLSK #2 and ASLSK #3 introduce additional Support Weapons, but these will be covered in later chapters.

I'm going to cover Demolition Charges first, then Flamethrowers, and finally the Machine Guns. This is the reverse order of their presentation in the rulebook, but I like the progression here: we start with a one-shot weapon with no range, then a slow-firing weapon with a short range, and then finally look at the fast-firing, long range Machine Guns.

2.2 Demolition Charges (rule 4.3)

The Demolition Charge (DC) is one of the most powerful weapons you will ever use. You'd have to combine a lot of squads and Machine Guns (MG) together in a Fire Group (FG) to get a 30 firepower (FP) attack.

The front of the DC counter shows '30-1' in large bold numbers. The '30' is the DC's FP, and the '1' is the DC's range, which is not used in ASLSK. (In the full ASL rules, you can throw a DC into an adjacent hex — hence the range of 1 — but this is a dangerous technique in which the DC will attack both the target and the throwing unit. Under the ASLSK rules, throwing a DC is not allowed.)

'1PP' shows the weight of the DC: one Portage Point (PP). A squad or half-squad (HS) has an Infantry Portage Capacity (IPC) of three PP, so up to three DCs could be carried without penalty.

The Breakdown Number of 'X12' shows that when a DC attacks, a DR of 12 will result in a dud that fails to detonate. DCs are one-shot weapons: when a DC attacks, it is permanently removed from the game (even if it was a dud).

The final important piece of information on the DC counter is the small triangle that can be seen directly above the 'X12' Breakdown Number. This triangle code is not defined in the ASLSK rules, but it signifies that this weapon cannot benefit from any Leadership Modifier. DC attacks never include a DRM for leadership.

The back side of the DC counter is divided into three sections, corresponding to the three methods of using a DC in the full ASL rules: placed, thrown, set. In the ASLSK rules, DCs may only be placed, so only the top two lines apply. These two lines simply remind you that you place a DC during the Movement Phase (MPh), and its attack is resolved during the Advancing Fire Phase (AFPh).

Using a DC is a classic good news/bad news situation. The good news is that, as mentioned previously, a DC is incredibly powerful. The bad news is that it is very difficult to actually detonate a DC on an enemy position... the defender will do everything in his power to stop you.

Let's see how this plays out using the tactical situation we looked at in Part 1.

Place the following units on board z:

zF5: German 4^1-6-7, 9–1
zF7: US 6^3-6-6
zG7: US 6^3-6-6, DC
zH6: US 6^3-6-6

The Americans will move first. Both sides have an Experience Level Rating (ELR) of 3. To win this scenario, the Americans must capture zF5 by the end of their player turn, otherwise the Germans win.

I've added a DC to the squad in zG7. Unfortunately, the counters provided in ASLSK #1 do not include an American DC. If you have ASLSK #2, you can use the American DC counter that comes with it, otherwise just use a Russian DC and assume that it is green instead of brown. The only difference between DC of different nations is the color of the counter; the values are always the same.

The DC is placed on top of the squad, to show that the squad possesses it. If the DC was under the squad, it would be laying on the ground, unpossessed, and the squad would have to recover the DC before it could carry it or use it in an attack.

The DC is given to the middle squad, because it is the only squad that has two hexes that it could enter using Assault Movement to move adjacent to the German position in zF5. The flanking squads will attempt to place smoke grenades in both of these hexes, so the chances of the DC squad having a smoke screen available are pretty good.

The first move will be the same as in the previous battle: the squad in zF7 will attempt to place smoke grenades in zF6, and then move to zE7-zE6. The squad in zH6 will move next, attempting to place smoke grenades in zG6 and then moving into that hex. Finally the DC squad in zG7 will use Assault Movement to enter whichever hex has a +2 Smoke counter in it. If both, or neither, of these two hexes have smoke present, it will enter zF6 to avoid stacking with another squad.

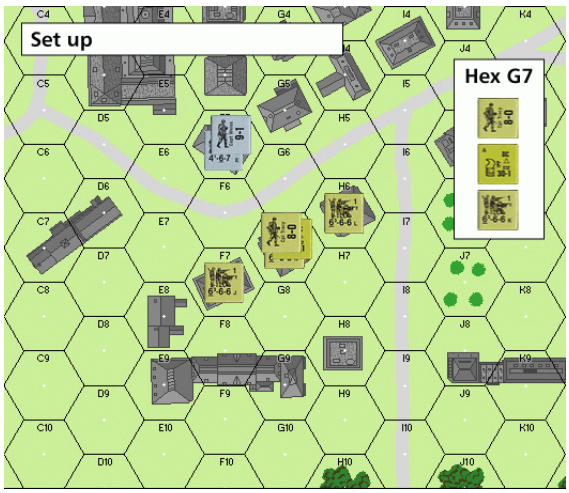

Figure 2.1: Demolition Charge (DC) example set up

But now, assuming that at least one Smoke counter is successfully placed, the Americans have a problem: it costs 2 Movement Factors (MF) to enter the smoke filled hex (1 MF for Open Ground + 1 MF for smoke), and 2 MF to place the DC in zF5 (2 MF for a building). This is 4 MF total, equal to the number of MF the squad has available, so Assault Movement could not be used.

It's time, then, to bring in some reinforcements: add an American 8–0 leader to zG7. Place the leader on the top of the stack, so that, from the bottom up, you have the squad, the DC possessed by the squad, and the leader.

If the squad and leader move together as a stack, the squad gets a 2 MF bonus, for a total of 6 MF. With 6 MF available, Assault Movement can be used to enter the smoke hex and place the DC, because 4 MF is less than 6 MF.

Before we play this out, let's review exactly what 'placing a DC' means. A unit places a DC by expending the MF necessary to enter the target hex, but the unit does not actually enter the target hex, and any defensive fire triggered by the placement MFs is taken in its current hex (adjacent to the target hex). If the placing unit survives all defensive fire triggered by the placement MFs without breaking or being pinned, then the DC is successfully placed in the target hex and will attack in the AFPh. What is happening here is that, after the squad moves adjacent to the German position, one or more soldiers get the perilous task of carrying the DC right up to the building occupied by the Germans, placing it next to the building, and then running like heck to get away before it detonates.

So why is throwing a DC forbidden in the ASLSK rules? Wouldn't that be easier and safer? Easier... yes; safer... no. The problem is that the blast radius of a DC is much greater than the distance any soldier can throw it, so a thrown DC attacks both the target (with less effectiveness than a placed DC) and the throwing unit. It's entirely possible to blow yourself up and leave the target unharmed (I speak from bitter experience here!). Throwing a DC is an act of desperation. Placing a DC is the most common method of using a DC, so it is the only one allowed in the ASLSK rules.

If the Germans fire on every unit as it moves adjacent to them, as they did in the previous battle, they will have four Final Protective Fire (FPF) shots when the squad with the DC, assisted by the 8–0 leader, Assault Moves into the smoke hex and attempts to place the DC in zF5. The 2 MF that must be spent to place the DC will give the Germans the two extra FPF shots, but let's assume that all four FPF shots have no effect. In the AFPh, the resulting DC attack will be a 30/+3 (+3 TEM DRM for the stone building).

The Breakdown Number of the DC will be 10 instead of 12, because the American squad is not an Elite unit. So on a DR of 10 or more, the DC will be a dud, but on a DR of 9 or less the Germans will suffer at least a 1MC, and could possibly suffer a 1KIA on a DR of 2. This could well be a game-winning attack for the Americans, so the German player will want to use a different defensive fire scheme...

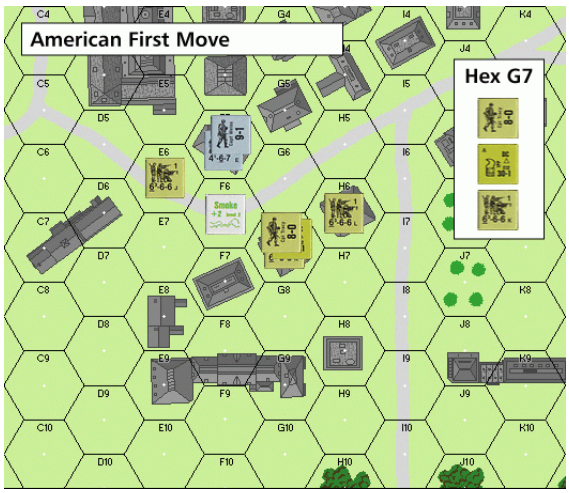

Figure 2.2: American first move; placing smoke in zF6 by the squad in zF7 and consecutive movement to zE6

2.2.1 Rally Phase

No activity.

2.2.2 Prep Fire Phase

No activity.

2.2.3 Movement Phase

2.2.3.1 The First Move

The squad in zF7 spends 2 MF to place smoke in zF6, and succeeds with a smoke dr of 3. Place a +2 Smoke counter in zF6. The Germans decline to fire.

The squad then spends 1 MF to enter zE7, and again the Germans decline to fire.

The squad then spends its final MF to enter zE6, and again the Germans decline to fire... turning down an 8/–3 shot against an adjacent attacker!

2.2.3.2 The Second Move

The squad in zH6 spends 2 MF to place smoke in zG6, and fails on a smoke dr of 5. The Germans decline to fire.

The squad then moves into zG6, and again the Germans decline to fire at an adjacent enemy squad.

What's going on here? The German player has decided that the squad with the DC is the greatest threat, so he is holding his fire in order to put maximum firepower on the DC squad. The American player, on the other hand, is going to move the DC squad last of all, because he wants to tempt the Germans into firing early.

The analysis of this situation, assuming that all DRs are 7s (neutral luck), goes like this: if the Germans fire as they did in the previous battle, breaking the first two squads but failing to break or pin the third squad, the DC attack will result in a 2MC (DR 7 + 3 TEM is 10 on the 30 FP column of the IFT). Both German units will roll a 9 (DR 7 + 2) for their Morale Checks (MC), which will pin the 9–1 leader and break the 4-6-7 squad. The broken squad will rout away, and the Americans will win when they kill the pinned leader with a 6-1 (7 FP vs 1 FP) Close Combat (CC) attack (DR 7 is less than the CC Kill Number of 10).

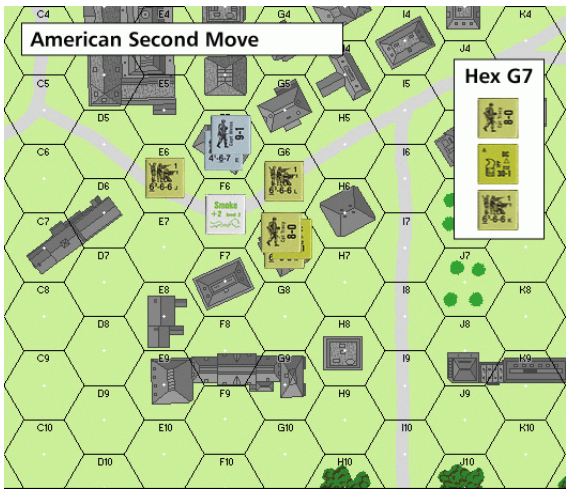

Figure 2.3: American second move; attempted smoke in zG6 by the squad in zH6 and consecutive movement to zG6

But, if the Germans concentrate all of their fire on the DC squad and break or pin it, preventing it from using the DC, the Germans will instead be hit with two 7 FP AFPh attacks from the first two American squads resulting in no effect (DR 7 + 3 TEM on the 6 FP column of the IFT). Then those two American squads will advance into the German hex to initiate CC, and (assuming no ambush occurs) the American CC attack will be at 2-1 odds (12 FP vs 5 FP). A DR of 7 will match the 2-1 CC Kill Number of 7, and the resulting Casualty Reduction of one of the German units will not eliminate all of the German defenders, so the Americans lose.

Thus it is clear that DC is the greatest threat to the Germans, and that they will increase their chances of winning by concentrating all of their fire on the DC squad.

Now, don't be misled by the above analysis... playing ASL/ASLSK does not normally involve making such detailed analyses of situations on every single turn. A veteran player would take one look at our situation here and immediately identify the DC as the biggest threat to the Germans, just on the basis of his past game experience, with no 'analysis' required. As you gain experience in playing ASLSK, you will increase your ability to take in a complicated situation at a glance and immediately know what move you want to make.

2.2.3.3 The Third Move

The American player announces that the squad and leader in zG7 will move together as a stack, and use Assault Movement. The stack spends 2 MF to enter zF6.

The presence of the 8–0 leader provides both a benefit and a risk to the Americans. The benefit, of course, is the additional 2 MF that the squad gets when accompanied by a leader. The risk is that, if the 8–0 leader breaks, the squad will have to take a Leader Loss Task Check (LLTC, rule 3.2.1) which could leave it pinned and unable to place the DC. So the American player is hoping that both the squad and the leader can withstand the German defensive fire.

The Germans now announce a Defensive First Fire. The FP is 4, doubled to 8 because of Point Blank Fire (PBF). The DRMs are –1 for the German 9–1 leader and +2 for the smoke (the smoke cancels FFMO, and Assault Movement cancels FFNAM). So the shot is an 8/+1. The DR is 6, which results in a 1MC (7 on the 8 column of the IFT).

The 8–0 leader passes his 1MC with a DR of 6 (6 + 1 is less than his Morale of 8). The squad rolls a DR of 5 and is pinned (5 + 1 equals their Morale of 6). Place a First Fire counter on the German stack, place a Pin counter on top of the American squad, but under the 8–0 leader, to show that the squad is pinned but the leader is not, and place a 4 Residual FP counter on top of the American stack.

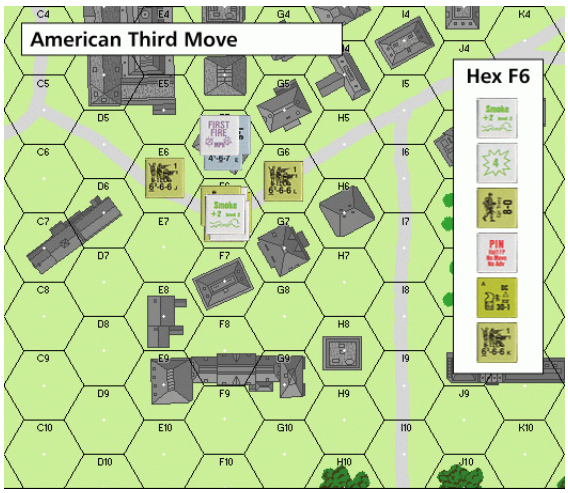

Figure 2.4: American third move; Assault move from the squad and leader in zG7 to zF6 where the squad is pinned by German Defensive First Fire

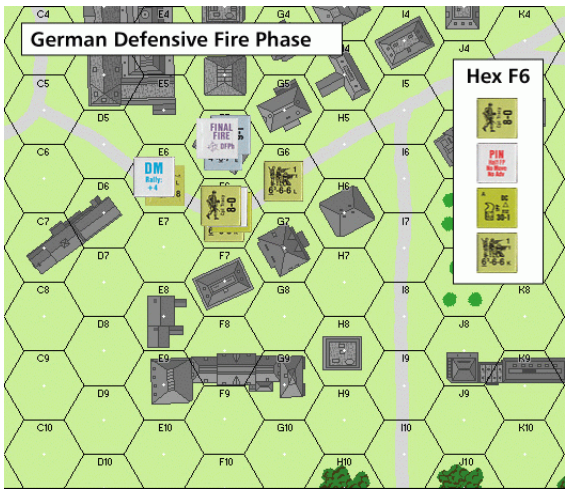

Figure 2.5: German Defensive Phase; the American squad in zE6 is broken by German Defensive Fire from zF5

The Germans could now take a second shot, this time as Subsequent First Fire, because the American stack expended 2 MF to enter zG6, but they decline to do so. With the DC squad safely pinned, their concern now is with the first two American squads.

This ends the MPh, as the 8–0 leader can do nothing useful with his remaining 3 MF (remember that he must limit his MF expenditure to 5 MF or less because he is using Assault Movement). Remove the Smoke and Residual FP counters.

2.2.4 Defensive Fire Phase

The Germans are marked with a First Fire counter, so they can only fire at an adjacent target with one-half of their normal FP. They choose to fire at the American squad in zE6.

The FP is 4, cut in half to 2, doubled back to 4 by PBF, with a –1 DRM from the German leader (FFMO and FFNAM never apply in the DFPh), so the shot is 4/–1.

The DR is 6, which is a 1MC (5 on the 4 FP column). The American squad fails its MC with a roll of 6 (6 + 1 is greater than its Morale of 6), so it is flipped over to its broken side and a DM counter is placed on top of it. Flip the First Fire counter over to the Final Fire side.

No other defensive fire is possible, so the DFPh is over. Remove the Final Fire counter.

2.2.5 Advancing Fire Phase

Remember that all shots taken in the AFPh are at one-half of their normal FP.

The squad in zG6 has 7 FP (6 FP, cut in half to 3, doubled back to 6 by PBF, +1 for Assault Fire bonus) and the pinned squad in zF6 has 4 FP (6 FP, cut in half to 3, cut in half to 1.5 because of the pin, doubled to 3 by PBF, +1 Assault Fire bonus). They will form a FG to attack at 8/+3 (11 FP and a +3 TEM DRM). The DR is 7, which has no effect (10 on the 8 FP column).

2.2.6 Rout Phase

The broken American squad routs to zC7 via zD6. It must rout to zD6, as that is its only legal rout destination. It could stop there, or continue to rout to zC7, zB6, or zB7.

Figure 2.6: American Advance Phase; the American squad in zG6 and leader in zF6 move to zF5

2.2.7 Advance Phase

The American squad in zG6 advances into the German-occupied hex zF5, followed by the 8–0 leader in zF6. The pinned squad in zF6 may not advance. Place a CC counter on zF5. The order in which these two units move is not important, as there is never any defensive fire in the APh, and ambush is not checked until the start of the CCPh.

2.2.8 Close Combat Phase

The American ambush dr is 4. The German ambush dr is 2, but the Germans also get a –1 drm from their 9–1 leader, so their final ambush dr is 1. This is 3 less than the American ambush dr, so the Germans have ambushed the Americans and will attack first.

The American player declares that his 8–0 leader will be attacking with the 6-6-6 squad, so both American units will defend together and cannot be attacked separately. If the Americans wanted their leader to attack by himself, then the Germans would have the option of attacking the squad alone, the leader alone, or both squad and leader together... so the American player must declare whether or not his leader will be making a combined attack with the squad, even though the Germans will attack first because of their ambush.

The German CC attack will be 5 FP vs 7 FP, which is 1-2 odds, with a –2 DRM (–1 leadership, –1 ambush). The DR is 10, which is reduced to 8, but that is greater than the 1-2 CC Kill Number of 4, so the German attack has no effect. If the German attack had been successful, the results would have been applied before the American CC attack, because of the ambush. Had the Germans eliminated the American units, there would have been no American CC attack at all.

The American CC attack will be 7 FP vs 5 FP, which is 1-1 odds, with a +1 DRM because they were ambushed. The DR is 7, which is increased to 8, and that is greater than the 1-1 CC Kill Number of 5, so their attack also has no effect.

Flip the CC counter over so that it becomes a Melee counter, remove the Pin counter, and the turn is over. If the scenario were to continue, the units in zF5 would have to continue to battle each other in CC each turn, but all subsequent CC attacks would be simultaneous and without the ambush DRMs, because the ambush condition ceases once the Melee counter is placed on the hex.

The Americans have lost once again, because they did not capture zF5 by the end of the turn.

That makes three losses in a row now. Are these Germans simply unbeatable? Why didn't the DC make more of a difference?

Well, the DC didn't change the outcome of the battle because the Americans didn't use it effectively! The Americans can make one tiny change in their set-up that will completely change the way this scenario plays out. This battle showed the 'obvious' way to use a DC... now let's look at a better way.

Reset all of the units to their starting hexes. In zG7, we have a stack consisting of (from the bottom up) a 6-6-6 squad, a DC, and the 8–0 leader. Change this stack so that it is: squad, leader, DC... so the DC is on top of the 8–0 leader, which means that he is the one carrying it, and not the squad.

A DC can be legally carried, and placed, by a leader, and his IPC of one PP is enough to carry the 1PP DC with no penalty to his movement. What does giving the DC to the leader accomplish?

- All leaders are Elite (rule 1.2.1), so the DC's Breakdown Number remains 12, instead of the 10 it has if a non-Elite squad uses it.
- The leader's Morale is 8, instead of the squad's 6, so he is going to be much tougher for the Germans to break or pin.
- With the leader handling the DC, there is no need for him to move along with the squad... the third squad can now move into zF6 before the leader moves, so the German player is probably going to have to hold his fire while *all three* American squads move adjacent to him, in order to have maximum firepower available to stop the DC. The German player will *not* be having fun at this point!

On the map, this situation would be (assuming the same smoke drs as previously): 6-6-6 squad in zE6, 6-6-6 squad and +2 Smoke in zF6, 6-6-6 squad in zG6, 8–0 leader and DC in zG7, ready to start his movement. The Rule of 7 suggests that, if the leader Assault Moves into the smoke, the Germans are going to need some luck to stop him from placing that DC: their best shot will be an 8/+1, so a DR 7 is a NMC which the leader will pass with a MC DR of 7. Their Subsequent First Fire and FPF shots will be 4/+1 which will have no effect on DRs of 7.

If those three squads remain unbroken and unpinned, they will form a FG to hit the Germans with a 20/+3 Advancing Fire shot (7 FP each), and if that has no effect they will still have a CC attack at 3-1 odds (18FP vs 5 FP) where a DR of 7 or less will eliminate the German defenders. Thus the Americans now have an excellent chance of winning this scenario, even if the Germans are able to prevent the 8–0 leader from placing the DC.

And all because we made one small change in the American set-up!

It is often better to let a leader handle a DC, especially for the Americans and the Italians, whose squads have low Morale ratings. And a leader with a Morale of 9 or 10 carrying a DC is a terrifying sight to any defender.

Placing a DC is a dangerous operation, and you may be reluctant to have a valuable leader exposed to the kind of defensive fire that a DC attracts... but remember that nothing forces you to use a DC. As we have seen here, the mere threat of a DC is enough to make a defender pass up defensive fire shots that would normally be devastating. If you don't actually use a DC, you can continue to threaten the defender with it in future turns. Sometimes, the best way to use a DC is to not use it at all!

A DC attacks in the AFPh at full FP because it is an instantaneous attack that is not reduced in effectiveness by movement of the placing unit. This ability to attack at full FP in the AFPh is one of the many traits it shares with the next support weapon we will look at: the flamethrower.

2.3 Flamethrowers (rule 4.2)

A flamethrower (FT) is a powerful weapon that will terrify any defender. It can fire in the AFPh at full FP, just like the DC does, because a short burst is usually all that is necessary, and careful aiming is not required.

A FT also ignores all TEM DRMs! A stone building, for example, normally has a TEM of +3, and its stone walls can't be harmed by a FT... but the burning liquid fuel will pour through any open window or door and quickly turn the interior of the building into an inferno.

The front of the FT counter shows '24-1' in large bold numbers. The '24' is the FT's FP, and the '1' is the FT's normal range (PBF does not apply to a FT). A FT can also make a long range attack at a range of 2 hexes with 12 FP.

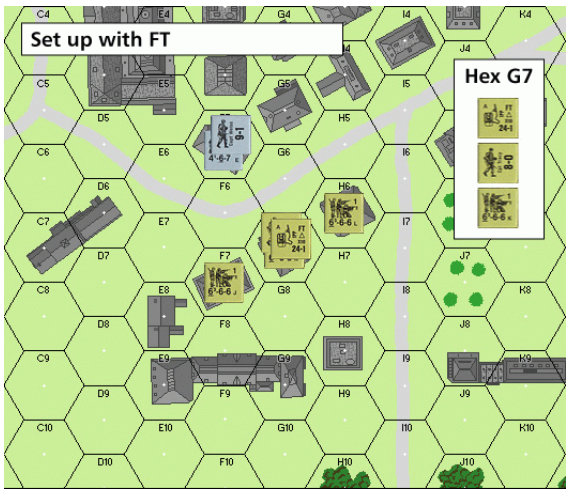

Figure 2.7: Flame Thrower (FT) example set up

'1PP' shows the weight of the FT.

The low Breakdown Number of 'X10' does not represent a high probability of a mechanical breakdown, but rather the limited amount of fuel that a FT carries.

The triangle code above the Breakdown Number signifies that this weapon cannot benefit from any Leadership Modifier. FT attacks never include a DRM for leadership.

The back side of the FT counter reminds you that it can attack at full FP in the AFPh, and that all attacks made against a unit carrying a FT receive a –1 DRM to their resolution roll on the IFT.

In a game a FT is used in much the same manner as a DC. Ideally, you would like to move adjacent to your target and hit it with the full 24 FP in the AFPh. Here are the ways in which using a FT differs from using a DC:

- A FT firing into an adjacent hex (range: 1) is actually better than a DC when attacking targets in high TEM hexes, because it ignores all TEM DRMs. With TEMs of +2 or +3 the FT is clearly better than a DC; with a TEM of +1 they are about equal; and with no TEM the DC is better.
- A FT can fire more than once, although with the low Breakdown Number it probably won't last forever. Note that if the FT is used by a non-Elite unit, the Breakdown Number is only X8!
- A unit carrying a FT is more vulnerable to enemy fire, because of the –1 DRM that is applied to any shots aimed at it. On the other hand, a unit using a DC will draw more defensive fire shots, because of the need to spend extra MFs to place the DC.
- A FT is much more flexible than a DC. It can fire from a range of 1 or 2 hexes; it can fire in the Prep Fire Phase instead of in the AFPh; it can fire in the DFPh; it can even be used for Defensive First Fire shots if any enemy unit is crazy enough to try moving within range of the FT!

Let's reset our tactical situation and look at a couple of things.

zF5: German 4^1-6-7, 9–1
zF7: US 6^3-6-6
zG7: US 6^3-6-6, 8–0, FT
zH6: US 6^3-6-6

Note that the American 8–0 leader could simply fire the FT in the Prep Fire Phase at a range of 2 hexes... before the Germans have a chance to do anything at all. This shot would be a 12/+0, with a 1MC occurring on a DR of 7. Remember how hard the Americans have worked to try to get an attack this good on the Germans? A FT gives it to them with no effort at all.

But the question facing the American player is: should he take this long range 12 FP shot in the Prep Fire Phase, or should he try to move adjacent and get the 24 FP shot in the AFPh? That would be a 24/+0, with a 3MC on a

DR of 7... a shot that would be nearly impossible for the Germans to withstand.

I think it comes down to a judgment call as to how much risk the American player is willing to take. The 24 FP shot would be awesome, but there's no guarantee that he'll successfully get into position to take it. The 12 FP shot is guaranteed to occur, but it might not have any effect.

I'd go for the 24 FP shot in the AFPh, myself, if only because I want to put as much pressure on the defender as I possibly can. And, win or lose, it would be much more fun to play it that way!

2.4 Game or Simulation?

ASL is widely regarded as being one of the most realistic wargames ever designed... but what about the situations discussed above? Would the German defenders really just sit around and do nothing — while the American troops calmly walk up to their building — only to open up with everything they've got when the guy carrying the DC/FT finally appears?

First, remember that moving units one at a time is just an abstraction that makes the game playable. In reality, all of the American forces would be moving at once, and the Germans would start firing on them as soon as they started moving, but, upon seeing the DC/FT coming their way, they would concentrate their fire in that direction.

ASL is a 'design for effect' game, rather than a rigorous simulation. A simulation will try to use the most realistic game mechanics possible, but such games can sometimes be tedious to play as a result. A design for effect game will use abstracted game mechanics to keep the gameplay fast and easy, as long as the results of each turn are reasonably realistic. That is the situation here: without a DC or FT, the Americans are unlikely to capture that building, and they will often suffer more casualties than the defenders when they do capture it. This is a realistic result for this situation, regardless of how 'gamey' the actual moves may have seemed.

This, I think, is a major part of the reason for ASL's success. It contains more historical detail than any other competing WWII tactical game system — a wealth of detail that can seem almost overwhelming at times — but it uses many abstractions to incorporate all of that detail while still keeping the game playable and fun. And, in the process, it generates very realistic results.

2.5 Machine Guns (rule 4.1)

By far the most common SW in ASL is the Machine Gun (MG). MGs come in three types: light Machine Gun (LMG), medium Machine Gun (MMG), and heavy Machine Gun (HMG). As you compare these types, moving from light to medium to heavy, you see increased FP, increased range, more weight (higher PP numbers), and higher Rate of Fire (ROF) numbers.

MG counters show their FP, range, and PP number just like the DC/FT counters do. Some models may have a Breakdown Number printed on them, such as 'B11', but if no Breakdown Number is present they are assumed to have a 'B12'. The 'B' prefix means that, unlike the DC and the FT, when a MG breaks down it can possibly be repaired and used again. When a MG does malfunction it is flipped over so that the 'R' (repair) and 'X' (permanent breakdown) dr numbers are visible.

The main difference from the DC/FT counters is the boxed ROF number, which signifies that these weapons may be able to fire multiple times in a single fire phase, without penalty.

Unlike DCs and FTs, MGs are usually assigned to squads rather than leaders. When a MG is fired by a leader it is limited to Area Fire (FP halved), the leader's Leadership Modifier cannot be used to assist anybody, and a MMG or HMG possessed by a leader is going to really slow him down, since he only has an IPC of one PP. Note also that MGs do not suffer a reduction in their Breakdown Number when they used by a non-Elite unit.

MGs are excellent defensive weapons that will pose many problems for attacking troops that are facing them. They are less useful on offense because MMGs and HMGs cannot fire in the AFPh if they have moved that turn. MGs also enable you to concentrate a tremendous amount of FP in a single stack, which is important when you

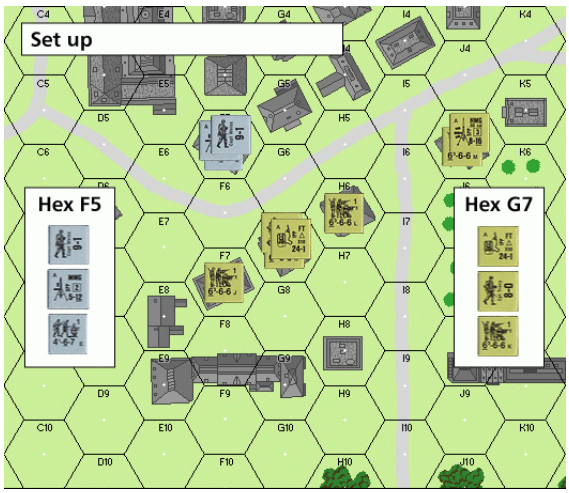

Figure 2.8: Example set up with Flame Thrower (FT), Medium Machine Gun (MMG) and Heavy Machine Gun (HMG)

have a good leader. For example, if the Americans stack three 6-6-6 squads with a 9–2 leader and fire at a stone building, the shot is 16/+1, but if each of those three squads also has a 4-10 MMG, the shot becomes 30/+1... a tremendous shot that is roughly equivalent to firing a FT from an adjacent hex, but this shot could be taken from up to six hexes away from the target.

Let's return to our tactical situation one final time, adding some MGs to the forces involved to see how they change the game play.

zF5: German 4^1-6-7, 5-12 MMG, 9–1
zF7: US 6^3-6-6
zG7: US 6^3-6-6, 8–0, FT
zH6: US 6^3-6-6
zJ5: US 6^3-6-6, 8-16 HMG

2.5.1 Rally Phase

No activity.

2.5.2 Prep Fire Phase

The squad in zJ5 will fire on the Germans in zF5 using the HMG and its own inherent FP, for a total of 14 FP. The shot is 12/+3, and the DR is 5 (colored dr is 2) resulting in a 1MC (8 on the 12 FP column).

The 9–1 leader passes his MC with a DR of 7 (7 + 1 is less than his Morale of 9). The 4-6-7 squad passes their MC with a DR of 4 (4 + 1 – 1 is less than their Morale of 7).

The HMG has a ROF of 3, so it has the chance to shoot again because the colored die in the original IFT DR was 3 or less. Place a Prep Fire counter on top of the squad in zJ5, but under the HMG. Strictly speaking, both the squad and the HMG should be marked with the Prep Fire counter, but it is a universal convention among ASL players that when a weapon retains ROF it is not marked until it either loses ROF, or the end of the Prep Fire Phase is reached.

The HMG now shoots again. The shot is 8/+3, and the DR is 8 (colored dr is 5) resulting in no effect (11 on the 8 FP column). The HMG has now lost ROF and cannot shoot any more, because the colored die was greater than 3. Move the Prep Fire counter to the top of the stack.

Figure 2.9: American Prep Fire Phase; The American squad in zJ5 has fired on the Germans in zF5 with the squads inherent firepower and the HMG without effect

The potential for MGs to fire multiple times if they retain ROF, especially with the powerful HMGs that have a 50% chance of getting another shot (ROF 3), recreates the ability of a MG to fire a large number of bullets at multiple targets in a short period of time. In particular, infantry attacking over Open Ground can take heavy casualties if even a single defending MG retains ROF a few times.

You can think of a MG that retains ROF as one that scored some hits in only a short burst, leaving it time to fire again or even engage a different target. A MG that fires and does not retain ROF was less successful, so it had to fire throughout the entire fire phase in order to score some hits on its target.

The Americans decline to fire their FT in the Prep Fire Phase.

2.5.3 Movement Phase

Note that if the squad in zJ5 had elected to move instead of Prep Fire, it would only have had 2 MF to spend, because the 5PP weight of the HMG exceeds the squad's IPC by 2 (they lose 1 MF for each PP over 3). To have had more than 2 MF to spend, the squad would have to either declare Double Time movement, or they would have to abandon the HMG.

2.5.3.1 The First Move

The squad in zF7 spends 2 MF to place smoke grenades in zF6, and succeeds on a dr of 1. Place a +2 Smoke counter in zF6. They then spend 1 MF to enter zE7, and their final MF to enter zE6, at which point the Germans announce a Defensive Fire shot.

The German player is in a tough spot: he knows he will probably lose if that American FT is able to attack in the AFPh, but he also doesn't like his chances if three American squads advance in for CC. So he is going to take a chance and fire the MMG only, with the 9–1 leader directing, in a First Fire attack on the squad entering zE6. He's hoping that the MMG breaks or pins the American squad and retains its ROF.

The MMG's 5 FP is doubled to 10 FP by PBF, so the shot is 8/–3 (–1 leadership, –1 FFMO, –1 FFNAM). The DR is 3 (colored dr is 1) resulting in a 3KIA! The American squad is completely eliminated, and, since the MMG retained its ROF, it is *not* marked with a First Fire counter. Remove the American squad. Normally a 4 Residual FP counter would now be placed in zE6, but, because the MMG retained its ROF, no Residual FP is placed at all (short successful burst = no Residual FP).

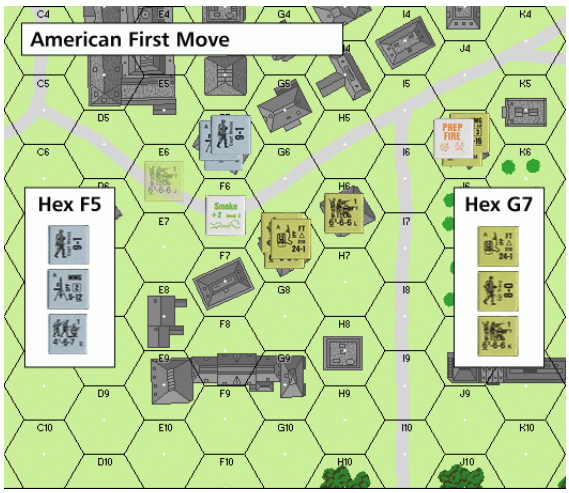

Figure 2.10: The Americans first move; the American squad in zF7 places smoke in zF6 and move to zE6 through zE7

The German player has the option to voluntarily lose ROF on the MMG, in spite of the colored dr, by putting a First Fire counter on it, in which case he would place the 4 Residual FP counter in zE6... but, of course, he does not want to do this. His concern now is stopping the FT, rather than preventing anyone else from entering zE6.

2.5.3.2 The Second Move

The squad in zH6 spends 2 MF to place smoke grenades in zG6, but the dr is 6. Not only does the smoke placement attempt fail, but the squad must immediately end its move and remain in zH6.

ASL is often criticized for unrealistically giving players too much control over their troops — which is true enough — but events such as cowering, SW breakdowns, and rolling a dr 6 on smoke placement attempts insure that there are unexpected things that can happen that will mess up even the best plans. So while ASL/ASLSK may fall short of recreating the true chaos and uncertainty of a WWII battlefield, those elements are present, and are handled in a way that does not decrease the playability of the game.

2.5.3.3 The Third Move

Now it's the American player who is in a tough spot. With one squad eliminated, and a second one unable to move, only one squad remains. Why is this a problem? The Americans must control zF5 to win, and only a Multi-Man Counter (MMC) can gain control of a hex (a leader can prevent an opponent from gaining control of a hex, but he cannot capture a hex by himself). So the last American squad must move adjacent to zF5, and must remain unbroken and unpinned, for the Americans to have any chance of winning.

The squad in zG7 announces that it will use Assault Movement, and spends 2 MF to enter zF6.

The German player, realizing that the Morale 6 squad will be an easier target than the Morale 8 leader with the FT, declares a First Fire shot against it. If this squad breaks or pins, it won't matter what the FT does, because the Americans will have no squad left to take control of zF5 and win the game.

The Germans fire using both the 4-6-7 squad and the MMG. The 9–1 leader cannot assist this shot with his Leadership Modifier. Once a leader uses his Leadership Modifier to assist a shot in a player turn, he cannot then assist any other firing units/SW for the rest of that player turn. The 9–1 leader already assisted the MMG by itself in the previous First Fire shot, so for the remainder of the player turn he can assist only that MMG, and only when it attacks by itself.

Figure 2.11: The Americans third move; the American squad in zG7 assault moves to zF6 where it receives a First Fire from the Germans.

The squad and MMG have a total of 9 FP, which is doubled to 18 FP by PBF. So the shot will be 16/+2 (+2 smoke, no leadership, smoke cancels FFMO, Assault Movement cancels FFNAM). The DR is 12. This is a doubles roll (6,6) that causes the Germans to cower because there is no leader to prevent it. The shot is thus resolved on the 12 FP column of the IFT, where 14 has no effect. In addition, 12 is the Breakdown Number for the MMG, so it malfunctions and is flipped over. The MMG will not be able to fire again until it is repaired. And finally, because the attack cowered, the squad is marked with a Final Fire counter rather than a First Fire counter.

The Residual FP will be calculated using only the squad's FP, because a malfunctioned MG cannot leave any Residual FP. So the squad's 4 FP, doubled to 8 FP by PBF, would have been on the 8 FP column, shifting one column left for cowering gives the 6 FP column, half of 6 is 3, and the largest Residual FP counter that is equal to or less than 3 is 2, so a 2 Residual FP counter is placed in zF6.

Why didn't the Germans hold their fire? If they had declined this shot and waited instead until the DFPh to fire on this last American squad, the shot would have been 16/+0, rather than 16/+2, because the +2 Smoke counter is removed at the end of the MPh. This would have been a much better attack, but it also would have been an all-or-nothing attack: they would have only made one full power attack on the squad, and no attacks at all on the leader/FT (unless the MMG retains ROF).

But the Germans fired here because they were hoping to fire twice: a First Fire shot followed by a Subsequent First Fire shot (the American squad spent 2 MF to enter the hex, so two shots are allowed). But the unexpected breakdown of the MMG, and the cowering of the squad, has completely ruined the German plan.

The Germans are still able to fire again, although this second shot will now be a Final Protective Fire (FPF) shot because the German squad is already marked with a Final Fire counter. There's no question as to whether or not the Germans should take this shot: facing a high probability of an American victory, the Germans will take every shot they can get... and hope for a miracle.

The FPF shot is 2 FP, doubled to 4 FP by PBF, with a +2 DRM from the smoke, and no leadership. The DR for the 4/+2 shot is 6, resulting in no effect (8 on the 4 FP column). The DR is also a NMC roll for the German squad, which it passes (6 is less than its Morale of 7).

2.5.3.4 The Fourth Move

The leader/FT in zG7 now has an interesting decision to make: should he Assault Move into zF6 or zG6? The Smoke counter in zF6 will provide more protection from the FPF shots that the desperate Germans will surely take, but moving there will expose him to two FPF attacks and an additional attack from the Residual FP (rule 3.3, 3.31, or 3.3.5 in the rulebook of ASLSK #1, #2 or #3 respectively) that is already present. Here's the analysis:

Figure 2.12: The Americans fourth move; the American leader/FT Assault Moves to zF6 and receives RFP. The German squad resorts to FPF.

zF6, 2 MF to enter
RFP: 2/+1 (+2 Smoke, –1 FT) — no effect on DR 7
FPF: 4/+1 (+2 Smoke, –1 FT) — no effect on DR 7
FPF: 4/+1 (+2 Smoke, –1 FT) — no effect on DR 7
zG6, 1 MF to enter
FPF: 4/–2 (–1 FFMO, –1 FT) — 1MC on DR 7

The choice appears obvious. The protective value of the +2 Smoke counter is worth taking the risk of three attacks, especially since two of those three attacks require the German squad to take a NMC as well.

