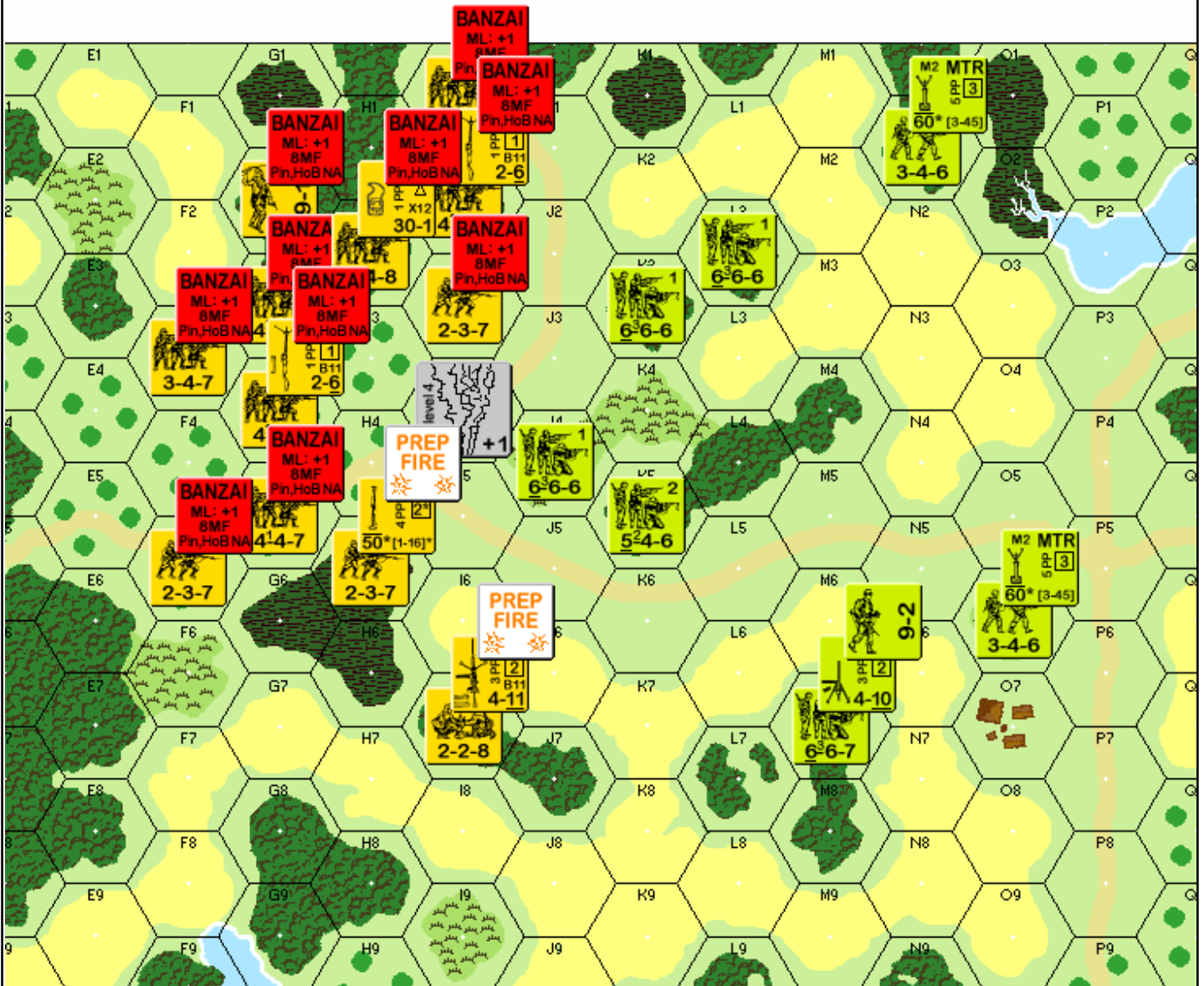


Banzai!!!



The Newsletter of the Texas ASL Club

August, 2008 Volume 13, Number 3

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August, 2008 Volume 13, Number 3

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hang it on the wall so any player could glance up and read results from across the room. I get even more megalomaniacal thoughts about building a custom ASL table, and the secret compartments and removable locking cover for leaving campaign games set up for a year. My ideas about a special ASL room are private, and I will not share them here.

The point is this; I think about ASL very much, and play very little. I am no longer 20. I no longer play SL, and there are more than 12 scenarios. I am married, and have responsibilities that take up most of the time I don't spend working. It finally dawned on me that time is the key. I could simply no longer start playing on Friday night and wrap things up on Sunday afternoon, tournaments being the exception. Having enough time to play, moreover finish a whole scenario is the crux of really satisfying game play.

To summarize, if the dice are not rolling in the glass, Father Time is busy eating your game day. After some consideration, I finally figured out that playing time is wasted in four different ways: digging in the plan, digging in the card, digging in the rules, and digging in the box. Hopefully, some of the suggestions below will increase the playing time of those reading this article, as I hope to increase mine.

1. Digging in the plan. In short, game day preparation is very important. Herr Shostak has already beaten this with a big stick, and he is absolutely right. Whenever remotely possible, decide beforehand who you are going to play, which scenario will be played, and who will attack and defend. There are literally mountains of fine scenarios to play, and I could spend an entire afternoon just flipping through them and oooing and ahhhing. This would not be playing time.

Generally speaking, the player who must travel will attack. The defending player has his own ASL space prepared, along with the assorted toys for game day. The defending player can also have his defense already set up by the time the opposing player arrives. This is a big time saving measure.

However, sometimes the traveling player will defend. This will take up more time, but is not a crisis. During the week or weeks preceding play, if I defend and travel, I set up the boards and look at the situation. I usually set up my defense and glance at it when I get the chance. Then, I carefully write down all the information so I can set it up quickly. The home team can perform a similar trick. Set up the boards, and try to figure out how one's opponent will defend. Defense in ASL usually comes down to just a few options. Jot down a few ideas concerning plan A, B, and maybe C to cover everything. That way, you won't be

Editor's Foxhole

Matt Shostak

We just concluded another very successful tournament, and you can read all about it in these pages. We should all be very grateful to Rick Reinesch for the hard work he puts in to make the tournament a success, and also to his many helper elves. Be sure to thank them when you see them. As you can see from the table of contents, this newsletter is chock full of goodness. The prolific Nick Drinkwater dropped a couple of excellent articles into my email right after the tournament, and Rick worked some graphical magic to make the accompanying maps and diagrams stand out. We round out the issue with all of our usual features which allow you to read about our club members and their stories. At the top of the agenda, Dan Preston has a good article on an important theme: how to play faster. It's a good reminder for all of us.