The leader/FT declares Assault Movement and expends 2MF to enter zF6. The defensive attacks will not affect the squad that is already in zF6, because Defensive First Fire attacks only affect the moving unit(s) that triggered them.

The Residual FP always attacks first. The 2/+1 shot has a DR of 6, resulting in no effect (7 on the 2 FP column).

The first FPF shot at 4/+1 has a DR of 7, resulting in no effect but the German squad is pinned because the 7 is also a NMC DR for them (7 equals their Morale of 7). Place a Pin counter on top of the German squad, but under the 9–1 leader.

The stack in zF5 now looks like this, from the bottom up: 4-6-7 squad, malfunctioned MMG, Pin, Final Fire, 9–1.

The German squad's FP will now be halved again for the second FPF shot, because they are pinned. So, 4 FP halved to 2 FP for FPF, halved to 1 FP for pinned, doubled to 2 FP for PBF, and +1 DRM for smoke and FT.

The second FPF shot at 2/+1 has a DR of 9, resulting in no effect, but the German squad is broken (9 is greater than its Morale of 7). Flip the German squad over to it broken side, remove the Pin counter and replace it with a DM counter.

Remove the Smoke counter and the Residual FP counters.

2.5.4 Defensive Fire Phase

No activity. Remove the Final Fire counter.

Figure 2.13: American Advancing Fire Phase; The 8–0 leader fires the FT at zF5. Squad and MMG are destroyed.

2.5.5 Advancing Fire Phase

The 8–0 leader fires the FT at zF5. The attack is 24/+0, and the DR is 4, resulting in a 1KIA. The broken German squad is randomly selected to suffer the KIA, and the 9–1 leader is broken.

Remove the German squad, flip the 9–1 leader to his broken side and put the DM counter on top of him. A subsequent dr of 1 on the 24 FP column of the IFT results in another KIA, so the malfunctioned MMG that was possessed by the eliminated German squad is also destroyed and removed (rule 4.0, 3rd paragraph).

At this point, the German player concedes. His broken leader must rout away in the RtPh, and then the American squad will advance into zF5, capturing the hex to win the scenario.

Chapter 3

Infantry in Battle

This chapter assumes that the reader has read, and understood, the previous chapters. Rules and concepts discussed in the earlier chapters will be used here with little or no explanation.

In this chapter I will present a small battle between the Germans, attacking with six squads, and the Russians, defending with four squads. The focus this time is on illustrating how a typical ASLSK scenario flows, rather than introducing new rules or units. The previous examples featured a close-range assault on a building, where manoeuvring was more important than Prep Fire. This battle will start off at much longer ranges, and Prep Fire will be critical. In addition, this battle will last several turns, so routing and rallying will be demonstrated in more detail.

I need to point out that, while I may have a reasonable understanding of the ASLSK rules (one would hope so, anyway, if I'm writing tutorials!), I am by no means an expert ASL player. The Russian defense plan that I'm going to use is almost certainly not the best defense possible, and the German attack plan may be less than optimal as well. These plans are sufficient for the purpose of this chapter, which is simply to demonstrate the ASLSK rules in action, but you may well notice ways in which they may be improved. I hope, however, that this battle will be a typical example of the kind of game you might see between players of average skill levels.

3.1 The Set-Up

Place the following units on board y:

yU3: Russian 4-4-7
yV6: Russian 7–0
yW6: Russian 4-4-7, 2-6 LMG
yZ7: Russian 4-4-7, 4-4-7, 4-10 MMG, 8–1
yDD1: German 4^1-6-7, 3-8 LMG, 8–1
yDD2: German 4^1-6-7
yDD3: German 4^1-6-7, 4^1-6-7, 3-8 LMG, 4^2-6-8, 5-12 MMG, 9–2
yDD5: German 4^1-6-7

Grain is not in season, so all grain hexes are treated as Open Ground. The road in yY10 exits the North edge of the map.

The Germans will move first. Both sides have an Experience Level Rating (ELR) of 3. To win this scenario, the Germans must capture yU6. There is no time limit... the game will continue until the Germans win.

Why no time limit? The moves that I will be recording will be my first playing of this scenario; and without having played the scenario, I have no way of knowing what time limit would give each side a reasonable chance to win. This will be a demonstration game, so the lack of a time limit will not be a problem: both sides will play as if there is a time limit. Once the game is complete, I will be able to suggest a time limit that would work for anyone who might want to play the scenario against an opponent.

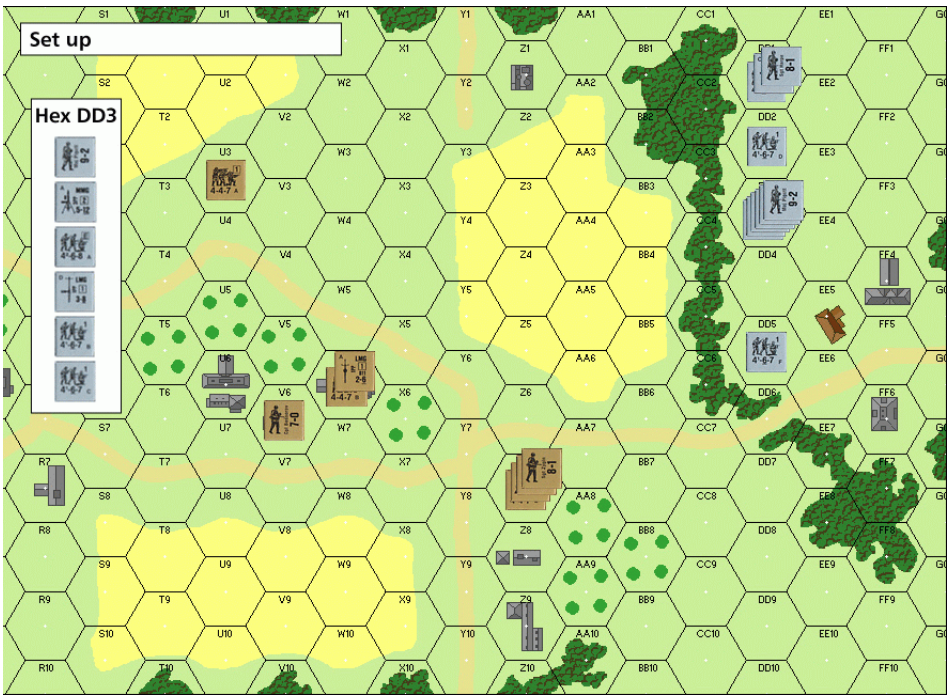

Figure 3.1: Example Infantry set up.

3.2 Two Rules of Thumb

There are two common dictates concerning proper play that you will encounter over and over when reading about ASL:

(A) Don't stack!
(B) Attacking units should move instead of using Prep Fire.

I disagree with both of these... not because they are incorrect, but rather because they are often presented as absolute truths, which I think teaches the wrong lessons to a beginner reading them.

In the case of (A), simply saying 'don't stack' implies that stacking is always bad... but I suspect that there are relatively few infantry scenarios that can be won without the use of stacking. Stacking is a powerful technique, and a common one, that does indeed also increase your vulnerability. To be a good player, you will need to understand when and how to use stacking. I would rephrase (A) as:

(A) Stack only when you have a valid reason to do so.

The drawback with stacking is that it multiplies the effectiveness of your opponent's attacks. For example, if your opponent rolls a 1MC against a single squad, only one Morale Check is made; but if that 1MC is rolled against a stack of three squads, then three Morale Checks will be made... essentially tripling the effectiveness of the attack.

The second dictate (B) comes from the observation that beginners usually spend too much time Prep Firing instead of moving, which is probably true. And this is understandable: Prep Fire comes first in the Sequence of Play, so a beginner will fire away without stopping to think about who might need to move later. But the actual relative importance of manoeuvre vs Prep Fire is highly dependent upon the scenario being played, so to imply that manoeuvre is always more important is wrong. I would rephrase (B) as:

(B) Think about moving before you think about Prep Firing.

If you decide who needs to move before you start Prep Firing, then you will avoid having too many units firing and not enough units moving. In the previous battles we've looked at, Prep Fire was ineffective, and the use of

manoeuvre was critical for the attacker to have a chance of winning. In the battle featured here, the attackers will have to use Prep Fire to blast their way to the objective.

3.3 Set-Up Analysis

This battle will be dominated by the wide open space that the Germans must cross to reach their objective (remember that the grainfields are out of season and do not exist). With no cover, and low Smoke Exponent numbers, the Germans will be slaughtered if they try to simply charge across that Open Ground.

One key for the Russian defense is to keep the Germans out of the stone buildings in yZ7-yZ8-yZ9 for as long as possible, as those would be excellent positions to use in attacking yV6 and yW6. The Russians have therefore placed the bulk of their defensive forces in yZ7. This gives the Russians a basic 12/–1 shot that will dominate most of the battlefield. Note that the –1 leader will cancel the +1 TEM of the woods hexes, so this stack will fire on Germans in woods hexes as if they were in Open Ground (a 12/+0 shot). Stacking does make the Russians more vulnerable, but the Russians are hoping that the +3 TEM of the stone building, and the –1 leader, will counter that vulnerability.

The Russian 7–0 leader is set-up out of LOS to serve as a rally point for the squad in yW6. If he was stacked with the squad, they would not run the risk of cowering, but the Russians do not want to take a chance that he might break. He needs to be available to rally that squad quickly so that they can fall back to yU6 for the final defense of the objective.

The squad in yU3 is probably a mistake: it's isolated with no safe rout path, and is far away from where the Germans will appear. But, it is in position to cover the Open Ground even if the other Russian defenders break or fall back, and if the Germans ignore it, it may be able to run over to yU6 later.

The Russians, then, are using a forward defense. They are going to deny the Germans any easy approach to the objective and instead force them to sit in the woods hexes and shoot. The idea is that each turn the Germans spend shooting is a turn that they don't get any closer to the objective. The Russians don't have to kill German units to win... they just have to delay them long enough that they run out of time. (Remember that, even though there is no time limit in effect for this playing, in a regular game the Germans would only have a limited number of turns in which to capture their objective.)

The most striking feature of the German set-up is the huge stack in yDD3. ASL players call such a stack a 'kill stack' since its purpose is to kill (or at least break) enemy units. With a –2 leader directing 20 FP, this kill stack is the perfect tool for cracking tough defensive positions in stone buildings. But this power comes at a cost: if the Russians can get a lucky hit on the stack, the German attack can unravel very quickly. The Germans must make maximum use of this kill stack, while, at the same time, minimizing its exposure to Russian attacks.

3.3.1 German Turn 1

3.3.1.1 Rally Phase

No activity.

3.3.1.2 Prep Fire Phase

No activity (no targets).

3.3.1.3 Movement Phase

The squad and 8–1 leader in yDD1 expend 2 MF to enter yCC2.

There is no other movement.

Why didn't the other German units use Assault Movement to enter the tree line? By waiting until the Advance Phase (APh) to enter the tree line, the Germans will make the Russians waste their first Defensive Fire Phase (DFPh). Remember, they don't want to give the Russians any free shots at their kill stack.

Avoiding the Russian defensive fire also means that the Germans will not be able to make any advancing fire attacks... but the kill stack would only have had 7.5 FP for such an AFPh attack (one-half FP, no ROF possible, and the MMG could not fire because it moved).

3.3.1.4 Defensive Fire Phase

No activity (no targets).

3.3.1.5 Advancing Fire Phase

No activity (no targets).

3.3.1.6 Rout Phase

No activity.

3.3.1.7 Advance Phase

4-6-7, LMG, 8–1 advance from yCC2 to yBB2.

4-6-7 advance from yDD2 to yCC3.

Kill stack advance from yDD3 to yCC4.

4-6-7 advance from yDD5 to yCC6.

Notice that the kill stack in yCC4 is more than four hexes from all of the Russian squads, so only the Russian MGs can fire at it with full FP.. but the two most important Russian positions are with range of the German squads in the kill stack. The German player has taken full advantage of the shorter range of the Russian squads, minimizing the danger to his kill stack while leaving it fully effective.

The Russians have only a single German squad within their normal range... and the German player hopes that they will fire at it instead of at his kill stack.

3.3.1.8 Close Combat Phase

No activity.

3.3.2 Russian Turn 1

3.3.2.1 Rally Phase

No activity.

3.3.2.2 Prep Fire Phase

First shot The squad in yU3 fires at yCC6. The range is 8 hexes, which is the maximum range for this squad (normal range: 4 hexes, long range: 4 x 2 = 8 hexes). The shot is 2/+1 (4 FP cut in half for long range, +1 TEM for the woods hex).

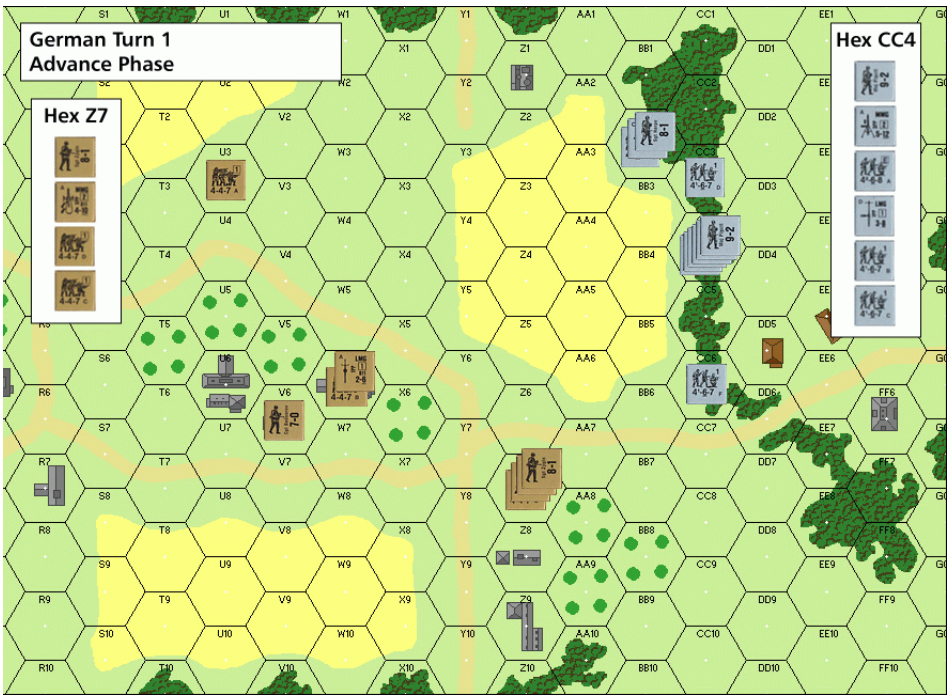

Figure 3.2: Situation after the German Advance Phase.

The DR is 4 and doubles (2,2) which causes the squad to cower, so the attack will shift one column to the left and use the 1 FP column, where the result is a PTC.

The German squad's PTC DR is 5, so they are not pinned. Put a Prep Fire counter on yU3.

Second shot The Russian stack in yZ7 must now decide which target to shoot at. The German squad in yCC6 could be attacked with full FP, or the German kill stack could be attacked with the Russian squads firing at half FP because of the long range.

The presence of the 9–2 leader makes the kill stack a very tough target... but it is also the biggest threat to the Russians, so the Russian stack in yZ7 fires at yCC4. The shot is 8/+0 (8 FP cut in half for long range, 4 FP MMG, –1 leadership, +1 TEM).

The DR is 4 (colored dr 3), resulting in a 2MC.

The 9–2's Morale Check (MC) DR is 6, resulting no effect (6 + 2 is less than 9). The three squads will now each receive a –2 DRM from the 9–2 leader. This Leadership Modifier cancels out the +2 DRM from the 2MC IFT result, so each squad will make an unmodified MC DR.

The MMG/4-6-8's MC DR is 5, resulting in no effect.

The LMG/4-6-7's MC DR is 9, so it breaks and is flipped over to its broken side.

The final 4-6-7's MC DR is 8, so it also breaks and is flipped over to its broken side.

Place a DM counter above the two broken squads, and place a Prep Fire counter on yZ7. The Russian MMG did not retain ROF, because the colored dr was greater than 2, so it cannot fire again.

The Russian stack rolled up a great Prep Fire shot, but the German kill stack managed to survive it in fairly good shape, with the 9–2 leader unharmed and just a couple of broken squads. The German attack has received a setback, but it has not been stopped.

3.3.2.3 Movement Phase

The Russian squad/LMG in yW6 declares Assault Movement and spends 2 MF to enter yV6. The Germans decline to fire.

3.3.2.4 Defensive Fire Phase

First shot The 4-6-8/MMG/9–2 in yCC4 fires at yZ7 (the broken units cannot fire). The shot is 8/+1 (9 FP, –2 leader, +3 TEM), and the DR is 11 (colored dr is 5), resulting in no effect and no ROF. Place a Final Fire counter on yCC4.

The stack in yCC4 now looks like this, from the bottom up: broken 4-6-7, broken 4-6-7, LMG, DM, 4-6-8, MMG, 9–2, Final Fire

Second shot The 4-6-7/LMG/8–1 in yBB2 fires at yZ7. The shot is 6/+2 (7 FP, –1 leader, +3 TEM), and the DR is 6 (colored dr is 3), resulting in a PTC and no ROF.

The Russian 8–1 leader's PTC DR is 8, resulting in no effect. The –1 Leadership Modifier will now be applied to both squads' PTC rolls.

The MMG/4-4-7's PTC DR is 6, resulting in no effect.

The 4-4-7's PTC DR is 7, resulting in no effect.

Place a Final Fire counter on yBB2.

Third shot The 4-6-7 in yCC3 fires at yZ7. The shot is 4/+3, and the DR is 5, resulting in no effect.

Place a Final Fire counter on yCC3.

Fourth shot The 4-6-7 in yCC6 fires at yZ7. The shot is 4/+3, and the DR is 7, resulting in no effect.

Place a Final Fire counter on yCC6.

Remove the Final Fire counters.

The Germans took four separate shots, including two with leader direction, at the main Russian stack and failed to do any damage. The +3 TEM of the stone building kept the Russians safe. The failure of these weak attacks demonstrates why the Germans need a powerful kill stack, and are willing to accept the increased vulnerability of stacked units in order to use one.

3.3.2.5 Advancing Fire Phase

No activity. Remove the Prep Fire counters.

3.3.2.6 Rout Phase

The Russians have no broken units.

The Germans have two broken squads in yCC4. These squads are not in Open Ground and are not adjacent to an unbroken enemy unit, so they are not forced to rout. But they are covered with a DM counter, so they may rout if they wish.

They are already stacked with the best German leader, so it is tempting to leave them there. But even with the leader's –2 DRM they would need a DR of 6 to rally (7 broken side morale, +4 DM DRM, –2 leadership DRM, –1 woods hex DRM), which is not really a good chance, and the Russians will continue to fire at that hex so

they will always be under a DM counter. It's possible that they may never rally under these conditions, and the Germans can't get an effective kill stack if broken squads are present, because of the stacking limit of three squads per hex, so the broken squads will rout away.

The broken squads must rout to the nearest woods or building hex that is a legal rout destination. The closest such hexes are yCC3 and yCC5, both 2 MF away.

They cannot rout to yCC5, because they would be moving closer to the known Russian units in yZ7.

yCC3 is a legal rout destination, but the Germans may choose to ignore it because it is no further away from the Russians in yU3 than their present hex. Normally, the Germans would ignore yCC3, because routing to that hex would leave the broken units in the LOS of Russian units, but, in this case it will work OK, so the German player announces that yCC3 will be his rout destination.

The broken units must rout one at a time. The 9–2 leader could choose to accompany either broken squad, but he will not do so... the Germans need to use his –2 leadership DRM to direct shots against the Russians rather than to rally broken units.

All routing units (except wounded leaders) have 6 MF to use. The broken 4-6-7/LMG will rout first. It expends 2 MF to enter yCC3. There is no interdiction because this hex is not Open Ground. The broken unit has reached its rout destination, so it must stop there... unless it can enter an adjacent woods or building hex. Once a broken unit reaches cover, in the form or a woods or building hex, it will not move back out into the open, but it may continue to move into other adjacent 'cover' hexes. This is why yCC3 works as a rout destination, even though it is in the LOS of Russian units: the broken unit can now spend an additional 2 MF to enter yCC2, which is not in the LOS of any Russian unit.

The other broken 4-6-7 now expends 4 MF to also rout to yCC3-yCC2. Both broken squads are now in a safe hex that cannot be fired upon by the Russians, and they are adjacent to a leader who will eventually be able to move in and assist them in rallying. The DM counter moves along with the broken units as they rout.

3.3.2.7 Advance Phase

The 4-4-7/LMG in yV6 advances into yW6.

What is this Russian squad doing, anyway? It runs away in the MPh, and then returns in the APh?!

This tactic is commonly called 'skulking.' Because the Russians moved out of LOS in the MPh, the Germans see nothing but an empty building during their DFPh. But when the German MPh comes around, suddenly there are Russian units in that building ready to blast any German unit that moves into the open. So now the Germans have to use Prep Fire to try to break the defenders... and German units that Prep Fire are not moving closer to the objective, which is exactly what the Russians want.

Many ASL players see skulking as a very unrealistic tactic, while others argue that it intentionally simulates defenders ducking down out of sight to avoid being shot at. ASL's detractors are quick to point out skulking as an example of how unrealistic and/or ridiculous ASL is... conveniently ignoring the fact that the games they prefer will have equally unrealistic aspects, since there is no such thing as a perfect simulation.

I see skulking as an artefact of the multi-phase sequence of play that ASL uses. Sure, it's unrealistic, but as a design for effect game, ASL/ASLSK has an overall realistic feel in spite of the various unrealistic elements that are present. And regardless of how you view skulking, it is completely legal, you will see it used against you, and you should use it when it makes sense to do so.

Skulking is actually not all that common. In this battle, for example, only one of the three Russian positions can use it effectively... and it is easy to argue that the Russians might have been better off using that squad/LMG to Prep Fire instead of skulking. But since that squad is currently the only one in position to actually occupy and defend the objective (yU6), the Russian player does not want to risk it any more than he has to.

3.3.2.8 Close Combat Phase

No activity.

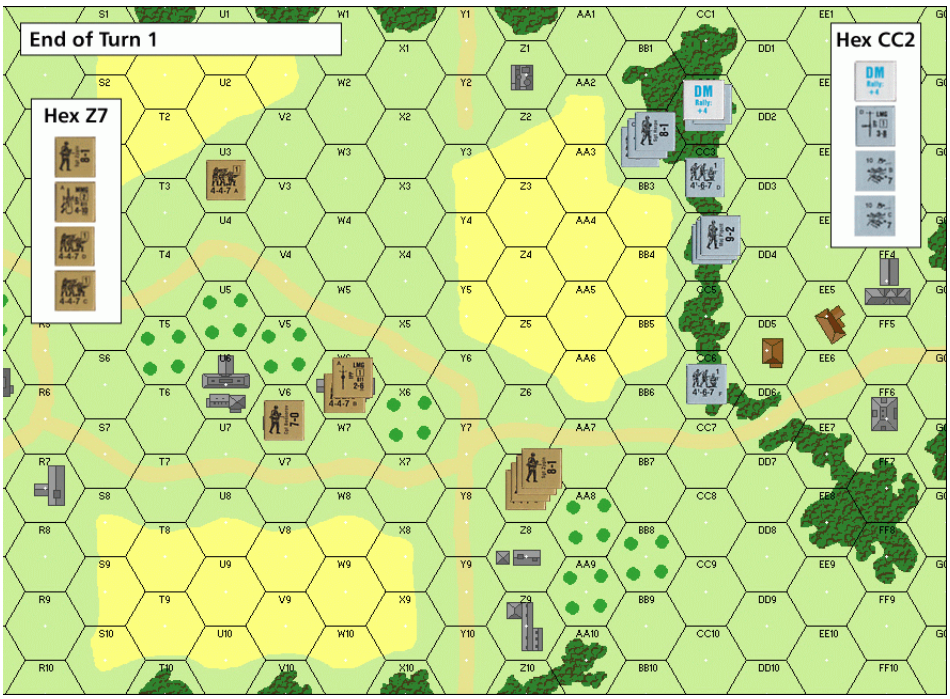

Figure 3.3: End of the first turn

3.3.2.9 Turn 1 Summary

The German attack is off to a shaky start, and the Russians are holding firm.

3.3.3 German Turn 2

3.3.3.1 Rally Phase

The broken German squads, because they are not stacked with a leader, cannot make a rally attempt. But, because this is the German player turn, the Germans may select any one broken unit to make a self-rally attempt, even if that unit does not have self-rally capability.

The Germans select the broken 4-6-7/LMG to make a self-rally attempt. The DRMs are +4 DM, +1 self-rally, –1 woods hex. The DR is 4, so the squad fails to rally (4 + 4 is greater than its broken side Morale of 7). A DR of 3 or less was needed for the self-rally to succeed.

Remove the DM counter.

3.3.3.2 Prep Fire Phase

First shot Given the lack of success the Germans had with their defensive fire, they decide to try a different tactic. The units in yBB2, yCC3, and yCC4 combine to form a multi-hex Fire Group (FG), and fire at yZ7. No leadership DRMs will apply, even though two leaders are present. Leadership can only be used with a multi-hex FG if there is a leader in every hex, and even then only the lowest Leadership Modifier can be used.

The Germans are hoping that sheer FP will give better results than smaller, leader assisted attacks.

The shot is 20/+3, and the DR is 3 (colored dr is 2), resulting in a 3MC.

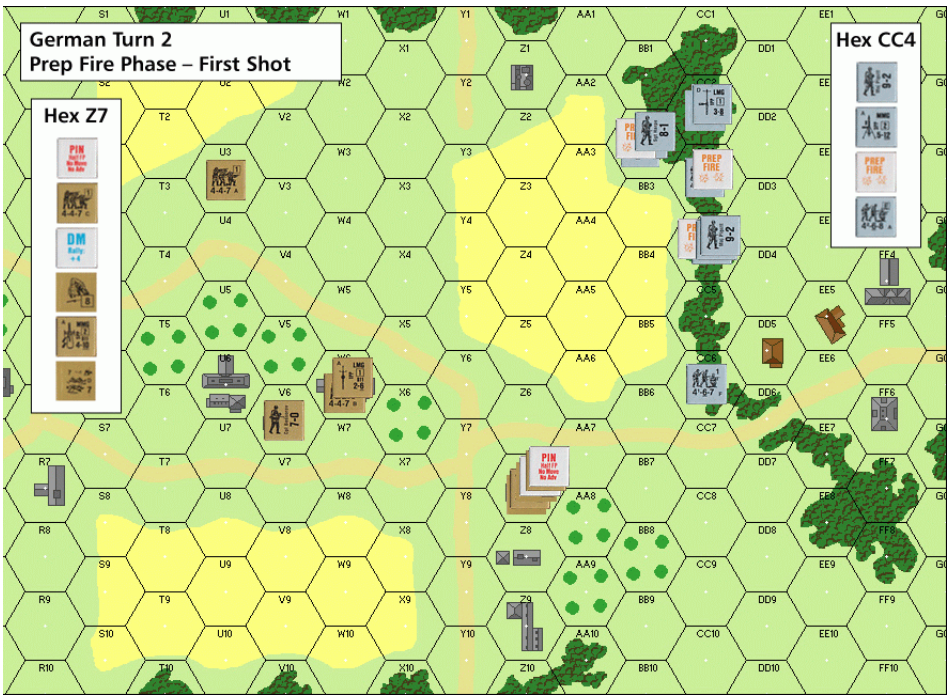

Figure 3.4: The Germans second turn; first shot in the Prep Fire Phase

The 8–1's MC DR is 7, which breaks him (7 + 3 is greater than 8). Flip the 8–1 over to his broken side. His Leadership Modifier cannot be used to assist the Russian squads with their MCs.

The MMG/4-4-7's MC DR is 5, which breaks them. Flip the 4-4-7 over to its broken side.

The 4-4-7's MC DR is 2, which results in no effect.

Now the unbroken 4-4-7 must take a PTC with a +1 DRM, because it is stacked with a leader with a higher Morale value who broke as a result of this attack. This is a Leader Loss Task Check (LLTC, rule 3.2.1). The LLTC does not apply to the broken 4-4-7/MMG squad, because broken units cannot be pinned (except by interdiction during a rout).

The LLTC DR is 8, so the 4-4-7 is pinned.

Place a Prep Fire counter on yBB2 on top of the 4-6-7/LMG, but under the 8–1. Place a Prep Fire counter on yCC3. Place a Prep Fire counter on top of the 4-6-8 squad in yCC4, but under the MMG, because the MMG maintained ROF and can shoot again.

Place a DM counter on the broken units in yZ7, and a Pin counter on the unbroken 4-4-7. The stack in yZ7 now looks like this, from the bottom up: broken 4-4-7, MMG, broken 8–1, DM, 4-4-7, Pin.

Second shot The German MMG retained ROF and can now shoot again. It fires at yW6. The shot is 4/+3 (5 FP, +3 TEM), and the DR is 6 (colored dr is 1), resulting in no effect, but ROF is retained again.

Third shot The German MMG fires again at yW6. The shot is 4/+3, and the DR is 5 (colored dr is 3), resulting in no effect and ROF is lost.

Move the Prep Fire marker in yCC4 on top of the MMG, but under the 9–2 leader.

Fourth shot The 4-6-7 in yCC6 fires at yZ7. The shot is 4/+3, and the DR is 7, resulting in no effect. Place a Prep Fire counter on yCC6.

3.3.3.3 Movement Phase

The German 8–1 leader in yBB2 spends 2 MF to enter yCC2, where he will be able to assist the broken squads in rallying in the next RPh.

3.3.3.4 Defensive Fire Phase

The 4-4-7 in yU3 fires a long range shot at yCC6. The shot is 2/+1, and the DR is 9, resulting in no effect. Place a Final Fire counter on yU3.

The 4-4-7/LMG in yW6 fires at yCC6. The shot is 4/+2 (long range for the squad, normal range for the LMG, +1 hindrance for yX6). The DR is 3 (colored dr is 2), resulting in a 1MC and no ROF. Place a Final Fire counter on yW6.

The 4-6-7's MC DR is 4, resulting in no effect.

The pinned 4-4-7 in yZ7 fires at yCC6. The shot is 2/+1, and the DR is 8 and doubles, so the shot cowers to the 1 FP column and has no effect. Place a Final Fire counter on yZ7.

Remove the Final Fire counters.

3.3.3.5 Advancing Fire Phase

No activity (no units can shoot).

Remove the Prep Fire counters.

3.3.3.6 Rout Phase

The German broken units are not under DM and may not rout.

The Russian broken units may rout, and will use yZ8 as their rout destination. Moving individually, they will spend 2 MF to enter yZ8, and then an additional 2 MF to enter yZ9 (an adjacent building hex). There will be no interdiction.

The broken 4-4-7 must abandon the MMG when it routs. A routing unit will never carry anything that would slow it down, and the MMG's 5PP exceeds the squad's IPC of 3. The MMG is placed at the bottom of the stack in yZ7, to signify that it is not possessed by any unit.

The DM counter moves with the broken units to yZ9.

3.3.3.7 Advance Phase

The 4-6-7/LMG in yBB2 advances into yCC3.

The 4-6-8/MMG/9–2 stack in yCC4 advances into yCC3. The kill stack has been reformed.

The 4-6-7 in yCC6 advances into yBB6. This move, while somewhat dangerous for the Germans, directly threatens the broken Russian units in the north. The Russians will have to respond to it... which means they'll be shooting at the advancing German squad and not at the German kill stack, allowing the kill stack to go about its business with ruthless efficiency (or so the German player hopes, anyway).

3.3.3.8 Close Combat Phase

No activity. Remove the Pin counter.

3.3.4 Russian Turn 2

3.3.4.1 Rally Phase

The 4-4-7 squad in yZ7 attempts to recover the abandoned Russian MMG. The recovery dr is 1, so the MMG is recovered and is placed on top of the 4-4-7.

The broken Russian 8–1 leader in yZ9 has a box around his broken side Morale of 8, which signifies that he has self-rally capability. The Russian leader attempts to self-rally with a +4 DRM (+4 DM, +1 self-rally, –1 building hex). The rally DR is 8, so the rally attempt fails.

Because this is the Russian player's turn, he may also select any one broken Russian unit to attempt a self-rally, so he selects the broken 4-4-7 in yZ9. The DRM is the same as for the leader's self-rally, and the rally DR is 4, which also fails.

The German 8–1 leader in yCC2 will attempt to rally the two broken squads. The DRM for each attempt will be –2 (–1 leadership, –1 woods hex).

The rally DR for the 4-6-7/LMG is 3, so the squad rallies (3 – 2 is less than the squad's broken side Morale of 7). Flip the squad back to its unbroken side.

The rally DR for the 4-6-7 is 4, so that squad rallies as well and is flipped back to its unbroken side.

Remove the DM counter from yZ9.

3.3.4.2 Prep Fire Phase

First shot The 4-4-7 in yU3 fires at long range at yBB6. The shot is 2/+0, and the DR is 5, resulting in a NMC.

The 4-6-7's MC DR is 9, so the squad breaks and is flipped over to its broken side. Place a Prep Fire counter on yU3, and place a DM counter on yBB6.

Second shot With the threat to the broken Russian units neutralized, the 4-4-7/MMG in yZ7 fires at yCC3, as the German kill stack is now the greatest threat. This is a long range shot for the squad, and a normal range shot for the MMG.

The shot is 6/+1, and the DR is 6 (colored dr is 5), resulting in a NMC and no ROF.

The 9–2 leader's MC DR is 6, resulting in no effect. His –2 Leadership Modifier will now apply to the MCs of each of the three squads.

The MMG/4-6-8's MC DR is 3, resulting in no effect.

The LMG/4-6-7's MC DR is 9, so the squad is pinned (9 – 2 is equal to the squad's Morale of 7).

The 4-6-7's MC DR is 8, resulting in no effect.

Note that, without the presence of the leader's –2 DRM, both this squad and the 4-6-7/LMG would have broken.

Place a Prep Fire counter on yZ7. Place a Pin counter on the 4-6-7/LMG and move it to the bottom of the stack (so that the unpinned units are above the Pin counter).

3.3.4.3 Movement Phase

The 4-4-7/LMG in yW6 declares Assault Movement and expends 2 MF to enter yV6 (still skulking).

3.3.4.4 Defensive Fire Phase

The kill stack in yCC3 fires at yZ7. The pinned 4-6-7/LMG will fire at half FP, and the LMG cannot retain ROF regardless of what the colored dr is.

The shot is 16/+1 (16.5 FP, –2 leadership, +3 TEM), and the DR is 6 (colored dr is 4), resulting in a 2MC and no ROF.

The 4-4-7's MC DR is 6, so the squad breaks and is flipped over to its broken side.

Remove the Prep Fire counter from yZ7 (broken units can't move or fire, so the Prep Fire counter no longer has any meaning). Place a DM counter on yZ7. There are no other possible defensive fire shots, so there is no need to place a Final Fire counter on yCC3... you would just immediately remove it.

3.3.4.5 Advancing Fire Phase

The Russian stack in yV6 fires at yBB6. The shot is 2/+1 (4 FP squad cut in half for advancing fire, and cut in half again for long range fire; 2 FP LMG cut in half for advancing fire; +1 hindrance DRM for firing through an orchard hex (yX6).

The DR is 12, which results in no effect on the broken German squad, but the LMG suffers a breakdown and is flipped over to its malfunctioned side. The Russian 7–0 leader prevents cowering... not that it matters any in this case!

Remove the Prep Fire counter.

3.3.4.6 Rout Phase

Both sides have broken units to rout, but the Russians will go first because it is their player turn.

The broken 4-4-7 in yZ7 will abandon the MMG and rout to yZ9, bringing the DM counter with them. Place this squad and DM counter at the bottom of the stack in yZ9, to show that the DM counter only affects this squad.

The broken 4-6-7 in yBB6 routs to yCC6 and yDD5, bringing the DM counter with it.

3.3.4.7 Advance Phase

The 4-4-7/LMG in yV6 advances into yW6.

3.3.4.8 Close Combat Phase

No activity. Remove the Pin counter.

3.3.4.9 Turn 2 Summary

The Russian northern position collapses as the German firepower begins to take a toll. The Russian defense has been reduced to two squads with no support weapons... while the German kill stack may finally make its first full-power shot.

3.3.5 German Turn 3

3.3.5.1 Rally Phase

The Russian 4-4-7 in yW6 attempts to repair the LMG. The repair dr is 2, which fails.

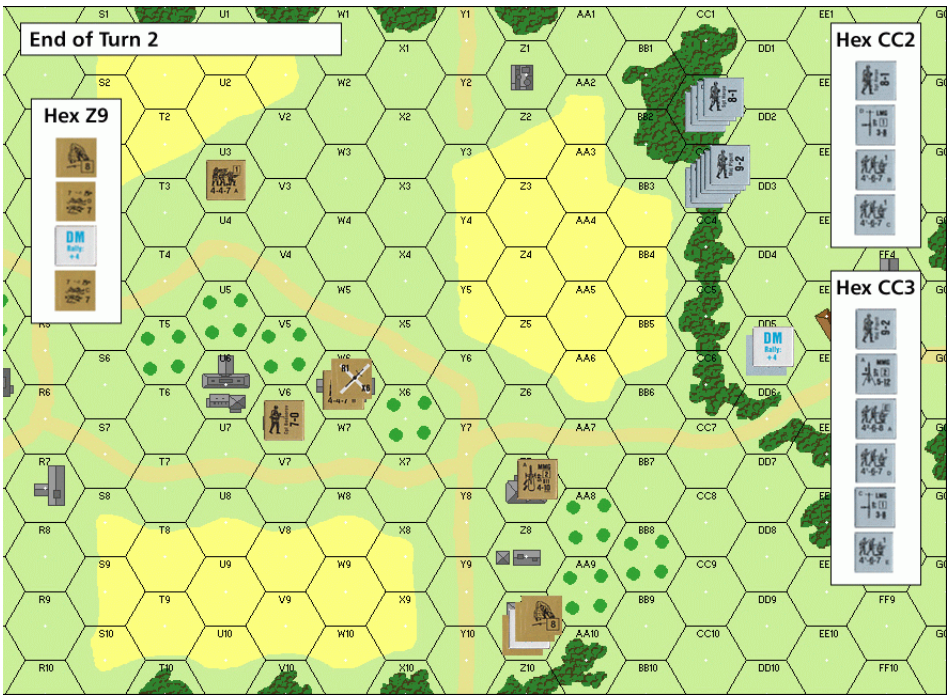

Figure 3.5: Situation after the second turn

The Germans attempt to self-rally the broken 4-6-7 in yDD5. The rally DR is 12, which fails... but the broken squad suffers casualty reduction and is replaced by a broken 1st Line half-squad (HS).

The broken Russian 8–1 leader in yZ9 attempts to self-rally. The DRM will be 0 (+1 self-rally, –1 building hex). The rally DR is 11, which fails.

Neither of the broken Russian squads may attempt to self-rally, because it is not the Russian player turn.

Remove all DM counters.

3.3.5.2 Prep Fire Phase

First shot The German stack in yCC3 fires at yW6. The shot is 20/+1, and the DR is 7 (colored dr is 1), resulting in a 2 MC and ROF for both the LMG and the MMG.

The LMG/4-4-7's MC DR is 4, resulting in no effect.

Second shot Both MGs will fire again at the same target. The shot is 8/+1, and the DR is 7 (colored dr is 2), resulting in a NMC and ROF for the MMG.

The LMG/4-4-7's MC DR is 6, resulting in no effect.

Third shot The MMG will fire again at the same target. The shot is 4/+1, and the DR is 4 (colored dr is 1), resulting in a 1MC and ROF for the MMG.

The LMG/4-4-7's MC DR is 11, so the squad is broken. In addition, 12 (11 + 1) is greater than 10 (Morale 7 + ELR 3), so the broken 1st Line 4-4-7 is replaced by a broken Conscript squad.

Fourth shot The MMG will fire again, this time at yU3. The shot is 4/+1, and the DR is 6 (colored dr is 3), resulting in a PTC and no ROF (the 9–2 leader prevents cowering).

The 4-4-7's PTC DR is 7, resulting in no effect.

Place a Prep Fire counter on yCC3. Place a DM counter on yW6.

3.3.5.3 Movement Phase

The German player is tempted to declare Double Time with the stack in yCC2 and move the entire stack to yX6 at a cost of 8 MF (4 MF + 2 MF Double Time + 2 MF moving with a leader). If they made it, they would then advance into yW6 and the safety of the stone building. There would then be little chance that the Russians could prevent them from capturing yU6 on turn 4 and winning the game.

But the 2/–2 shot they would take from the Russians in yU3 (–1 FFNAM, –1 FFMO) has just enough chance of success to make the German player worry about what happens if things go wrong. He decides to play it safe, instead.

The stack in yCC2 moves together with the leader, expending 6 MF: yDD2-yDD3-yDD4-yEE5-yEE6.

3.3.5.4 Defensive Fire Phase

The 4-4-7 in yU3 fires a long range shot at yCC3. The shot is 2/+1, and the DR is 6 and doubles, so cowering moves the shot to the 1 FP column where there is no effect.

3.3.5.5 Advancing Fire Phase

No activity. Remove the Prep Fire counter.

3.3.5.6 Rout Phase

The broken 4-2-6/LMG in yW6 routs to yV6 and is placed under the 7–0 leader to show that the DM counter affects the squad but not the leader.

3.3.5.7 Advance Phase

The stack in yEE6 advances to yDD6.

3.3.5.8 Close Combat Phase

No activity.

3.3.6 Russian Turn 3

3.3.6.1 Rally Phase

No repair roll is made for the LMG, because the unit that possesses it is broken.

The broken 8–1 leader in yZ9 attempts to self-rally. The rally DR is 5, which succeeds, so he is flipped over to his unbroken side.

The 8–1 now attempts to rally the two broken squads in that hex. The rally DRM is –2 (–1 leadership, –1 building hex), so a DR of 9 or less will succeed.

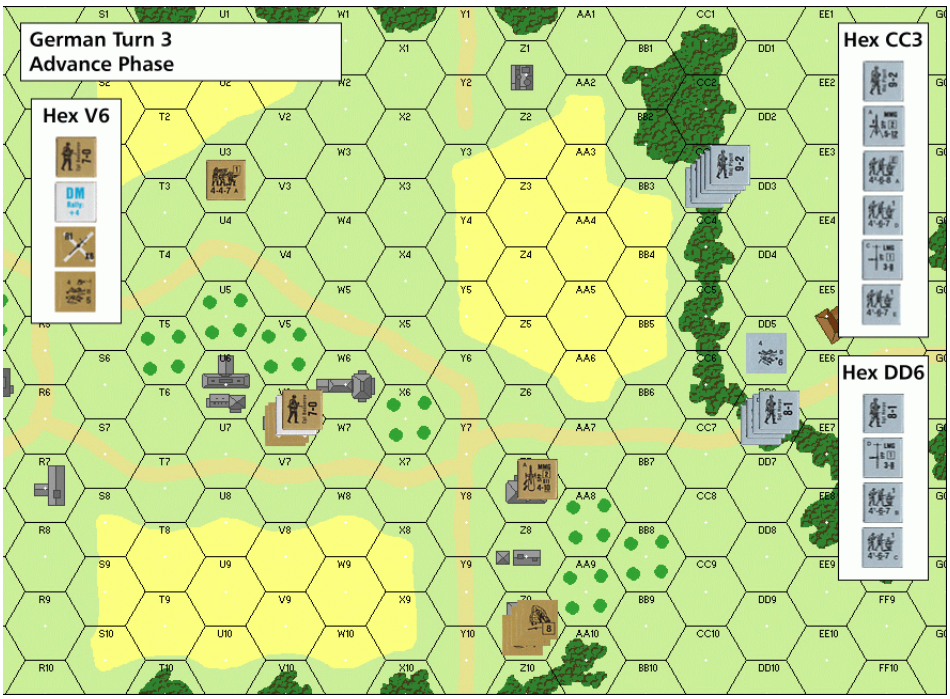

Figure 3.6: The German Advance Phase in the third turn. The stack moved from yEE6 to yDD6

The first rally DR is 7, and the second rally DR is 4, so both 4-4-7 squads are rallied and flipped over to their unbroken sides.

The 7–0 leader attempts to rally the broken 4-2-6 in yV6. The rally DRM is +3 (+4 DM, –1 building hex), so a DR of 3 or less will be needed. The rally DR is 7, which fails. Remove the DM counter.

The Germans cannot attempt to self-rally the broken HS in yDD5, because it is not their player turn.

3.3.6.2 Prep Fire Phase

First shot The 4-4-7 in yU3 fires a long range shot at yCC3. The shot is 2/+1, and the DR is 6, which results in no effect. Place a Prep Fire counter on yU3.

Second shot The stack in yZ9 fires a long range shot at yDD6.

The players pause to make a LOS check, in order to count the hindrances from the orchard hexes correctly. Both stacks are temporarily moved out of the way, and a string is stretched from the center dot of yZ9 to the center dot of yDD6. The LOS check shows that the LOS passes through yAA9 and yBB8, but it does not pass through yAA8 (although it comes very close!), so there will be a +2 Hindrance DRM on this shot.

Note also that the woods hex +1 TEM will also apply, even though the LOS follows the road depiction in yDD6 and never touches the woods depiction. The only time that the road would cancel the +1 TEM is if the Germans were fired upon during their MPh while moving along the road, and even then only if the LOS did not touch the woods depiction.

The shot is 4/+2 (–1 leadership, +2 orchard hindrance, +1 TEM), and the DR is 9, resulting in no effect. Place a Prep Fire counter on yZ9.

3.3.6.3 Movement Phase

No activity.

3.3.6.4 Defensive Fire Phase

First shot The stack in yCC3 fires at yU3 (long range for the squads). The shot is 12/+1 (14 FP), and the DR is 2 (colored dr is 1), resulting in a K/3 and ROF for both MGs.

The 4-4-7 squad is replaced by a 2-3-7 HS. The 2-3-7's MC DR is 6, which breaks the HS (6 + 3 is greater than its Morale of 7). Flip the 2-3-7 to its broken side, remove the Prep Fire counter from yU3, and place a DM counter on yU3.

Second shot The MGs in yCC3 will fire again, this time at yZ9. The Russian player immediately demands a LOS check.

A string is stretched from the center dot of yCC3 to the center dot of yZ9. The string does not pass through the woods depiction in yCC4, so a LOS does exist. If the LOS had been blocked by the woods in yCC4, the German player would still have to roll for the shot, even though it could not possibly hit anything: the roll would be necessary to see if the MGs continue to retain ROF... or if they possibly suffer a breakdown. (Few things in ASL are as depressing as breaking your MG on a shot that had no LOS in the first place!)

The shot is 8/+2 (–2 leadership, +1 orchard, +3 TEM), and the DR is 11, resulting in no effect and no ROF. Place a Final Fire counter on yCC3.

Third shot The stack in yDD6 fires at yZ9. The shot is 8/+4 (–1 leadership, +2 orchard, +3 TEM), and the DR is 7 (colored dr is 5), resulting in no effect and no ROF.

Remove the Final Fire counter.

3.3.6.5 Advancing Fire Phase

No activity. Remove the Prep Fire counter.

3.3.6.6 Rout Phase

The Russian player declines to rout the broken 2-3-7 HS, since the stone building it occupies is by far the safest place for it.

3.3.6.7 Advance Phase

The stack in yZ9 advances into yZ8.

3.3.6.8 Close Combat Phase

No activity.

3.3.6.9 Turn 3 Summary

The Russian position continues to deteriorate. The only good news for the Russians was their northern force rallying, but they are way out of position and drawing a ton of German fire. The Germans are now ready to leave the cover of the tree line and begin the actual assault.

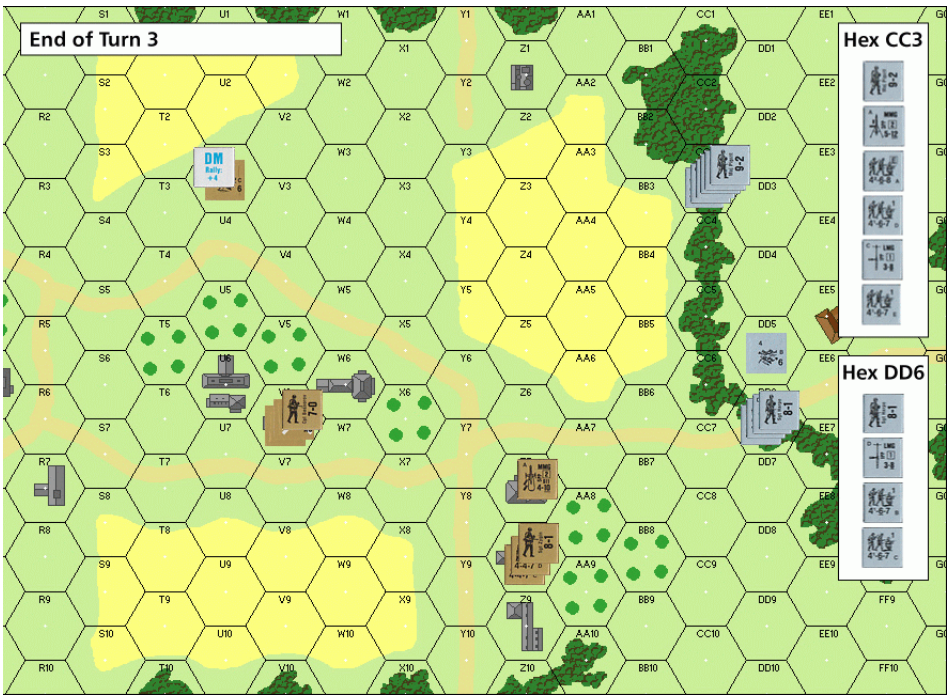

Figure 3.7: Situation at the end of the third turn

3.3.7 German Turn 4

3.3.7.1 Rally Phase

The Germans attempt to self-rally the HS in yDD5. The rally DR is 7, which fails.

The Russian 7–0 leader attempts to rally the 4-2-6 in yV6. The rally DR is 7, which fails.

Remove the DM counter.

3.3.7.2 Prep Fire Phase

No activity.

The Russian player knows he's in trouble when the Germans stop Prep Firing...

3.3.7.3 Movement Phase

First move The German player announces that the stack in yDD6 will move as a stack with the 8–1 leader (6 MF)... and use Double Time (8 MF)... and use the road bonus (9 MF)! Place a Counter Exhausted (CX) counter on the German stack.

The stack moves yCC7-yBB6-yAA7-yZ6-yY7 (5 MF expended so far) at which point the Russian player announces a Defensive First Fire shot against them by the stack in yZ8. The Russians must shoot: the German stack's 9 MF will take them all the way to yU7, and then nothing can stop them from advancing into yU6 to win the game.

The shot is 8/–3 (–1 leadership, –1 FFNAM, –1 FFMO), and the DR is 11, resulting in a NMC.

The 8–1's MC DR is 8, so he is pinned and cannot assist the squads in their MCs.

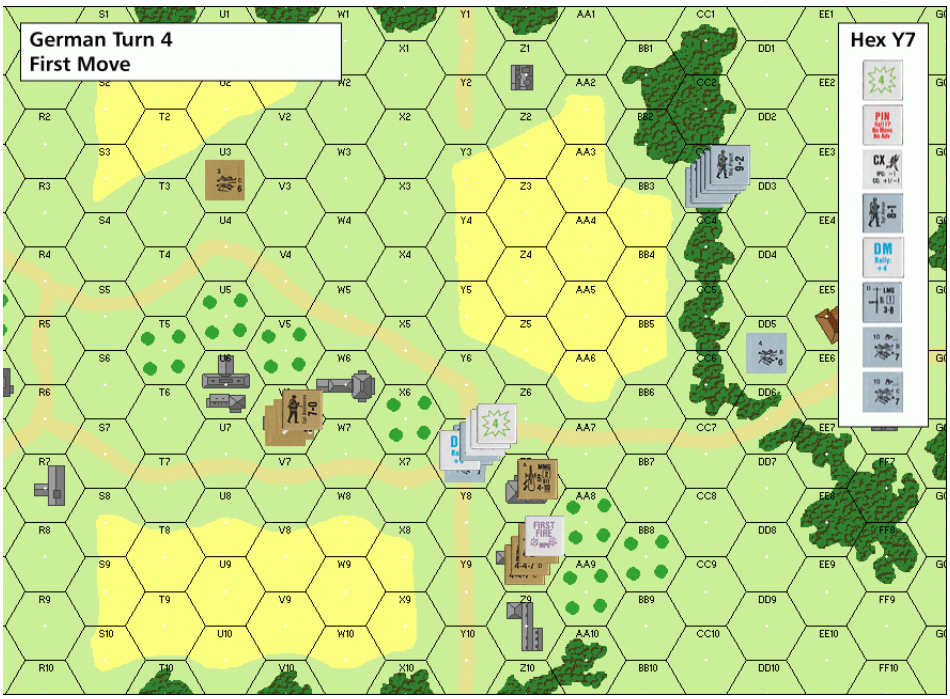

Figure 3.8: German Movement Phase, first move; the Germans move the stack from yDD6 to yU7 but get stopped in yY7 where the Russian player announces Defensive First Fire and is able to pin the leader and break the squads.

The LMG/4-6-7's MC DR is 10, breaking them. Flip the squad over to its broken side.

The 4-6-7's MC DR is 8, breaking them. Flip the squad over to its broken side.

Place a DM counter on top of the two broken squads, and a Pin counter on top of the 8–1 leader. Place a 4 Residual FP counter on yY7. Place a First Fire counter on the Russian stack in yZ8.

Second move The stack in yCC3 will move as a stack and declares Double Time for 8 MF. Place a CX counter on the stack. The CX counter lowers the 4-6-8's IPC to 2PP, which is one less than the MMG's 3PP, so the stack will only have 7 MF if they bring the MMG along. The 9–2 cannot assist the 4-6-8 in carrying the MMG, because his IPC is lowered by the CX counter as well, from 1PP to 0PP.

The stack expends 7 MF to move to yV5. Place a DM counter on the adjacent broken 4-2-6 in yV6.

The Russians in yZ8 cannot use Subsequent First Fire to fire on the German stack as it moves to yV5 because the Germans in yY7 are closer. The first German stack sacrificed themselves to draw the Russian fire, giving the second stack a clear path to the objective.

Forcing the defender to fire at a nearby unit in order to let units further away move freely is a very common, and very powerful, tactic in ASL.

The Russians concede at this point, as there is nothing to prevent the Germans from advancing into yU6 during the APh to win the game.

3.4 Post-Game Analysis

This scenario ended up being a lot more dependent upon Prep Fire than I thought it would be, and I certainly didn't expect it to end with the entire German force madly charging across the map in Double Time! But that's

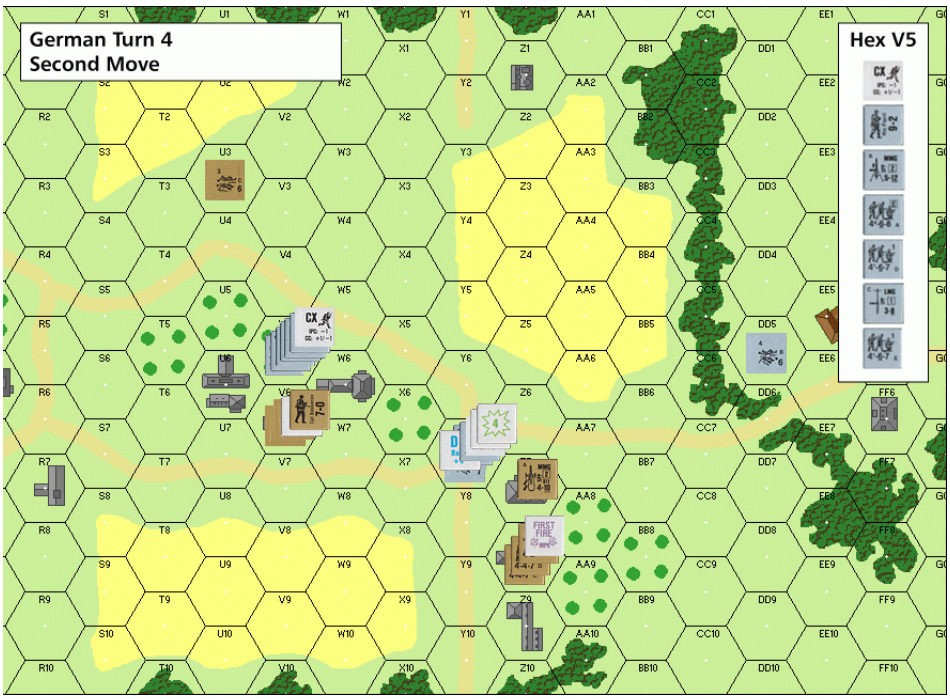

Figure 3.9: German Movement Phase, second move; the Germans move the stack in yCC3 to yV5 using Double Time.

part of the appeal of the game: when you sit down to play ASL/ASLSK, you can never know for sure what's going to happen!

On turn three, the Russians could have skipped their Prep Fire to Assault Move into yZ8, and then advanced into yZ7 in their APh. This would put them into position to attempt to recover the MMG during the first RPh of turn four, and it would also have allowed them to use PBF against any Germans running along the road. But the German answer to this would have been to pound them with a clear Prep Fire shot from the kill stack in yCC3, which probably would have broken them and allowed the other German stack to run along the road and win the game anyway.

On turn four, the Russians could have tried to stop both German stacks by splitting their defensive fire: one 4-4-7 firing at the 8–1 stack on the road (a 4/–2 shot) and the other 4-4-7 with 8–1 leader firing at the 9–2 stack (a long range 2/–3 shot), although judging the LOS to the 9–2 stack would have been tricky for the Russians (a LOS check can only be made after a shot is announced).

But the Russians would have needed some luck to stop both German stacks with these shots, and I was more interested in clearly demonstrating the technique of sacrificing a unit to draw the enemy's defensive fire.

I think that the Germans could win this scenario in three turns, although it would require near perfect play on their part, and no bad luck... so I think that four turns would be the proper time limit. It's possible that it might be a little too hard to win as the Russians with a four turn time limit. This could only be determined for certain by playing the scenario several more times. If the Russians do need a bit of help, you could try adding another 4-4-7, or dropping the German 8–1 leader back to an 8–0.

Having now played this scenario once, I can see ways to improve both the German attack and the Russian defense, starting by changing their set-ups, so I can't claim that the scenario was particularly well-played. But I hope that it will have given you an understanding of how the various elements and rules of ASL all come together in the course of a game. You should now be able to play, and enjoy, any of the scenarios in ASLSK #1.

Chapter 4

Ordnance and the To Hit Process

This chapter assumes that the reader has read, and understood, all of the previous chapters. Rules and concepts discussed in the earlier chapters will be used here with little or no explanation.

This chapter will primarily cover ASLSK #2, although the relevant parts of ASLSK #3 will occasionally be mentioned in passing. I think it's a little easier to explain Ordnance if one does not have to pretend that tanks do not exist.

In ASLSK #1, all non-CC attacks are resolved in the same way: the attack is announced, the FP and DRMs are calculated, and then a DR is made on the appropriate column of the IFT to find the result of the attack. All such attacks automatically hit their targets (assuming a LOS exists).

The introduction of Ordnance in ASLSK #2 brings with it a whole new method of resolving attacks. These weapons are relatively slow firing, large caliber weapons that must first make a 'To Hit' (TH) DR to see if they have hit their target. Only if a hit is scored do they then make a second DR to find the result of the hit.

TH DRs have a large number of possible DRMs, as listed on the back of the To Hit Chart. Many of these DRMs are the same ones you have been using in resolving small arms attacks on the IFT, while others are specific to Ordnance. The long list of DRMs appears daunting, but it is not really difficult to learn: simply check through the list, top to bottom, every time you fire Ordnance. While your first attempts at firing Ordnance will be slow going, with repetition the process will speed up considerably.

The introduction of Ordnance brings other changes as well. Some of these weapons may have multiple types of ammunition to choose from when making an attack, including Smoke, White Phosphorous (WP), High Explosive (HE), Armor Piercing (AP), High Explosive Anti-Tank (HEAT), Armor Piercing Composite Rigid (APCR), and Armor Piercing Discarding Sabot (APDS) shells. Ordnance can appear either as a Support Weapon (SW) on a 1/2" counter, or as a Gun on a large 5/8" counter. Guns must be manned by specially trained crews to fire at full effectiveness, so MMC crew counters have been added to the counter mix, and Guns also introduce the concept of facing: when a Gun is placed on the map, it must be positioned so as to indicate the direction it is aimed.

4.1 Ordnance: SWs

Ordnance that appears as SW are small weapons that are commonly carried into battle by the soldiers themselves. Their use is very similar to that of MGs: they can be used by any unit, they have a weight expressed as a PP number, some can retain ROF and thus possibly fire several times in the same fire phase, they can suffer breakdowns, and some can be repaired if they do malfunction.

SW Ordnance introduced in ASLSK #2 includes Bazookas (BAZ), Panzerschrecks (PSK), and Light Mortars. ASLSK #3 adds Anti-Tank Rifles (ATR), PIATs, and Panzerfausts (PF). Panzerfausts are a special case in that they were used in such numbers that they are treated as an inherent SW and never appear as separate SW counters.

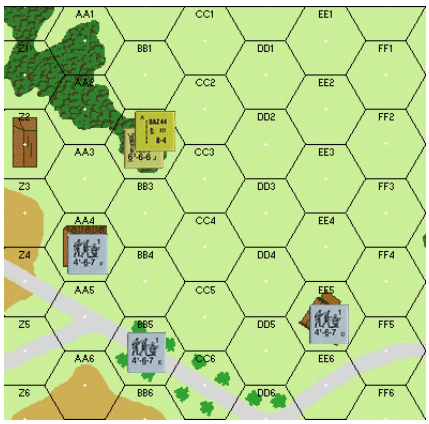

Figure 4.1: Ordnance example set up.

4.1.1 Bazookas & Panzerschrecks

Place the following units on board w:

wBB2: American 6-6-6, BAZ 44
wAA4: German 4-6-7
wBB5: German 4-6-7
wEE5: German 4-6-7

The BAZ 44 (the model introduced in 1944) has a FP of 8 and a range of 4. The X11 breakdown number reflects the limited amount of ammunition that would be carried, rather than just the weapon's mechanical reliability. The back of the counter shows the BAZ 44's To Hit table: for each possible range from 0 to 4, the corresponding To Hit number (TH#) is given. Shots longer than range 4 are not allowed.

BAZs, PIATs, PSKs, and PFs fire HEAT rounds. These weapons were not intended to be used against infantry, so no HE rounds were ever produced for them. They are collectively referred to as Shaped Charge Weapons (SCW) — 'shaped charge' being a more generic name for HEAT — and they are also classified as Light Anti-Tank Weapons (LATW) along with the ATR.

HEAT rounds produced a special explosive effect that was designed to punch a hole in a tank's armor plating. Such rounds could be used effectively against infantry only under certain conditions. Therefore, the only non-tank targets that SCWs can be fired at are buildings and Guns.

In our example, the Americans in wBB2 can fire their BAZ 44 at wAA4 because it contains a building. The range is 2 hexes, so the basic TH# is 8 (from the back of the BAZ 44 counter). The TEM of the target hex, +2 for a wooden building, applies as a DRM to the TH DR. The shot would thus be TH8/+2, so a DR of 6 or less is required to score a hit.

If a hit occurs, a second DR is then made on the IFT to find the result of the hit. This IFT DR would be made using the BAZ 44's FP of 8 with no DRMs at all. An 8/+0 roll on the IFT has a good chance of causing damage: a DR 7 gives a 1MC.

If Ordnance shots are compared to regular shots, they are both less effective and more effective. They are less effective, because if they do not score a hit, nothing happens to the target. They are more effective, because if they do score a hit, the full FP of the attack is applied to the target with no DRMs: Hindrance and TEM DRMs only make a hit harder to obtain... they do not reduce the effectiveness of a hit when it occurs.

When Ordnance is fired using the To Hit process, the possibility exists for a Critical Hit to occur, which can greatly increase the amount of damage done. Whenever a SCW rolls an original DR 2 on a TH roll, it scores a Critical Hit (CH, rule 6.1). A CH doubles the FP of the attack, and the target hex TEM applies as a negative DRM.

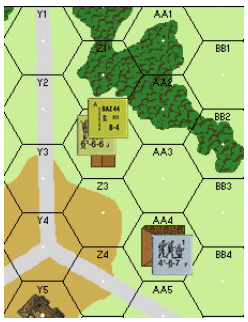

Figure 4.2: Alternate Ordnance example set up.

If the Americans had scored a CH in firing the BAZ 44 at wAA4, the IFT DR would be 16/–2... giving a 3MC on a DR of 7!

Because a CH reverses the normal TEM, suffering a CH while in a stone building (–3 DRM) is more dangerous to you than suffering one while in a wooden building (–2 DRM). One example of why this occurs would be that while a stone building normally offers much better protection than a wooden building, if a section of a stone building is blown into your troops, they will likely suffer more severe injuries from the flying pieces of heavy stone than they would from flying pieces of wood in a wooden building.

Ordnance can never be part of a Fire Group (FG), so the American squad must fire its inherent 6 FP separately, even if they fire at the same target as the BAZ.

The BAZ cannot be fired at wBB5, because that hex does not contain a building, Gun, or tank.

The BAZ could be fired at wEE5 at a range of 4 hexes, but the shot would be TH4/+2. This is a really bad shot, because a breakdown is more likely than a hit: only a DR 2 will score a hit, but a DR 11 or a DR 12 will result in a permanent breakdown.

Now add an American 8–1 leader to the stack in wBB2. This leader could be used to direct the BAZ shot, giving it a greater chance to hit. With leader direction, a BAZ shot at wAA4 would be TH8/+1 (+2 TEM, –1 leadership). If a hit is obtained, the IFT roll would remain 8/+0, because leadership does not affect the IFT roll for either normal hits or CHs.

Remember, however, that a leader may direct the fire of only one unit or FG per player turn. If the leader directs the BAZ, he cannot be used to direct the squad's 6 FP shot.

Remove the 8–1 leader, and place the 6-6-6 squad and BAZ 44 in wZ2, which contains a wooden building.

If the American squad now fires the BAZ at wAA4, they must either accept a +2 TH DRM, or suffer a backblast attack. If they fired without the +2 TH DRM and rolled a DR 5 (colored dr of 3), they would score a hit (5 + 2 is less than the TH# of 8), but they would also suffer a 1MC themselves from the backblast (3 on the 1 FP column of the IFT). Had the squad accepted the +2 TH DRM they would have avoided the backblast attack, but the shot would have missed.

Firing a rocket-propelled projectile from within a building was extremely dangerous to the occupants of that building, and would only be attempted in desperate circumstances (or by poorly trained troops who didn't know any better). If you choose to accept the +2 TH DRM, what happens is that the soldier with the bazooka actually steps outside the building, fires a quick shot, and then ducks back into the building to reload. Running outside and back for each shot means there is less time for careful aiming, so a +2 DRM is applied.

Note that the TH DRM lists in both ASLSK #2 and ASLSK #3 incorrectly assign the backblast DRM to LATWs (PIATs and ATRs have no backblast), and the definition of LATW in those two rulebooks is not quite correct either (ATRs do not have their own To Hit tables). BAZs, PSKs, and PFs are the only weapons affected by backblast.

4.1.2 Light Mortars

If you were to go to an ASL forum and post the question: 'What is the least useful weapon in ASL?' I think a lot of players would nominate the Light Mortars.

If you changed the question to: 'What is the most annoying weapon in ASL?' the Light Mortars would probably be the overwhelming choice.

Light Mortars combine a high ROF with a weak attack, a combination that often proves frustrating to the players. Whenever Light Mortars are present, you'll see seemingly endless mortar shots which, for the most part, will have no effect. Add to this the fact that Light Mortars are some of the heaviest SWs in the game, so they really slow down your troops' movement, and you have a weapon that many players will readily describe as 'useless.' What are Light Mortars good for? They are effective against units moving in Open Ground, and they are especially effective against units in woods hexes... but a competent opponent will never willingly give your Light Mortars those kinds of shots. And all mortars benefit from a CH far more than other weapons (because their normal attack is so weak), but, considering that you are as likely to roll a breakdown as a CH, that's not exactly a significant advantage.

Light Mortars were used in such quantities that they should be as common as MGs in ASL/ASLSK scenarios, but you will find that they appear only occasionally, which is a clear indication that players and scenario designers alike often find them to be more trouble than they are worth. Even ASLSK #2, a module that is all about Guns and mortars, only uses Light Mortars in three of its eight scenarios.

ASL's portrayal of Light Mortars as weapons of limited effectiveness would seem to be pretty accurate: although in real life they were widely used, they were also seen as being rather ineffective weapons, and many countries steadily reduced their use of Light Mortars as the war progressed.

There are a number of special rules that apply to all attacks by mortars, whether they are large mortars (Guns) or Light Mortars (SWs). The actual use of mortars in combat, and the ways in which they differ significantly from other Ordnance, will therefore be covered later, in the discussion of Gun-sized mortars.

For now, here are the main differences between Light Mortars and the larger, Gun-sized mortars.

Light Mortars:

- Do not require a special crew.
- Do not have a facing.
- Can have their attack directed by a leader.
- Can be carried by infantry like any other SW.

4.1.3 Ordnance: Guns

Weapons that use the larger 5/8" counters are called Guns. These are large weapons that are normally transported to a battle by being towed behind a vehicle (example: an anti-tank gun), or by being dismantled and carried within a vehicle (example: a large mortar). Once they are set up on the battlefield, they either don't move at all, or they can only be moved slowly by infantry units that attempt to manhandle them.

Guns are classified by function: anti-tank gun (AT), infantry howitzer (INF), artillery (ART), anti-aircraft gun (AA), and mortar (MTR). These Gun types are always found in the upper righthand corner of the Gun counter.

A Gun's caliber (shell diameter in millimeters) is found in the lower lefthand corner. The Gun caliber may include a suffix that indicates the Gun's barrel length. Barrel length is important, because longer barrels fire shells at a higher velocity. Guns with higher velocity are usually more accurate, and their AP rounds will be more deadly against tanks.

The barrel length suffixes are not actually used in ASLSK, because the barrel length effects are already calculated into the To Hit charts that ASLSK uses. But for those who might be curious about what the various suffixes mean, here is a list showing the designations for 75mm guns of each length:

75* short barrel/low velocity

75 normal
75L long barrel/high velocity
75LL very long barrel/very high velocity

All four of these 75mm guns would have identical HE attacks, because HE power is based on the size of the shell and not its velocity. But they will have vastly different AP capabilities: a 75LL is devastatingly effective when firing AP rounds at enemy tanks, while a 75* is so ineffective with AP that it might not even be supplied with any AP rounds!

All of the Guns included in ASLSK #2 have a Breakdown Number of B12. If a Gun rolls an original TH DR of 12, it malfunctions. A Gun that malfunctions is either flipped over to reveal the R and X numbers that will be used in subsequent repair attempts, or, if its back side is labeled 'limbered,' it is marked with a Gun Malfunction counter instead. Note that some of the Guns that can fire while limbered do have a Breakdown Number of B11 while in that mode, but the ASLSK rules do not allow the use of limbered Guns.

Gun counters, with the notable exception of mortars, do not have any range printed on them. In game terms, the range of most Guns is essentially infinite... the American 57L AT Gun, for example, has an maximum range of nearly 250 hexes!

We'll now take a close look at how each of the different types of Guns function in ASLSK.

4.1.4 Anti-Tank Guns

AT Guns were the primary defense armies had against enemy tanks. Some of the smaller caliber AT Guns may not have HE ammunition available, as noted by a black line underneath their caliber number.

Place the following units on board w:

wR6: German 2-2-8 crew, 75L AT
wU4: American 6-6-6
wV8: American 6-6-6

All Guns (weapons depicted on large 5/8" counters) must be possessed by specially trained crews in order to fire at full effectiveness. Crews are HS-sized MMC that depict two kneeling soldiers. Crews are always Elite, have the ability to self-rally, and are not subject to ELR. They can operate any Gun or SW without penalty. Their inherent FP is weak and short-ranged because they are not as heavily armed as regular infantry, and they have little experience in fighting as regular infantry.

The AT Gun in wR6 is placed on top of the crew counter, to show that the crew possesses the Gun. But Guns must also be placed to show the direction the Gun is facing. This is done by rotating the Gun counter until the Gun barrel points at one specific corner of the hex. This facing direction is noted by listing the two hexes that are adjacent to that corner.

In our example, place the Gun in wR6, on top of the crew, and facing wS6-wS7 (that is, the Gun barrel is pointing directly at wT6, wV6, wX6, etc.). The Gun is said to be pointing at hexspine wS6-wS7. A hexspine is the common side shared by two adjacent hexes, and it can also be called a hexside.

A Gun's facing defines its Covered Arc (CA), the area in which it may fire. In our example, the 75L's CA includes the hex rows wS6-wDD0, wS7-wZ10, and all hexes in between these two rows. The 75L could fire at, to give just a few examples, wU5, wU7, or wV8. But wU4 is outside its CA... to fire at wU4 the crew would have to turn the 75L to face the wR5-wS6 hexspine prior to the shot, and suffer a penalty TH DRM for doing so. Likewise, to fire at wS8, the 75L would have to be turned to face wR7-wS7.

To fire the 75L at the American squad in wV8 at a range of 4 hexes, the Infantry Target Type (ITT) section of the To Hit Chart is consulted. This chart shows that, at a range of 3-6 hexes, the 75L's basic TH# is 8, with a CH occurring on a final TH DR of 3 or less. The shot would be TH8/+3 (+3 TEM for the stone building); a CH cannot occur on this shot, because the final TH DR will be at least 5 (lowest possible DR 2 + 3 TEM).

A German leader in wR6 could not direct the firing of the Gun. The 75L does, however, have a ROF of 2, which works exactly like a MG's ROF: if the colored dr of the TH DR is 1 or 2, the Gun can shoot again.

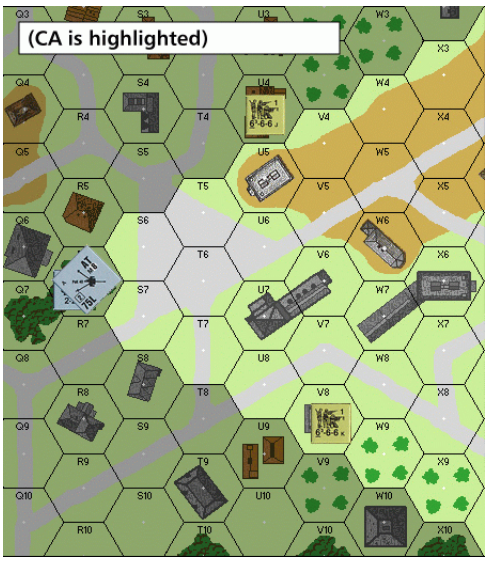

Figure 4.3: The Covered Arc of the 75L Gun in wR6 is highlighted.

If the 75L scores a hit on wV8, the resulting IFT DR would be 12/+0. The 12 FP value can be found in two places: in the FP column on the To Hit Chart, and in column headings of the IFT itself. The 12 FP column on the IFT includes the designation '/70' to show that Guns with a caliber of at least 70mm will use this column. A Gun would have to be at least 80mm to use the 16 FP column.

After firing at wV8, regardless of whether or not a hit was scored, place a 1/2" –1 Acquired Target counter in wV8 (rule 6.10). If there is more than one Gun present, make sure you select an Acquired Target counter with the same letter designation as the firing Gun, so that there will not be any confusion as to which Acquired Target counter belongs to which Gun. The next shot the Gun takes at this target will receive a –1 DRM to the TH DR, after which the Acquired Target counter will be flipped over to its –2 side.

Thus, the first shot made by a Gun at a specific target will have no Acquired Target DRM; the second shot at that specific target will have a –1 Acquired Target DRM; and all subsequent shots at that specific target will have a –2 Acquired Target DRM. The Acquired Target counter can follow the target as it moves, as long as it remains in the Gun's LOS.

If the 75L fired at wV8 with a –2 Acquired Target counter in place, the shot would be TH8/+1 (–2 Acquired Target, +3 TEM), and now a CH could occur: DR 2 + 1 = final DR 3.

If the 75L decides to fire at wU4, it must change its CA as part of the firing process. After announcing the shot, remove any existing Acquired Target counter for that Gun that might be on a previous target. Turn the 75L counter to face wR5-wS6, a change of one hexside. This CA change will result in a +6 DRM to the shot: +3 DRM to change CA by one hexside, doubled because the Gun is in a woods or building hex. If the Gun had changed its CA by two hexsides, the DRM would be +8 (+3 and +1 doubled); and by three hexsides, +10 (+3 and +1 and +1 doubled).

The shot is therefore a TH8/+8 (+6 CA change, +2 TEM). The Gun would have no chance of scoring a hit, but it would still place a –1 Acquired Target counter after the shot. The Gun's ROF would be lowered from 2 to 1 because of the CA change. The lowered ROF and CA DRM only apply to this shot. Subsequent shots, assuming no further CA changes are made, would have no CA DRM and full ROF, so the next shot at wU4 would be a TH8/+1 (–1 Acquired Target, +2 TEM) with a ROF of 2.

Note that, even though the shot had no chance to score a hit, a TH DR must still be made to see if the Gun retains ROF or suffers a breakdown. The Germans could also have chosen to not fire the Gun at all, thereby allowing the Gun to freely change its CA at the end of the fire phase with no risk of a breakdown... but not firing

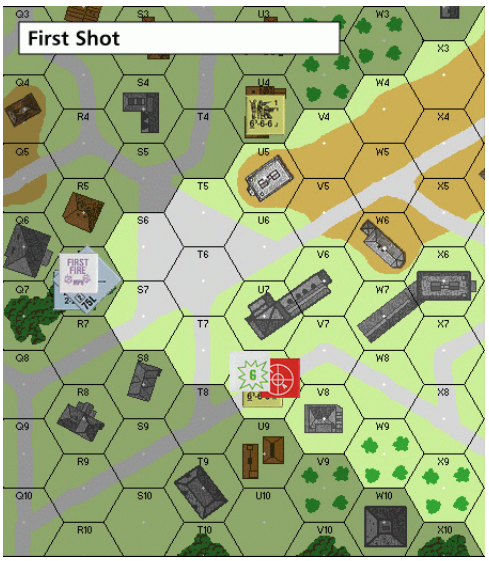

Figure 4.4: First shot of the 75L Gun in wR6 at the American squad that just moved to wU8.

would also mean that they would lose any chance for multiple shots and would not place an Acquired Target counter.

Gaining acquisition greatly increases the chance of scoring a hit on future shots, so it is common to see Guns taking shots that have little or no chance of hitting, just so they can place or flip an Acquired Target counter.

Guns handle Defensive First Fire shots somewhat differently than do personnel units. A Gun may First Fire until it loses ROF, and then it may make only one additional Intensive Fire shot. Turn the 75L's facing back to wS6-wS7 and we'll see how this works:

The American squad in wV8 declares normal movement and expends 1 MF to enter the Open Ground hex wU8, at which point the Germans decide to take a First Fire shot at them. The shot is TH8/–2 (–1 FFNAM, –1 FFMO), and the DR is 8 (colored dr is 4), which scores a hit but ROF is lost. The IFT DR at 12/+0 is then 9, resulting in a NMC.

The squad's MC DR is 5, resulting in no effect. Place a First Fire counter on the 75L, a –1 Acquired Target counter on the American squad, and a 6 Residual FP counter on wU8. Note that if the 75L had retained ROF, or if no hit had been obtained in the first place, no Residual FP counter would be placed.

The American squad now expends another MF to enter wT7. The –1 Acquired Target counter moves with it, but the 6 Residual FP counter remains in wU8. The Germans declare an Intensive Fire shot in order to fire again. Place an Intensive Fire counter on the 75L. Guns that use Intensive Fire must add a +2 DRM to their TH DR, and their B# is reduced by 2. The 75L will thus have a B10 for this shot, and the normal B12 becomes a X12: if the original TH DR is 12, the Gun suffers a permanent breakdown that cannot be repaired.

The Intensive Fire shot at a range of 2 hexes is a TH9/–1 (+2 Intensive Fire, –1 Acquired Target, –1 FFNAM, –1 FFMO), and the TH DR is 5, resulting in a hit. The IFT DR at 12/+0 is 4, resulting in a 3MC.

The squad's MC DR is 6, which breaks the squad. Flip the First Fire counter over to the Final Fire side, flip the American squad over to its broken side and place a DM counter on it, and flip the –1 Acquired Target counter over to its –2 side. Intensive Fire shots never leave Residual FP.