The Forced March of Time

Dan Preston

I love to play ASL. I spend an inordinate amount of time thinking about it. I spend a lot of time thinking about scenarios and different applications of rules and their effect on play. I tend to leave Journals and scenario sheets lying around and look at them or read them when I get the chance. I get ambitious thoughts about how I could scan and enlarge the IFT to a huge size, print it, frame it, and

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caught flatfooted when the defender calls from the other room, "I'm ready!"

Try to custom fit your selection to the available resources. If you have little time, say, a few hours on Saturday, don't plan on playing "The Last Bid". Similarly, if game day is full up and you cannot get to the meeting until later on in the day, don't plan on setting up a six board monster game because there simply won't be enough room. If you are playing at someone else's house, even a small scenario will be hard to manage if it is 14 turns long.

2. Digging in the card. Once you have decided on a scenario to play, READ THE SCENARIO CARD. Every facet of the game will hinge on the information given. Read the card a couple of times. Make sure the boards are lined up properly, and ask your opponent if he concurs. Pay special attention to the SSR's. These can magically change grain to open ground or to level 1 hills.

Read the victory conditions. If the VC state that, "The Russian player immediately wins if there are no good order German MMCs in building 3N2", then the German player had better set up at least a half squad in there somewhere. That would certainly be better than handing the Russian player a win on turn 1.

Make sure you know when and where reinforcements for each side will enter. Sometimes a group must enter on the same hex, or on the same board edge. It is great to split things up for more tactical options, but it really gums up the works when you go to move that third stack and your opponent points to the card and states, "They all have to enter over here".

3. Digging in the rules. This one is a real killer. Have your rulebook and assorted charts handy. One of the biggest drags on the game can be stopping play to look up a vaguely remembered rule right in the middle of a rate of fire rampage.

Re-read the rules concerning the type of scenario you are playing. If your scenario includes cavalry, it would behoove you (no pun intended) to go over that section during the week as a refresher. It would also be a good idea for your opponent to follow suit.

If you intend to play with vehicles, especially AFVs, look up the pertinent vehicle section in Chapter H. Some vehicles have useful and sometimes very odd capabilities. The same advice applies to Guns. One could do some homework ahead of time and jot down the kill numbers and final kill numbers against the opposing targets. While we are on the subject, every AFV is worth a different number of CVP if destroyed, captured or exited. It might be a good idea to also jot down how much your vehicles are worth ahead of time to save time on the math later on.

If you have all infantry, re-read Chapter A. If you have mostly tanks, re-read Chapter C and D. I was surprised to find that a vehicle may drive right through a hex containing an opposing AFV. Yes, it's in there. You just have to know where to look. That little gem has come up a couple of times now for me, and it took forever to find the rule (D2.6). I finally penciled in a bookmark in the index to find it quickly.

A player will never memorize all the rules. It is simply not possible. Even the mundane rules can sometimes be a problem, especially when one does not play as often as one would wish, like myself. Cover the important rules and you will be ahead of the game (pun intended).

4. Digging in the box. It sometimes seems that there are a zillion counters and most of them never get used. I am not going to bore the reader with my opinion of counter organization. Every player has his preferences of the Plano Pantheon. However, pulling some counters (and dice, for that matter) ahead of Rally Phase saves time in the long run.

No matter if you have all infantry or all tanks, someone is going to Prep Fire and someone is going to First/Final Fire. Pull a handful out and leave them in some convenient spot on the table. A paper plate will work fine. If you have infantry, some of them will be DM, and some will PIN. This is inevitable. Pull out a handful of each, and put it on the pile. You will need a pretty generous stack of concealment counters. Even if the scenario takes place in the desert, and growing concealment is impossible, somebody is eventually going to CX. If conditions are Dry, and one side has a flamethrower, and there is a lot of grain, pull out some Blaze counters. You are probably going to need some. The same is true of Residual counters (Fire Lanes not so often) and Wall Advantage counters.

If there are a lot of vehicles, pull out some Motion counters. Pull out some Acquisition counters for all your ordnance. Match the ID numbers if possible, and pull Area type counters as well.

The aforementioned list is not all-inclusive, but some counters are certain to be needed. The trick is to pull out the ones that are certain to be used, once again to save playing time.

Concerning the actual opponents, there are some more tricks available to save time as well. Generally speaking, the defending player, or the player who need not travel, will pull the counters for the sides. Putting these on the scenario card will save time in organization. I like to line mine up, whereas some players stack. It is usually a good idea to also grab a handful of half squads for the majority type for both sides. Most nationalities will deploy for setup, but even the Russians will get whittled down during play. If one side or the other has a low ELR, it is also a good idea to pull out

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some lower quality squads and half squads as well. In such a case, pulling out some Disrupt counters will also save time later.

Dice are easy. Pull a handful of different colors for Random Determination purposes. I also like to keep these separate from my actual playing dice. I am superstitious like that.

Last and not least, pull out the Sniper counters for both sides and actually place them somewhere on the board. I am terrible about forgetting to pull out my Sniper counters, and it usually comes up about mid-game, after some activations have been forgotten and the time for their impact is long gone.

In conclusion, ASL is great, but real life intrudes. There are a few shortcuts that will increase the available playing time and commensurate enjoyment. I have shared a few observations that should contribute to game fun for some players who have to “hurry up and have fun” like me. With any luck, your games could start coming down to that “last DR of the last CCPh of the last turn” instead of “gee whiz I gotta go, I’ve got things to do”. Time is the key.

Style Points

Rick Reinesch



Ok, so this isn't my style point, but I'll give credit where credit is due. In a playing of *Cat Becomes The Mouse* (WCW4) against Matt Shostak my Cromwell VIII was trying to be a nuisance to one of Matt's Tigers. The Cromwell had managed to get the Tiger to expend all of its initial MA and MG fire, to no effect on my tank. Time to bag a cat. I fired up a HIP Cromwell VII and circled behind and out of LOS of the Tiger, attempting to enter into the hex directly behind the German tank from out of bypass, stop, and fire a point-blank rear shot. I would win any gun duel : +5 for me (+4 Bounding Fire, +1 BU) versus +6 for Matt (+2 Intensive Fire, +1 BU, +3 CA change). While my bounding fire shot had no certainty of success, I wasn't going to get a better chance at the Tiger.