The German 75L managed to stop one American squad, but now it cannot fire again in this MPh (or in the following DFPh). The American squad in wU4 could move to wR5 with nothing to fear other than a couple of rather feeble 2/+1 FPF shots from the Gun's crew, and then it will be in position to hit the crew with PBF Advancing Fire followed by advancing into wR6 for CC and/or to capture the Gun. Even if the 75L had broken

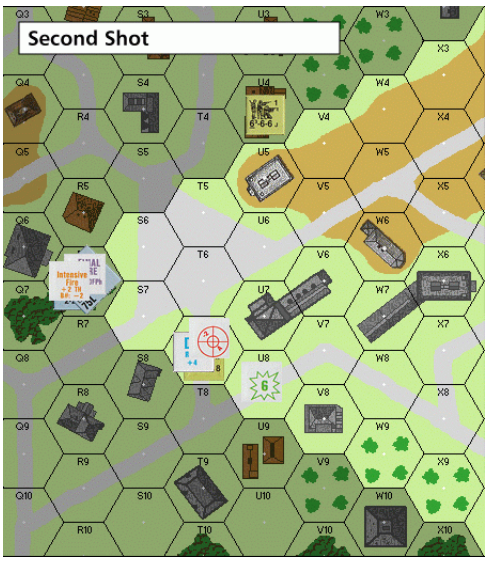

Figure 4.5: Second shot of the 75L Gun in wR6 at the American squad that just moved to wT7.

the squad with its first shot, the second squad would still likely make it to wR5, given the TH DRM penalties that result from changing the CA and possibly having to use Intensive Fire if the first shot did not retain ROF.

Guns are powerful weapons, but they are vulnerable if they are not protected by nearby friendly infantry.

When a Gun uses Intensive Fire, it is desperately firing shells at a faster than normal pace, with a corresponding decrease in accuracy and an increased chance of suffering a breakdown. But the mechanics of the Intensive Fire rule don't seem to make much sense at first glance.

For example, a Gun fires in the Prep Fire Phase, does not retain ROF, and then declares Intensive Fire to take one more shot. If the Gun is firing faster in order to have time to take an extra shot, why doesn't the Gun have to declare this at the start of the Prep Fire Phase, before it knows the results of its normal fire? And why don't the Intensive Fire penalties apply to all of the shots in that fire phase, instead of only to the last one?

These questions become even more interesting when you realize that this is exactly how Intensive Fire worked in original Squad Leader system (rule 70 in Cross of Iron): a Gun had to declare Intensive Fire at the start of the fire phase, and the penalties applied to every shot it took in that fire phase.

Squad Leader's Intensive Fire rule is very logical in theory, but it had major problems in practice. Applying the breakdown and To Hit penalties to every shot in the fire phase meant that sometimes the overall chance of scoring a hit was actually reduced when using Intensive Fire, and the overall chance of breaking the Gun was extremely high. Squad Leader (SL) players were apparently reluctant to ever use Intensive Fire.

The ASL version of Intensive Fire solves these problems. By applying the penalties only to the Gun's last shot, the rule insures that Intensive Fire always gives a Gun an increased overall chance of hitting a target, but with less accuracy and more chance of breakdown than a Gun that takes the same number of shots by maintaining ROF. And because the breakdown penalty only applies to a single shot, players are much more likely to use Intensive Fire in ASL than they were in SL.

Allowing a Gun to wait until its ROF is lost before declaring Intensive Fire also keeps an attacker facing a defending Gun from knowing the defender's intentions ahead of time. This is a common theme in all of the Defensive First Fire rules: the attacker must move without knowing for sure how the defender will respond. Declaring Intensive Fire after a Gun has taken all of its normal shots is pretty unrealistic from the point of view of the Gun itself... but it is very realistic from the point of view of an attacker who is manoeuvring a tank or squad in sight of that Gun.

There are three situations in which a Gun may use Intensive Fire:

- When a Gun loses ROF in the Prep Fire Phase and is marked with a Prep Fire counter, it may take one more shot as Intensive Fire during that Prep Fire Phase.
- When a Gun loses ROF during the opponent's MPh and is marked with a First Fire counter, it may take one more shot as Intensive Fire (at any moving target) during that MPh.
- If a Gun starts the DFPh already marked with a First Fire counter, it may take one Intensive Fire shot during that DFPh, but only if it fires at an adjacent target. This is the only instance in which a Gun may use Intensive Fire during the DFPh.

Note that Intensive Fire is always voluntary: a Gun is never forced to take an Intensive Fire shot. There is no consensus among players as to whether taking an Intensive Fire shot is a good idea. Some players will use Intensive Fire freely, while others will hardly ever use it. It depends upon the situation in the game, your personal playing style, and how much risk of breaking your Gun you are willing to accept.

The German 75L AT has four types of ammunition available. On the front of the counter, the '75L' does not have a line above it or below it, so it has an unlimited supply of the standard HE and AP rounds. On the back of the counter, the 75L has two special ammunition depletion numbers: one at the top for APCR (with separate numbers for 1942, '43, and '44), and one for Smoke right above the X6. Whenever you have some doubt as to what a complicated ammunition depletion code means, check the historical notes for that Gun (example: the '*HE7 J4E' on the American 57L AT Gun).

AP and APCR are really only useful against tanks, so they will not be discussed until the next part of this tutorial series. Smoke, however, can be fired using the Area Target Type.

There are three target types that can be used when firing Ordnance using the To Hit process: Infantry Target Type (ITT), Area Target Type (ATT), and Vehicle Target Type (VTT). VTT is only used when firing at vehicles such as tanks, so it also will not be discussed until the next part of this tutorial series. The To Hit Chart in ASLSK #2 does not contain a VTT section.

ITT is by far the most commonly used target type... all of the shots taken by the German 75L AT in the previous examples have been ITT shots. (Note that some SW Ordnance, such as the BAZ 44, have their own custom To Hit tables included on their counters. These weapons never use any of the three standard target types.)

When you fire using the ITT, you are aiming at a non-vehicular unit/stack. When you fire using the ATT, you are aiming at the target hex itself, spreading out your shots to cover the entire hex. Hits are easier to achieve with the ATT, because the target hex TEM is not applied to the TH DR... but the hits will do less damage, because the FP used for the IFT DR is cut in half, and the target hex TEM is added to the IFT DR. In addition, a weapon using ATT will automatically lose ROF, regardless of the colored dr, unless it is a mortar.

ATT must be used if the firing weapon is a mortar, and it must be used by any weapon that fires Smoke or WP. It may also be used when firing HE, but may not be used with any other type of ammunition.

Under the ASLSK rules, the ATT will probably be little used except by mortars and when firing Smoke/WP: the two situations in which its use is mandatory. Having a better chance of scoring a hit is rarely worth having your FP cut in half and TEM added to the IFT DR. One notable advantage of using the ATT is that it allows you to fire at an empty hex, either to place Smoke/WP in that hex, or to place/flip a 5/8" Acquired Target counter there. This Acquired Target counter can then be used to increase the chances of successfully firing into that hex in some later turn, or it can be switched to a 1/2" Acquired Target counter if you fire using the ITT at a unit that enters that hex (see rule 6.11).

Here's an example of how the ATT is used when firing Ordnance Smoke. Place the following units on board w:

wC5: American 6-6-6
wC8: German 4-6-7, 9–2
wD7: German 4-6-7
wF8: German 2-2-8, 75L AT (facing wE8-wF7)

There are two hexes of Open Ground separating the German attackers from the American position. They risk being cut to shreds if they try to cross that Open Ground with the intent of engaging the Americans in CC. Smoke grenades won't help much, even if the Germans succeed in placing any with their Smoke Exponents of 1.

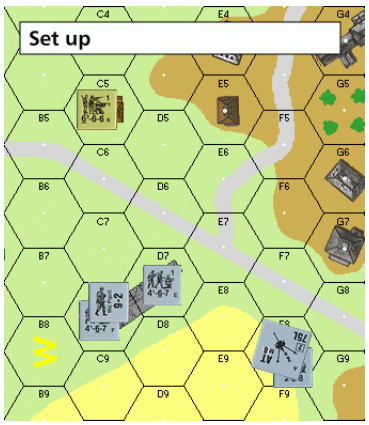

Figure 4.6: Example of Area Target Type (ATT).

Figure 4.7: German Prep Fire Phase.

The 75L, however, has a Smoke depletion number of s7, so it will try to fire Smoke into the American position during the Prep Fire Phase. The range is 5 hexes, which gives a TH# of 7 on the ATT. There is a –2 DRM for firing Smoke at a range of less than 13 hexes (hitting a target with Smoke is relatively easy), and the +2 TEM does not apply to ATT TH DRs, so the shot is TH7/–2. This guarantees that, if the 75L has any Smoke rounds available, a hit will be scored and the Smoke placed.

The s7 depletion number works like this:

- If the original TH DR is less than 7, the Gun fires Smoke and may try for Smoke again on a future shot.
- If the original TH DR equals 7, the Gun fires Smoke, but it may not fire any more Smoke for the remainder of the game... it used up all of its remaining Smoke rounds in this attack.
- If the original TH DR is more than 7, the Gun had no Smoke rounds available, so the shot did not actually occur (that is, the Gun is free to select another type of ammunition and redo the shot with it). Note, however, that if the original TH DR was 12, the Gun does suffer a malfunction in addition to being noted as having no remaining Smoke rounds.

The TH DR is 4 (colored dr was 2), resulting in a hit. ROF is lost because the ATT was used. Place a +3 Ordnance Smoke counter on wC5 and a Prep Fire counter on wF8. The original TH DR was less than 7, so the 75L may try to use Smoke again on a future shot. No Acquired Target counter may be placed when firing Smoke/WP (even if the Smoke shot fails to hit).

Ordnance Smoke differs from Smoke grenades in two ways: It is much thicker (+3 instead of +2), and it lasts much longer. Smoke grenades create a smoke screen that lasts only until the end of the MPh in which they were used, but Ordnance Smoke, if fired in the Prep Fire Phase, will last two full turns:

Current Turn, start of your Prep Fire Phase: Fire Ordnance Smoke and, if successful, place a +3 Smoke counter.

1st Subsequent Turn, start of your Prep Fire Phase: Flip the +3 Smoke counter over to a +2 Dispersed counter.

2nd Subsequent Turn, start of your Prep Fire Phase: Remove the +2 Dispersed counter.

Note that Smoke/WP is normally only fired in the Prep Fire Phase. If Smoke/WP is fired in the DFPh, it is placed dispersed side up, so it will be much less effective and it will disappear quickly.

With the +3 Smoke counter in place on wC5, the best defensive fire shot the American squad can get against German units using normal movement will be 12/+3, if they hold their fire until a German unit moves adjacent (6 FP doubled by PBF, +4 for firing out of a Smoke hex, –1 FFNAM, Smoke Hindrance cancels FFMO), which will only result in a PTC on a DR of 7. This shot would not leave any Residual FP (6 Residual FP shifted left four columns on the IFT for the attack's +4 Smoke Hindrance is off of the chart).

Without the +3 Smoke counter, the best American shot would be 12/–2 (–1 FFNAM, –1 FFMO) which would result in a 2MC on a DR of 7, and 6 Residual FP. Blanketing the American defenders with Ordnance Smoke

Figure 4.8: German Movement Phase.

effectively added a total +5 DRM (from –2 to +3) to the attack they would have without Smoke being present! Note that any unit that fires *out* of a Smoke hex has to add +1 to the total Smoke Hindrance.

Smoke grenades are nice... when you can get them. But having a Gun that can fire Smoke? Priceless!

Let's see how this might play out: The 4-6-7 in wD7 moves to wC6, where the American squad makes its 12/+3 First Fire Attack. The DR is 9 resulting in no effect and no Residual FP. The 4-6-7, 9–2 stack now moves to wC6. The American squad's Subsequent First Fire attack, 6/+3, rolls a DR 7 for no effect.

In the AFPh, the combined German stack attacks with 8/+3 (4 FP doubled to 8 by PBF, –2 leader, +2 TEM, +3 Smoke). The DR is 7 for no effect.

The Germans then advance into the American hex for CC. They get a –2 drm on their Ambush roll from the 9–2 leader, and succeed in ambushing the Americans. The German CC attack is 9-6, for 3-2 odds, with a –1 DRM for Ambush and another –2 DRM for leadership. The DR is 5, which eliminates the American squad.

The Smoke counter has no effect on CC or Ambush, but by blinding the American defenders, it allowed the Germans to get into a position to use CC to win easily.

White Phosphorous, which some Guns have instead of, or in addition to, Smoke, is used just like Smoke. It is less dense — a +2 when placed and a +1 when dispersed — but it is nastier: placing WP on an enemy unit forces that unit to suffer a NMC.

4.2 Infantry Howitzers

INF Guns were used in the front lines to provide direct fire support to the foot soldiers. They are identical to AT Guns in terms of how they function in the game. The only practical difference between the two types is that INF Guns are usually short barrel, low velocity Guns which limits their effectiveness when firing AP rounds. The primary use for INF Guns is firing Smoke and HE... they were not designed for dueling enemy tanks.

4.3 Artillery

ART Guns were designed for long range, indirect fire missions against an unseen enemy, where their firing would be directed by an artillery observer via radio or field telephone. Because their role was not to engage the enemy directly, these Guns will not appear in many scenarios.

When they are present in a scenario, ART Guns are used in much the same way as AT and INF Guns. The major differences are:

- ART Guns are normally much larger than AT or INF Guns, so most of them cannot be moved by manhandling under the ASLSK rules because they usually are not Quick Set Up (QSU) Guns.
- ART Guns will often not have any AP rounds available, as noted by a black line above their caliber number. They were not intended to engage enemy tanks with direct fire.
- ART Guns are too large to set up in a building hex. (Only small target Guns, and AT/INF Guns that are not large targets, may set up in, or be moved into, a building hex.)

The notable exception to these ART rules is the Russian 76L ART: a multi-purpose Gun that served equally well in both the ART and AT roles. Thus the 76L ART does have QSU ability, which is unusual for an ART Gun, and scenarios that use it will often grant it the ability to set up in a building hex via a Scenario Special Rule (SSR), making it nearly identical to a regular AT Gun.

4.4 Anti-Aircraft Guns

With the ASLSK rules, AA Guns will never have aircraft to shoot at, but AA Guns can be used quite effectively against ground targets. In fact, the most famous AT Gun of the war — the German '88' — was actually an AA Gun!

AA Guns have a mounting that allows them to spin around rapidly, which is a necessity for a weapon that must track fast-moving aircraft. This is indicated by a large white circle on their counter. This 360 degree mount means that AA Guns only suffer a +1 DRM for each CA change of one hexside, and their ROF is not lowered when they do change their CA.

The downside to the 360 degree mount is that it makes AA Guns physically much bigger than AT/INF Guns of similar caliber. This means that AA Guns will have a larger target size, which makes them easier to hit, and they will not have QSU ability, so they cannot be moved by manhandling.

Small caliber AA Guns that are capable of rapid fire also have the ability to attack using their Infantry Firepower Equivalent (IFE). When a Gun uses IFE, it rolls directly on the IFT using its IFE FP, which is printed in parentheses next to the Gun's caliber, and ignores the To Hit process completely. In effect, it is firing like a large MG.

A Gun's ROF is reduced by one when IFE is used, but it gains the ability to use Subsequent First Fire and FPF. Note that CA change DRMs also apply to IFE shots; this rule was accidentally omitted in the ASLSK #2 rulebook, but it is present in the ASLSK #3 rulebook.

Trying to decide between using the To Hit process or using IFE can often be a difficult decision. My personal rule of thumb is: if the target is in high TEM terrain, and/or if there is a lot of Hindrance, then I use the To Hit process, because it provides the highest ROF, allows the use of Acquired Target counters, and, if I get a hit, it's a straight roll on the IFT at full FP. Otherwise, if there is little in the way of TEM or Hindrance, or the target is moving in the open, I use IFE to avoid the necessity of having to roll a hit for the shot to have any effect.

4.5 Mortars

Mortars are short barreled, high trajectory weapons that have a number of unique features. Mortars operate very differently than normal Guns.

Small caliber mortars appear as SWs (Light Mortars), while large mortars (76mm and up) appear as Guns. All mortars function identically in the game, except as noted previously in the Light Mortar section.

Mortars are indirect fire weapons: instead of firing shells directly at their target in a flat trajectory, they fire shells in a high arc. This characteristic is the main reason that mortars differ so much from the other types of Guns. In theory, this high arcing trajectory would also allow mortars to fire over LOS obstacles... but this is not possible in the ASLSK rules. Mortars cannot hit a target unless they have a LOS to that target, so they work exactly like all of the other Guns in that respect.

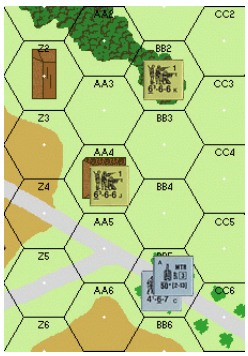

Figure 4.9: Mortar example set up.

Mortars can never fire from a building hex (another rule that was omitted from ASLSK #2 but is in ASLSK #3). So, while there are no specific restrictions against placing a mortar in a building, or moving a mortar into a building, there is no reason to ever do so unless you are simply moving through the building.

Unlike most Guns, mortars do have a range printed on their counters, in brackets in the lower righthand corner. Mortars have relatively short ranges when compared to other Guns, and their high arcing trajectory means they have a minimum range as well as a maximum range. The American 81* MTR, for example, can fire at any target that is at least 3 hexes, but no more than 75 hexes, distant. The mortar tube cannot be elevated enough to fire at a range of 1 or 2 hexes (it would have to fire almost straight up!).

Mortars never have AP rounds, and they must always use the ATT when firing. The ATT accurately depicts the nature of mortar fire: instead of firing directly at an enemy unit with precise aiming, mortars simply lob many shells into a general area. However, unlike other Guns, they can retain ROF when using the ATT... even if they are firing Smoke/WP.

76mm-82mm mortars do not have their ROF reduced when they change CA (although they still have the CA change DRM applied to their TH DR). These mortars, even though they are on large Gun counters, were still small enough to be easily turned.

Some mortars list 'IR' as an ammunition type. This stands for 'Illuminating Round.' This ammunition is not used in ASLSK; in full ASL, these rounds can illuminate an area of the map when fired during night battles.

Because they must use the ATT to fire, mortars can only place the large 5/8" Area Acquired Target counters (rule 6.11). Note that SW mortars can also place these Area Acquired Target counters. But, because mortars can never convert these 5/8" Acquired Target counters into 1/2" Acquired Target counters by firing on the ITT, they can never retain acquisition on a unit that moves into another hex.

When indirect fire weapons attack a woods hex, the shells come down through the tops of the trees, and they can occasionally be detonated in the air by a tree branch or trunk. These 'Air Bursts' are particularly deadly to infantry targets, as they spread shrapnel over a wide area and can hit personnel that are otherwise well protected against direct fire. Whenever a unit in a woods hex is attacked by a mortar, the normal +1 TEM is ignored and the –1 Air Burst TEM is used instead. This –1 TEM, combined with a mortar's high ROF, makes even the smallest mortars deadly when used against units in woods.

Place the following units on board w:

wAA4: American 6-6-6
wBB2: American 6-6-6
wBB5: German 4-6-7, 50* MTR

It is the German Prep Fire Phase. The 50* MTR fires at wBB2. The shot is a TH7/+0 and the DR is 3 (colored dr is 1), resulting in a hit and ROF. A 50mm HE hit uses the 6 FP column on the IFT, which is then cut in half due to the use of ATT, so the hit is a 2/–1 (–1 Air Bursts TEM), and the DR is 9, which results in no effect. Place a 5/8" –1 Acquired Target counter on wBB2.

The 50* MTR fires again, and the shot is TH7/–1 (–1 Acquired Target) and the DR is 5 (colored dr is 3), resulting in a hit and ROF. The hit is a 2/–1, and the DR is 6, which results in a NMC. The American squad's MC DR is 8, which breaks them. Flip the 6-6-6 to its broken side, place a DM counter on it, and flip the Acquired Target counter to its –2 side.

The 50* MTR fires again, but this time at wAA4, so the Acquired Target counter on wBB2 is removed. The shot is TH7/+0 and the DR is 6 (colored dr is 3), resulting in a hit and ROF. The hit is a 2/+2 (+2 wooden building TEM), and the DR is 5, resulting in no effect. Place a 5/8" –1 Acquired Target counter on wAA4.

The 50* MTR could continue to fire until it loses ROF, but this is enough to show its effectiveness against the different targets. When firing at the building in wAA4, a hit of 2/+2 means that the German player would need a DR of 3 just to cause a NMC, but when firing at the woods in wBB2, a hit of 2/–1 means a DR of 6 will cause a NMC.

4.6 Guns as Targets

Guns that do not set up on a paved road hex are automatically emplaced (that is, they are protected by sandbags, etc., rule 6.3). Emplaced Guns have a +2 TEM, but this Emplacement TEM cannot be combined with any other TEM (except Air Bursts, see ASLSK #3) or gunshield DRM. If the Gun is moved to a new hex, the Emplacement TEM is lost and cannot be regained.

Some examples of emplaced Guns:

- A Gun emplaced in Open Ground has a TEM of +2.
- A Gun emplaced in a woods hex has a TEM of +2, but if it is fired upon by a mortar the TEM drops to +1 because of the –1 from the Air Bursts.
- A Gun emplaced in a stone building has a TEM of +3, because the Gun's owner will obviously choose to use the building TEM rather than the Emplacement TEM.

AT and INF Guns have gunshields (rule 6.6) that can also provide a +2 TEM (+1 TEM if attacked by a mortar), but only if the attacker is within the Gun's CA. This gunshield TEM cannot be combined with any other TEM. Gunshields rarely come into play, because Emplacement provides the same level of protection regardless of the direction the attack comes from.

Gunshields are most likely to come into play when a Gun is attacked by Ordnance: if terrain or Emplacement TEM is applied to the attacker's To Hit DR, the +2 gunshield TEM can then be applied to the IFT DR if a hit is scored. If, however, the gunshield TEM is instead applied to the attacker's To Hit DR then it cannot be applied to any resulting IFT DR.

Emplacement TEM and gunshield TEM can only protect a crew that is manning that Gun. They provide no protection to any other units that may be in the Gun's hex, including any non-crew unit that might be manning that Gun.

Each Gun has a target size which is either small, normal, or large. Small Guns have a white circle behind their manhandling number, while large Guns have their manhandling number printed in red. When a Gun is attacked by Ordnance, a small Gun receives a +1 DRM (it's hard to hit) while a large Gun receives a –1 DRM (it's easy to hit). Note that the TH DRM list in ASLSK #2 has these values reversed; the ASLSK #3 TH DRM list is correct.

When resolving an Ordnance hit on a Gun, a CH or a subsequent IFT result of KIA destroys both the Gun and its manning unit. An IFT result of K results in a malfunctioned Gun and Casualty Reduction to the manning unit. If the IFT result is not a KIA or K (not a direct hit on the Gun), the Gun is undamaged and the gunshield TEM (if applicable) can then be used to modify the IFT DR before finding the result that applies to the manning infantry. Direct hits are always judged before adding any applicable gunshield TEM to the IFT DR.

An emplaced Gun and its crew can set up using Hidden Initial Placement (HIP, rule 6.4). To do this, the opposing player leaves the room while the Gun's owner places his counters on the map. After he has set up his counters, he writes down the location and facing of each HIP Gun, and then removes each HIP Gun and its crew

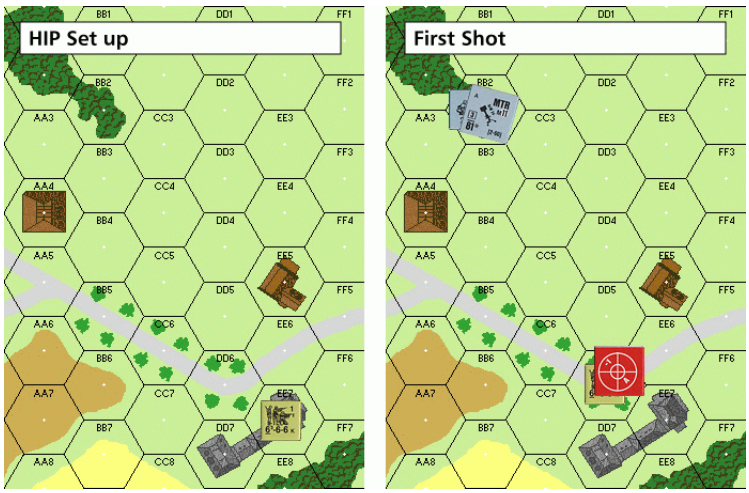

Figure 4.10: Hidden Initial Placement setup and first German shot at the American squad in wDD6

from the map. When the opposing player returns, he has no idea where the hidden Gun(s) might be located. If a HIP Gun was not set up in Open Ground or on a road, he may never see the Gun until it fires.

The use of HIP adds a realistic element of uncertainty to a scenario, but the technique is of somewhat limited usefulness when fighting infantry, since the Gun(s) are unlikely to remain hidden very long, and the first surprise shot taken against an infantry target may not be decisive. The most important use of HIP is with AT Guns that expect to be dueling enemy tanks. Whether or not the tanks will survive the AT Guns often depends upon how well the Guns' owner made use of HIP. Tank vs AT Gun battles will be covered in detail in a later chapter.

Place the following unit on board w:

wEE7: American 6-6-6

It is the American MPh. The American squad, seeing no enemy units nearby, announces normal movement and expends 1 MF to enter wDD6. The German player interrupts the American move at this point and places a 2-2-8 and 81* MTR in wBB2, with the 81* MTR facing wBB3-wCC3. The mortar and crew had been set up there using HIP, so the German player reveals his written note of their location and facing so that the American player can verify that they have been placed on the map correctly.

The 81* MTR takes a First Fire shot at the moving American squad. The shot is a TH7/–1 (–1 FFNAM, the orchard cancels FFMO), and the DR is 8 (colored dr is 3), resulting in a hit and ROF. The hit is 8/+0 (no TEM), and the DR is 11, resulting in no effect. Place a 5/8" –1 Acquired Target counter on wDD6.

The American squad continues to move, expending 1 MF to enter wCC6. The –1 Acquired Target counter cannot follow the moving squad; 5/8" Area Acquired Target counters always remain in the hex in which they were placed (only 1/2" Acquired Target counters can move along with a target).

The 81* MTR can now fire another First Fire shot, which would again be a TH7/–1. If it took this shot, the Acquired Target counter in wDD6 would be immediately removed, and then a 5/8" –1 Acquired Target counter would be placed in wCC6 after resolving that shot.

4.7 Red/Black To Hit Numbers

The ASLSK To Hit Charts include both red numbers and black numbers. The use of red numbers indicates less accurate shots. There are a number of different reasons why a Gun might use the red numbers, including inferior gunsights, poor quality ammunition, poorly trained gun crews, etc., although with the ATT section I think all the numbers are red simply because firing on the ATT never involves precision aiming at a particular enemy unit.

4.7.1 Firing at Range 0

Firing at Range 0 (at a target in the same hex) is not possible in ASLSK #2. The only time that opposing units can occupy the same hex during a fire phase is if they are all broken, or if they are under a Melee counter. And in both of those cases, those units are not allowed to fire at one another.

With the introduction of tanks in ASLSK #3, firing at range 0 will become possible.

4.8 Manhandling a Gun

QSU Guns can be moved during a scenario by manhandling (rule 6.5). Manhandling a Gun is pretty much a desperation tactic: it is slow, dangerous, uncertain of success, and cancels HIP and Emplaced status. It occurs so rarely in full ASL that I was surprised to see it included in the ASLSK rules.

Chapter 5

Tanks

This chapter assumes that the reader has read, and understood, all of the previous chapters. Rules and concepts discussed in the earlier chapters will be used here with little or no explanation.

This chapter will cover ASLSK #3, which adds tanks to the ASLSK system and completes the basic ASLSK ruleset. Tanks add a whole additional layer of complexity to the basic ASL game system, and the vehicle rules differ from the Infantry rules in many fundamental ways. ASLSK #3 includes two types of vehicles: tanks and Armored Cars. These two types of vehicles can be collectively referred to as AFVs (Armored Fighting Vehicles).

5.1 Vehicle Counters

Vehicle counters are absolutely packed with information. These counters may seem cluttered at first glance, but this packed design actually benefits playability: ASLSK players have almost all of the information they need during a game right on the counter itself, which is handier than having to look up tank data on a separate card or chart.

Each vehicle counter includes a detailed overhead view line drawing of the vehicle, with the vehicle's name/model printed alongside the image. Some vehicle names may have a lowercase letter in parenthesis added at the end which denotes the country of origin for that vehicle. For example, the '(a)' on the Russian Sherman III counter shows that, even though this is a Russian tank, it was actually manufactured in America.

The caliber of the AFV's Main Armament (MA) appears in the lower left corner of the counter, and the ROF number (if any) appears above it. This MA information is read exactly the same way as it is on Gun counters. The only exception to this is those rare cases when the AFV's MA is not a Gun. The British Light Tank Mk VIB counter, for example, shows '*CMG' as its MA; this means that the tank's coaxial machine gun (CMG) is treated as its MA, and the asterisk tells you that there is additional usage information about this weapon on the back of the counter. If the note on the back of the counter is not clear, you then check the 'Vehicle and Ordnance Historical Notes' booklet where it will be explained in greater detail. It is, in fact, always a good idea to review the historical notes for all of the vehicles involved in a scenario prior to playing it, to make sure that both players are aware of any special usage rules that might apply to those vehicles.

Sharp-eyed ASLSK players may notice that Sherman tanks equipped with 75mm Guns have their ROF number printed on a white background. This has no special meaning when using the ASLSK rules, but, for those who might be curious, in full ASL the white ROF background signifies that these tanks have a very fast and accurate turret traverse coupled with a relatively quick-firing Gun, which gives them certain advantages with respect to ASL's Multiple Hits rule and Gun Duels rule.

Breakdown numbers for AFV MA are handled exactly the same as for regular Guns: a B12 is assumed unless a B# appears on the AFV counter itself. But the two Russian IS-2 tank models have a special kind of B#... a B11 with a circle around the 11. The circled B# indicates that these tanks carried an unusually low number of rounds for their MA. These tanks could potentially run out of ammunition during a battle.

AFVs with a Breakdown number (circled B#) suffer MA malfunction normally, on an original TH DR of 12, but if the original TH DR is equal to or greater than the circled B# (and is not a 12) the AFV is then marked with a Low Ammo counter. The Low Ammo counter makes the original B# into a X# that will permanently disable the MA, and creates a new B# of one less than the original circled B#.

To summarize how this works, if a Russian IS-2 rolls:

- Original TH DR 12 — MA malfunctions (can be repaired)
- Original TH DR 11 — place Low Ammo counter on the tank

If an IS-2 with a Low Ammo counter rolls:

- Original TH DR 11 or 12 — MA permanently disabled (out of ammo)
- Original TH DR 10 — MA malfunctions (can be repaired)

A vehicle's machine gun armament is displayed in the lower right corner of its counter. This is a series of two or three Firepower (FP) numbers separated by slashes. When all three numbers are present, they are read from left to right as:

- Bow machine gun (BMG) — mounted in the front of the hull.
- Coaxial machine gun (CMG) — mounted in the turret alongside the MA.
- Anti-aircraft machine gun (AAMG) — mounted on top of the turret.

Or, in other words: BMG/CMG/AAMG

If the AFV does not have an AAMG, then only two numbers are used: BMG/CMG

If a dash is present instead of a number, then there is no BMG or CMG in that position. The Italian L3/35, for example, shows '4/–' which signifies that it has a 4 FP BMG and no CMG.

A few AFVs have rather unusual MG armament. The Russian IS-2m, for example, shows '1/4 R2/4' with a white dot behind the '1'. This tank thus has a fixed-mount 1 FP BMG (+1 DRM when firing the BMG at a moving target), a 4 FP CMG, a 2 FP Rear machine gun (RMG) mounted in the back of the turret, and a 4 FP AAMG. The ASLSK #3 rules incorrectly identify the RMG as a 'Rear coaxial MG' and neglect to point out that it has a Covered Arc (CA) exactly opposite that of the MA/CMG.

AAMGs are considered 'optional' equipment on certain AFVs, so their counters come in two versions, some with an AAMG and some without. See the six Russian Sherman III counters: two of these counters include an AAMG, but the other four counters do not. When playing a scenario using such an AFV, you use the version depicted on the scenario card first, and only use the other version if additional counters are needed. Thus, if a scenario calls for three Sherman IIIs without AAMGs, you could not use the counters with an AAMG... but if the scenario calls for three Sherman IIIs with AAMGs, you would then use the two counters with AAMGs and one without an AAMG.

Vehicular MGs have a breakdown number of B12, they never cower, and they do not have a ROF rating unless they are also the vehicle's MA. BMGs and CMGs each have a CA that works the same way as a Gun's CA, but the AAMG has no CA and thus can always fire in any direction without any CA change DRM penalty.

A vehicle's Movement Point (MP) allowance is printed in the upper right corner of the counter. If this number is printed over a white oval, the vehicle is fully-tracked (a tank), and if it is printed over a white circle, the vehicle is wheeled (an Armored Car). If an asterisk appears next to the MP number, check the back of the counter and/or the historical notes for a special usage note. If the MP number is printed in red, the vehicle suffers from Mechanical Reliability problems.

AFVs can either be turreted or non-turreted. A turret allows the MA (and the CMG) to be aimed in any direction without having to change the direction that the vehicle itself is facing. A non-turreted AFV must turn the entire vehicle in order to aim the MA (which will always point to the AFV's front).

There are four possible turret classifications in ASLSK:

- Fast Turret Traverse (T) — a thin white circle surrounds the vehicle depiction.
- Slow Turret Traverse (ST) — a thin white square surrounds the vehicle depiction.
- Restricted Slow Traverse (RST) — a thick white square surrounds the vehicle depiction.

- Non-Turreted (NT) — there is no circle or square surrounding the vehicle depiction.

The one exception to the above list is the Russian KV-2. This tank is depicted as a NT tank, but it does indeed have a turret... which turns so slowly that the tank suffers NT AFV To Hit DRM penalties even when it turns the turret instead of the whole vehicle.

Each AFV is rated for the amount of armor protection it has in two areas: the turret, and the hull (the body of the AFV that the turret is mounted on). NT AFV's also have hull and turret armor ratings, but in this case 'hull' simply refers to the lower part of the NT AFV's body, and 'turret' refers to the upper part of the NT AFV's body. Both hull and turret areas are further subdivided into three facings: front, side, and rear.

The two numbers found directly below the MP rating, on the right side of the counter, are the AFV's Armor Factors (AF). Armor Factors give the effective thickness of the armor in centimeters of vertical armor plate. Thus an AFV with a front hull AF of 11 has the equivalent of 110mm of armor protection on the front hull. In many cases the actual real-world thickness of an AFV's armor will be less than the value indicated by the AF, because the AF rating takes into account such things as sloping the armor to increase its effective thickness.

The ASL/ASLSK armor system uses a limited set of AF values:

0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 14, 18, and 26

No other AF values are allowed. An AF of 0 actually represents armor up to 1cm in thickness, and an AF of 1 represents armor that is 1cm to 1.5cm thick.

The two AF numbers printed on the AFV's counter are for the vehicle's hull. The top AF is the value for the front of the hull, and the bottom AF is the value for the side and rear of the hull. The AFs for the turret are derived directly from the hull AFs:

- If the hull AF has a square around it, the turret AF is one step stronger.
- If the hull AF is unmarked, the turret AF is identical to the hull AF.
- If the hull AF has a circle around it, the turret AF is one step weaker.

For example: a German Pz VIB's hull has a front AF of 26 and a side/rear AF of 8. The turret's AFs are 18 front (because the 26 is circled) and 11 side/rear (because the 8 has a square around it).

This armor rating system is incredibly elegant and simple in requiring only two numbers to describe the armor protection of an AFV. And it is surprisingly accurate: there are only a handful of WWII AFVs that don't quite fit this system (their hull and turret armor differ by more than one step on the ASL armor scale).

The convention that a circle = bad/worse and a square = good/better is used consistently throughout ASL/ASLSK. The only exception to this is when a circle or square appears around a squad's class designation. For example, there are two American Elite class squads: a 7-4-7 (marked with an 'E') and a 6-6-7 (marked with an 'E' with a square around it). The presence of a square surrounding the 'E' on a 6-6-7 squad does not indicate that it is a better squad than a 7-4-7... it merely indicates that it is a different type of Elite.

AFVs can have varying levels of ground pressure, which affects their chances of becoming bogged. This is indicated on the counter with the unit ID letter in the upper left corner:

- Unit ID in a square = low ground pressure (good)
- Unit ID unmarked = normal ground pressure
- Unit ID in a circle = high ground pressure (bad)

And finally, the two AF numbers also indicate the target size of the AFV. Target size affects how easy it is to hit the AFV, with small targets being harder to hit and large targets being easier to hit:

- Very small target = white background behind both AFs
- Small target = white background behind top AF
- Normal target = no color
- Large target = top AF printed in red
- Very large target = both AFs printed in red

On the back of the vehicle counter, the vehicle depiction appears again on a plain white background. This is the vehicle's 'wrecked' side; if the vehicle is eliminated in combat, it turns into a wreck by flipping over to its white side.

A wide variety of additional information can appear on the back of a vehicle counter. This information is provided so that the players may have ready access to it during the game, but it is applicable only to an unwrecked vehicle. When a vehicle is eliminated and turns into a wreck, all information for that vehicle — on both sides of the counter — is thereafter ignored.

Many vehicles have ammunition depletion numbers for the MA, which are read in exactly the same way as ammunition depletion numbers for Guns. Some American and American-built AFVs have a depletion number for 'C' ammunition which is not used in ASLSK (in full ASL these AFVs can fire Canister rounds which have a deadly shotgun-like effect against Infantry, but with only a very short effective range).

In addition to ammunition depletion numbers and special usage notes, the other information that can appear on the back of a vehicle counter includes:

sD# Smoke Discharger usage number
sM# Smoke Mortar usage number
sN# Nahverteidigungswaffe usage number
No IF vehicle cannot use Intensive Fire (IF)
ML:9 Tiger crew Morale 9

The remaining four items that can appear are used only when playing full ASL and do not apply to the ASLSK rules:

G vehicle may be equipped with a Gyrostabilizer
Sz vehicle may be equipped with Schürzen
® vehicle is not equipped with a radio
CS # crew survival number (red = increased chance of a burning wreck)

5.2 Vehicle Status Counters

There are numerous aspects of a vehicle's status that are variable in nature, so a variety of additional counters are used to keep track of them.

The most important of these are the generic white turret counters that can be used with any turreted vehicle. These are used to indicate direction of the vehicle's Turret Covered Arc (TCA) and the crew's exposure status. One side of the turret counter depicts an open hatch occupied by the AFV's commander; this is the Crew Exposed (CE) side. The other side shows a closed hatch and is the Buttoned Up (BU) side.

When a turreted vehicle counter does not have a turret counter on it, the vehicle is BU and its turret is facing in the same direction as the vehicle itself. A turret counter must be placed whenever the crew opens a hatch to become CE, or the turret turns to face in a different direction than the vehicle. Whenever the vehicle becomes BU with the turret facing to the front, the turret counter is removed.

NT AFVs do not have a TCA to track, but they can become CE, so CE counters without a turret are also provided.

Malfunction counters are available for each type of weapon that an AFV can carry: BMG, CMG, AAMG, and MA. When an AFV weapon malfunctions, place the appropriate Malfunction counter on the vehicle. If the weapon is permanently disabled, flip the Malfunction counter over to its Disabled side.

Other vehicle status counters provided include Motion/Immobilized, Bog/Mired, Shock/UK, stun/+1, and STUN/Recall. These counters will be discussed later in this chapter.

5.3 Vehicle Counter Management

The design of the ASL vehicle counters packs a tremendous amount of information onto each counter, but this information is not always easily accessible to the players: many vehicles can cart around large stacks of status and acquisition counters, making it impossible to read the vehicle counter from a distance, and difficult to pick up the vehicle counter to look at it more closely.

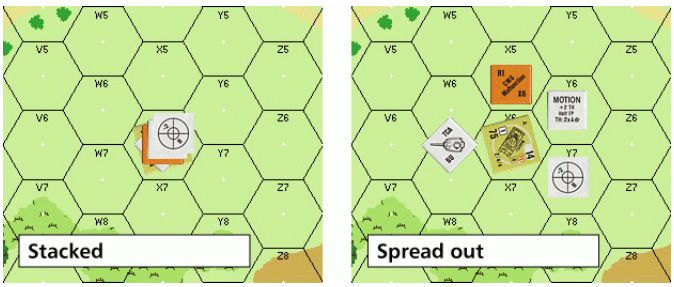

Figure 5.1: Stacked vehicle and information counters (l) vs spread out information counters.)

But one key difference between a stack of vehicular status counters and a stack of Infantry counters is that the relative positioning of the vehicular counters within the stack has no particular significance. The only positioning requirement is that the vehicle counter itself, and the turret counter (if present), must be kept pointing in their proper facing direction.

This means that, in many situations, you can simply place these vehicular status counters in a hex next to the vehicle they apply to so that the vehicle counter itself remains in full view of the players. Even a turret counter can be removed from on top of the vehicle: you can place the turret on the adjacent hexspine (the hexspine that it would point to if it was still on top of the vehicle counter), so that it continues to show the direction the turret is facing without covering up the vehicle counter.

Spreading out your vehicular status markers like this can really make the game easier to play, especially in scenarios with a lot of vehicles, because you can take in the entire tactical situation at a glance. Note, however, that if you do this you must position the status counters so that there is absolutely no question as to which vehicle they belong to. In situations where the nearby hexes are cluttered with Infantry and/or other vehicles — or if your opponent objects — then you will have to place all of a vehicle's status counters on top of that vehicle.

To see how this can work, place the following counters on board v in hex vX6:

- American M4A2(L) tank facing towards vW7-vX7
- BU turret counter facing towards vW6-vW7
- CMG malfunction counter
- Motion counter
- -2 Acquired Target counter (from an enemy Gun)

You can see that it might be a challenge to remember exactly what is in that stack... and then imagine a big armor scenario with numerous stacks just like it scattered across the map!

Now try placing those counters like this:

- vX6: American M4A2(L) tank facing towards vW7-vX7
- hexspine between vW6-vW7: BU turret counter facing towards vV6
- vX5: CMG malfunction counter
- vY6: Motion counter
- vY7: –2 Acquired Target counter (from an enemy Gun)

As long as there are no Infantry in those hexes, and no other vehicles adjacent to those hexes, it will be perfectly clear that those status counters are for that particular tank. With this kind of counter layout, it is instantly clear what tank is present and what its complete status is.

A final tip for managing counter clutter is to only use the minimum number of Motion counters that are necessary. Motion counters are used to mark vehicles that remain in Motion at the end of their MPh. If you have vehicles that are adjacent to each other and moving as a group, either in a column along a road or in a line out in the field, just place a single Motion counter next to the lead vehicle and let it apply to the entire group. This technique is again dependent upon your opponent's agreement; if he objects, you will then have to do this 'by the book' and place a Motion counter on each individual vehicle in the group.

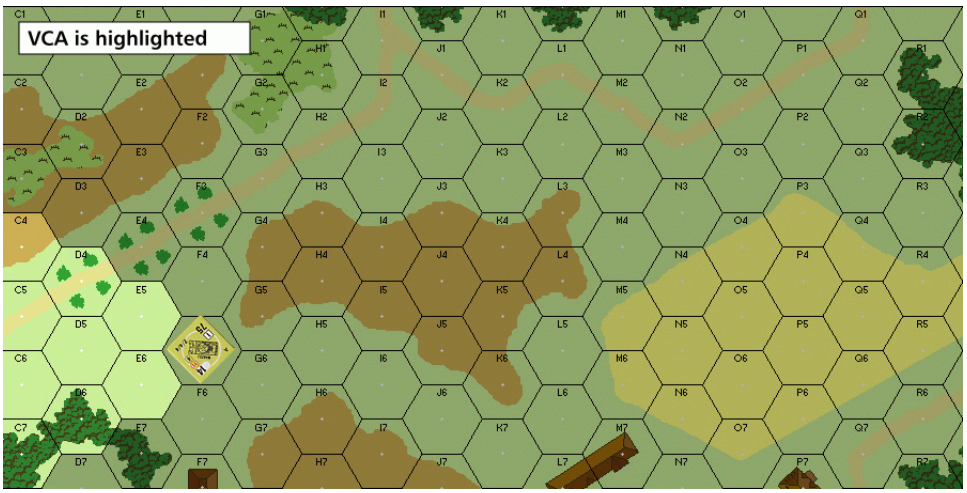

Figure 5.2: The Vehicle Covered Arc of the vehicle in vF5 is highlighted

5.4 Basic AFV Movement

AFV movement is quite a bit different than Infantry movement, so vehicles are assigned Movement Points (MP) rather than Movement Factors (MF). For example, when crossing a Crest Line into higher terrain, a unit that uses MF must pay double the normal MF cost of entering that hex, while a unit that uses MP must pay an additional 4 MP over the normal MP cost of entering that hex (or 2 MP additional if moving along a road). The use of the MF/MP terminology always makes it clear whether a specific movement rule applies to Infantry or to vehicles.

AFVs have a Covered Arc (CA) in the direction that they are facing, just like Guns do. This is called the Vehicle Covered Arc (VCA). The VCA defines the hexes into which an AFV can move, and into which a BMG can fire; if the AFV is NT, the VCA also then defines the hexes into which the MA can fire. Whenever a turreted AFV does not have a turret counter on it, its TCA and VCA are identical.

Movement Example #1

Place the following unit on board v:

vF5: American M4A2(L) facing vE5-vE6, BU

This tank's VCA includes the hex rows vE5-vA3, vE6-vA8, and all hexes in between these two rows. If the tank wishes to move, the only hexes it can enter would be vE5 and vE6; it would first have to turn to change its VCA, at a cost of 1 MP per hexspine, before it could enter any other adjacent hex.

Assume that it is the American MPh, and that the tank wishes to move. There is no Motion counter on the tank, so it is currently stopped. A stopped vehicle must spend 1 MP to start before it can spend any MP to actually move. Similarly, a moving vehicle must spend 1 MP to come to a halt (stop), although some combat results and some movement events can force a vehicle to stop without the expenditure of a Stop MP.

The expenditure of MP to start or stop does not actually represent the vehicle's engine being turned on or off, but it instead accounts for a motionless vehicle's inability to instantly accelerate to top speed, and a rapidly moving vehicle's inability to instantly come to a dead stop. In a real battle situation an AFV would likely keep its engine running at all times, so as to be able to start moving at a moment's notice.

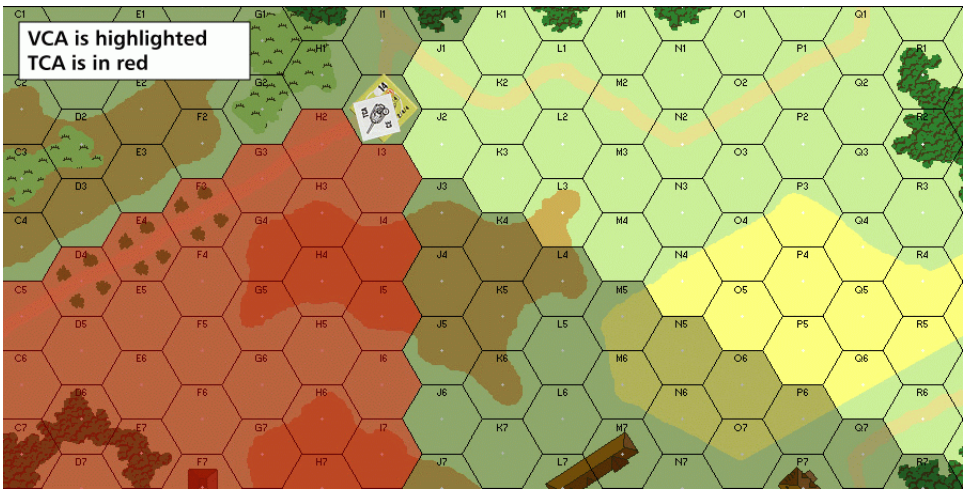

Figure 5.3: The Vehicle Covered Arc of the vehicle in vI2 is highlighted, the Turret Covered Arc is indicated in red.

The M4A2(L) begins its move by spending 1 MP to start. It has a total of 14 MP, so there are 13 MP remaining. It then spends 1 MP to turn its VCA to face vE5-vF4 (12 MP remaining) and spends 1 MP to enter vF4 (11 MP remaining).

The tank now spends 1 MP to enter the Orchard in vF3 (10 MP remaining), and 1 MP to turn its VCA to vF2-vG3 (9 MP remaining). In conjunction with that last MP expenditure, the player announces that the tank will turn its turret to face vG3-vG4 and it will also become CE, so a turret counter is placed on top of the M4A2(L), facing towards vG3-vG4, with the CE side up.

A vehicle's crew exposure status may be voluntarily changed only once during the MPh, in conjunction with any other MP expenditure. So a vehicle that begins its MPh BU may become CE at some point during its move, and a vehicle that begins its MPh CE may become BU at some point. In addition, a vehicle may also change its crew exposure status during the APh, regardless of whether or not it changed CE/BU status during the MPh.

A turreted vehicle's TCA may be changed at will in conjunction with any MP expenditure. There is no limit on how many times the TCA may be changed during a vehicle's MPh, nor is there any restriction on how many hexspines it can turn each time it does change.

The M4A2(L) now spends 1 MP to turn its VCA to vG3-vG4 (8 MP remaining). This VCA change also changes the TCA to vF4-vG4: if the player does not announce a specific TCA change in addition to the VCA change, the turret will remain stationary with respect to the vehicle's hull and the TCA will thus change by the same number of hexspines as the VCA.

The CE tank can now move along the road at the road movement rate of 1/2 MP per hex (if it was BU, it would have to pay 1 MP per road hex). The tank now expends 1.5 MP to move vG3-vH2-vI2 (6.5 MP remaining). As it enters vI2, it also changes its TCA to vH2-vI3.

The tank now expends 1 MP to enter vJ1 (5.5 MP remaining). This move costs 1 MP because, even though vJ1 is a road hex, there is no road crossing the hexside between vI2 and vJ1, so the tank must pay the Open Ground MP cost. If the tank had actually followed the road through vI1, the cost to move to vJ1 would have been 3 MP: 1 MP to turn left, 1/2 MP to enter vI1, 1 MP to turn right, 1/2 MP to enter vJ1. Taking the cross-country shortcut was much faster.

The tank now spends 4.5 MP to move vK2-vL2-vM3-vN3-vO4 (1 MP remaining) and it changes its TCA to vP3-vP4 as it enters vO4. The turret counter is not removed, even though the TCA is now the same as the VCA, because the tank is still CE.

At this point, with 1 MP remaining, the M4A2(L) has a decision to make: should it spend this last

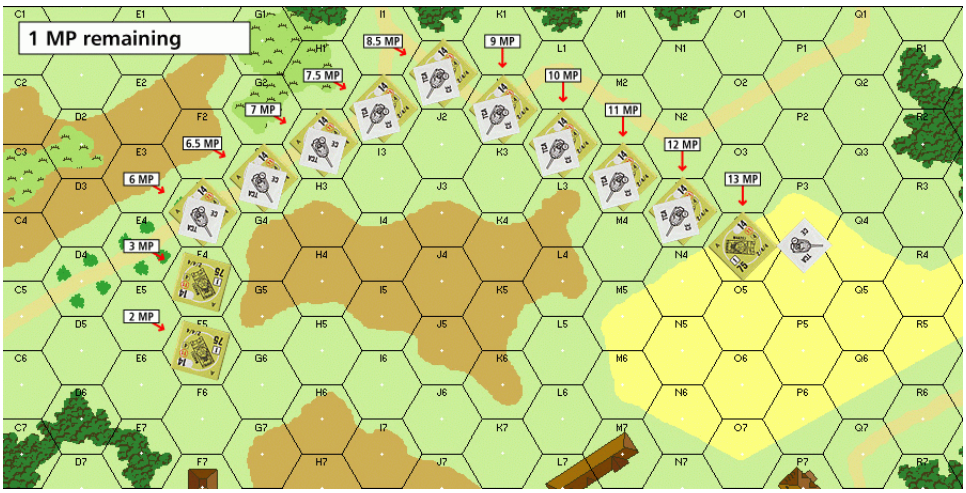

Figure 5.4: The tank moved from vF5 to vO4 with 1 MP remaining.

MP to move one more hex, or should it pay 1 MP to come to a full stop where it is? If it chooses to stop, it remains where it is and its MPh is completed. If it continues moving, then it could spend its last MP to enter either vP3 or vP4, at which point it would be marked with a Motion counter to remind the players that this tank has not stopped, and then its MPh would be over.

Whenever an AFV expends any MP during a MPh, it must spend all of its MPs. A tank with 14 MP, for example, cannot just spend 1 MP to start, 1 MP to move one hex, 1 MP to stop and then declare that its MPh is over... it still has 11 unused MP unaccounted for, and they must be spent on something.

This is one of the biggest differences between AFV movement and Infantry movement. AFV movement works this way in order to account for the different vulnerabilities of AFVs and Infantry.

A squad becomes less vulnerable to enemy fire when it stops moving: the troops 'go to ground' to take advantage of any available cover. Thus when a squad stops moving before using its full MF allowance, it becomes much harder to hit and is no longer vulnerable to any additional enemy Defensive First Fire.

But when an AFV stops moving, it becomes more vulnerable to enemy fire: it can't go to ground or otherwise take cover, and a vehicular target is much easier to hit when it is stationary than it is when it is moving. It would be unrealistic to allow a moving AFV to limit its vulnerability to Defensive First Fire by 'moving slowly' (not spending all of its MP).

There are two ways in which an AFV can use up excess MP:

- Whenever a moving AFV is stopped, it can spend any number of MP as Delay points.
- When a moving AFV enters a new hex, it may pay more MP than is required.

Movement Example #2

Place the following units on board v:

vP7: German 2-2-8 crew
vP7: German 50L AT Gun facing vP6-vQ7
vT6: American M4A2(L) facing vS6-vS7, BU

The American tank wants to move into vS6 so that it will be in position to attack the Germans in vP7. There are three basic methods that it may use to execute this move.

(A) The M4A2(L) expends 1 MP to start, 1 MP to enter vS6, 1 MP to stop, and finally 11 Delay points in vS6.

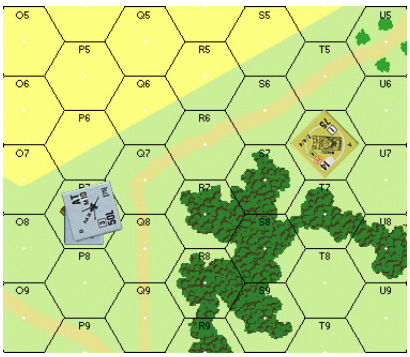

Figure 5.5: Setup for movement example #2

(B) The M4A2(L) expends 1 MP to start, 12 MP to enter vS6, and 1 MP to stop.

(C) The M4A2(L) expends 11 Delay points in vT6, 1 MP to start, 1 MP to enter vS6, and 1 MP to stop.

Method **(C)** is somewhat safer than the first two methods, because the tank only expends 2 MP in the LOS of the AT Gun, limiting it to no more than two Defensive First Fire shots. Methods (A) and (B) both expend 13 MP in the LOS of the AT Gun, which would allow the Gun up to 13 Defensive First Fire shots (assuming that the Gun could actually retain its ROF that many times).

Just prior to the previous Movement Example, I wrote: 'Whenever a moving AFV is stopped...' Did this wording sound a little strange to you? After all, if a vehicle stops, it is no longer a moving vehicle... right?

Well, this brings us to what is probably the most difficult-to-understand part of vehicular movement in ASL: the three movement 'states' that a vehicle can have, and the confusing terminology that is used to describe them.

A vehicle in ASL can have various combinations of the following three states:

- Motion vehicle
- Stopped or non-stopped vehicle
- Moving Target

It's perfectly natural to think that these are just three different ways of describing the same thing, but these are actually describing three different things. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for you to learn and understand these three movement states and how they interact with one another. If you don't understand them properly, you will become hopelessly confused when trying to figure out how vehicles move and fight in ASL.

The following vehicular movement status summary, written by Ole Boe, a noted ASL rules expert, is the best and most concise summary of these movement states that I have found:

Vehicular Movement Status

moving : A vehicle that is currently executing its MPh.
Motion : A vehicle that is not moving and not stopped.
non-stopped : A vehicle that is moving and not stopped.
Moving Target : A vehicle that is/has been in Motion and/or entered a new hex this Player Turn.

Ole's summary is not just for beginners... I keep a printed copy with my player aids for full ASL as well (the full ASL version has one small addition to the 'Moving Target' line that doesn't apply to ASLSK).

The phrase 'Moving Target' is used interchangeably with the phrase 'Moving Vehicle', but even though they have the same meaning, 'Moving Target' is preferable as it is less likely to be confused with the term 'moving' that simply refers to a vehicle that is executing its MPh.

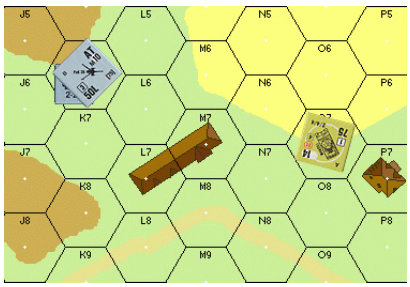

Figure 5.6: Setup for movement example #3.

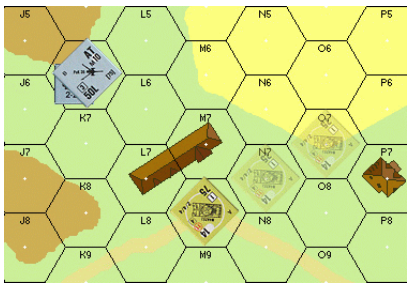

Figure 5.7: The tank moved from vO7 to vM8 using 5 MP (start, change VCA, move 2 hexes and stop). The remaining 9MP are spent as Delay Points.

For example, to ask: 'Is the moving vehicle a Moving Vehicle?' just seems silly, but if we rephrase that question as: 'Is the moving vehicle a Moving Target?' it makes a little more sense. And the question is a valid one, because a vehicle that is moving (executing its MPh) is not always a Moving Target.

Let's examine how these three movement states work in more detail.

A moving vehicle is a vehicle that is currently executing its MPh: a vehicle that is expending MPs to enter new hexes, change its VCA, start and/or stop, etc. Only one vehicle at a time can be a moving vehicle.

A moving vehicle that ends its MPh without stopping becomes a Motion vehicle, and it is marked with a Motion counter. A vehicle that is in Motion remains in Motion until a combat result forces it to stop, or until it begins to execute its next MPh (when it once again becomes a moving vehicle instead of a Motion vehicle). Thus moving and Motion are mutually exclusive: a vehicle can be one or the other, but never both at once.

A vehicle that is moving can be either stopped or non-stopped, and could possibly change back and forth between those two several times in a single MPh. That is, a moving vehicle could expend some MPs, then stop and expend some Delay points, then start again and expend more MPs, then stop again and expend more Delay points, etc., up to the limit of its available MPs.

Stopped/non-stopped status really only applies to moving vehicles, because vehicles that are in Motion are always non-stopped. Vehicles that are not moving and not in Motion are always stopped.

A vehicle is a Moving Target if it is in Motion; it is also a Moving Target if it had been in Motion, or if it entered a new hex, earlier in the current Player Turn. Once a vehicle becomes a Moving Target, it remains a Moving Target until the end of the current Player Turn. Thus it is entirely possible to have a vehicle that is not moving, and is not in Motion, that is nevertheless still a Moving Target.

Players must keep track of these confusing vehicle movement states because of their effect on combat. If you look through the TH DR Modifiers list, you will see several references to Motion, Moving Vehicle (meaning Moving Target), stopped, and non-stopped.

But before we get to actual combat using vehicles, let's look at some more movement examples to demonstrate exactly how these movement states work.

Movement Example #3

Place the following units on board v:

vK6: German 2-2-8 crew
vK6: German 50L AT Gun facing vL5-vL6
vO7: American M4A2(L) facing vN6-vO6, BU

It is the beginning of the American MPh. The American tank is not moving, it is not in Motion, it is stopped, and it is not a Moving Target.

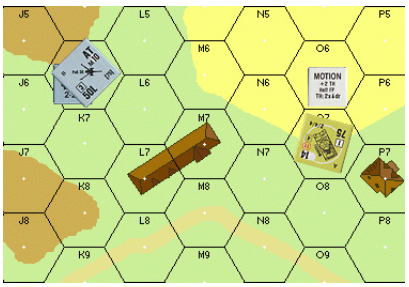

Figure 5.8: Setup for movement example #4.

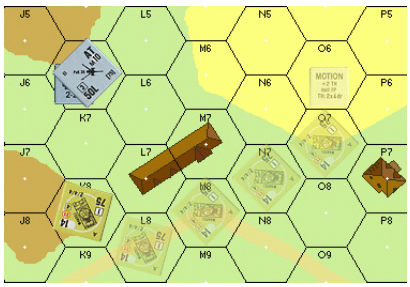

Figure 5.9: The American tank starts in Motion in vO7, changes its VCA to vN6-vN7, moves to vL8, changes VCA again to vK8-vL7 enters vK8 and stops.

Note that if the American player declines to do any activities with this tank during this MPh it will not expend any MPs at all and will remain stationary throughout the MPh.

The American player now announces that the tank will start moving, and it expends 1 MP to start (13 MP remaining). It is now a moving vehicle, or, if you prefer, 'the' moving vehicle (because you can never have more than one moving vehicle at any given time). In addition, it is not in Motion, it is non-stopped, and it is not a Moving Target.

Why is it still not a Moving Target, even though it has begun to expend MPs? Because, so far in this Player Turn, it has not yet been in Motion or entered a new hex, which are the only two things that can give it Moving Target status. And, since the tank cannot be in Motion until after its MPh is complete (remember that moving and Motion are mutually exclusive), the only way for this tank to gain Moving Target status in this MPh is for it to enter a new hex. The M4A2(L) is in a curious state where it is no longer stopped, but not yet a Moving Target.

The tank now spends 1 MP to change its VCA to vN6-vN7 (12 MP remaining), but it still is not a Moving Target. It has now spent 2 MP in the German AT Gun's LOS, which means that the Gun could have fired at it twice, and the tank would not have received the defensive benefit of being a Moving Target for either shot.

The tank now spends 1 MP to enter vN7 (11 MP remaining), which moves it out of the Gun's LOS (the Gun on the hill cannot see over building vM7 to any lower level hex). The tank also finally gains Moving Target status, so it is now: moving, not in Motion, non-stopped, and a Moving Target.

Another MP is spent to enter hex vM8, and then the tank spends 1 MP to stop. The remaining 9 MP are spent as Delay points, which concludes the tank's MPh. The tank is now: not moving, not in Motion, stopped, but still a Moving Target. It will remain a Moving Target until the end of the American Player Turn.

A vehicle that moves as a Moving Target and then stops retains Moving Target status only until the end of the current Player Turn. The tank would therefore have Moving Target status during the German DFPh, but in the following German Player Turn it would not be a Moving Target during the German Prep Fire Phase.

To understand why the tank remains a Moving Target even after it ends its MPh stopped, remember that almost all of the actions that occur during a turn would actually be happening simultaneously in real life. Thus, a tank that comes to a stop during its MPh, and then much later in the turn is fired on in the DFPh, is a Moving Target because, in a real battle, this firing would be occurring as the tank was moving and coming to a stop. Or, to put it another way: choosing to wait until your DFPh to fire at a moving tank that stops does not allow you to treat it as if it spent the entire turn motionless, which would certainly not be realistic.

Movement Example #4

Place the following units on board v:

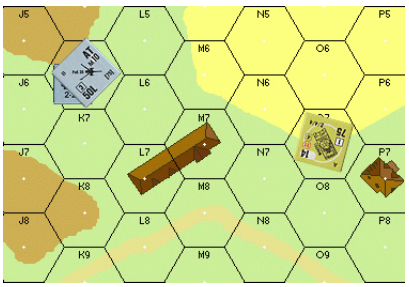

Figure 5.10: Setup for movement example #5.

vK6: German 2-2-8 crew
vK6: German 50L AT Gun facing vL5-vL6
vO7: American M4A2(L) facing vN6-vO6, BU, in Motion

It is the beginning of the American MPh. The American tank is not moving, it is in Motion, it is non-stopped, and it is a Moving Target. This tank has been a Moving Target right from the start of the Player Turn, because it began the Player Turn with a Motion counter on it.

The tank begins its MPh by spending 1 MP to change its VCA to vN6-vN7 (13 MP remaining). The Motion counter is removed, and the tank is now moving, not in Motion, non-stopped, and a Moving Target.

The Tank now spends 4 MP to enter vN7 (paying 3 MP more than necessary, 9 MP remaining), moves to vL8 (7 MP remaining), changes its VCA to vK8-vL7 (6 MP remaining), spends 5 MP to enter vK8 (1 MP remaining), and then stops (all MP expended). After completing its MPh, the tank is not moving, not in Motion, stopped, but still a Moving Target.

And one final movement example:

Movement Example #5

Place the following units on board v:

vK6: German 2-2-8 crew
vK6: German 50L AT Gun facing vL5-vL6
vO7: American M4A2(L) facing vN6-vO6, BU

It is the beginning of the American MPh. The American tank is not moving, it is not in Motion, it is stopped, and it is not a Moving Target.

The tank spends 12 Delay points, and then spends 1 MP to start and 1 MP to change its VCA to vN6-vN7 (all MP expended). Place a Motion counter on the tank. The tank is not moving, it is in Motion, it is non-stopped, and it is a Moving Target.

But it was never a Moving Target during its MPh! The German AT Gun could have taken up to 14 Defensive First Fire shots at the tank, but none of them would have been against a Moving Target. The tank became a Moving Target only when the Motion counter was placed on it, after the tank's MPh was completed.

At this point, if you are getting frustrated with the whole confusing business of: 'moving vehicles are not in Motion' and 'vehicles in Motion are not moving', etc.... well, welcome to the club. It's unfortunate, but the ASL vehicle movement rules use a lot of unnecessarily confusing terminology. The game plays fine once you get used to this terminology, but keep Ole's movement status summary handy... just in case!

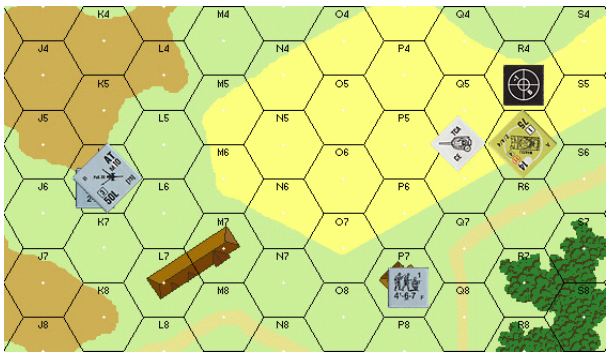

Figure 5.11: Setup for combat example #1.

5.4.1 AFV Combat: Stationary

When ordnance is fired at an Infantry target and scores a hit, the shot is resolved with a DR on the IFT. But firing ordnance at an AFV introduces a new method of resolving a hit: the To Kill process.

Firing ordnance at an AFV is a two-step procedure. First you select the type of ammunition that you wish to fire, figure a TH#, and make a TH DR to see if your shot hits the target. If a hit occurs, you then figure a To Kill number (TK#) from your ammunition type and the target's applicable AF value, and make a TK DR to see if your shot has any effect on the target.

The IFT is usually not used at all when firing ordnance at an AFV, except to resolve any collateral attack on an AFV's exposed crew (Rule 7.12). If the AFV is BU, then no collateral attack can occur.

There's a tremendous amount of material to cover just to demonstrate the most basic elements of combat with AFVs, so this first Combat Example is going to be quite lengthy.

Combat Example #1

Place the following units on board v:

vK6: German 2-2-8 crew
vK6: German 50L AT Gun 'B' facing vL5-vL6
vP7: German 4-6-7 squad
vR5: American M4A2(L) facing vQ5-vQ6, CE, TCA of vQ5-vQ6
vR5: German –1 Acquired Target counter 'B' (from a previous shot)

It is the beginning of the German Prep Fire Phase. The German player decides to fire his AT Gun at the American tank. The Gun has three types of ammunition available: HE, AP, and APCR. The type of ammunition to be used must be selected before the TH DR is made.

When you fire ordnance at a vehicle, you will normally use the Vehicle Target Type (VTT) section of the To Hit Chart. The VTT works in much the same way as the ATT and the ITT, with one important difference: when you fire using the ATT or the ITT, your shot will affect all of the units in the target hex (except that a shot using the ITT cannot affect a BU AFV); but when you fire using the VTT, your shot will only affect the one specific vehicle that you are firing at.

The range here is 7 hexes, which gives a basic TH# of 9 for a German 50L on the VTT.

You'll notice that, along with the addition of the VTT section to the To Hit Chart, the number of possible To Hit modifiers has increased from 18 (in ASLSK #2) to 25. There really are no shortcuts to learning this long list of TH DRMs; just go through the entire list each time you shoot to see which ones apply to that shot. This will become much easier and faster with repetition, and people who play on a regular basis can often actually memorize the list and do all of the TH DRMs for

common situations in their heads. This list looks daunting, and it does take a while to understand everything that affects a TH DR... but once you get the hang of it the system is actually pretty simple to use.

For this first look at a shot against a tank, I'll run through all 25 cases ('NA' means 'not applicable').

Firer Based TH DRMs:
1. NA
2. NA
3. NA
4. NA
5. NA
6. NA
7. NA
8. NA
9. NA
10. NA
11. NA
12. NA
13. NA
14. NA
15. NA
16. NA

Target Based TH DRMs:
17. NA
18. NA (Grain Hindrance does not apply because the Gun is on a higher level than the Grain)
19. NA
20. –1
21. NA
22. –1 (large target)
23. NA
24. NA
25. NA

Thus only two cases on the list apply to this shot, and both of them are obvious just from looking at the map (there's a –1 Acquired Target counter, and the tank's counter shows that it is a large target).

This shot is then a TH9/–2, so the Gun will either score a hit or malfunction... it cannot possibly fire and miss! (An original TH DR of 11 or less is a hit; an original TH DR of 12 is a malfunction). When the VTT is used, a Critical Hit (CH) occurs only on an original TH DR of 2.

The shot will hit the front of the tank, so the AF value used will be 11 for a hull hit, and 8 for a turret hit (a circled '11' means that the turret front armor is one step less than the hull front armor). Assuming that the shot actually hits the target AFV, a turret hit occurs if the colored dr of the TH DR is less than the white dr; if the colored dr is equal to or greater than the white dr, then a hull hit occurs.

AP (Armor Piercing)

The German 50L has a basic TK# of 13 at range 7. This basic TK# would be doubled to 26 if a CH occurs. The final TK# is found by subtracting the target's AF from the basic TK#. Here, a hull hit would have a final TK# of 2 (TK# 13 –11 AF), and a turret hit would have a final TK# of 5 (TK# 13 –8 AF).

Once the final TK# is known, a TK DR is made and the result found on the Direct Fire column of the AFV Destruction Table. Assuming that the final TK# was 5 for a turret hit, the possible results of the TK DR are as follows:

TK DR 4 or less Elim (flip AFV over to wrecked side)

TK DR 5 Shock

TK DR 6 Possible Shock (crew NMC)

TK DR 7 or more no effect

The tank's exposed crew would also be attacked with a 2/+2 (2 FP from the 50mm AP, Rule 6.2; +2 DRM from the partial protection of the tank, Rule 7.7) collateral attack (Rule 7.12) on the IFT using the TK DR, but this will have no effect: a TK DR of 4 or less would be needed for the collateral attack to affect the crew, but such a DR would simply kill the tank outright in this situation. Collateral attacks are not resolved if the AFV is killed or shocked by the primary attack.

A Shock result forces the AFV to immediately BU (if CE) and stop (if moving or in Motion). It is marked with a Shock counter, and must attempt to recover in the RPh as described in Rule 7.10. It can do nothing at all until it recovers, and any acquisition it might have gained against another target is lost. A Possible Shock result requires the AFV crew to take a NMC using the Morale value of that nation's best unbroken Elite Infantry; the AFV is shocked if this NMC is failed (which is the only adverse result that this NMC can have).

Shock is one of the most interesting results of AFV combat, and when it occurs it adds a lot of uncertainty to the battle. A shocked tank is either dead or completely unharmed... but neither player knows for sure! Do you keep shooting at a shocked enemy tank to try to ensure a kill? Or do you give up your acquisition and switch to another target, and hope that the shocked tank doesn't later recover and rejoin the battle?

If the shot had hit the hull, resulting in a final TK# of 2, the possible results of the TK DR would be as follows:

TK DR 2 Immobilized, collateral attack 1MC

TK DR 3 Possible Shock (crew NMC), collateral attack NMC if not shocked

TK DR 4 collateral attack PTC

TK DR 5 or more no effect

The M4A2(L)'s front hull armor is thick enough that the 50L cannot get an Elim result against it at this range with a normal hit (the TK DR cannot be less than 2). But with no chance to kill the tank, and only a slight chance to shock it, there are several chances for the collateral attack (2/+2 on the IFT) to possibly affect the exposed crew.

Note also that there is nothing special about an original TK DR of 2... a TK DR is one of the few instances in ASL/ASLSK that rolling an original DR 2 doesn't trigger some special result.

APCR (Armor Piercing Composite Rigid)

Regular AP rounds would sometimes shatter on impact, doing little or no damage to the target AFV. This led to the development of the APCR round, which had a shatter-proof core made of tungsten. APCR rounds were much more effective than regular AP rounds, but they were never available in large quantities.

Shots with APCR are resolved in exactly the same way as shots with AP.. they will just have a higher basic TK#, but a lower collateral attack value (1 FP).

If the German 50L had successfully fired using APCR, the basic TK# of 17 would have given a final TK# of 9 for a turret hit and 6 for a hull hit.

Possible results for an APCR turret hit:

TK DR 8 or less Elim (flip AFV over to wrecked side)

TK DR 9 Shock

TK DR 10 Possible Shock (crew NMC)

TK DR 11 or more no effect

Possible results for an APCR hull hit:

TK DR 5 or less Elim (flip AFV over to wrecked side)

TK DR 6 Immobilized

TK DR 7 Possible Shock (crew NMC)

TK DR 8 or more no effect

HE (High Explosive)

Normally it is quite difficult to kill an AFV using HE, but the American tank here is vulnerable to HE because of its exposed crew. (Leaving a tank CE this close to enemy forces is often a bad idea, but I've done so in this example because it allows me to demonstrate a number of different rules.)

The 50L's HE round has a basic TK# of 6, as found on the HE and Flame To Kill Table. This TK# is too low to defeat the American tank's armor, and even a CH (TK# of 12) would only have a chance of a kill against the weaker turret armor. But the collateral attack from the HE round will be a 6/+2 against the exposed crew.

Possible results for a non-CH HE hit:

original TK DR 2 collateral attack 2MC

original TK DR 3 or 4 collateral attack 1MC

original TK DR 5 collateral attack NMC

original TK DR 6 collateral attack PTC

original TK DR 7 or more no effect

In reviewing the types of ammunition that the German 50L AT Gun could use in this situation, APCR definitely gives it the best chance of killing the American tank. But APCR is a depletable ammunition, so there's no guarantee the Gun will actually be able to use it. HE has no chance of killing the American tank, barring a CH on the turret, but its collateral attack could force the AFV to BU or even stun it.

If an AFV crew suffers a Pin result, it must BU immediately (but no Pin counter is placed).

If an AFV crew fails a MC that was not caused by a Possible Shock result, the AFV is marked with a stun counter. A stunned AFV must immediately BU and stop, and may not move or attack for the remainder of that Player Turn. At the end of the Player Turn, the stun counter is flipped over to its +1 side, which adds a +1 DRM to all of that AFV's future TH, IFT, CC, and MC DRs.

Note that there are 'stun' counters, and 'STUN' counters, which are two different conditions. You can think of a stun counter as representing a wounded AFV commander, while a STUN counter could represent a dead AFV commander. A STUN counter is placed on an AFV if its exposed crew suffers a K or KIA result, or if the crew rolls an original DR 12 on a MC that was not caused by a Possible Shock result, or if a crew that has already been stunned once is stunned a second time.

A STUN counter has the same effect as a stun counter, except that the AFV is recalled and it must exit the map via a friendly board edge as soon as possible once it regains the ability to move (Rule 7.10). Thus a stun result allows an AFV to continue fighting, but a STUN result forces an AFV to withdraw from the battle.

The German Gun, of course, could continue to fire at the American tank until it loses ROF, and then it could choose to use Intensive Fire to take one more shot.

The German 4-6-7 squad in building vP7 can also fire at the American tank, because the crew is CE. This attack would be a 4/+2 on the IFT, with the +2 DRM again being due to the partial protection that the tank offers its exposed crew. The squad would need to roll a DR 5 or less for its attack to have any effect.

The squad could also try to fire a Panzerfaust (PF) at the tank, but this would have little chance of success. First, the range is 3 hexes, so this action would have to be taking place in 1945 for a PF to even be able to hit a target that far away. Next, the squad would have to see if they have a PF ready to fire, which would require a PF availability dr of 4 or less (–1 drm for 1945). The basic TH# for a PF at range 3 is 4, so the shot would be either TH4/+1 (+2 avoid backblast, –1 large target) or a TH4/–1 if they choose to not avoid the backblast.

They are unlikely to score a hit if they avoid the backblast, and if they accept the backblast they have a good chance of harming themselves (Rule 4.4.3). However, should they fire a PF and hit the tank, well... there's no point wasting time calculating a TK# for a PF hit; just make a DR to check for a dud (original DR 12). If it's not a dud, the tank is killed. PFs are so incredibly powerful that only one Allied tank in ASLSK #3 even has a chance of surviving a PF hit: the Russian IS-2m, and it only has a chance to survive if the PF hits its front hull (26 AF)!

Note that in the ASLSK rules, a PF is the only weapon that suffers a dud on an original TK DR of 12, but in full ASL, an original TK DR of 12 is a dud for all weapons.

Let's assume that the German units fired at the American tank with no effect, and that no German units moved in the MPh, which will allow us to explore the American attack options in the DFPh.

The American M4A2(L) can fire its MA and all three of its MGs, and the MA can possibly fire multiple times if it retains ROF. This AFV is equipped with an AAMG, which can fire in any direction without penalty (it does not have a CA). However, an AAMG can only be fired (and repaired) if the AFV is CE.

If the tank wants to fire MGs at the 4-6-7 squad in vP7, the AAMG is currently the only MG that can fire at it. An attack by the AAMG alone would be a 4/+2 on the IFT, and the MA, BMG, and CMG could then be used against the German AT Gun in vK6.

The CA change DRMs that apply when a Gun fires outside its CA, listed in #8 on the TH DR Modifiers list, also apply to the IFT DR if a BMG fires at a target outside the VCA, or a CMG fires at a target outside the TCA.

If the tank wanted to fire both the AAMG and the CMG at the 4-6-7, the TCA would have to change to vQ6-vR6. The resulting shot would be a 8/+3 (+2 TEM, +1 T TCA change), and the BMG could still be used against the AT Gun. If the tank then fired the MA at the 4-6-7, the +1 T TCA change DRM would apply to that shot as well (the CMG and the MA would actually be firing simultaneously at the 4-6-7, so the TCA change would affect both attacks), or the MA could fire at the AT Gun, which again would have a +1 T TCA change DRM for turning the turret back to its original facing.

You might think that, if you turn the turret to fire the CMG at the squad, and then turn the turret back to fire the MA at the Gun, that the MA's shot would have a +2 TCA change DRM because of the two turret turns (+1 each)... but it doesn't work that way. CA change DRMs are never cumulative when firing at different targets. In other words, when you fire at a target and then change CA to fire at a different target, only the CA change DRM involved in turning from the first target to the second target applies; any CA change DRM that applied to the attack on the first target is ignored for the attack on the second target.

If the tank wanted to fire the BMG and the CMG at the 4-6-7, it would have to change its VCA to vQ6-vR6. This shot would be a 6/+5 (+2 TEM, +3 NT VCA change). The AAMG could then be used against the AT Gun, but could not make a separate attack on the 4-6-7, because Mandatory FG applies to an AFV's MGs.

The tank could also fire all three MGs at the 4-6-7, but this 10 FP attack would actually only be an 8/+5 because the IFT does not have a '10' column. Thus nothing is gained by firing the BMG in

conjunction with the other two MGs, so the tank would be better off just turning the turret to fire the CMG & AAMG at the 4-6-7 (8/+3) and using the 2 FP BMG to fire at the AT Gun.

Let's assume that the tank decided to fire the AAMG at the 4-6-7 (4/+2) and the BMG & CMG at the AT Gun (6/+2) and that these two attacks had no effect. No TCA or VCA changes were necessary for these attacks. The tank can now select a target for its MA. (Note that the tank could have fired its four weapons in any order that it wished; there is no requirement that the MGs fire before the MA.)

The M4A2(L) can fire HE, AP, Smoke, and WP, but in this demonstration it will only fire HE against the German Infantry targets.