I expended the movement points to go into the CAFP to the rear of the Tiger and finally into its LOS. Matt decided to Intensive Fire before I got a chance to expend a Stop MP. No problem. While this would put his front turret AF facing me, I would still have a chance at a rear hull shot, and I liked my chances with the mods he would have for his shot coming at me. Matt would have +2 IF, +2 moving target, +1 limited LOS, +1 BU, +3 CA change for a total of +9 off a base To Hit of 10. Matt swung the turret, fired, and rolled...snakes, followed by a dr of 1. Just like shooting skeet, only with Tigers.

Rules Tip

Matt Shostak



Encircled troops suffer a lowered morale only for attacks made against them. In other words, a broken encircled unit would use its normal morale level when trying to rally, for example. See A7.7: "... suffers an immediate one level drop in morale to both the attack that sealed its Encirclement and any other attacks made against that Location as long as it is so marked." How many of us have been playing that one wrong? Thanks to David Longstreet for pointing that one out.

Rules Tip

Rick Reinesch



Remember when conducting OBA missions that Concealed units in non-Concealment Terrain and in LOS of the Observer are always considered a Known enemy unit to him for his actions. The only exceptions to this are at night and if Winter Camouflage is involved (C1.6).

Scenario Analysis: AoC8 The Game's Up Aussies



Nick Drinkwater

Background

Desperate Australian rearguards are caught in two minds as they try to hold onto some RAF hangars and also try to evacuate themselves from the clutches of the marauding Germans in the final dark days on Crete. The Germans want those hangars now, but they also want to snare as many of the retreating Commonwealth as possible before they flee over the mountains, back to the waiting destroyers for a cruise to Cairo to fight again.

Scenario Attractions

Mediterranean Terrain (olive groves, and lots of them!), kettenkrads, motorcycles, side-cars, Australians, a well-armed German reconnaissance force, defender and attacker alternatives with moving target VC, fighting withdrawal defense combined with a desperate last stand. All this results in the key ingredient of a great ASL scenario—a lot of difficult decisions!

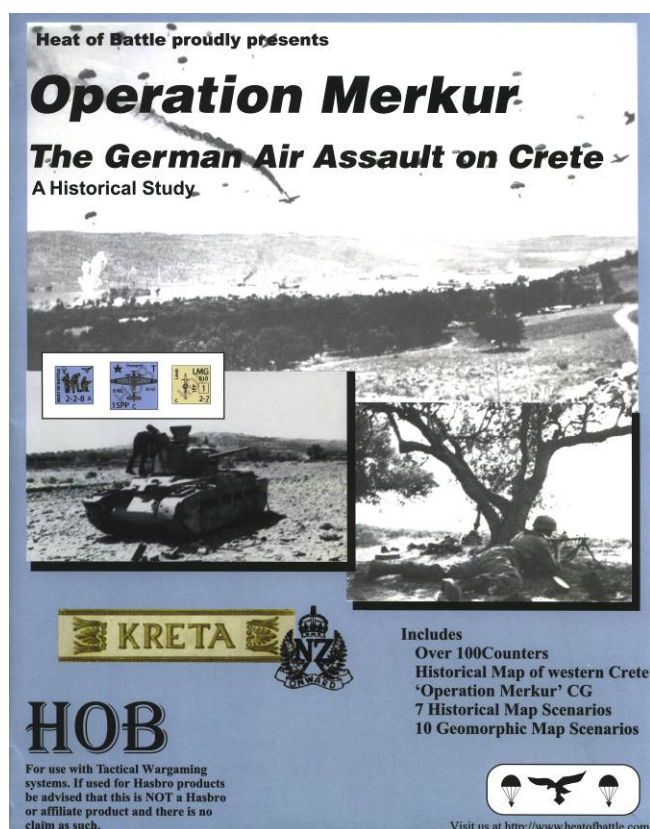
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Rules Refresher

Brush up on a number rules and game mechanics that don't always get a lot of play.

- Olive Groves as 2MF inherent terrain—one-level blind hexes as they are in-season (B14.8)
- Towing and hooking/unhooking rules for vehicles and Quick Set Up status (C10.1-C10.23)
- Impact of Ammo Shortage for the Australians (A19.131)
- All the rules on uses of sidecars and motorcycles (D15)



Introduction

This scenario is from the recently released *Operation Mercur: Kreta* pack from *Heat of Battle (HOB)*, and is one of the 10 scenarios included therein that use geomorphic boards. Note that an additional seven scenarios are set on the historical map, where you are able to play out the full range of dusty parachute and glider drops you'd expect of a Crete scenario. For those who like their ASL with a bit of a twist, this historical pack will stand out with pride on your shelf; the historical map is simply magnificent and the breadth and range of the scenarios are excellent. For a full product review, please see the summary I did for the Banzai

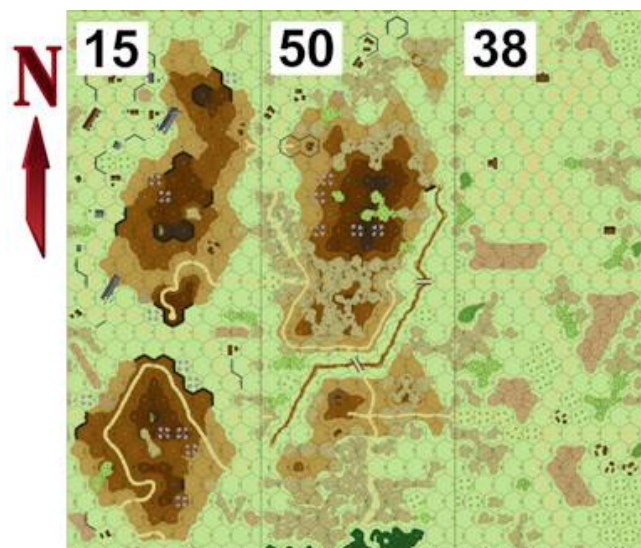
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(<http://banzaipipeline.blogspot.com/2008/03/review-kreta-operation-merkur.html>).