If the tank fires at the AT Gun at a range of 7 hexes, the basic TH# using the ITT is 7. The TH DRMs would be +2 TEM (emplaced Gun) and +1 small target, making the shot a TH7/+3. The Gun does not get the +1 Height Advantage TEM because it already has a positive TEM from being emplaced, and it also cannot use the +2 gunshield TEM for the same reason (although if the tank scores a hit that is not a Direct Hit, the gunshield +2 DRM would then apply to the IFT roll).

A hit on the Gun is resolved as a 12/+0 IFT attack. If this attack does not result in a K or KIA (which represent a Direct Hit on the Gun itself) you then add +2 to the IFT DR (the gunshield +2 TEM) to find the result that is applied to the crew. In other words, if the 12/+0 does not result in a Direct Hit, you then treat it as a 12/+2 because of the gunshield.

If there was another squad in the AT Gun's hex, the tank's HE shot using the ITT could hit it as well. Against this additional squad the shot would be a TH7/+1 (+1 Height Advantage TEM). If the tank then rolled a TH DR of 5, the shot would miss the Gun and its crew ($5 + 3 = 8$) but it would hit the additional squad ($5 + 1 = 6$) which would then suffer a 12/+0 attack on the IFT. A TH DR of 4 or less would hit both the Gun/crew and the additional squad.

If the tank wishes to fire its MA at the 4-6-7, it must change its TCA to vQ6-vR6. The shot at range 3 using the ITT is a TH8/+3 (+1 T TCA change, +2 TEM). Had the tank chosen to change its VCA instead of its TCA, then the shot would be a TH8/+5 (+3 NT VCA change, +2 TEM).

And finally, note that an AFV does not have to be in Motion in order to change its VCA when firing, nor does such a VCA change cause an AFV to gain Motion status.

A battle between a tank and a Gun, as depicted in the previous example, will tend to favor the Gun unless the tank's armor is too thick for the Gun to penetrate. The Gun will usually get the first shot as the tank moves into position to attack. It is easier to score a hit on a tank than to score a hit on a Gun, and the Gun will often have a higher ROF than the tank. In addition, even if the Gun's crew does break, there's always a chance that they might rally and get the Gun back into action... but a knocked-out tank is permanently lost.

Take a look at case #13 on the TH DR Modifiers list: if an AFV is BU it has a +1 DRM added to its TH DR. This did not come into play in the above Combat Example, but it is one of the most commonly used DRMs. Players will often face a difficult choice in deciding whether to be CE to avoid this +1 DRM, or to be BU to keep the AFV crew safe from IFT attacks and HE. And for those who might be considering moving to full ASL at some point, note that this choice becomes even more critical in ASL... as CE AFV are prime targets for ASL snipers, who can attack without warning and knock a tank out of the battle with a single rifle shot!

Whenever a hit on a AFV will result in a TK DR, you must determine which target facing the shot actually hit: front, side, or rear. An AFV's strongest armor is always in the front, so avoiding a side or rear shot is often a top priority for a player with AFVs. Unlike a weapon's CA, which is rather limited, an AFV's front target facing is quite generous; a firing unit must be way off to the side to qualify for a side shot.

To see how this works, set up an American tank as in the previous Combat Example (in vR5, VCA of vQ5-vQ6) and refer to the target facing diagram on page 11 of the ASLSK #3 rules.

- a shot from vP2 would hit the tank's front
- a shot from vQ3 would hit the tank's side
- a shot from vO10 would hit the tank's front
- a shot from vP9 would hit the tank's side

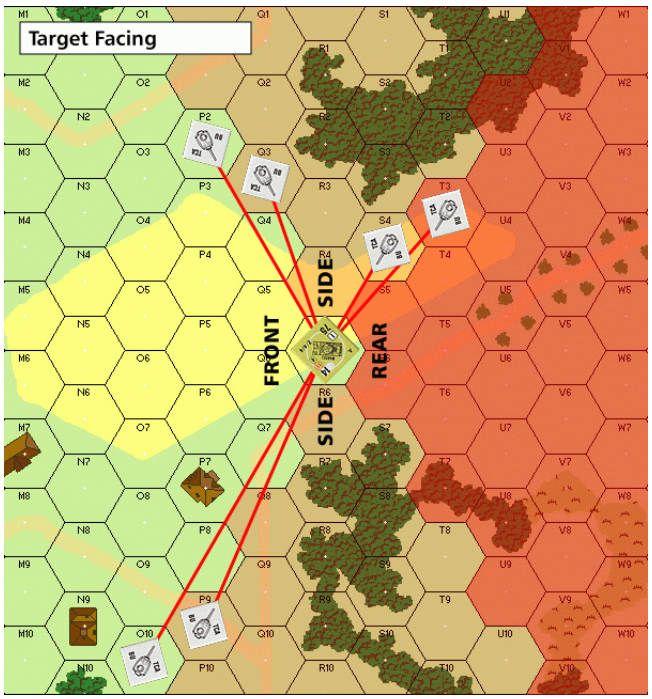

Figure 5.12: Schematic overview of target facing.

- a shot from vS4 would hit the tank's side
- a shot from vT3 would hit the tank's rear

5.4.2 AFV Combat: Movement

The first Combat Example, despite its length, was pretty straightforward: nobody moved. But in battles where AFVs are present, movement is likely to play a key role. When the attacker has tanks, the defender must find ways to limit their mobility advantage.

Combat Example #2: 'The Art of Tank Hunting'

Place the following units on board v:

vP7: broken American 6-6-6 squad (no DM)
vY3: German Pz VG facing vX2-vX3, BU

It is the start of the German MPh. The German player wants to move the Pz VG (Panther), but, upon seeing the asterisk next to the tank's MP value, checks the back of the counter and then the 'Vehicle and Ordnance Historical Notes' booklet, and learns that the Panther must make a stall DR each time it expends a Start MP. A stall result can represent one of two things: the engine stopped unexpectedly and has to be restarted, or a transmission problem has prevented the tank from shifting into gear.

The tank spends 1 MP to start (14 MP remaining) then rolls a DR 12... it stalls! The German player makes another DR, a 5, so the tank has to spend 1 MP to stop (13 MP remaining) and then 4 Delay points (9 MP remaining). The tank's driver — no doubt cussing loudly in German — tries again. The tank spends 1 MP to start (8 MP remaining) and the stall DR is a 10... success!

The tank now drives down the road, planning on moving adjacent to the broken American squad to put a DM counter on it and force it to rout away.

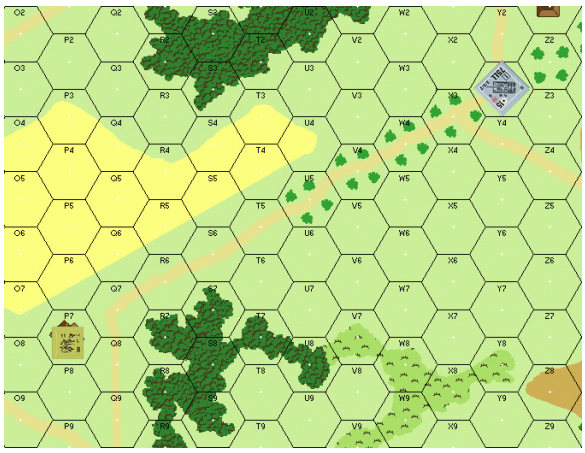

Figure 5.13: Setup for combat example #2.

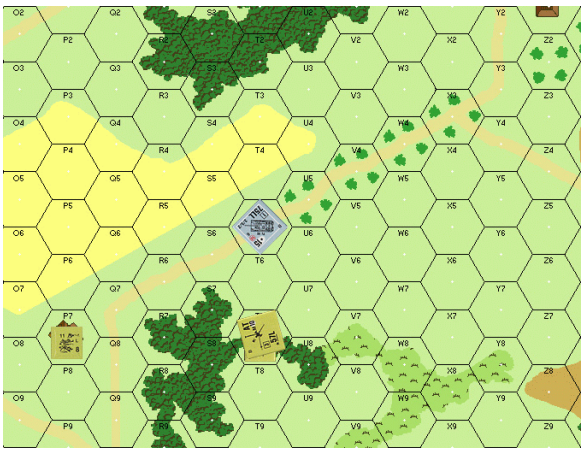

Figure 5.14: The HIP American crew and 57L AT appear on the board.

- 1 MP is spent to enter vX3 (7 MP remaining)...
- 1 MP is spent to enter vW4 (6 MP remaining)...
- 1 MP is spent to enter vV4 (5 MP remaining)...
- 1 MP is spent to enter vU5 (4 MP remaining)...
- 1 MP is spent to enter vT5 (3 MP remaining)...

At which point the American player triumphantly yells: 'I have a shot!' The tank's movement is paused here so that the American player can take a Defensive First Fire shot.

An American crew is now placed on the map in vT7, along with an American 57L AT facing vT6-vU7. After placing these units, the American player gives the German player the piece of paper on which he had recorded the location and facing of his HIP AT Gun & crew, so that the German player can verify that they have been placed correctly.

The American player decides to fire AP. The 57L has a basic TH# of 10 at range 2 when using the VTT. The TH DRMs are: –1 large target, and +2 Moving Target (Moving Vehicle) with more than 3 MP spent in the Gun's LOS (case 24). Case #25, –1 for 2-hex range, does not apply because the target is not stopped. The shot is thus a TH10/+1, so a TH DR of 9 or less will score a hit.

If a hit occurs, the basic TK# for the 57L is 16, and the Panther's side AF is 6, which gives a final TK# of 10. The possible results of a hit are:

TK DR 9 or less Elim (flip AFV over to wrecked side)

TK DR 10 Shock if turret hit; Immobilized if hull hit

TK DR 11 Possible Shock (crew NMC)

TK DR 12 no effect

The Panther has very little chance of surviving this attack. What little survival chance it does have comes from it being a Moving Target. But if it does somehow survive, then it is the AT Gun that is doomed: before the Gun can fire a second shot, the tank would spend 1 MP to change its VCA to vS6-vT6. With this VCA change, the 57L could now only hit the Panther's front, and most of its shots would bounce harmlessly off of that thick armor unless a CH occurs. The Gun's crew, on the other hand, would not last long against the MG and HE fire of the tank.

After the VCA change, the Panther would end its MPh by spending 1 MP to stop, and its last MP as a Delay point.

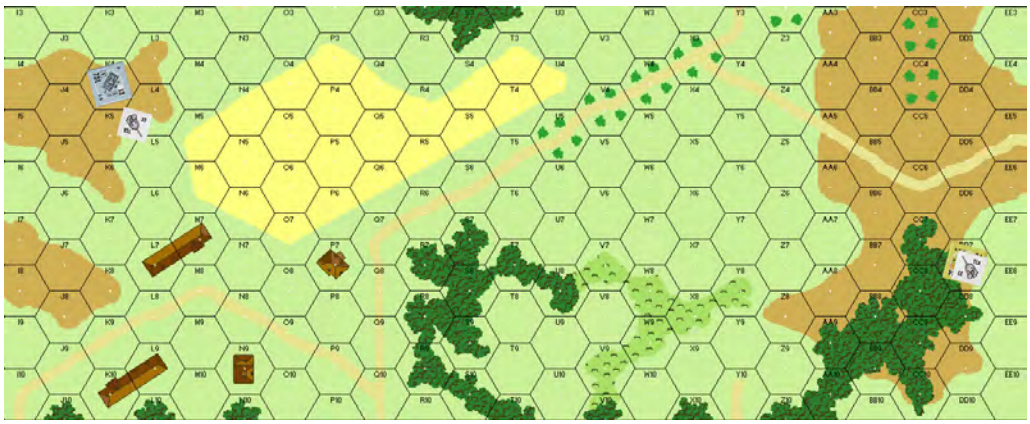

Figure 5.15: Setup for combat example #3.

In this situation, there were only two road hexes in which the 57L could get a good side shot against the tank: vT5 and vU5. A shot fired at vV4 would have hit the tank's front armor, and a shot fired at vS6 would have hit the tank's side armor but with an additional +6 CA change TH DRM (+3 doubled because of Woods).

It's interesting to note that, if the Panther had changed its VCA to vX3-vY4 before moving down the road, the Gun would never have had a side shot at it. This, of course, is completely unrealistic: in real life there's no way a tank could drive down that road without giving up a side shot to the hidden Gun at some point. This is not a flaw in the game system... stuff like this is bound to occur whenever you constrain movement & firing to an artificial hexagonal grid. But it is a good example of how ASL's depiction of reality will always fall short of the real thing, even though the game usually does a good job of convincing you that it really is realistic.

This Combat Example demonstrates just how vitally important the ability of Guns to set up using HIP is. The American 57L AT Gun is totally out-classed when facing a Panther; it has almost no chance of knocking one out... unless it can use a HIP set up to get a side shot, which turns it into a deadly threat to a Panther.

Few things will slow down your opponent's armored assault more than having a HIP Gun hidden somewhere on the map. In a real game, knowing that a 57L was hiding somewhere, a prudent German player would not have dared to move the Panther at all! He would have first sent Infantry to sweep through the Woods on both sides of the road, looking for that hidden Gun. And the American player, of course, would have set up his own Infantry to try to prevent this. While this Infantry battle raged, the German armor would be stuck in place, unwilling to do more than offer some long range fire support to the German Infantry as long as the location of the Gun remains unknown.

But if you then add in victory conditions that require the German armor to move, and a time limit that makes it impossible to win if the armor is too cautious, things could get a little... tense.

The meta-game that can develop when one player has AFVs that need to move, and the other player has Guns that can set up HIP, can become incredibly interesting as they try to outguess and outwit one another. But a closer look at the tactics involved is unfortunately outside the scope of this chapter.

Combat Example #3: 'Tank vs Tank'

Place the following units on board v:

vK4: German Pz IVH facing vJ4-vK5, CE, TCA of vK5-vL4
vDD7: American M4A2(L) facing vCC7-vDD6, CE

It is the start of the American MPh. Both tanks have only AP and HE ammunition remaining. There is no LOS between these two tanks, as it is blocked by the Woods in vCC7. Note that because both tanks are on a hill, only LOS obstacles that are also on a hill can block LOS between them.

The American M4A2(L) first expends 10 Delay points (4 MP remaining). It then spends 1 MP to start (3 MP remaining), and 1 MP to enter vDD6, changing its TCA to vCC6-vCC7 as it moves (2 MP remaining).

A LOS now exists between the two tanks; the range is 19 hexes. A shot from the German Pz IVH would hit the American tank's front armor, but a shot from the American tank would be a side shot if it hits the German tank's hull. Thus the German tank is in a vulnerable position, and it needs to change its VCA so that the hull's front armor is facing the American tank.

AFVs have the unique ability to fire during their MPh (assuming, of course, that they did not fire in their Prep Fire Phase). Firing during movement is called Bounding First Fire, and any vehicle that takes such a shot is marked with a Bounding Fire counter (unless it retains ROF). Obviously, whenever both attacking and defending units can fire during movement, the potential for confusion will be high, so here is a summary of how the Defensive First Fire/Bounding First Fire combination works:

- After each MP expenditure, both Defensive First Fire and Bounding First Fire may occur.
- Defensive First Fire occurs before Bounding First Fire.
- Defensive First Fire may result in multiple shots if multiple MPs were used in the MP expenditure (assuming ROF and/or Intensive Fire allows multiple shots).
- Bounding First Fire is limited to a single shot per MP expenditure, even if multiple MPs were used.
- After using Defensive First Fire, a weapon that retains the ability to shoot (due to ROF or Intensive Fire) may use Defensive First Fire again after any future MP expenditure, regardless of how many MPs are actually used.
- After using Bounding First Fire, a vehicle that retains the ability to shoot (due to ROF or Intensive Fire) may use Bounding First Fire again, but only after expending at least 1 additional MP.

The defender clearly has the advantage here. He gets to shoot first and may possibly get to take more shots, and take them more often. But the attacker faces an even more serious problem: WWII-era tanks could indeed fire while moving, but their chances of actually hitting a target with such a shot are usually pretty slim. Thus a stationary defender is far more likely to score a hit than is a moving attacker.

After the American tank spends the 1 MP to move into LOS in vDD6 there are two shot possibilities. First, the German tank has the option to take one Defensive First Fire shot. Then, regardless of whether or not a Defensive First Fire shot occurred, the American tank (if it survived any Defensive First Fire shots) has the option to take one Bounding First Fire shot.

Let's see what chance of success these shots might have.

Defensive First Fire: The German 75L has a basic TH# of 8 when using the VTT at a range of 19 hexes. The German tank needs to get his front armor facing the Americans, and he needs to get his TCA turned to face the target. Changing the VCA to vK5-vL4 will accomplish both goals (the turret turns along with the tank, so the TCA will change to vL3-vL4 when the VCA changes).

The TH DRMs for this shot are thus: +3 NT VCA change, –1 large target, +4 Moving Target with 1 MP in firer's LOS (case 24), making the shot a TH8/+6. The shot is unlikely to score a hit, but it would get the hull's front armor facing in the correct direction and put an Acquired Target counter on the American tank. And since a TH DR of 2 is needed, a hit will also be a CH.

The German player could also choose to just change his TCA, which would result in a +1 T TCA change DRM instead of the +3 NT VCA change DRM, making the shot a TH8/+4. This would give the tank a better chance of scoring a hit, but leave it vulnerable to a side hull hit.

Bounding First Fire (BFF): The American 75 has a basic TH# of 7 when using the VTT at a range of 19 hexes. The only applicable TH DRM for this shot is +6 BFF with less than 2 MP in LOS (#14), making the shot a TH7/+6. This shot cannot score a hit (even a CH will miss), and it would not allow the American tank to place an Acquired Target counter, so it would be pointless to actually fire.

Note: The ASLSK #3 rules do not actually prohibit a vehicle that is in Motion or using BFF from gaining acquisition when it fires, but designer Ken Dunn has stated that acquisition should not be allowed under these conditions. This will certainly be corrected in some future errata, so you may want to go ahead and disallow acquisition by a vehicle in Motion or using BFF, which is exactly how it works in full ASL as well.

There is another penalty that would also apply to this shot. Because the American tank did not come to a stop before firing, once the TH DR is made the lower of the two drs must be doubled. Doubling the lower dr further reduces your chance of scoring a hit, assuming you had any chance of scoring a hit to begin with. This is case 16, Motion Fire, on the TH DR Modifiers list. (Again we encounter potentially confusing terminology... this case should really be titled 'Motion/Non-Stopped Firer' as it is in full ASL.)

A lot of players get confused about how to use cases 14 and 16 on the TH DR Modifiers list, so I'll try to clarify the usage: If you take a BFF shot while stopped, you use case 14; if you take a BFF shot while non-stopped, you use case 16, which tells you to also use case 14. In other words, the 'add case 14' text found in case 16 is simply reminding you that case 14 also applies... it's not telling you to add in case 14 twice!

It works the same way if a vehicle fires in the AFPh: If the vehicle is not in Motion, use case 14; if the vehicle is in Motion, use case 16 and case 14.

There are two cases on the TH DR Modifiers list that are MP-dependent: case 14 and case 24. The only time that you have to actually count MPs is when a shot takes place during the MPh, and the firing unit and the target have been out of LOS at some point during that MPh. In all other instances, case 14 will always be +4 or +5, and case 24 will always be +2.

In this current Combat Example, the two tanks began the American MPh out of LOS, and the American tank has so far only spent 1 MP in LOS, which made case 14 a +6 (T turret) and case 24 a +4 in the TH calculations above.

Now, having looked their respective chances of scoring a hit, what should our players do here?

The German player gets to fire first, but he will decline to shoot. The American tank is currently no threat to him, and he would prefer to let the American tank spend more MP in LOS to increase his own chances of hitting. The American player of course will not fire, because his shot would have no chance of success.

Please note that I am going through these TH calculations in exhaustive detail simply to help you learn how these game mechanisms work. In a real game between experienced players, none of these TH calculations would have been made... both players would be well aware that the American tank can't hit the broadside of a barn until it stops, and the German tank doesn't need to be concerned about it until it does stop. In other words, this tutorial is probably making the game sound much more difficult to play than it actually is.

The American player now announces that he will attempt to fire his Smoke Mortar (sM8, see rule 7.5). His usage DR is 5, which is successful so he places a +2 Dispersed Smoke counter in vBB6 and expends 1 MP (1 MP remaining). If the Smoke Mortar usage had failed, there would not have been any MP cost. The American player, understanding that the German has the initial advantage in this fight, placed the Smoke to reduce the chance of the German tank scoring the first hit. The Smoke will disappear at the start of the next American Prep Fire Phase.

The American tank has now expended 2 MP in LOS, and once again the German player has the option to take a Defensive First Fire shot, after which the American player could take a BFF shot.

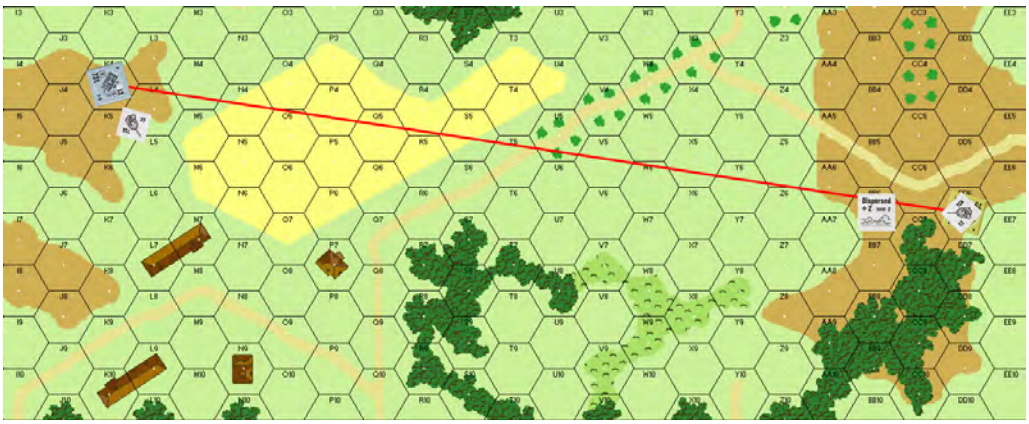

Figure 5.16: The American M4A2(L) first expends 10 Delay points, starts and enters vDD6, changing its TCA to vCC6-vCC7 as it moves. It then places Smoke in vBB6 and stops.

Both players decline to fire, however, since the addition of the +2 Hindrance from the Smoke will make the shots even less likely to hit than they were previously.

The American tank then spends its last MP to stop, for a total of 3 MP spent in LOS.

Now the German player has a concern. With the American tank stopped, case 16 will not apply if it takes a BFF shot... but the German player decides that the +2 Smoke Hindrance will probably prevent a BFF shot from being a serious threat. Let's see if his judgment is correct.

Defensive First Fire: If the German tank fires, its shot will be a TH8/+7 (+3 NT VCA change, +2 Smoke, –1 large target, +3 Moving Target with 3 MP in LOS). There's no chance of scoring a hit.

Bounding First Fire: If the American tank fires, its shot will be a TH7/+7 (+5 BFF with 3 MP in LOS, +2 Smoke). No chance of scoring a hit.

The American MPh is now over.

In the DFPh, the German tank fires AP with a TH8/+6 shot (+3 NT VCA change, +2 Smoke, –1 large target, +2 Moving Target case 24). The VCA changes to vK5-vL4 and the TCA changes to vL3-vL4. The TH DR is 4 (colored dr is 1), so the shot misses but ROF is retained. A –1 Acquired Target counter is placed on the American tank.

The German tank now fires again, and this time the shot is a TH8/+2 (+2 Smoke, –1 acquired target, –1 large target, +2 Moving Target case 24). The TH DR is 7 (colored dr is 3) which is a miss. ROF is lost, and the Acquired Target counter is flipped over to its –2 side. This ends the DFPh.

This second shot had much more chance of scoring a hit, primarily because it did not have the +3 NT VCA change DRM that applied to the first shot. This illustrates an important point: if you must move into the LOS of an enemy AFV/Gun, try to do so outside of that unit's CA. If the defending unit doesn't have to change its CA to fire at you, it's going to have a good chance of scoring a hit.

In the AFPh, the American tank may take one Bounding Fire shot at the Pz IVH because it is not already marked with a Bounding Fire counter. ROF will not apply. The shot is a TH7/+6 (+4 Bounding Fire case 14, +2 Smoke). The shot cannot score a hit, but the American player takes it anyway (making a TH DR only to check for a weapon malfunction) in order to put a –1 Acquired Target counter on the German tank.

Note that case 1 applies only to an AFPh shot taken by a vehicle that didn't move. A vehicle that moves and then fires in the AFPh must use case 14 instead of case 1.

The RtPh is skipped (no broken units). The APh is skipped: vehicles cannot move in the APh, and the American player declines to use the APh to BU. And the CCPh is skipped.

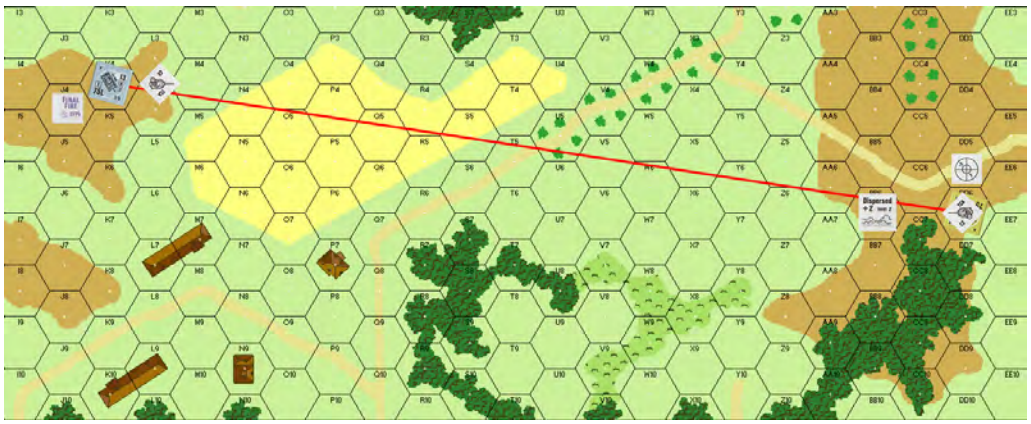

Figure 5.17: The German tank fires AP, changes VCA to vK5-vL4 and TCA to vL3-vL4. It then takes a second shot.

With the end of the American Player Turn, the M4A2(L) ceases to be a Moving Target.

The German tank will fire again in the Prep Fire Phase. The shot is a TH8/–1 (+2 Smoke, –2 acquired target, –1 large target), so a TH DR of 9 or less will be a hit. The 75L has a basic TK# of 16 at a range of 19 hexes, so the possible results of a hit are:

Turret hit with a final TK# of 8:

TK DR 7 or less Elim (flip AFV over to wrecked side)

TK DR 8 Shock

TK DR 9 Possible Shock (crew NMC)

TK DR 10 or more no effect

Hull hit with a final TK# of 5:

TK DR 4 or less Elim (flip AFV over to wrecked side)

TK DR 5 Immobilized

TK DR 6 Possible Shock (crew NMC)

TK DR 7 or more no effect

The American tank, if it survives, will return fire in the DFPh. The shot is a TH7/+1 (+2 Smoke, –1 acquired target), so a TH DR of 6 or less will be a hit. Any subsequent shots will have a –2 acquired target DRM, so they will be a TH7/+0. The 75 has a basic TK# of 13 at a range of 19 hexes, so the possible results of a hit are:

Turret hit with a final TK# of 7 (13 - 6):

TK DR 6 or less Elim (flip AFV over to wrecked side)

TK DR 7 Shock

TK DR 8 Possible Shock (crew NMC)

TK DR 9 or more no effect

Hull hit with a final TK# of 5 (13 - 8):

TK DR 4 or less Elim (flip AFV over to wrecked side)

TK DR 5 Immobilized

TK DR 6 Possible Shock (crew NMC)

TK DR 7 or more no effect

This is now a very even matchup. The German tank is slightly more likely to score a hit, and slightly more likely to score a kill with a turret hit. The key difference between these two tanks is that the German high-velocity 75L is a better antitank weapon than the American 75: it is more accurate at long range, and it has better armor penetration (even though the American tank has better armor protection than the German tank).

The previous Combat Example developed in a way that was typical of real WWII tank battles: stationary tanks exchanging shots at long range. But battles of maneuver did occur during the war, and you will see them occur quite often in ASL/ASLSK scenarios.

A word of warning: the next Combat Example is extremely complex. It's probably going to feel more like an advanced master class than a beginner's tutorial... and I did agonize about whether I should even include it. But if you are going to use armor effectively in ASL/ASLSK, you really need to see how the rules all come together in a wild mobile battle situation.

However, if you are not yet completely comfortable with the concepts discussed to this point, you may wish to skip over Combat Example #4 for now and continue on with 'AFV Combat: Miscellaneous.' You don't need to go through this combat example in order to start playing the scenarios included in the game.

Combat Example #4: 'How to Kill a Tiger'

Place the following units on board u:

uL7: Russian T-34 M41 'E' facing uM7-uM8, BU, in Motion
uM8: Russian T-34 M41 'D' facing uN7-uN8, BU, in Motion
uN8: Russian T-34 M41 'C' facing uO8-uO9, BU, in Motion
uO3: Russian T-34 M41 'B' facing uO4-uP3, BU
uQ2: Russian T-34 M41 'A' facing uQ3-uR2, BU
uT6: German Pz VIE facing uS6-uS7, BU
uV2: German Pz IVH facing uU2-uV1, BU, Immobilized

For the sake of simplicity, all of these vehicles will fire only standard AP rounds in this battle. It is the start of the Russian MPh, and the Russians have a problem... the Pz VIE Tiger tank.

The T-34 M41 is totally out-matched when facing a Tiger. With an AP TK# of about 13, the T-34s can't get an outright kill against the Tiger's front armor without a CH. But the Tiger, with an AP TK# of about 20, will kill a T-34 with almost every hit it scores! In addition, the T-34s have RST turrets: they must be BU to fire their MA, so all of their shots must use the +1 DRM from case 13. (In the T-34 M41, the tank commander also served as the gunner for the MA/CMG, so when he's propped up in the open hatch those weapons can't be fired.)

If the Russians choose to simply move into LOS and trade shots with the Tiger, they will almost certainly lose: the five T-34s will likely be turned into wrecks long before a Russian CH occurs. But they can increase their chances of killing the Tiger by the use of aggressive maneuvering.

Two lessons from the previous Combat Example will play an important role in this battle:

- The Russians will want to move into the Tiger's LOS while outside of the Tiger's TCA, to decrease the chance of the Tiger scoring a hit on them.

- The Tiger can probably ignore any T-34 until it expends a Stop MP, because case 16 makes it difficult for a non-stopped T-34 to score a hit.

The Russian objective here will be to try to get a side or rear shot at the Tiger from point blank range, which will give them their best chance of knocking it out with a single shot. The T-34s will be charging hard. The German objective is to avoid giving up a side or rear shot, and to kill as many of the T-34s as possible. If the Tiger can survive this MPh and eliminate some T-34s, it might have a chance to win this battle. The Germans have to make each of their shots count.

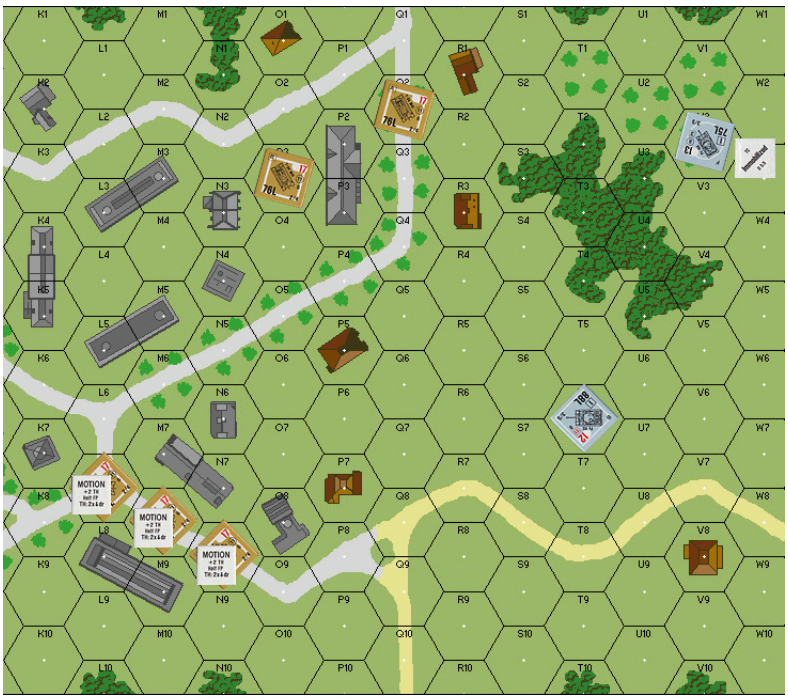

Figure 5.18: Setup for combat example #4.

The MPh begins with T-34 M41 'A' spending 1 MP to start (16 MP remaining). This tank model suffers from Mechanical Reliability problems (indicated by its red MP value), so the Russian player must make a DR whenever this tank starts. If the Mechanical Reliability DR is a 12, the tank is immobilized... which would probably be disastrous for the Russians. But the DR is a 2, so the tank starts safely.

Had the Mechanical Reliability DR been an 11, the T-34 M41 would have stalled, as explained in Russian Vehicle Note M in the 'Vehicle and Ordnance Historical Notes' booklet. This stall possibility on a Mechanical Reliability DR applies only to certain Russian vehicles, and is (surprisingly) not indicated anywhere on the tank counter itself, so you have to check the historical notes to know about it.

Tank 'A' then spends 2 MP to move to uQ4 (14 MP remaining), which is in the Tiger's LOS but outside of its TCA. As the T-34 moves into its LOS, the Tiger has a couple of defensive options available to it:

- It could fire its Smoke Discharger (sD7), Rule 7.5
- It could make a Motion Status attempt, Rule 3.3.2.1

These defensive options, if successful, would make it harder for the Russians to hit the Tiger... but they would also make it nearly impossible for the Tiger to score a hit itself. If the game situation is such that the defending tank needs to kill some of the attacking tanks, then these special defensive options should be avoided. If the defending tank simply wants to try to escape, then smoke dispensers and Motion Status attempts might be useful. Here, the German player elects to stand and fight.

The German player doesn't want to allow the T-34 to simply drive up and get a side shot, but he won't fire until the T-34 has spent at least 4 MP in LOS, so that the TH penalty from case 24 is only +2.

Tank 'A' now spends 2 MP to move to uS5 (12 MP remaining). It has now spent 4 MP in the Tiger's LOS. If the German player were to declare a Defensive First Fire shot using the 88L at this point,

the shot would be a TH10/+5 (+2 ST TCA change, +1 BU, +2 Moving Target). A TH DR of 5 or less would be needed for a hit, which is not a great shot, so the Tiger holds its fire.

Tank 'A' spends 1 MP to enter uT5 (11 MP remaining). A shot from this hex would be a side shot, unless the Tiger elects to shoot first and changes its VCA/TCA to do so. If the Tiger decides not to shoot, a Bounding First Fire shot by the T-34 would be a TH10/+4 (+1 BU, +4 BFF, –1 large target), with the lower dr doubled due to case 16. A TH DR of 6 or less would normally result in a hit, but case 16 will dramatically reduce the actual chances of a hit:

TH DR results with lower dr × 2

1,1 = 3 : hit (critical hit)

1,2 = 4 : hit

1,3 = 5 : hit

1,4 = 6 : hit

1,5 = 7 : miss

2,2 = 6 : hit

2,3 = 7 : miss

2,4 = 8 : miss

3,3 = 9 : miss

So four of the possible DRs that would normally result in a hit will now result in a miss due to the doubling of the lower dr. If you were to take the time to count this out, looking at all 36 possible results of rolling two colored dice, you would find that 8 of the 36 possible DRs will result in a hit, giving a 22% chance of a hit.

But if the T-34 stops before firing, case 16 will not apply, and a –2 DRM from case 25 (point blank range) will. A stopped T-34 would thus have a TH10/+2, with a 72% chance of scoring a hit! It's easy to see why the Tiger might be willing to ignore a T-34 until it stops.

I unfortunately don't know of any shortcuts for estimating how much harder it will be to score a hit when the lower dr is doubled. Personally, I just assume that any shot taken with the lower dr doubled is probably going to miss.

Tank 'A' now spends 1 MP to enter uU6, 1 MP to change its VCA to uT6-uU7, and 1 MP to stop (8 MP remaining). Now the T-34 has stopped and has a rear shot (+1 to the TK# if a hit is scored); the Tiger must respond with Defensive First Fire.

If the Tiger fires its 88L MA, it has two options:

- Change VCA: TH10/+5 (+4 NT VCA change, +1 BU, +2 Moving Target, –2 case 25 point blank range)
- Change TCA only: TH10/+4 (+3 ST TCA change, +1 BU, +2 Moving Target, –2 case 25 point blank range)

Changing the VCA is safer, in that it prevents the T-34 from getting a side or rear shot... but turning just the turret gives the Tiger a better chance of scoring a hit and killing the T-34, and it at least gets the Tiger's impenetrable front turret armor facing the T-34.

This aggressive Russian maneuvering has presented the German player with a painful dilemma: he wants to take the best shot he can, because he desperately needs to kill some of the Russian tanks... but if he does take the best shot available, he'll leave himself at least partially vulnerable to a return shot from the T-34, if it survives.

The German player elects to change his TCA only, by two hexspines to uT5-uU6, and takes the TH10/+4 shot. The TH DR is 6 (colored dr is 1), so a front turret hit is scored on the T-34, and ROF is maintained. The TK# is 13 (21 - 8) which is a guaranteed kill. Tank 'A' is flipped over to its wrecked

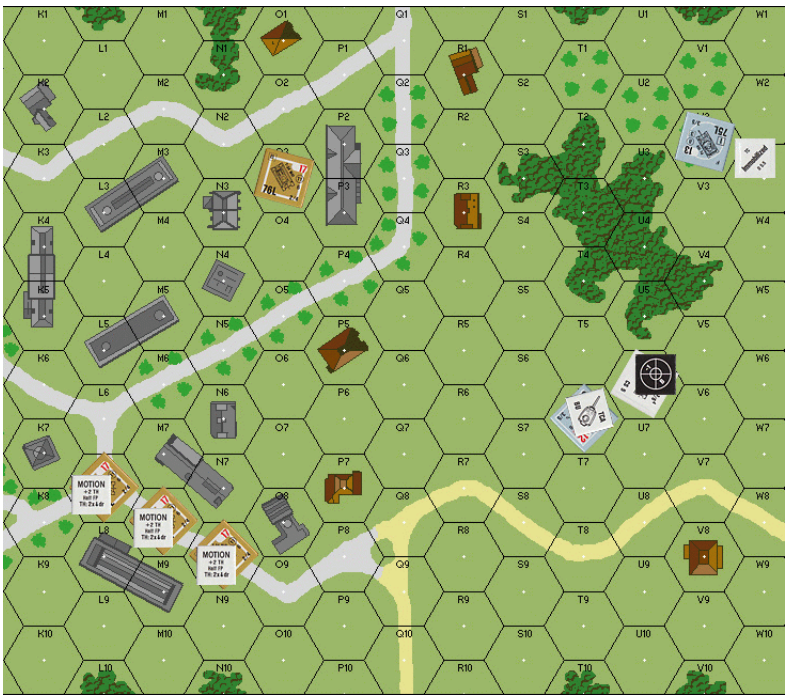

Figure 5.19: Russian tank 'A' starts and moves to uQ4 and then to uS5. The Tiger does not fire. The T-34 then moves to uT5 and on to uU6, changes VCA to uT6-uU7 and stops. It now has a rear shot on the Tiger. Unfortunately the Tiger changes TCA and manages to score a front turret hit, wrecking the T-34.

side, and a –1 Acquired Target counter is placed in uU6. The Acquired Target counter might seem to be useless, since the Tiger obviously has no need to fire at a wrecked T-34, but should another T-34 attempt to move into or through uU6, the Tiger could use the –1 Acquired Target counter to fire at it (which would transfer the Acquired Target counter from the wreck to the new target).

The Tiger can no longer fire its Smoke Discharger (the sD7 must be fired before any other weapon is fired), but it could still make a subsequent Motion Status attempt because it retained ROF and thus is not yet marked with a First Fire counter.

Tank 'C' will move next. Since this tank is already in Motion, no Mechanical Reliability DR is required.

Tank 'C' spends 2 MP to move to uP9, 1 MP to change VCA to uP8-uQ9, 4 MP to move to uT7, and 1 MP to stop (9 MP remaining). By stopping in uT7 instead of uU7, the Russian player forces the Tiger to make a two hexspine TCA change in order to shoot at him.

The Tiger again takes a Defensive First Fire shot as soon as the T-34 stops, changing TCA to uT7-uU7. This shot is again a TH10/+4, and the TH DR is 8 (colored dr is 3), so the shot misses and ROF is lost. A First Fire counter is placed on the Tiger, and the –1 Acquired Target counter is placed on Tank 'C'.

Tank 'C' now takes its Bounding First Fire shot, which is a TH 10/+2 (+1 BU, +4 BFF, –1 large target, –2 point blank range). The TH DR is 10, which is a miss. A Bounding Fire counter is placed on Tank 'C'.

Tank 'C' now spends 1 Delay point (8 MP remaining). The Tiger could now take an Intensive Fire shot, but declines to do so because there are other T-34s yet to move. But Tank 'C' does decide to take an Intensive Fire shot. This shot is a TH10/+4 (+2 Intensive Fire, +1 BU, +4 BFF, –1 large target, –2 point blank range), and the TH DR is 11, which is a miss and the 76L MA malfunctions. Tank 'C' is marked with an Intensive Fire counter and a MA Malfunction counter.

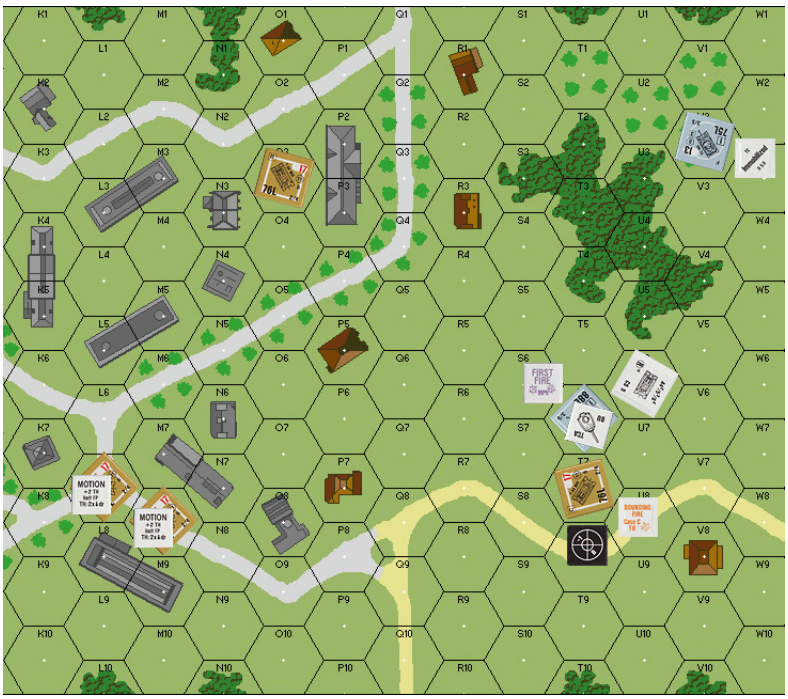

Figure 5.20: Russian tank 'C' moves to uP9, changes VCA to P8-uQ9, moves to uT7 and stops. The Tiger changes TCA to uT7-uU7 and takes a Defensive First Fire shot that misses. Tank 'C' takes a Bounding First Fire shot at the Tiger, but also misses.

Tank 'C' now spends 1 MP to start (Mechanical Reliability DR is 6), 2 MP to move to uV6, 2 MP to change VCA to uU6-uU7, 1 MP to stop, and 2 Delay points. This move gets Tank 'C' out of the way of the T-34s that have yet to move. The Tiger's –1 Acquired Target counter follows the T-34 as it moves, because the T-34 did not leave the Tiger's LOS.

Tank 'D' now spends:

- 2 MP to move to uO9
- 1 MP to change VCA to uO8-uP8
- 2 MP to move to uQ8
- 1 MP to move to uQ7
- 1 MP to change VCA to uR6-uR7
- 3 MP to move to uT5
- 1 MP to change VCA to uT6-uU6
- 1 MP to stop
- (5 MP remaining)

The German player declares an Intensive Fire shot against it as soon as it stops. The Tiger's TCA changes to uT5-uU6, and the shot is a TH10/+6 (+3 ST TCA change, +2 Intensive Fire, +1 BU, +2 Moving Target, –2 point blank range). The TH DR is 8 which is a miss. The Tiger is marked with an Intensive Fire counter, and the –1 Acquired Target counter is removed from Tank 'C' and placed on Tank 'D'. The First Fire counter that was on the tank is removed, and not flipped over to the Final Fire side like it would be for a Gun's crew, because there is no 'manning unit' for a tank.

Fire counters are normally placed on an AFV only for that vehicle's MA. The non-MA MGs can each only fire once, so it's usually easy for the players to remember which ones have fired without the

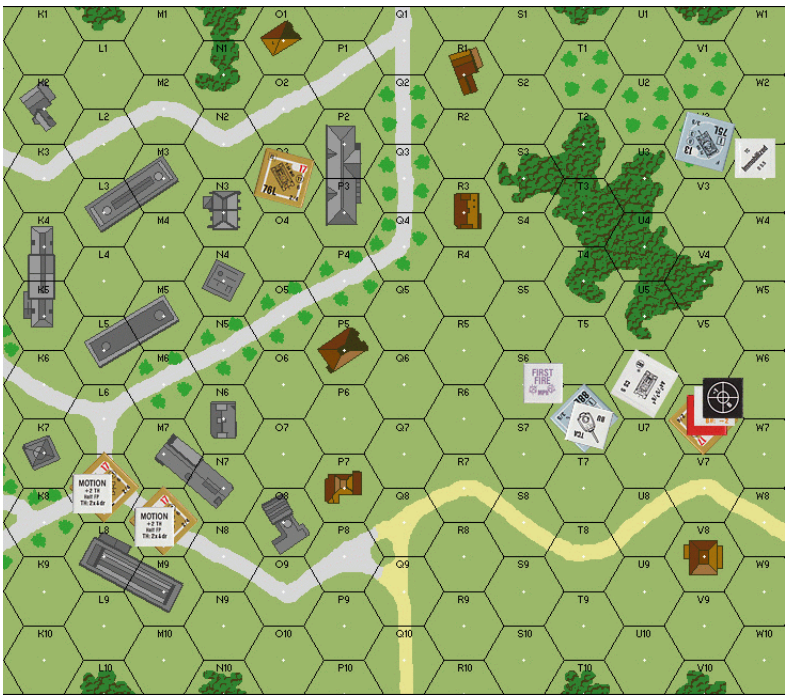

Figure 5.21: Tank 'C' takes an Intensive Fire shot at the Tiger, but misses and malfunctions. It then moves out of the way for the other T-34s to uV6 and changes VCA to uU6-uU7.

need to clutter up the map with additional multiple fire counters. Note, however, that a Defensive First Fire shot taken with a non-MA MG will still prevent that vehicle from making a subsequent Motion Status attempt, even though an actual First Fire counter might not be placed on the vehicle.

Tank 'D' now takes a Bounding First Fire shot, a TH10/+2 (+1 BU, +4 BFF, –1 large target, –2 point blank range). The TH DR is 3 (colored dr is 2), so a side hull hit is scored on the Tiger. The TK# is 6 (14 - 8), and the TK DR is 11, which has no effect. Tank 'D' is marked with a Bounding Fire counter.

Tank 'D' spends 1 MP to start (Mechanical Reliability DR is 10), 2 MP to enter uU6 (1 MP plus 1 additional MP for the wreck), 1 MP to change its VCA to uT6-uU7, and its final MP to stop.

The T-34 now takes an Intensive Fire shot, which is a TH10/+4 (+2 Intensive Fire, +1 BU, +4 BFF, –1 large target, –2 point blank range). The TH DR is 5 (colored dr is 3) which scores a rear hull hit on the Tiger. The TK# is 7 (14 - 8, +1 for rear target facing), and the TK DR is 8, resulting in a possible Shock.

Tiger crews were composed of elite combat veterans, so they have a Morale Level of 9 (ML:9 on the back of the counter) instead of the Morale Level 8 used by other German AFVs. The MC DR is 9, so the crew is not Shocked. The hit thus has no effect, and Tank 'D' is marked with an Intensive Fire counter.

Tank 'E' now spends:

- 4 MP to move to uP9
- 5 MP to move to uU7
- 2 MP to change VCA to uT6-uU6
- 1 MP to stop
- (5 MP remaining)

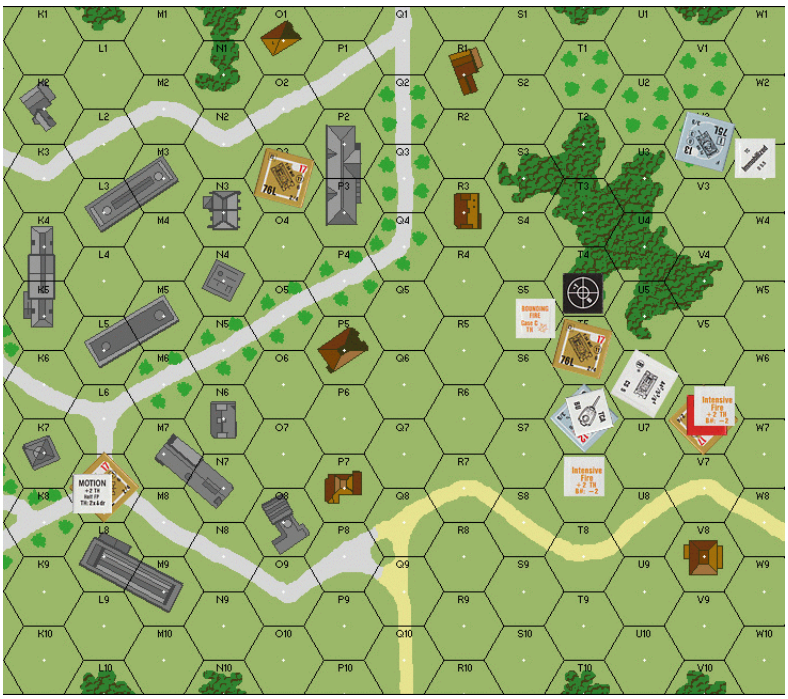

Figure 5.22: Tank ‘D’ moves to uT5, changes VCA to uT6-uU6 and stops. The Tiger now takes an Intensive Fire shot at the T-34 but misses. Tank ‘D’ takes a Bounding First Fire shot that results in a side hull hit, but to no effect.

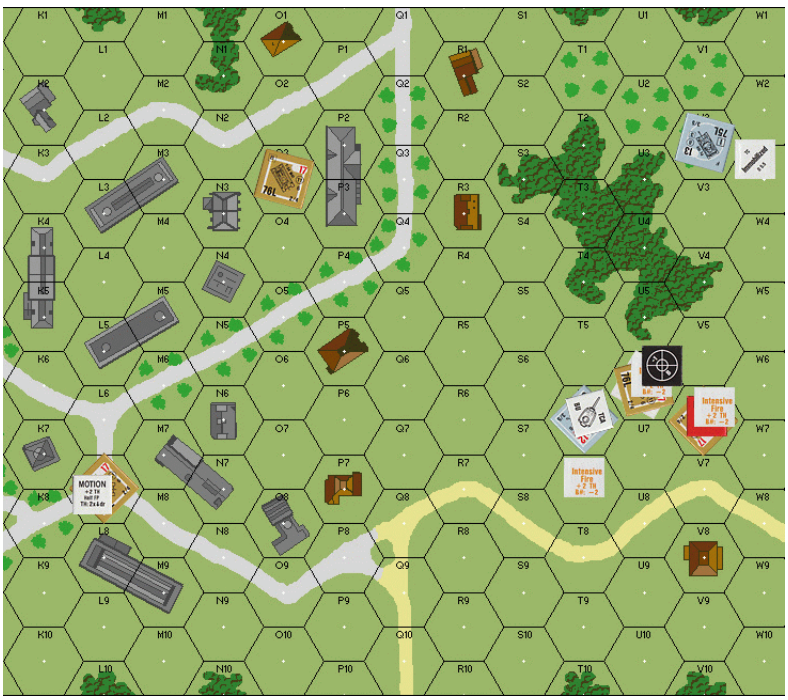

Figure 5.23: Tank ‘D’ starts and moves to uU6, changes VCA to uT6-uU7 and stops. It then takes an Intensive Fire shot that scores a rear hull hit. This results in a possible Shock, but the Tiger crew succeeds the morale check.

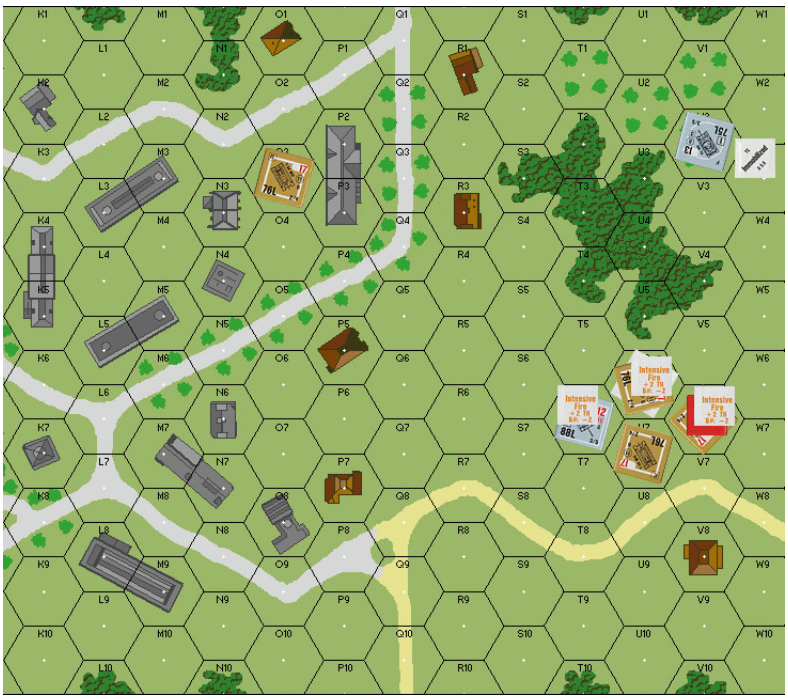

Figure 5.24: Tank ‘E’ moves to uU7, changes VCA to uT6-uU6 and stops. The Tiger changes VCA and TCA to uT7-uU7 firing its CMG.

Faced with the possibility of a T-34 getting two shots at the rear of the Tiger’s hull, the German player fires the Tiger’s CMG at Tank ‘E’, changing both the VCA and the TCA to uT7-uU7. The Tiger’s turret counter can now be removed because the VCA and TCA are identical and the tank is BU.

The CMG cannot possibly harm the BU T-34, so the IFT DR is meaningless except to see if the CMG malfunctions, which does not occur with a DR of 4. Note that, had this shot been able to damage the target, the combined effect of the two-hexspine VCA change and the two-hexspine TCA change would have added a +7 DRM to the IFT DR. Remove the –1 Acquired Target counter from Tank ‘D’.

This is a perfectly legal shot: there is no rule that prevents you from making an attack that cannot possibly harm the target. And although you might think that firing a MG just to get your front armor facing the enemy is a sleaze tactic, it is an accepted part of the game, and even a necessary part. The combination of (A) vehicles with high MP values, and (B) the close range battles that are typical of ASL scenarios played on the geomorphic mapboards, would make it far too easy to just drive past your opponent to get a side or rear shot. Defending AFVs must be able to respond to such manoeuvres, but there must also be a limit as to how many times they can react. Linking such reactions to the firing of a MG, while certainly gamey and unrealistic, is a very simple solution that, most of the time, works quite well.

Tank ‘E’ thus finds itself facing the nearly impregnable front armor of the Tiger. But the Russian player has an answer to that.

Tank ‘E’ spends 1 MP to start (Mechanical Reliability DR is 7), 2 MP to enter uT6 (1 MP plus 1 additional MP for the Tiger!), 1 MP to enter uS6, changing its TCA to uS7-uT6 as it does so, and its final MP to stop. It once again has a rear shot on the Tiger.

The Tiger now fires its last weapon, the BMG, at Tank ‘E’, changing its VCA to uS6-uT5. The IFT DR is 6, so the BMG does not malfunction. Tank ‘E’ is once again facing the Tiger’s front armor... but the Tiger has now absolutely, positively used up all of its possible defensive options for this MPh.

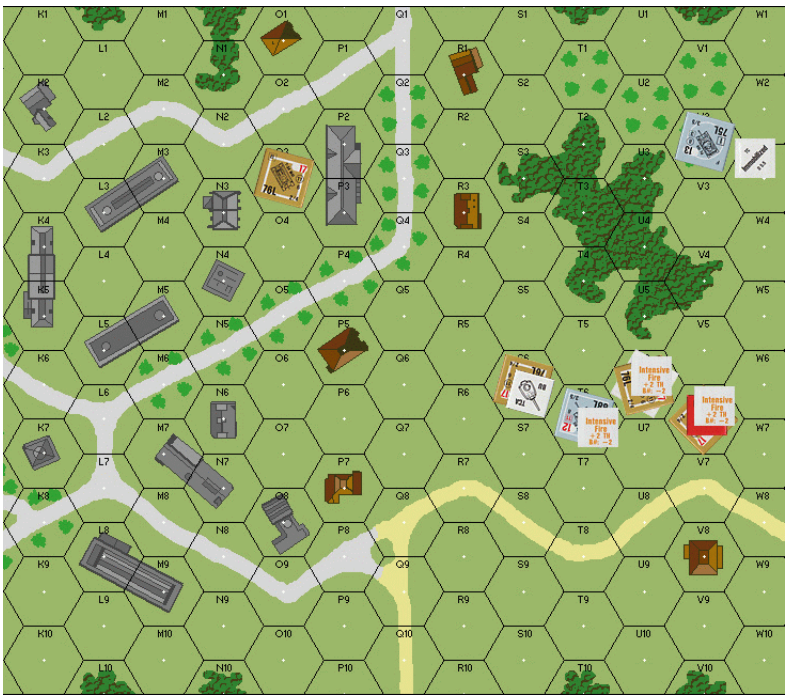

Figure 5.25: Tank ‘E’ starts again and moves to uS6 through uT6, changes VCA to uS7-uT6 and stops. It again has a rear shot at the Tiger. The Tiger fires its BMG, changing VCA to uS6-uT5, so to T-34 again faces the Tiger’s front armor.

> Tank ‘E’ has used up all of its MP, so it will only be able to fire once. The Russian player therefore decides to wait, and take this shot during the AFPh. Shooting in the AFPh won’t give the shot any better chance of success, but it will allow Tank ‘E’ to place a –1 Acquired Target counter on the Tiger.
>
> Tank ‘B’ can now simply drive over to uT7, stop, and take two point blank shots at the Tiger’s rear armor (Bounding First Fire, followed by Intensive Fire). The German player has no options remaining and can do nothing to prevent this.
>
> The Russians have successfully obtained the attack opportunity that they wanted, but if Tank ‘B’ fails to kill the Tiger, the German player may have a good chance of winning this battle: the T-34s will be terribly vulnerable to the Tiger’s shots in the following German Prep Fire Phase.

The Immobilized Pz IVH was on the map simply to give the Russians a reason to not drive around the Woods to get behind the Tiger. I wanted to demonstrate how aggressive maneuvering can result in side and rear shots, even when you have to drive right at the target.

ASL players refer to this type of swarming attack, where numerous weak tanks try to overwhelm a single strong tank, as a ‘Dance of Death’ attack. I believe that this term was first used by J. R. Tracy, as the title of his article describing the technique that was published in the British ASL newsletter ‘View from the Trenches’ (issue 26/27), although the swarming attack technique itself has been a part of ASL right from the start.

5.4.3 AFV Combat: Miscellaneous

We’ve so far looked at a lot of obvious ways of attacking an AFV... now here’s a way that is not so obvious: firing HE ammunition using the Area Target Type (ATT). This technique is not often used, but it can sometimes actually improve your chances of stopping an enemy AFV.

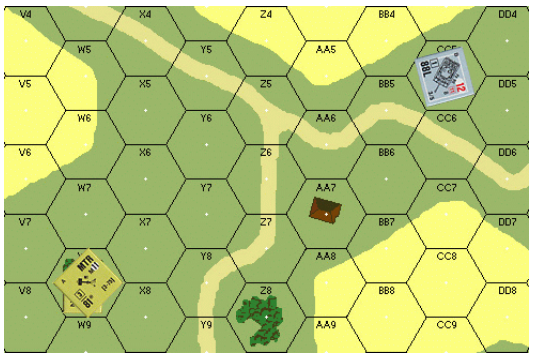

Figure 5.26: Setup for combat example #5

Combat Example #5: 'How to Kill a Tiger, Revisited'

Place the following units on board t:

tW8: American 2-2-7 crew
tW8: 81* MTR facing tX7-tX8
tCC5: German Pz VIE facing tBB5-tCC6, BU

Okay, if you ever actually find yourself firing a mortar at a tank, it's a good indication that you're having a really bad day. Mortars simply are not known for their tank-killing prowess. But... it would be a mistake to think that a tank cannot be hurt by a mortar!

Here, the American 81* MTR will fire HE ammunition using the ATT at a range of 6 hexes. The shot is a TH7/–1 (–1 large target). If a hit is scored, it will be resolved with a DR on the IFT instead of a TK DR. Shots using the ATT are always resolved on the IFT.

The IFT DR will be on the 8 FP column, with a +1 DRM because all of the Tiger's AF are equal to or better than 8. This +1 DRM is found in Note 3 on the AFV Destruction Table, and also in Rule 7.11. Note, however, the typo at the end of Rule 7.11: it should read '+1 if all AF are greater than or equal to 8.' The AFV Destruction Table is somewhat difficult to read, but on this table only the 'K' results apply to the Area Target Type column. Thus, if the IFT DR is less than a K result, the Tiger is eliminated; and if the IFT DR is equal to a K result, or one greater than a K result, the Tiger would be either immobilized or shocked. With the ATT, you use the IFT DR to determine the location of the hit (hull or turret) instead of the TH DR. The AFV Destruction Table simply summarizes what's already in the rules, so, when in doubt about how to read it, just refer back to the appropriate rule (in this case, 7.11).

A hit by the 81* MTR on the Tiger would have these results:

Normal Hit (8 FP column)

original IFT DR 2 or 3 : immobilized or shocked

original IFT DR 4 or more : no effect

Critical Hit (30 FP column)

original IFT DR 2, 3, 4 : eliminated

original IFT DR 5 or 6 : immobilized or shocked

original IFT DR 7 or more : no effect

Mortars must use the ATT in order to attack an AFV, but this technique can also be used by Guns. Whenever you find yourself facing an AFV that can only be defeated by getting a CH with AP ammunition, check to see what your chances would be if you switched to HE and the ATT... you may find that the chances of getting some result on the target might actually be better. The tricky part

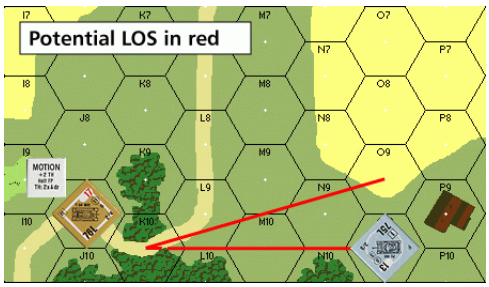

Figure 5.27: Setup for terrain example #1

is deciding if giving up the possibility of multiple shots via ROF is a worthwhile trade for a single ATT shot with a slightly better chance of affecting the target.

AFVs & Terrain

As you have seen in the earlier chapters in this series, Open Ground is simply deadly to Infantry. But this is not true for an AFV, which will often prefer to remain in Open Ground.

An AFV does get a defensive benefit from being in high TEM terrain, just like Infantry does, but there are several negative effects involved when an AFV enters a Woods or building hex:

- The movement cost for an AFV to enter such a hex is quite high.
- A Bog Check is required, which could potentially leave the AFV immobilized.
- High TEM terrain severely penalizes shots taken outside of a weapon's Covered Arc (CA).

In short, mobility is arguably an AFV's greatest asset... and setting up in, or moving into, high TEM terrain sacrifices much of that mobility. Sacrificing mobility to gain a TEM benefit is a decision that you'll always want to consider carefully.

Another interesting aspect of Open Ground is that an Armored Car pays 3 MP to enter while a tank pays only 1 MP to enter. The reason for this is that the MP value for an Armored Car reflects its movement ability when on a road. On-road, an Armored Car is many times faster than a tank, but, off-road, that same Armored Car may be no faster — and may possibly even be slower — than a fully-tracked tank.

Terrain Example #1

Place the following units on board t:

tJ9: Russian T-34 M41 facing tK9-tK10, BU, in Motion
tO10: German Pz IVH facing tN9-tN10, BU

It is the start of the Russian MPh. The T-34 wants to use the cover of the trees to engage the German tank. There are three ways in which it can do this.

(A) The T-34 can expend half of its MP allowance (8.5 MP) to enter tK9, 1 MP to stop, and 7.5 MP in Delay. Entering a Woods hex requires a Bog Check (Rule 7.6). A Bog Check requires a DR on the Bog Check chart, which can be found inside the To Hit Chart folder. This Bog Check DR would have a +3 DRM for entering a Woods hex at half MP. A Bog DR of 9 or more would result in the T-34 bogging: it would immediately stop and be marked with a Bog counter, which ends its MPh. A bogged vehicle cannot move or change its VCA until it removes the Bog status by making a successful Bog Removal DR at the start of its MPh.

(B) The T-34 can expend all of its MP allowance to enter tK9 and stop. A Bog Check DR must still be made but no DRM would apply, so only a DR of 12 would cause a Bog. In this case, the T-34 is moving more slowly and carefully than it did in (A), which greatly reduces its chances of bogging.

Note that here the tank's MP expenditure is counted differently depending upon whether it wishes to stop or not. If it wishes to stop, it pays 16 MP to enter tK9 and 1 MP to stop; if it wishes to remain in Motion, it pays 17 MP to enter tK9. Even though it requires all of a vehicle's MP to enter a Woods hex without incurring the +3 Bog DRM, you may still use 1 MP to start or stop in conjunction with that move. Had the T-34 not been in Motion at the start of its MPh, it could have paid 1 MP to start, 15 MP to enter tK9, and 1 MP to stop.

Also note that if the T-34 did not begin its MPh adjacent to the Woods hex, it would not have the option to spend all of its MP to enter the Woods. If an Armored Car does not begin its MPh adjacent to a Woods hex, it cannot enter that Woods hex at all (except along a road).

(C) The T-34 can expend 1 MP to enter tK10 along the road, 1 MP to stop, and 15 MP in Delay. No Bog Check is made.

As you can see, a Woods-Road hex is ideal terrain for an AFV: there's no extra MP cost to enter, there's no chance of a Bog, and the AFV will receive a +1 TEM benefit against most shots.

If the German Pz IVH does fire at the T-34 as it enters tK10, the +1 TEM will apply because the LOS crosses (just barely) the Woods depiction in tK10. However, if the Pz IVH was in tO9 instead of tO10, then a First Fire shot against the moving T-34 in tK10 would not have a +1 TEM, because the LOS runs along the road without crossing any Woods depiction. A road can only negate the +1 TEM when the target is moving along the road during a MPh; if the target is not moving using the road movement rate, or if the shot does not occur during the target's MPh, then the +1 TEM will always apply regardless of whether the LOS follows the road or not.

And finally,

(D) the T-34 could choose to ignore the road altogether and enter tK10 using the methods described in (A) and (B), in which case it would have to make a Bog Check DR, but it would also receive a +1 TEM to all shots against it.

Driving into a building with a tank works just like driving into the Woods, except that you must be BU, and you do not have the option to reduce your Bog chances by expending all of your MP to enter the building hex. Driving into a building will always involve a Bog Check DR with at least a +3 DRM (wooden building) or a +4 DRM (stone building).

Players who are planning on moving to full ASL at some point really should not get into the habit of driving into buildings: in full ASL, a tank driving into a building not only has to run the risk of bogging, but there's also a chance that it could fall through the floor into a cellar, or that the entire building could collapse into a heap of rubble on top of it!

5.5 AFVs in Close Combat

There will be times when Infantry will find themselves facing an enemy tank without having any useful anti-tank weapons available. When this occurs, they'll just have to fight it the old-fashioned way: advance into its hex and attack it with Close Combat.

A number of things change in Close Combat whenever a vehicle is present:

- All CC attacks are sequential instead of simultaneous, with each side alternating in making one attack at a time. Thus if a unit is eliminated by a CC attack before it gets a chance to make its own attack, it will not be able to attack at all.
- The non-vehicular side always attacks first, unless there's an ambush.
- No more than two units (one of which must be a SMC) may combine to attack a vehicle.

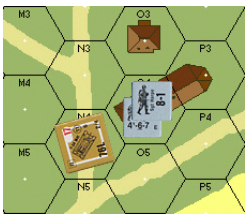

Figure 5.28: Setup for close combat example #1

- Vehicles are attacked using a unit's Close Combat Value (CCV) instead of its FP.
- A vehicle attacking in CC may only use its CMG, RMG, AAMG (if CE), MA IFE (if turreted and less than 15mm in caliber), or Nahverteidigungswaffe close defense system.

Close Combat Example #1

Place the following units on board t:

tN4: Russian T-34 M41 facing tN3-tO4, BU
tO4: German 4-6-7, 8–1

It is the German APh. The German squad and leader want to advance into the T-34's hex to engage it in Close Combat. The leader can advance into the T-34's hex at will, but the squad must pass a Pre-AFV Advance/Attack Task Check (PAATC) before they can advance (Rule 3.7). If the squad fails this PAATC, they remain where they are and are pinned (they couldn't find enough courage to dare to approach the enemy tank).

To pass a PAATC, the DR must be equal to or less than the squad's Morale. The squad will get a –1 DRM to their PAATC thanks to the presence of the 8–1 leader. Their PAATC DR is an 8, which becomes a 7 with the –1 DRM, so the squad and the leader both advance into tN4. Place a CC counter on tN4.

In the CCPh, the Germans will attack first. The squad and leader choose to combine to make a single attack on the T-34. Their CCV is 6 (5 for the squad, +1 for the extra SMC) which is their CC Kill Number for this attack (the Close Combat Table's odds chart is not used when you are attacking an AFV using your CCV), and they will have a –1 CC DRM from the 8–1's leadership. If their original CC DR is 6 or less, the T-34 will be eliminated, and if it is 7, the T-34 will be immobilized.

The German CC DR is 9, which is reduced to 8, which has no effect.

The T-34 now gets to attack. It can only use its 4 FP CMG. The odds are figured by comparing the tank's FP to the defender's CCV: 4 FP to 6 CCV is 1-2 odds, so the Russian CC Kill Number is 4. The Russian CC DR is 7, which has no effect.

(If there was a third German unit in the hex, it would now be able to make its CC attack, after which a second Russian unit could attack, etc.)

All surviving units in the hex have now attacked once, so the CCPh is over. The CC counter is replaced with a Melee counter. The German units are held in Melee by the tank, but an AFV is never held in Melee by enemy Infantry. The T-34 can simply start up and drive away (exit the Melee hex) whenever it is eligible to move.

In the above example, if the T-34 had been in Motion, the German CC attack would have had a +1 DRM (–1 leadership, +2 vs Motion vehicle), and the Russian FP would have been halved to 2, giving 1-4 odds and a CC Kill Number of 3. If units from both sides remained in the hex after these CC attacks, the CC counter would again be replaced with a Melee counter, but the German units would not be held in Melee by the non-stopped tank and could exit the hex whenever they are eligible to move.

The T-34 cannot use its BMG in CC, but a functioning BMG would be sufficient to avoid the –1 DRM for a CC attack vs a vehicle with no manned/usable MG (had the CMG been malfunctioned).

As you can see, CC vs AFVs tends to favor the Infantry, particularly if any good leaders are present. Large caliber MAs and thick armor are of no benefit in CC, so AFVs will tend to stay clear of enemy Infantry.

AFVs are somewhat hindered in their ability to fight Infantry at close range because their best weapon against Infantry in the same hex — the overrun attack — did not make it into the ASLSK rules. AFVs can drive into or through a hex containing enemy Infantry, but in ASLSK the only way they can attack the Infantry while doing so is by taking Bounding First Fire shots.

Infantry, however, does get a chance to attack a vehicle moving into or through its hex. There is a special form of CC known as Reaction Fire (Rule 3.3.4) that Infantry can use as Defensive First Fire, Subsequent First Fire, or Final Protective Fire. The key features of Reaction Fire are:

- Reaction Fire may only be used against a vehicle moving into or through the unit's hex.
- MMC must pass a PAATC.
- Reaction Fire is resolved as a normal CC attack against a vehicle.
- The moving vehicle does not get a CC attack of its own, even if it survives the Infantry's Reaction Fire attack.

5.6 Final Thoughts

To say that this is a long chapter is something of an understatement. It contains nearly 20,000 words!

With all five tutorial chapters together totalling about 54,000 words, this single chapter represents nearly 40% of the full tutorial. And yet, even with an chapter so lengthy, there are many rules and situations concerning the use of armor in ASLSK that I have completely ignored. You will have to read and study the rulebook to completely master the use of armor in the ASLSK system, but hopefully I've demonstrated enough of the rules to make learning the rest easy.

This final tutorial chapter has been, by far, the single most difficult writing project that I have ever attempted. It was so difficult that I had to call in some reinforcements. I am grateful to Peter Fisla, Alpha Mastrano, and Todd Pytel for the valuable assistance they provided in reviewing various parts of this chapter, making useful suggestions, finding numerous errors, and even, in one case, providing a remedial math course to remind me how to calculate probabilities correctly! But the responsibility for any errors that remain in this tuorial is mine alone. I will correct and update this tutorial as these errors are pointed out to me.

I apologize for the many delays in getting this chapter finished. I worked on it off and on over a period of 10 months, and spent several months prior to that reading about and studying the ASL armor rules to be sure that I understood them enough to be able to write a useful tutorial for them. I resumed playing ASL only about four years ago, after a 10+ year absence, so my confidence level with the armor rules wasn't very high when I started this project. I can only hope that I haven't messed up any rules explanations too badly.

The illustrations accompanying this tutorial were created using map images from the VASL program (www.vasl.org) along with scans of the countersheets. Scanning the actual printed mapboards would have looked better, but using the VASL maps saved me some time and effort, since they were already at the size and resolution that I needed. I've also added similar illustrations to all of the previous tutorial chapters.

I've received a surprising number of requests from people seeking permission to translate these ASLSK tutorials into another language. While I'm always happy to grant these requests, I think it will be easier for everyone if I just make it official right here:

I hereby grant permission for these tutorials to be translated into another language and then to be distributed or reposted for the benefit of players who speak that language. All I ask in return are the common courtesies: don't claim to be the original author, and don't sell your translations.

Players have also asked about printable versions. Although you can find copies of these tutorial articles in PDF format in the ASLSK file sections on BGG, the ones that are available at the time of this writing are very plain:

there's no special text formatting, and my low-resolution 72 dpi illustrations (when included) probably won't print out very clearly. In the past, some players have talked with me about their interest in preparing a high quality PDF version with extensive text formatting and high-resolution illustrations, and one individual even provided me with some sample pages of how his ideas would look. But I don't know if anyone will ever go ahead with a project like this or not.

It would probably be a good idea for anyone who plans to work on a translation or a high quality PDF of the tutorials to put up a post to that effect, to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

Chapter 6

Explanation of the Rout Phase

Every personnel unit in ASL has a Morale Level rating. This rating is a measure of how much punishment the unit can withstand before 'breaking.' When a unit fails a Morale Check (MC) and breaks, its will to survive overcomes its discipline: it ceases to be an effective combat unit and the player loses control of it.

A broken unit most commonly represents soldiers who have simply panicked, but other explanations are also possible. For example, the broken troops could just be 'keeping their heads down' in the face of heavy incoming fire (the tendency of American soldiers to do this is the reason for their lower Morale Levels when compared to equivalent German and British squads). Or they could have stopped fighting in order to assist wounded squad members, or the soldier commanding the squad could have become a casualty, leading to some confusion until another soldier takes command of the squad, etc.

During the Rout Phase (RtPh) broken units may be forced to rout (run away) by the presence of enemy units, or in some cases they may choose to voluntarily rout. Many special rules come into play whenever broken units rout. These rules have proven to be difficult for beginning players to understand, so this chapter will attempt to explain exactly how the Rout Phase is played.

One thing to keep in mind, as a player, is that you have little control over your broken units. The Rout rules give you very few choices to make concerning your broken units, which is consistent with the idea that broken units are no longer responding to orders. Instead of telling you what you *may* do, the Rout rules usually tell you what your broken units *must* do.

I suspect that part of the problem in understanding the Rout rules is due to the sometimes nonsensical moves that they force your broken troops to make. But your imaginary soldiers have a much more limited view of the battlefield situation than you do as a player, and only two things concern them: moving away from the enemy, and getting into cover by moving into woods or a building. If you can put yourself into their shoes and try to see the battlefield from their perspective, the Rout rules will start to make more sense.

6.1 Desperation Morale

When a unit breaks, it is always marked with a Desperation Morale (DM) counter. During the RtPh, only units that are marked with DM can rout. A DM marker does not by itself force a unit to rout, but a unit cannot move in the RtPh without one. (The only exception to this is an unbroken, unpinned leader stacked with a broken unit: that leader may choose to accompany the broken unit when it routs.)

This is why a broken unit with DM that is not currently in a woods or building hex will sometimes choose to keep the DM marker at the end of a Rally Phase instead of removing it: it accepts the +4 Rally penalty in order to continue to move towards cover in the next RtPh. Broken units in woods or buildings do not have this option; DM markers are always removed from them at the end of a Rally Phase unless they are adjacent to a Known Enemy Unit. This is an example of your lack of control over broken units... once they end a Rally Phase in cover, they will not move again unless enemy action forces them to.

Broken units without a DM marker can regain it in three ways:

- Whenever an enemy unit moves adjacent to a broken unit, the broken unit immediately regains a DM marker.
- Whenever a broken unit is hit by enough firepower to possibly cause a Normal Morale Check (NMC) — taking into account Terrain Effects Modifiers (TEM) and possible cowering — it immediately regains a DM marker (regardless of the actual result of that attack).
- Whenever a broken unit begins the RtPh in an Open Ground location in the normal range and Line of Sight (LOS) of a Good Order Known Enemy Unit that would be able to Interdict a unit routing through that location, it immediately regains a DM marker.

The application of Desperation Morale means that recovering from breaking is usually a two step process: First, the DM needs to be removed so that the unit, while still broken, is no longer running from the enemy and no longer has the +4 DRM penalty to Rally rolls. Then the non-DM broken unit can be rallied. It is possible to do this in a single step and rally a unit still under DM, but this usually requires a good rallying leader, a broken unit with a high broken-side morale, and some luck.

6.2 The Rout Phase

The ATTACKER conducts all of his routs first, one unit at a time. When the ATTACKER has completed all of his routs, the DEFENDER then conducts all of his routs, one unit at a time.

Units that are forced to rout, but have no legal rout path, are eliminated for failure to rout.

There is a problem with the wording of the rout rules in both the ASLSK #1 and ASLSK #2 rulebooks. These rules imply that a unit that is eliminated for failure to rout is removed at the END of the RtPh. This is probably an error in the rules, since when using the full ASL rules such units are eliminated immediately. If the ATTACKER has a broken unit that must be eliminated for failure to rout, leaving it in place until the end of the RtPh could, in rare instances, cause it to block the rout paths of broken defending units, causing them to be eliminated as well.

This will probably be fixed at some point, either in an official errata or in a future edition of an ASLSK rulebook. If both players agree, however, you could use the ASL rule and eliminate units as soon as you determine that they must rout but have no legal rout path.

Here then is a detailed description of how routing works, presented in a question & answer format. Examples are given to help you see the rules in action. You will need boards y and z, one German squad counter, and three American squad counters to set up the Examples.

6.2.1 Who May Rout?

Any broken unit currently marked with a DM counter may rout. Routing is always done one unit at a time, even if the broken units were stacked at the beginning of the RtPh.

However, an unbroken, unpinned leader that is stacked with a broken unit that is marked with a DM marker may accompany that unit when it routs. This is the only instance in which two units may rout together, and it is also the only instance in which a unit (the leader) may rout without being broken and under DM.

6.2.2 Who *Must* Rout?

A broken unit is forced to rout in two situations:

- If it is adjacent to an unbroken Known Enemy Unit.
- If it is in an Open Ground location in the normal range and LOS of a Good Order Known Enemy Unit that would be able to Interdict a unit routing through that location.