This particular scenario may seem a strange subject to choose for an analysis article, as it is extracted from what many would see as one of the more esoteric offerings that has emerged onto the ASL scene in 2008. True, but at its heart this is very a solid, run-of-the-mill order of battle that turns into something extremely challenging the more you examine it. When I first reviewed the Kreta pack on the Banzai Pipeline blog in March 2008, I identified this scenario as probably the most tactically interesting in the pack. Now having played it, I think that prediction has been confirmed; this scenario is a gem.

Map and Terrain

It's Crete, it's May 1941, it's grainy, it's sunny and it's non-windy. SSR define that all woods, orchards and marsh are olive groves. A very important point: this terrain is considered inherent, ala dense jungle, so no *woods* bypassing is allowed! The olive groves are considered rally terrain, though special F.1C desert routing rules are also in effect. All hedges are walls, and all buildings are stone (from the *Operation Merkur* special rules), and there is no *during-the-game* entrenching allowed due to the rocky nature of the terrain.



For this scenario, we are using the rare but fabulous board 15, the new-ish board 50, and our old friend board 38, in which the airfield *is* in play. Note that even though the long runways and dispersal pens are not treated as city boulevards, they remain horribly exposed places over which to attack. Overall, the board configuration results in a rocky, chunky, busy place dissected through the center by the large board 50 gully and scattered with obstacles everywhere; olive groves blanket everything, especially

both of the prominent massifs on board 50. The Germans need to be particularly aware of the cost of moving across this terrain, particularly while on motorbikes or whilst trying to tow things (and you'll be doing plenty of both), so plan your first 2-3 movement turns accordingly! Some woods overlays are added to the south side of board 50 to impede very fast and direct German access to the Australian exit hex rows on board 38.

Winning

On first read, the victory conditions appear fairly complex, but during play, things turn out to be a lot simpler than the text conveys. Basically, the Australians need to acquire 17 more VP more than the Germans, and VP can only be gained for both sides by controlling the four airfield buildings (hangars) at the end of each turn, *and* by the Australians (only) for CVP of exited units off the south edge of Board 38 after turn 3. You will need to keep a running tally on who holds which buildings for which turn and be aware of the time constraints of the scenario to properly plan both for this building grab, and for the end-game dash. Note that with only 4 buildings each offering a single VP in a cumulative sense, as soon as the Germans occupy two of these buildings, a net balance of 0VP will be accruing to each side each turn. This equation has a massive effect on the planning of the Aussie defense as they need to hold those buildings for as long as possible to get their VP total up to and above 16VP, making their exit requirements that much easier.

A quick look at the simple math alone shows that the Australians can be 12VP to the good after three turns without a whiff of a German appearing at the airfield; the sooner the Germans get to that aerodrome and start beating up those defenders the better, as you will start to swing the VP balance back the other way! If the Germans are at turn 5 and have only captured one building for one single turn, then the Aussies will already be at net 18VP, and they won't have to get anything off the board. This also means that the German player will now have to work even harder and faster to get the two final buildings to try and push the momentum on VP in the other direction. Both sides should treat the VP total like a pendulum that at the beginning of the game will immediately start to push in the Australian direction, and then it will stop, and perhaps even turn around in the German direction for the last couple of turns. As you can see in this game, planning matters a lot and it's really important to keep an eye on the various scoring permutations, especially in the last two turns.

The Australians

The Aussies have a really fascinating task in this scenario. By SSR they are forced to set up a dispersed defense by keeping a handful of MMC (four) and a SMC on board 50

north of hex row U, and a handful more (four) close to the airfield on board 38, including both trenches and a gun. Note that no one is able to park themselves adjacent to the board 38 board edge for any easy turn 4 escapes. Note also that setup restrictions for board 38 for the Australians are listed in the order of battle only and **not** in the historical section—read this carefully and understand your force disposition limitations. The real question the Aussies face is how to apportion forces correctly so that they can (i) try and delay the oncoming Germans, (ii) maximize casualties on the approaching Axis, (iii) form a tough defense that can hold at least three of the airport buildings until turn 5 *at the earliest*, **and** finally (iv), retain a small “run-away, run-away” force (think Monty Python) that can move through any gaps in the Germans and exit at game end. Tough choices indeed.

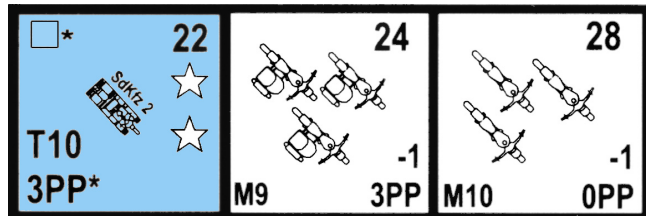
It is clear that, for once, these are not Canberra's finest. These boys have taken a battering over the previous few days and their ELR is only an average 3, and their infantry is very mixed bag stuff: three elites, three first-line, and three second-line squads. They are still all stealthy, of course, but the second-liners can cower. They have also been given a couple of 2-4-8 ‘bump’ half-squads and have managed to rustle up a real hotchpotch of support weapons and guns, including a German LMG (captured use penalties do apply to this), a captured German 37L antitank gun, some old relic of a Polish field gun (which is actually quite tasty, being a 100mm piece) and an old French 75. A Vickers MMG, two Bren guns and that stiff-upper-lip mainstay of the British army, the Boys antitank rifle, round out the equipment. Despite this hit and miss order of battle these guys are still well led: an 8-1, 7-0, and king of everything it touches, a stonking 9-2, who is the ‘supreme being’ of this particular battlefield. This guy needs to be protected very well as he absolutely has to be alive in Turns 7 and 8 if the Aussies are to resist the Nazi hordes.

The Germans

This is just what you would expect from an early war German elite recce force: a bunch of tough hombres (ELR 4), well equipped and well led, and ready to kick Australian ass. Onboard, the Germans start with great gun support in the form of a 37L gun, 50L gun, two of the brilliant 75*mm field guns, and the ace in the hole, a ROF 3 81mm mortar – awesome! In addition, they are assigned 8 squad equivalents of 4-6-8s, a 9-1, 8-1 and two 8-0s plus three (read it and weep) dm MMGs. It is probably the intention of the scenario designer that most of this lot starts the game mounted, as they have also been issued seven sidecars and two motorbikes. At least some of the guns should start the game onboard and set up, but if you feel the need, the Germans have also been issued two captured British trucks, and wait for it, three kettenkrads (yes!) to shift those guns about.