Examples of units that *cannot* force a non-adjacent broken unit in Open Ground to rout include leaders without a SW, CX units, pinned units, units in Melee, and any unit whose LOS to the Open Ground location passes

through any Hindrance. In ASLSK #2, Guns that would have to change CA to fire at that location, or that are more than 16 hexes away, also cannot force a broken unit to rout.

However, all of the units mentioned above *will* force a broken unit to rout if they are adjacent to it.

6.2.3 How Far Can I Rout (And What Can I Take With Me)?

All routing units have 6 MF except for wounded leaders, who have 3 MF. These movement values can never be increased.

When routing, MMCs must abandon any SW whose PP exceeds 3, and may carry only 3 PP total, abandoning any excess. Routing leaders may only carry 1 PP, and may not assist a routing MMC in carrying anything. In other words, routing troops will abandon anything that would slow them down, but will otherwise carry as much as possible... even if you would prefer them to leave it behind so an unbroken unit could pick it up!

6.2.4 Where do Routing Units go?

Units that rout must leave their current hex and move to the nearest (in MF) building or woods hex that is a legal rout destination. If there is more than one hex that is a legal rout destination, and they are all the same distance away, the routing player may choose which one he will use as his rout destination.

6.2.5 What is a Legal Rout Destination?

A woods or building hex is a legal rout destination if it can be reached by the routing unit in the current RtPh. For most routing units, this means the destination hex must be one that can be reached using no more than 6 MF, but for wounded leaders a destination hex can be no more than 3 MF away.

There are a number of conditions that can prevent a woods or building hex from being a legal rout destination:

- A routing unit will *never* move closer to a Known Enemy Unit, even if that Known Enemy Unit is broken. In addition, once a routing unit is aware of a Known Enemy Unit, it remains aware of it throughout the RtPh, even if its rout path takes it out of the LOS of the Known Enemy Unit. Any potential rout destination hex that would require the routing unit to move closer to a Known Enemy Unit at any point along the rout path is not legal and must be ignored.

  Example #1:

  Place the following on board y:

  yBB8: Broken German squad
  yZ5 and yCC8: US squads

  The potential rout destinations here are yZ7, yZ8, yZ9, and yAA10, all 3 MF away. But yZ7 and yZ8 are not legal rout destinations, because they cannot be reached without moving closer to the Known Enemy Unit in yZ5. Notice that yAA9-yZ8 is not legal, even though yZ8 itself is no closer to the Known Enemy Unit than the broken unit's starting hex, because in moving from yAA9 to yZ8 you would be moving closer to the Known Enemy Unit (from 4 hexes away to 3 hexes away). Even if no LOS existed between yAA9 and yZ5 the routing unit would still 'remember' the Known Enemy Unit in yZ5 from seeing it from yBB8 and would not be allowed to move closer to it by entering yZ8.

  The German player must select either yZ9 or yAA10 as his rout destination.

  - A routing unit may not move adjacent to a Known Enemy Unit.

  The only exception to this is the very rare situation in which a routing unit is leaving a hex that also contains a Known Enemy Unit, in which case it must move adjacent to the Known Enemy Unit in

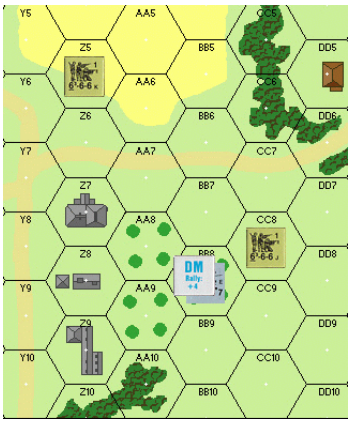

Figure 6.1: Setup for example #1

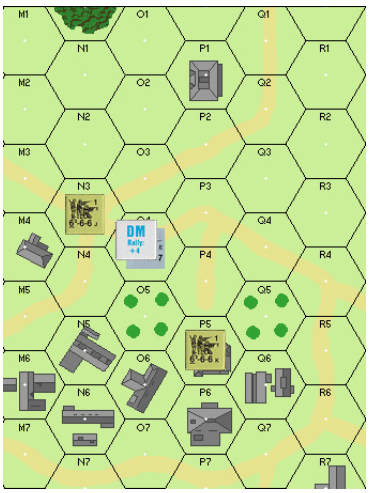

Figure 6.2: Setup for example #2

order to be able to move at all (that is, in moving adjacent to the Known Enemy Unit, it is actually moving *away* from it by leaving its hex).

In all other cases, any potential rout destination hex that would require the routing unit to move adjacent to a Known Enemy Unit is not legal and must be ignored.

Example #2:

Place the following on board y:

yO4: Broken German squad
yN3 and yP5: US squads

The German squad cannot rout towards the Known Enemy Unit in yP5, and it cannot rout to yN5 because it is not allowed to move adjacent to the Known Enemy Unit in yN3 by entering yN4. The only legal rout destination for the German squad is yP1.

- A building/woods hex may be ignored as a rout destination, at the discretion of the routing player, if it is no further from a Known Enemy Unit than the broken unit's current hex.

Example #3:

Place the following on board y:

yX4: Broken German squad
yY6: US squad

The nearest woods or building is yW6, which can be reached via yW5-yW6 for 3 MF. But yW6 is two hexes away from the American squad, and the broken unit's current hex is also two hexes away from the American squad. The German player can choose to ignore yW6 and select a different rout destination, because yW6 is no further from the Americans than his current hex.

In this situation, the German player may select yW6 as his rout destination, or he may ignore it and select either yU3, yU6, or yV6 as his rout destination, which are all 4 MF away.

And finally, if a woods or building hex cannot be entered because of stacking limits, it cannot be selected as a rout destination.

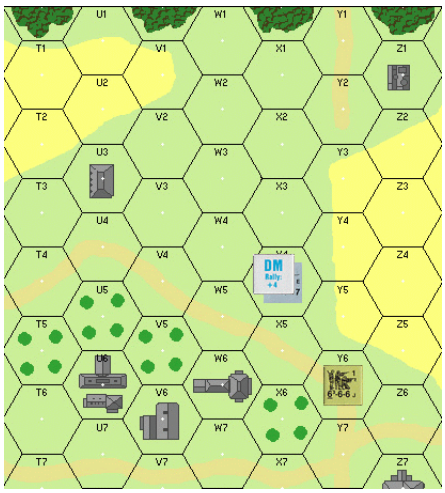

Figure 6.3: Setup for example #3

6.2.6 What if I don't have a Legal Rout Destination?

If there are no woods or building hexes within 6 MF (3 MF for a wounded leader) of a routing unit, or if none of the woods and buildings within range are legal rout destinations due to the reasons listed in the previous section, then the routing unit does not have a rout destination.

A routing unit that does not have a rout destination can rout to any hex it wishes, as long as it obeys all of the other routing rules (it cannot move towards a Known Enemy Unit, it cannot move adjacent to a Known Enemy Unit, etc.). It does not have to move towards a distant woods/building hex, nor does it have to use all of its available MF.

Example #4:

Place the following on board y:

yW6 Broken German squad
yU4, yV6, and yZ7: US squads

There are no possible rout destinations within 6 MF of the broken German unit. The closest woods/building hexes that it could reach are yX0 and yZ1, both 7 MF away.

Because it does not have a rout destination, the broken unit has quite a lot of freedom as to where it can rout. Initially, it can only rout to yX5, as any other move is illegal (moving towards or adjacent to a Known Enemy Unit). It could then end its rout in yX5, or continue on to either yX4 or yY5. From these two hexes there is a large section of the map that it could legally rout to, and it could end its rout at any point it wishes.

6.2.7 What if I discover I cannot reach my Rout Destination?

If a routing unit has a legal rout destination, it *must* move to that destination hex in that RtPh. The only time this is not true is when the routing unit is using Low Crawl (which will be explained in detail later).

However, a routing unit will occasionally discover during its rout that it can no longer legally continue to move towards its rout destination. When this occurs, a new rout destination must be immediately selected, based on the unused MF that the routing unit has remaining. The routing unit must then rout to this new rout destination.

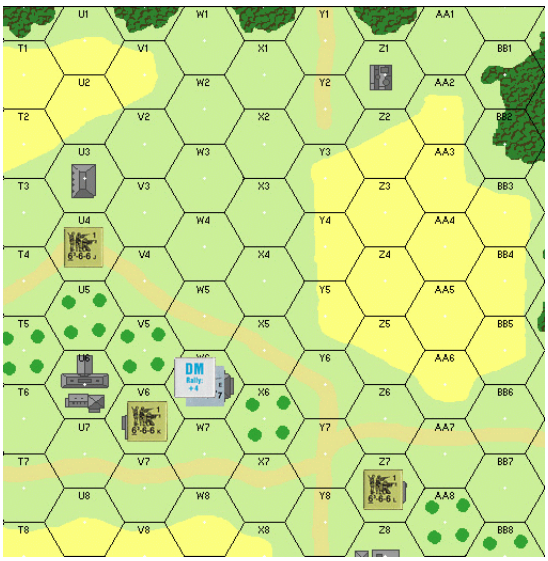

Figure 6.4: Setup for example #4

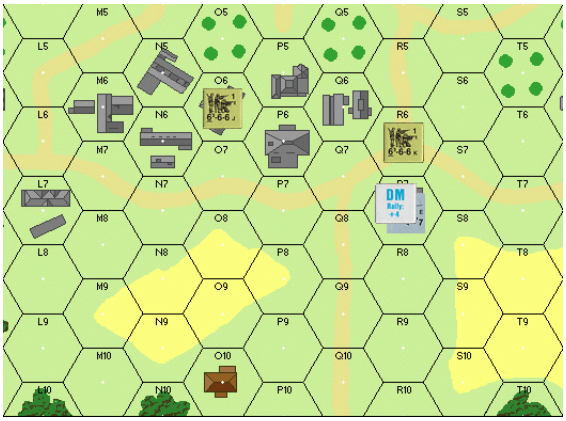

Figure 6.5: Setup for example #5

If a routing unit discovers that it cannot legally reach its rout destination, and it has no other legal rout destination, it then may continue its rout without a rout destination, as described in the previous section.

Example #5:

Place the following on board y:

yR7: Broken German squad
yO6 and yR6: US squads

The German squad must rout to yP6. Assume that it will take the shortest rout path, which is yQ8-yP7-yP6.

Upon entering yP7, the routing unit will suddenly see the American squad in yO6, which immediately becomes a Known Enemy Unit. This new Known Enemy Unit will now prevent the routing unit from entering yP6, because you cannot rout towards a Known Enemy Unit.

A new rout destination must immediately be selected, and the building in yO10 is now the nearest woods/building hex. But the routing unit has already used 2 MF to reach yP7, so it only has 4 MF remaining. Routing to yO10 requires 4.5 MF (yP8-yP9-yO10), so the routing unit does not have enough MF remaining to reach this potential rout destination in this RtPh.

Because no woods or building can now be reached in this RtPh, the broken squad can use its remaining MF to rout to any hex that does not violate the basic Rout rules. One good option would be yP8-yO9 to get next to building yO10, so that you could rout into yO10 in the next Rout Phase.

(This situation was originally posted by David Ramsey on the SZO ASL forum. SZO = Strategy Zone Online; now part of GameSquad: www.gamesquad.com).

6.2.8 What is Interdiction?

Panicked troops in a reckless, disorganized retreat are highly vulnerable to even sporadic fire from anyone who happens to see them running across a field. ASL calls this situation Interdiction. Whenever a routing unit enters an Open Ground hex that is in the LOS and normal range of an enemy unit that is not broken, pinned, CX, or in Melee, it may suffer Interdiction.

In the previous Example, the routing unit would be interdicted in yQ8 by the unit in yR6, and again in yP7, which is visible to both enemy units.

A routing unit that is interdicted must make a NMC. If it fails this NMC it suffers Casualty Reduction, but any remaining HS may continue to rout. A routing leader wounded by a failed Interdiction NMC may continue to rout if he has not yet spent 3 MF. If the interdicted unit is pinned, it must immediately end its rout in that hex. A routing unit can undergo only one Interdiction NMC per Open Ground hex entered, regardless of how many enemy units might have a LOS to, and be in range of, that Open Ground hex.

An interdicting unit can use either its inherent FP and range, or the FP and range of any SW it possesses, so a MMC with a MG will be able to Interdict routing units at a much greater range than a MMC without a MG.

Units that wish to Interdict must be able to fire upon that Open Ground hex with at least 1 FP and with no Hindrance modifiers. Leaders without a SW, or a single leader with a MG, cannot Interdict. Weapons that fire using the To Hit process can also be used to Interdict, out to their normal range or 16 hexes, whichever is less, as long as they do not have to change their CA in order to aim at the Open Ground hex. There is no limit to the number of Interdictions a single unit can make.

Although Interdiction is technically shooting, since it is based on range and FP, it does not count as an actual shot. No IFT or To Hit rolls are made, and no Residual FP is left in the Interdiction hex. Units can Interdict even if they have exhausted all of their normal firing opportunities, and they suffer no penalty for interdicting (that is, there is no chance of a weapon breaking down, etc.).

This is a key point for the routing player to consider! Allowing your routing unit to be interdicted is essentially giving your opponent a *free* shot: he gets a guaranteed NMC result at absolutely no risk to himself.

The way to avoid being interdicted is to use Low Crawl.

6.2.9 What is Low Crawl?

Instead of simply running away and leaving itself vulnerable to Interdiction, a routing unit can instead choose to use Low Crawl. When Low Crawl is used, the routing troops are laying flat on the ground and slowly crawling away from the enemy.

Low Crawl is a rout of one hex that requires all of the routing unit's MF, regardless of the terrain in the hex entered. A routing unit that uses Low Crawl cannot be interdicted.

Low Crawl follows the same rules as a normal rout: you must select a legal rout destination, if possible, and move towards it if you have one; and you cannot move towards or adjacent to a Known Enemy Unit.

Although Low Crawl is commonly used to avoid Interdiction, it can also be used even when there is no possibility of Interdiction. Low Crawl is an option available to every routing unit except one that is routing out of an enemy-occupied hex.

6.2.10 When should I use Low Crawl?

Whether or not to use Low Crawl is a judgment call that can only be made in the context of the overall situation in the game.

Low Crawl is a completely safe rout, but it will often leave your broken unit in a highly vulnerable position. Using a normal rout and risking Interdiction can easily turn out badly, but it can also possibly get your broken unit away from the enemy, which makes an elimination for failure to rout less likely, and a successful rally in the future more likely.

6.2.11 What Is Elimination For Failure To Rout?

Whenever a broken unit is forced to rout, but has no legal rout path at all, even with Low Crawl, the broken unit is automatically eliminated for failure to rout.

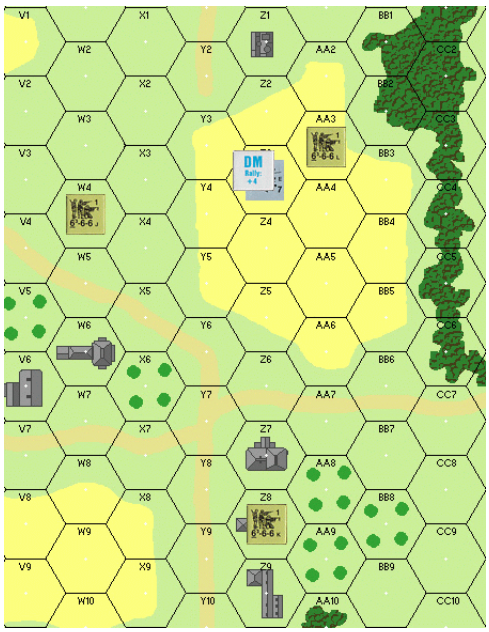

Figure 6.6: Setup for example #6

If a routing unit ends its rout adjacent to an unbroken Known Enemy Unit, it is also automatically eliminated for failure to rout.

Example #6:

Place the following on board y:

yZ3: Broken German squad
yW4, yZ8, and yAA3: US squads

The only legal rout destination for the German squad is yZ7, exactly 6 MF away. But if the squad routs to yZ7, it will end its rout adjacent to the previously unknown American squad in yZ8 and be eliminated for failure to rout, because it has no MF remaining which could be used to rout away. The only way to keep the broken squad alive is to use Low Crawl to rout to yZ4.

Now look at the same situation, but put the squad in yZ8 into yZ7 instead. The broken unit cannot rout at all, because any move it makes will either be towards or adjacent to a Known Enemy Unit. The broken unit is thus eliminated for failure to rout... it has no place to go.

6.2.12 What happens if I Rout Adjacent to a Previously Unknown Enemy Unit?

A routing unit *can* move adjacent to an enemy unit, if that enemy unit was unknown to it. When this occurs, the routing unit must immediately rout away from this new Known Enemy Unit or be eliminated for failure to rout. This will almost always involve selecting a new rout destination.

This highlights some of the difficulty encountered in learning the Rout rules: you're told repeatedly that you cannot ever move adjacent to an enemy unit... and then you're suddenly told that you can! It all depends upon whether it is a Known Enemy Unit or not. If your routing troops don't realize that the enemy unit is there, they will run right up to it... and then immediately turn and run in some other direction.

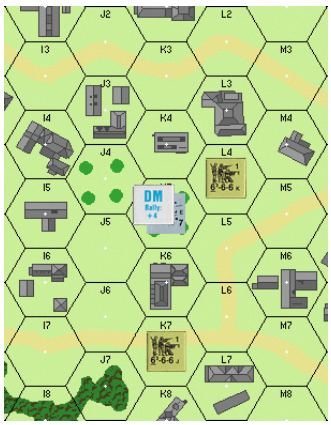

Figure 6.7: Setup for example #7

Example #7:

Place the following on board y:

yK5: Broken German squad
yK7 and yL4: US squads

The only legal rout destination for the Germans is yK6. But as soon as the routing unit enters yK6, it finds a (now) Known Enemy Unit adjacent to it in yK7, so it must rout away. From yK6 it must choose either yI5 or yI6 as its new rout destination, and rout there. It will be interdicted in yJ5 by the enemy unit in yK7.

This illustrates the frustration you can feel during a RtPh: as a player with a full view of the map, you would like to simply rout to yI4 via yJ4 with no Interdiction because of the orchard. But the Rout rules won't allow you to do this. Your panicked troops see yK6 as being much closer than yI4, so that's where they go... only to discover their error too late.

This is a situation in which Low Crawl is useless. If the broken unit Low Crawls into yK6, it will end its rout there and be eliminated for failure to rout; and once it routs into yK6 normally, it can no longer use Low Crawl, so it must suffer Interdiction as it runs away from yK6 through yJ5.

6.2.13 Must a Routing Unit always take the Shortest Path to its Rout Destination?

No. As long as a routing unit reaches its rout destination, it is not required to use the shortest path.

Example #8:

Place the following on board y:

yS4: Broken German squad
yR4: US squad

The routing unit's rout destination is yU3, which is 3 MF away. But if it routs directly to yU3 it will be interdicted in yT3. To avoid this, it can choose to rout to yS3-yT2-yU3 for 5 MF, avoiding Interdiction because the grainfields are not Open Ground, while still having enough MF to reach its rout destination.

If it uses Low Crawl, it must move to yT3. A Low Crawl must always be made towards the unit's rout destination (if there is one), so a Low Crawl to yS3 is illegal because it does not bring the routing unit closer to its rout destination.

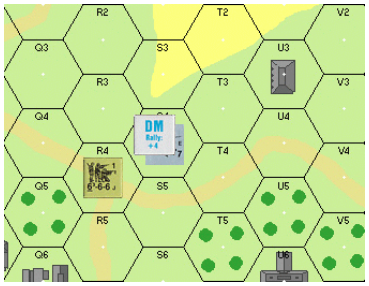

Figure 6.8: Setup for example #8

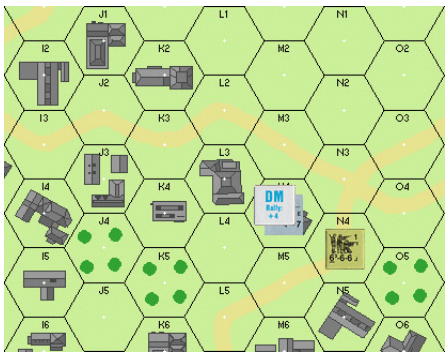

Figure 6.9: Setup for example #9

Note that if the broken unit here was a wounded leader, the only options would be to either run directly to the building (suffering Interdiction) or use Low Crawl. A wounded leader only has 3 MF, which is not enough to allow him to run through the grainfields to reach the building.

6.2.14 Do I Have To Stop My Rout When I Enter My Rout Destination?

No. Once a routing unit enters its rout destination, it may continue to rout, but only to adjacent woods/building hexes.

In other words, once your broken troops successfully reach cover during a RtPh, they will not voluntarily move back out into the open... but they can continue to rout through other woods and building hexes.

Example #9:

Place the following on board y:

yM4: Broken German squad
yN4: US squad

The routing unit's rout destination is yL3, which it enters for 2 MF. Because it still has MF remaining, it may continue to rout to yK4 and even yJ3. The routing unit can choose to end its rout in any of these three hexes.

The routing unit *cannot* rout to yL3 and then continue to rout to yK2, even though it has enough MF to reach it, because it would have to enter a non-woods/building hex.

6.2.15 When a Unit in a Multi-Hex Building Routs, may it Leave that Building?

Yes. A broken unit in a multi-hex building may ignore all other hexes of that building when choosing a rout destination.

The idea here is that, if one part of a building is no longer safe for the broken squad, running into an adjoining room and slamming the door shut is unlikely to make them much safer. They would be much more likely to abandon that building altogether. The Rout rules give them that option, although they are not required to leave the multi-hex building.

Example #10:

Place the following on board z:

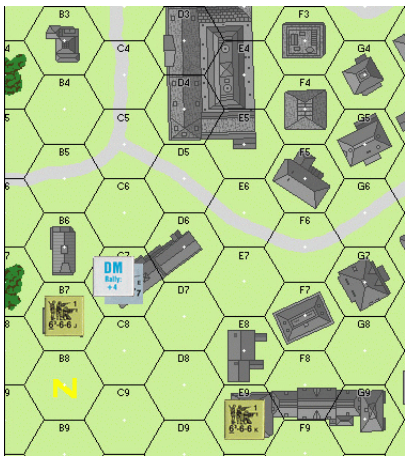

Figure 6.10: Setup for example #10

zC7: Broken German squad
zB7 and zE9: US squad

Normally, the broken squad's rout destination would have to be zD6 which is 2 MF away. And once the routing squad enters zD6 it would have to stop, because there are no other adjacent woods/building hexes that it could continue to rout to.

But, because zD6 is part of the multi-hex building that the routing unit occupies at the start of the RtPh, the routing unit has the option to ignore zD6 and choose another rout destination. In this case, that would be zD4 or zE5, both 4 MF away.

Assume that zE5 is selected as the rout destination. If the broken unit routs directly to it via zC6-zD5-zE5, it will be interdicted twice. But if it spends 5 MF to rout via zD6-zE6-zE5 it reaches its rout destination safely with no Interdiction. The routing unit is allowed to leave zD6 and enter a non-woods/building hex in this instance, because its rout destination (zE5) is outside of the building it started the RtPh in.

6.2.16 When I Rout, do I have to leave my Starting Hex?

Yes. You cannot rout 'in place'. If you choose to rout, or if you are forced to rout, you must leave your hex and go somewhere else.

6.2.17 When can I Rout from an Enemy-Occupied Hex?

Broken units under a Melee counter may not rout, so the only time you can rout from an enemy-occupied hex is when the hex contains only broken units from both sides. A Melee condition exists as long as there is at least one unbroken unit, from either side, in the hex.

6.3 Summary

I used to think that the Rout rules were pretty straightforward. Sure, lots of weird things can happen in the Rout Phase... but really, how hard could it be to write a simple explanation of how the rules work?

Heh.

This chapter was much more difficult to write than I ever imagined! To cover all of the different things that can occur in the Rout Phase, and to explain them in a way that might actually make sense to people, was a challenge.

Please let me know if you spot any errors, or if you have any suggestions as to how this chapter might be improved and made more useful. I will update the chapter as necessary.

6.4 Full-Throttle ASL

Those of you who are not interested in full ASL can skip this last section.

The Rout rules in the Starter Kits and the Rout rules in full ASL are almost identical. As an aid for ASLSK players who are planning to move up to full ASL, and to make this chapter more useful to ASL players (who can have just as much trouble understanding the Rout rules as ASLSK players), I will briefly discuss what changes occur in routing when you play with the full ASL rulebook.

The biggest single difference is that ASL includes surrender rules: if a broken unit is adjacent to a Known, Good Order, armed enemy infantry/cavalry unit, and is unable to rout away from it without being interdicted, and without using Low Crawl to avoid that Interdiction, that unit will surrender instead of routing. Under the ASLSK rules, such units will always rout.

What this means is that, if the only path away from an adjacent unit is an Open Ground hex that can be interdicted, the broken unit will throw down their weapons and surrender rather than be gunned down when they run away across the open field. I think the reasoning behind this is that Interdiction at point blank range is going to be difficult to survive, and Low Crawl cannot protect you when the enemy is right next to you... you must have some distance between yourself and the enemy before Low Crawl can make you harder to hit.

Other things that change under the full ASL rules include:

- DM is placed on broken units that are attacked by CC/WP.
- Concealed Units are not Known Enemy Units, even if you have a LOS to them.
- Under certain conditions, units may voluntarily break at the start of the RtPh in order to be able to rout in that RtPh.
- A routing unit is not always required to move to its rout destination. For example, if the only way to reach its rout destination in 6 MF or less would require moving through a known minefield hex, or a hex being fired upon by off-board artillery, the routing unit is allowed to take an alternate, safer path, even if that means it will not reach its rout destination in the current RtPh. Your troops might be panicked, but they are not suicidal!
- As long as a routing unit follows the shortest path to its rout destination, it may use shellholes, entrenchments, and pillboxes to avoid Interdiction... even if doing so means that it cannot reach its rout destination in the current RtPh.
- A rubbled building is no longer a building.
- There is no absolute stacking limit in full ASL, so a woods/building hex cannot be ignored as a rout location simply because of the number of units already in it. But as the number of occupying units increases past a certain point, the MF cost to enter that hex also increases... and if the MF cost increases too much, that could make the hex ineligible to be a rout destination.

Chapter 7

Explanation of ROF and Defensive Fire

(Note: An expanded version of this article, complete with full color examples of play, has been published by MMP in their magazine Operations, Issue 49. Copies of this issue can be purchased directly from MMP at: http://www.multimanpublishing.com/Operations/prodops49.php Please do not re-post or re-use this article without first obtaining permission from MMP.)

Because players learning to play ASL Starter Kit #1 continue to have questions about how ROF works, especially during the complicated defensive fire sequence, I've decided to put together this detailed look at both ROF and defensive fire. In addition to explaining how these rules work, I'm also going to discuss the rationale behind the rules. If you understand the rationale for the rules, so that when you play the game you can visualize what's happening on the map, you should then find the rules themselves easier to understand and master.

In ASL Starter Kit #1 the only weapons that have ROF are the MGs (LMG, MMG, HMG). Other starter kits will introduce additional SW with ROF, such as the light mortar, and Guns and AFVs also usually have ROF. I will use the HMG in my examples, as it has the highest possible ROF combined with a high FP, making it a very deadly weapon indeed.

During an ASL turn, there are three phases in which a unit may fire: the Prep Fire Phase (PFPh), the Advancing Fire Phase (AFPh), and the Defensive Fire Phase (DFPh) which — for the purposes of this discussion — will also include shots taken against moving units during the Attacker's Movement Phase (MPh). I'll explain how ROF works in each of these cases, beginning with the simplest and working up to the most complicated.

But first, let's explore what ROF in ASL actually represents.

One turn in ASL covers the passage of two minutes of time. A lot can happen in two minutes at this scale, so the rules must, of necessity, have some level of abstraction built into them. ROF is one of those abstractions.

Suppose a HMG prep fires at a squad, causing a Morale Check. What really happened in this situation falls between one of two extremes: (A) the HMG fired continuously for two minutes before finally causing enough damage to have an effect, or (B) the HMG scored some lucky hits after maybe only 10 seconds of firing, affecting the target almost immediately. The ROF mechanism allows for both possibilities, or anything in between, without the tedium of actually counting bullets and seconds.

If the HMG does not make its ROF, that would be situation (A): it spent the entire phase firing at the target, so it has no time left to try any additional shots.

If the HMG makes its ROF, that is situation (B): the target was affected very quickly, so the HMG has plenty of time remaining to engage another target, or to continue to shoot at the original target to try to cause even more damage.

Whenever a weapon fires and makes its ROF, that indicates that the weapon is firing accurately and getting effective hits quickly, allowing it the possibility of making several attacks in one turn. But if the weapon does not make its ROF, that indicates that the attack is less effective, so it will spend the rest of the turn shooting at that target and will only resolve a single attack against it.

ROF really is an inspired game mechanism. HMGs in WWII were particularly effective weapons... but how do you represent that in a game? If you give the HMG a huge FP number, then the weapon is only effective against a single target per turn, which is not historical. If you allow a HMG to fire 10 times per turn while squads can only fire once, that is more historical, but then you might spend 90% of your playing time firing MGs... and players probably would end up hating the game. The ROF rules give the HMGs the potential to fire repeatedly within a single turn — which makes infantry realistically fearful of facing them — but the game still moves along at a reasonable pace because extra shots do not occur in excessive numbers.

Now here's how ROF is actually used in the game.

7.1 Advancing Fire Phase

The simplest case to handle is the attacker's AFPh. There is no ROF at all. Any unit that did not fire in the Prep Fire Phase can fire once with 1/2 FP, and that's it.

The AFPh is how ASL handles units that fire while moving. Soldiers firing weapons while running are not going to be very accurate with their shots, so ASL penalizes them by cutting their firepower in half and by delaying their attacks until after all defensive fire is complete (so squads that move and break don't even get a chance to shoot). ROF is not allowed during the AFPh because advancing fire is inherently inaccurate.

Note that FT and DC do attack with full FP in the AFPh.

In the full ASL rules, there is a way that units can fire in the AFPh with full FP and possible ROF for their weapons, as well as a reason for them to do so. But in the starter kits, there is no way to do this, and no reason to want to do it.

7.2 Prep Fire Phase

The PFPh is also an easy case. If a weapon prep fires and makes its ROF, it does not get a Prep Fire marker (although the squad firing it does if it also attacked)... so the weapon can shoot again, at the same target or a different target. As long as it continues to make its ROF, it can continue to shoot until it either runs out of targets, breaks down, or voluntarily stops.

If the weapon stops shooting before it loses its ROF, it will not be marked with a Prep Fire marker. But, because it did fire, it will not be able to move during the Movement Phase, and it will not be able to fire during the AFPh.

7.3 Defensive Fire

Now things get a little complicated. There's really no way to explain how ROF works with defensive fire without explaining how defensive fire itself works.

I think that a key to understanding defensive fire is to realize that a defending squad can fire an almost unlimited number of times... something the rules don't really make plain. These multiple defensive shots come with increasing restrictions on when they can be taken, and increasing penalties to the firing unit, but there's no limit on how many can occur.

This seems odd at first glance, considering that attacking squads are limited to a single attack each. The reason for allowing multiple defensive shots is to recreate the reality of a WWII battlefield, where if you simply charged an enemy position you risked suffering fearful casualties... even if you greatly outnumbered the defenders. Limiting defending squads to a single shot would make it far too easy for the attacker to charge a defender's location and overwhelm them in close combat.

Here's a summary of what a defending squad can do during the attacker's MPh:

7.3.1 Shot: First Fire

Restriction: target must be moving, defender must not have a First Fire or Final Fire marker

Penalty: none

Result: place First Fire marker on defender, but not on any weapon that makes its ROF

7.3.2 Shot: Subsequent First Fire

Restriction: target must be moving, there must not be any other known enemy units closer to the defender, and the defender must not have a Final Fire marker

Penalty: Area Fire (1/2 FP), Sustained Fire (B# –2, no ROF)

Result: place Final Fire marker on defender and any MG defender possesses (even if the MG was not previously marked, and even if the MG did not fire with the squad)

7.3.3 Shot: Final Protective Fire

Restriction: target must have moved ADJACENT to defender

Penalty: MGs must fire, Area Fire + Point Blank Fire, Sustained Fire, IFT DR is also a NMC roll for the defender

Result: Final Fire marker remains on defender and any MG defender possesses, unless the defender fails the NMC and breaks

A squad can take one First Fire shot, one Subsequent First Fire shot, and an unlimited number of Final Protective Fire shots, but all of these shots are triggered by the attacker moving a unit. If the attacker doesn't move, the defender can't shoot.

These shots can also be taken in combination against a single target, if its location and MF expenditure allows it. For instance, if a unit spends 3 MF to move ADJACENT to an unmarked defending squad, the defender can take a First Fire shot, followed by a Subsequent First Fire shot, followed by a Final Protective Fire shot (3 MF = 3 shots) - but if the moving unit was not ADJACENT then only two shots could be taken, since Final Protective Fire is only allowed against ADJACENT targets. If the moving unit was ADJACENT but the defender was marked with a First Fire marker, three shots could still be taken: one Subsequent First Fire shot, and two Final Protective Fire shots. Note that all shots against an ADJACENT target always receive the Point Blank Fire bonus, even if they are not Final Protective Fire.

ROF is only applicable to a First Fire shot. If a weapon takes a First Fire shot, and makes its ROF, it is not marked with a First Fire marker (but, just like in Prep Fire, the squad that fired the weapon would get a First Fire marker if it also attacked). The weapon can take additional First Fire shots as long as it makes its ROF and the attacker continues to move units.

Note, however, that when a squad takes a Subsequent First Fire shot, it must use any MGs it possesses or forfeit their use for the remainder of that Player Turn (except for Final Protective Fire). Such MGs will fire using Area Fire/Sustained Fire even if they are not marked with a First Fire marker. In other words, the squad cannot fire as Subsequent First Fire while its MG fires as First Fire. Both must fire as Subsequent First Fire, and then both will be receive a Final Fire marker. The same applies to a squad taking a Final Protective Fire shot, except that MGs must be always be used.

Subsequent First Fire penalizes MGs by forcing them to be marked with a Final Fire marker, regardless of their previous status, regardless of the IFT DR, and regardless of whether they even fired. I'm not sure why the rules do this, but presumably it is to keep MGs from being too effective on defense.

7.3.4 Example

Assume that the defender has one squad with a HMG, and that the attacker has two squads, the first one 4 hexes away from the defending squad, and the second one 5 hexes away. It is the start of the attacker's MPh.

The first attacking squad spends 1 MF to enter a hex 3 hexes away from the defender. At this point the defender interrupts the attacker's move to announce a First Fire shot with both the squad and the HMG. The result of the shot is that the attacking squad breaks, the defending squad is marked with a First Fire marker, and the HMG makes its ROF (1, 2, or 3 on the red die on the IFT DR) so it is *not* marked.

Now the defender has to decide whether or not to accept the HMG's ROF. If he chooses to retain ROF, the HMG will not be marked and will remain eligible to take another First Fire shot, but the Residual FP left in the target hex will be calculated using only the squad's FP. If he chooses to give up the ROF, the HMG will be marked with a First Fire marker and the Residual FP will be calculated using the squad's and HMG's combined FP. Whenever a MG retains ROF it leaves no Residual FP at all. The defender chooses to retain ROF.

Since the attacking unit only spent 1 MF to enter its hex, it cannot be fired upon again by the defending squad or its HMG in this MPh.

Now the attacker moves his second squad, spending 2 MF to enter a hex 4 hexes away from the defender. The defending squad cannot attack using Subsequent First Fire, because there is a known enemy unit that is closer (the first attacking squad, now broken, 3 hexes away). But the HMG, which is not marked, can attack using First Fire and does so. The result of the shot is no effect to the attacker's unit, and the HMG again makes ROF and is not marked.

Because the attacking unit spent 2 MF to enter the hex, the HMG could take a second shot at it, but it must decide immediately whether or not it will do so. If the additional shot is not taken at this time, the opportunity to do so is forfeited. The HMG declines to take the second shot.

The attacker continues moving his second squad, spending 1 MF to enter a hex 3 hexes away from the defender. Again the HMG, because it has made its ROF on all of its shots and is not marked, can take a First Fire shot on the attacker's unit.

But the defender decides to instead take a Subsequent First Fire shot with his squad, possible now because there is no known enemy unit that is closer, and also fire the HMG with the squad. The shot is Area Fire for both the squad and the HMG, Sustained Fire for the HMG, no ROF is possible, and both squad and HMG will be marked with a Final Fire marker.

Even if the HMG did not participate in the Subsequent First Fire with the squad, it still would be marked with a Final Fire marker. If you wonder why you would not fire the HMG, since it's going to get a Final Fire marker either way, the answer is to avoid the extra chance of a breakdown from Sustained Fire... thus ensuring that you will have a functioning HMG for at least one Final Protective Fire shot.

Once the defending squad and its HMG are both marked with a Final Fire marker, they cannot shoot any more in that MPh unless an attacking unit moves ADJACENT to them, at which point they may take a Final Protective Fire shot. There is no limit to the number of Final Protective Fire shots that they can make... as long as the defending squad keeps passing its NMCs, and the attacker keeps moving units ADJACENT, it can keep shooting.

And now we come finally to the Defensive Fire Phase itself. Just like the attacker in the PFPh, the defender in the DFPh can shoot at any of the attacker's units (even those that were also attacked during the MPh), and any weapons that make ROF can continue to make additional attacks.

But some of the defender's units might have First Fire or Final Fire markers on them, that were placed during the MPh. Units that are marked with a Final Fire marker cannot shoot at all in the DFPh; units marked with a First Fire marker can only shoot at enemy units in an adjacent hex with Area Fire/Sustained Fire.

I hope that this will help you understand how ROF and defensive fire works in ASL. Keep in mind that even expert players cannot always agree on how the defensive fire rules are applied in every situation... in researching this article I read through some rules discussions that made my head spin from the complexity of their arguments and counter-arguments! If you find that I have made an error in my analysis, please let me know so that I can make the necessary corrections.

ASL Starter Kit Abbreviations

® : not equipped with radio 78

AA : Anti-Aircraft gun 62
AAMG : Anti-Aircraft Machine Gun 76
AF : Armor Factor 77
AFPh : Advancing Fire Phase 13
AFV : Armored Fighting Vehicle 75
AP : Armor Piercing 59
APCR : Armor Piercing Composite Rigid 59
APDS : Armor Piercing Discarding Sabot 59
APh : Advance Phase 14
ART : Artillery 62
ASL : Advanced Squad Leader 7
ASLSK : Advanced Squad Leader Starter Kit 8
AT : Anti-Tank gun 62
ATR : Anti-Tank Rifles 59
ATT : Area Target Type 67

B# : Breakdown number 76
BAR : Browning Assault Rifle 8
BAZ : Bazooka 59
BFF : Bounding First Fire 97
BMG : Bow Machine Gun 76
BU : Buttoned Up 78

CA : Covered Arc 63
CC : Close Combat 14
CCPh : Close Combat Phase 14
CCV : Close Combat Value 112
CE : Crew Exposed 78
CH : Critical Hit 60
CMG : Co-axial Machine Gun 75
CS # : crew survival number 78
CX : Counter Exhausted 55

DC : Demolition Charge 24
DFPh : Defensive Fire Phase 13
DM : Desperation Morale 12
DR : Dice Roll 11
dr : die roll 16
DRM : Dice Roll Modifier 11
drm : die roll modifier 20

ELR : Experience Level Rating 9

FFMO : First Fire Movement in Open Ground 12
FFNAM : First Fire Non-Assault Movement ... 11
FG : Fire Group 10
FP : Firepower 7
FPF : Final Protective Fire 17
FT : Flamethrower 30

G : Gyrostabilizer 78

HE : High Explosive 59
HEAT : High Explosive Anti-Tank 59
HIP : Hidden Initial Placement 72
HMG : Heavy Machine Gun 32
HS : Half Squad 12

IF : Intensive Fire 78
IFE : Infantry Firepower Equivalent 70
IFT : Infantry Fire Table 10
INF : Infantry Howitzer 62
IPC : Infantry Portage Capacity 24
ITT : Infantry Target Type 63

K : Kill number 12
KIA : Killed in Action 12

LATW : Light Anti-Tank Weapons 60
LLTC : Leader Loss Task Check 27
LMG : Light Machine Gun 23
LOS : Line of Sight 10

MA : Main Armament 75
MC : Morale Check 12
MF : Movement Factor 9
MG : Machine Gun 24
ML : Morale Level 78
MMC : Multi-Man Counter 35
MMG : Medium Machine Gun 32
MP : Movement Point 76
MPh : Movement Phase 11
MTR : Mortar 62

NMC : Normal Morale Check 13
NT : Non-Turreted 77

PAATC : Pre-AFV Advance/Attack Task Check 112