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Cool German Toys: Kettenkrads, Sidecars and Motorbikes!

All in all, a very potent, mobile strike force indeed...and helped by two, yes two, Mk II light tanks. OK, admittedly it's not the greatest tank in the world, but in this scenario, the IFE of 4 and CMG of 5 are quite potent and may be good for late game encirclement opportunities against stubborn holdout Aussies trapped in hangars. Look out for that Boys ATR though! (Written with only the smallest trace of irony). One of those tanks could also be devastating if it gets into good position across the Australian escape route.

Things get even better for the Germans in turn 1, as three more 4-6-8s, an 8-1, another 50L gun, another Kettenkrad, and three more motorbikes come on to add some extra oomph to the attack. Wow! This is a pretty mighty force indeed, but they will be needed as the Germans have a tough task here.

Australian Setup Considerations: Decisions, Decisions, Decisions...

Due to the stringent setup conditions, the Aussies will be dispersed, and by this very action they will be faced with some tough early decision making. The key thing the Aussies will be confronting early on will be a swarm of very mobile German infantry looking to exploit any gaps they perceive in the defensive lines. Time is against the Germans as they need to be in the airfield hangars as soon as possible, trying to deny the Australians some easy VP. Therefore, it is likely that the Germans may be prepared to take some risks and brave a few long range -1 and -2 shots in order to get moving early and get to the places they need to be.

Possible German Approach Routes

Looking at the obvious terrain obstacles in their path (see Figure 1), the German's most natural 'corridors' of attack will be (A) along the northern board edge through the olive groves north of the board 50 Hill (hexes 50A4-G4 to E7-A6); (B) through the central board 50 gully (hexes 50U3-U9); or (C) through the huge olive groves that have been created through overlay additions on the south side of board 50 (hexes 50EE8-GG8 to 50DD3-GG3). They could possibly plough up and over the main hill mass on board

50, but that would be too exhaustive in MP usage and easy to stymie by an Aussie hilltop and reverse slope defense, so that is unlikely. As it is the shortest route and offers the fastest path into the NW corner of the airfield, the Australians should expect a strong German probe using attack route (A), and almost certainly a secondary flanking drive through (B), or even (C) if facing very a patient German player, in order to position themselves in Turns 5-8 to deny Australian escape routes off board 38.

In response to this, the northernmost slopes of the board 50 hill need to be guarded from hex 50K5 by a squad with a LMG, as even 2-1 and 1-1 down shots can devastate mounted Germans with the double break possibility of falling off their bikes; if an opportunity comes to take these shots, roll away! In addition to this hilltop holdout, the northern corridor (A) should probably be defended by another squad and a dummy in the olive groves at the foot of the hill (hexes 50C3, 50F6 and 50F3 all offer good defensive positions) so that the Germans have to work hard to get forward here, hemorrhaging movement points and hence time. If necessary, conduct a slow fall-back defense and delay, delay, delay; while they are dealing with you in the olive groves, the Germans are not smashing up your troops in the hangars.

To guard against a sneaky approach through route (B) in the board 50 gully, perhaps another squad should get placed on the southern crest of the board 50 hill and yet another squad / half-squad to guard the hillside woods-road (50U6-U9) that runs along the side of the valley. No German motorcyclist should ever get free rein to ride unhindered along the board 50 roads. With their huge mobility they will be in the Aussie backfield creating havoc and perhaps grabbing victory buildings in nanoseconds, if given the chance. Residual fire is the defenders friend in this scenario, as it hurts bike riders and will probably force them to avoid choke points and use up precious MPs.

Setup limitations preclude the Aussies from directly blocking the southernmost approach route (C), but as you do have the option to set up south of the stream (but still on/north of row U), it may be prudent to put a squad and a half into the far SE corner of the board 50 setup area in the U2-U3 area (see Figure 2). These guys are really useful and can act as your mobile reserve being used to assist with blocking any sneaky German end-runs along the board 50 gully (1), or they can move over to block any thrusts through the southern board 50 overlay olive groves (2). Finally, they can also act as a 'dash' force in the later parts of the game if an opportunity presents itself to exit off the south side of board 38 for some cheap VP (3). They really are the Aussie's mobile fire team and should be treated accordingly—plan and position them well.

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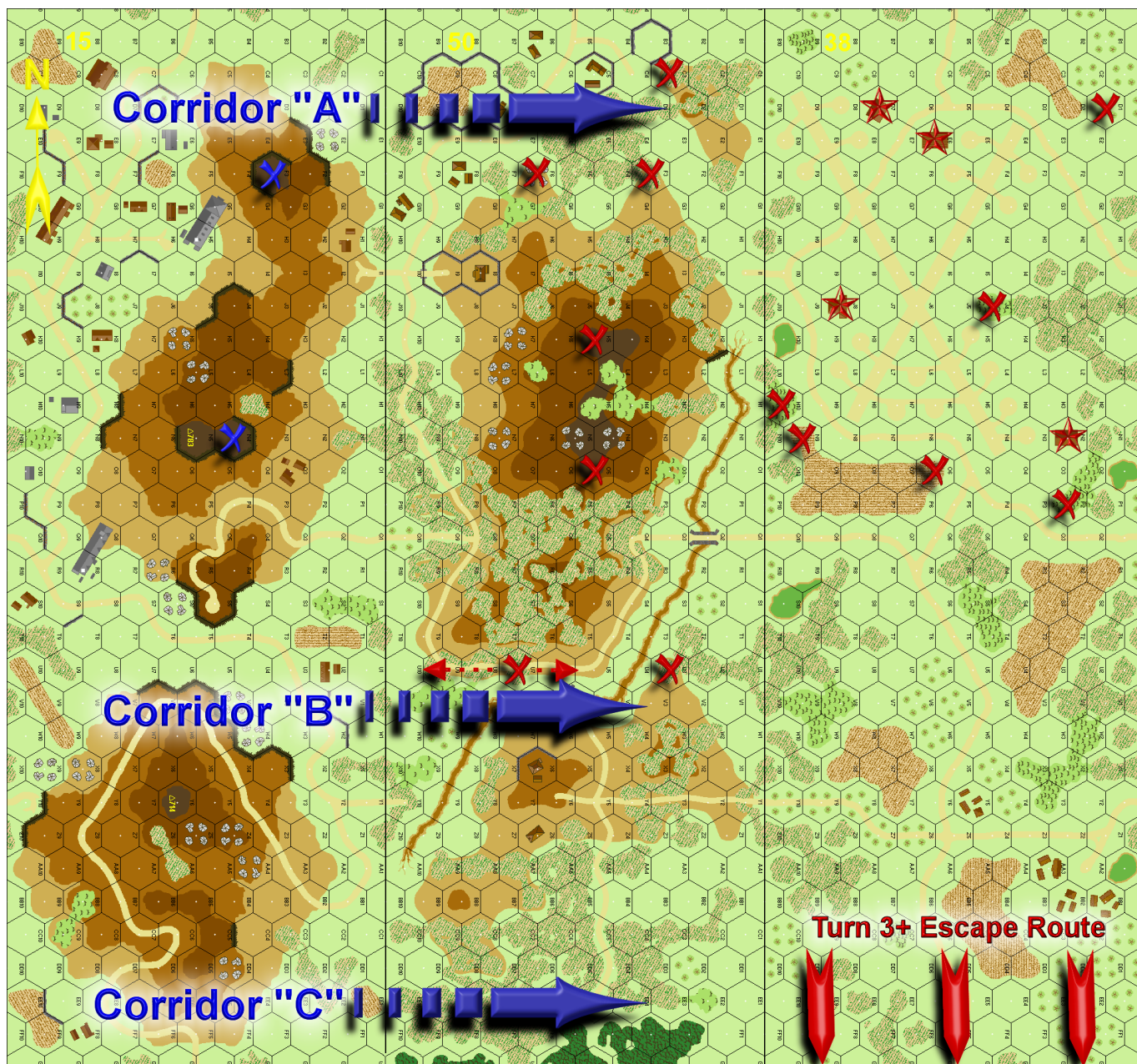


Figure 1. The main approach routes for the Germans. Red stars in the northeast part of the playing area indicate the four hangars which are cumulative VP locations throughout the game. Red Xs denote possible Aussie defensive locations. Blue Xs outline possible German gun positions.

Board 50 Hilltop Defense?

It is very likely that any hilltop defenders on board 50 are going to take a barrage of shots from the German artillery facing them on board 15. It is likely that the 81*mm mortar will get off a smoke round or two, so it may be worth trying to make a big dummy stack under a foxhole to suck up some of those shots. If the Aussies do get smoked in, they need to get off the hill fast and run to the northeast corner

of board 50 and assist in delaying the approaching attackers that should be working their way through the scattered olive groves along the “A” corridor. Every turn in delay matters as you will be accruing VP from the hangars, so helping this effort is key. If any of the other hilltop defenders look like they are being bypassed, get them moving as fast as possible either back to the airfield (hexes 50I2 / H2 are good positions to be concealed in), or if things look stable there, sneak them towards the southern edge of board 38.

Defending the Honor of the RAF: the Airfield

Planning for the defense of the airfield is a fairly straightforward thing for the Australian player; you know where the Germans are coming from and the objectives they need to take, so you can build a very tough and obstinate defense to deny them. First thing to consider is where to place the guns. Some might like to put one of the guns on the board 50 hilltop, but that is likely to be smoked and by-passed pretty quickly and may be of limited use later on in the game. I prefer to spread them around the airfield (hexes 38J4, D1, O6, P2, N9 and M10 are all great positions) with the intent of forming mutually supporting positions for defense of the hangars. Keeping them out of the LOS of the probable location of a level 4 German mortar is also a good idea; there are only one or two spots that it is likely to be located, so check out the terrain. Be particularly prudent with placement of the 37L antitank gun, which can quickly punch holes through the two MkIIs across the length and breadth of the airfield; good fields of fire are needed for this gun.

It is most likely that with a strong northern assault down corridor "A" the Germans will drive first at the closest buildings, 38E6 and D7. These buildings need to be defended well, but they can also be easily covered with firepower from every other spot on the airfield and its perimeter. I would keep big guns and the MMG out of the area of these buildings since it is likely that these two hangars will fall at some point before game end, and it will be necessary to keep these tubes firing as long as possible, especially with the likely loss of a gun or two due to ammo shortage. Buildings 38N2 and J8 are much harder to approach and conquer, and I would opt to place at least two of the guns and MMG close to or inside these buildings and make them a nightmare for the Germans to approach. Remember the runways are the defender's friend with their typically -1/-2 modifiers: your units in the hangars should plan to die in place, so there should be no need for the Aussies to be crossing them; the Germans are not going to be so lucky!

Use the trenches to connect the buildings to rally terrain in the olive groves so you can recycle units if necessary. Note that you probably don't want to connect buildings 38E6 and D7 with a trench as that offers an easy approach route and cover to E6 to any Germans who get into the first building, D7. Keep careful track of time. By turn 5, anything north of about row N is **not** going to get off the board, so plan ahead a little when considering your unit placement. Bear in mind simple things such as turn 3-4 moves of a gun crew away from a malfunctioned / bypassed gun in rows N / O to the board 38 south edge. This could win the game for the Australian player if they are able to get those precious two CVP off the board. Also, be sure to deploy any squads who are poised for end-game runs to maximize your potential

for getting *something* off; at this point, their job is to somehow avoid trouble and stay alive. As discussed above, the Australian player really needs to be in control of at least three hangars by the end of Turn 5, or your escape job is going to be so much harder. If you only control two buildings at the end of Turn 4, then you probably only have 10 or 12 VP in the bag: getting 4-6 more CVP off the board from fleeing units is a very tall order.

German Setup

The vast majority of the German force should be set up, ready to move, and in the correct positions to drive toward the approach corridors described above. Note that when setting up, it is really important to count out at least two turns in advance the MP needed to get you through to your objectives, and then plan your force disposition accordingly; attack corridor "C" is going to take the longest to negotiate even if it is initially unguarded. In contrast, corridor "A" will take the shortest time to get through, but is perhaps the most exposed to some potentially damaging early long range Australian shots. Remember to stop motorbike riders at the end of each movement phase. If in motion during Australian prep / advancing fire phases, then any failed rider MC will have to take a Bail-out NMC and the potential of compounding casualties for no extra gain at all. It is inevitable that your units will be taking some long range bullets, but your morale of eight can help you get through here.

The Guns

The one question the German player may be faced with in setup is how many of your various guns should be set up already in tow, and how many should be unloaded and ready to fire from the board 15 level 4 crest lines. The 81*mm mortar is your most potent weapon in the game with a huge 3ROF and good to-hit chances even at long ranges (20 hexes or more), so keep this one ready to fire from the start. A good place for this weapon may be the northernmost summit of the board 15 hill in hex 15F3. From here, you have a great LOS to most of the northern half of the airfield, including all of the victory buildings. LOS also exists to any Australians just south of the board 50 Gulley who are moving to interdict a corridor "C" thrust. In addition, this position allows you to see GG3-5 and GG9-10 of the board 38 exit hexes (at over 30 hex range), so this weapon can be a very potent threat to interdict the fleeing Australians deep into the endgame. It is also your one resource (apart from your tanks) with smoke capability, so it could be very useful to smoke in any particularly tall board 50 hilltop "?" stacks that the Australians may have started with. Note that since woods are actually olive groves by SSR, there will be no air burst benefit for this mortar, or for its short-ranged 50*mm baby brother.

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If facing a particularly up-front Australian defense focused on the board 50 hill, then it may be good to keep at least one of the two 75*mm infantry guns unlimbered to offer direct fire support from the start, maybe in 15N4. All of the German guns in this scenario are QSU so they are actually fairly easy to maneuver, but remember that it is effectively one turn to get these guys packed up and going somewhere new. As you may need these guns in the later game, it's best to keep them in towed status as long as possible to maximize their late game fire opportunities; just make sure you are aware of the impact of the extra 1MP per hex due to towing and what that may do to the timing of your route of travel.

The German approaches are clearly going to be hindered by Australian blocks and hindrances, but the mobility of your units is the key here. Even in open ground, your bikes and sidecars will be doing 8-9 hexes per turn and there are places where they can use the roads to increase this distance a lot. As olive groves are in season, remember the one-hex blind zone this creates and use this terrain benefit wherever possible to hide from long-range pot-shots from the Australians, especially on corridors "A" and "C". If the Aussies have been foolish enough to leave the board 50 gully road unguarded then leap on that opportunity, it is a freeway direct into the heart of the Aussie defenses around the southern part of the airfield. Unlikely, but sometimes you just might catch a break!

Tackling the Hangars

If the German main route of attack is through corridor "A" then you should be looking to threaten the stone buildings in hexes 38E6 and D7 by about turn 4, and ideally should have taken one, if not both by the end of turn 5. These two buildings are probably the most exposed of the Australian victory locations and can be approached directly from the olive groves closest to this route. The big task here for the German is to try and coordinate the attack; it's a natural consequence of approach under fire to get strung out a little and arrive for the assault on the victory locations in dribs and drabs. This plays into the hands of the Australian player as he can use his big MMG/9-2 combo and long range fire to systematically reduce these approaching squads and make the assault task that much harder. Count yourself lucky there are no fire lanes due to Australian ammo shortage!

If the Germans are able to take these two buildings but are a little late in doing so, then in reality your task has just gotten that much harder. To get one of the other hangars and start swinging the VP differential back in your direction is going to be a huge task, as the buildings are both isolated, adjacent to the airfield, and easily covered by a ring of Australian gun barrels. Some approaches are literal death

traps as you may have to cross the runway too – ouch! Of the two, the hangar in 38N2 is perhaps the easier to assault as there is some cover from the orchards to the north, but it is quite possible that the Australians will have the 9-2 / MMG and a gun in this vicinity along with at least a squad and a half, and that will be a hard nut to crack. The German player may well consider withholding the use of the smoke from the 81*mm mortar until these later turns to assist this part of the ground assault as it may well be needed more by then! Alternatively, the two tanks can assist here with their sDs, assuming they are still alive and kicking. Keep an eye out for encirclement opportunities with these two vehicles, especially if the Aussie 37L gun has been suppressed.

Endgame Amongst the Olives

Finally, the Germans will need to get some units to the far south side of board 38 to stop the Australians from having a free run off the board. That is a long way to go for troops coming from the NW corner of the playing area and you will have undoubtedly fought off some annoying delaying skirmishes with the Australians to get there. Ideally, you will have gotten into position to place one or hopefully two machine guns along the board 38 exit edge to lay crisscrossing fire lanes along the exit row; the Aussies may be under ammo shortage but you are not! It would be even better if you could get one or two of the 3ROF antitank or infantry guns here, too. This will put a massive crimp in the Australian plans as you recreate the *Charge of the Light Brigade* through the *olive grove of death* for the fleeing Antipodeans! The Germans may need to penetrate all the way to the far eastern edge of board 38 to block off all Aussie escape routes. But if the German infantry can't quite make it that far, you may wish to park your Kettenkrads or captured British trucks in some of the exit hexes to deny Australian escape routes, as this will require them to subsequently advance in and then ambush-withdrawal out the other side to get through—likely but not guaranteed. It could be quite possible your Australian opponent may only need to exit a single half-squad to claim victory, and yet he may come up short due to the sheer number of bodies and hardware in his way. Sneaky but it works!

Summary

A departure from many scenarios, this game involves a continual running / retreating skirmish, insane assaults across murderous open terrain, finished off with a desperate dash to freedom by a shattered, disrupted garrison; three scenarios in one and a challenge for each player from start to finish. An excellent design from this interesting pack and I'm looking forward to trying some more scenarios out of it soon! Hopefully you will be interested enough to give this one a try.

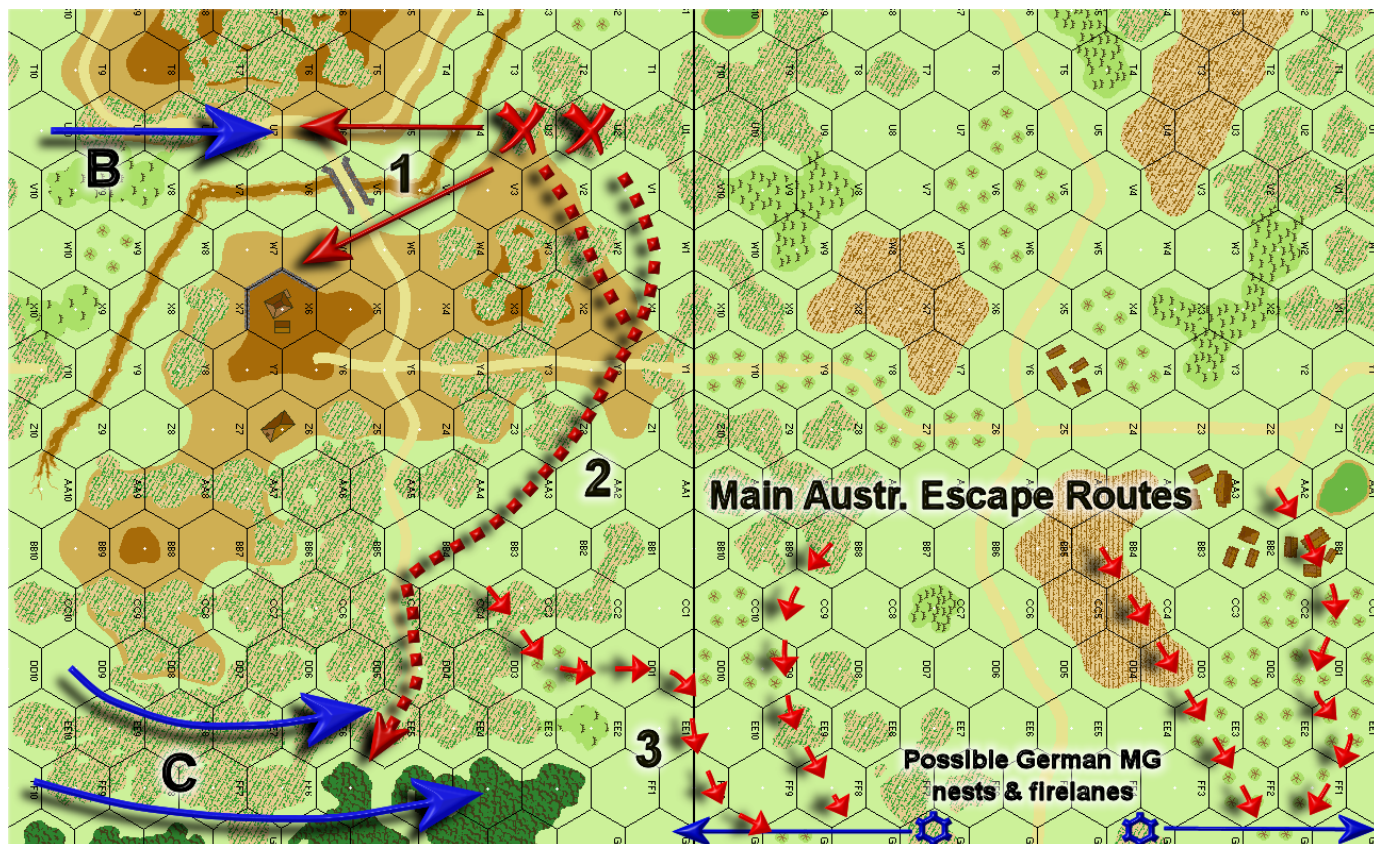


Figure 2. Hexes 50 U2/U3 are start points for an Australian squad. From here, they can (1) guard against approaches along the board 50 gully (B), or (2) move to defend an approach through the southernmost olive groves (C), or can infiltrate back off the south board edge (3). Possible German endgame MG positions are marked (blue positions), where fire lanes can be laid to impede Australian escape routes

Postscript AAR

My interest in this scenario stems from a brilliant game I played with Matt Schwoebel at the 2008 Texas Team Tourney. This game contained many of the incidents and ideas detailed above and we went through the complete emotional spectrum of highs and lows during the 6 hours we took to play. Matt is a great guy, a fun opponent and does not know when he is beaten. He took this one to the wire after we'd both been through a huge roller coaster on the luck side. Matt lost both his 75* mm guns to malfunction early on, but was able to dominate and decimate my defenses with huge ROF tears from his mortar and from his 50L antitank guns which he had laboriously towed all the way over to the SE corner of board 38. It was a testimony to his good planning and play that every one of the guns he towed was up and firing on the Australians at game end and this almost made the difference. My 9-2 was a star repeatedly in the game, shredding squad after squad that attacked the 38E6/D7 hangar complex before critically malfunctioning the MMG for two desperate turns. Both of Matt's tanks were placed in scarily effective positions to

threaten and encircle the hangars before I was able to unveil the 37L gun which nailed both in squeaky, successive shots!

At the end of turn 5, I had managed to climb to the required 16 VP from hangar control before Matt claimed the second hangar after his second assault on the building. This resulted in a no-net VP loss/gain for each of us for each of the last three turns; at this point, his corridor "A" attack force was too weak to have any chance of claiming either of the remaining two hangars. This just left me needing 1VP to escape offboard and I had lined up and dispersed as many units as I could to achieve this over the last two movement / advance phases.

A total of 12 CVP of my fleeing units were ready for the dash and I assumed the game was in the bag—someone would slip through the net somewhere! However, I had not reckoned on the secondary punch from Matt's corridor "B/C" attack group, which went on an almighty, gleeful Schwoebel ROF spree. In a horror sequence from hell, Matt proceeded to shred, destroy, break, tie up in CC and worst of all, pin everything I tried to send through to exit the

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board, apart from one single gun crew (this is where I am having my "Gillis I hate this game moment" as yet another bloody ROF 3 weapon does me damage!). This single crew had come on a very circuitous run to get to the last two exit hexes but was faced with a single final shot on a solo MF in its last hex from Matt's damn 81*mm mortar, 25 hexes away. It was the last unit that I could possibly get off the board in this last turn of the game; to win, I would have to avoid pinning (or worse).

Matt fired, hit, rolled an 8 on the effects...NMC!

So having coming so close, was I about to suffer another last roll defeat? I rolled a...6...and gratefully scampered off for the win. Phew.

Tactical Tip

Rick Reinesch



Remember that AFVs with an MA have Vehicular Smoke Grenades (D13.35). If you go CE you have a 33.3% chance of getting Smoke from an AFV that does not normally possess vehicular smoke dispensers. Even if it is only for the duration of the MPh, this is a better chance of getting smoke into a hex than an AFV with an sD value of 5 (27.8%).

Product Review: HOB's Special Forces Pack

Nick Drinkwater



Summary

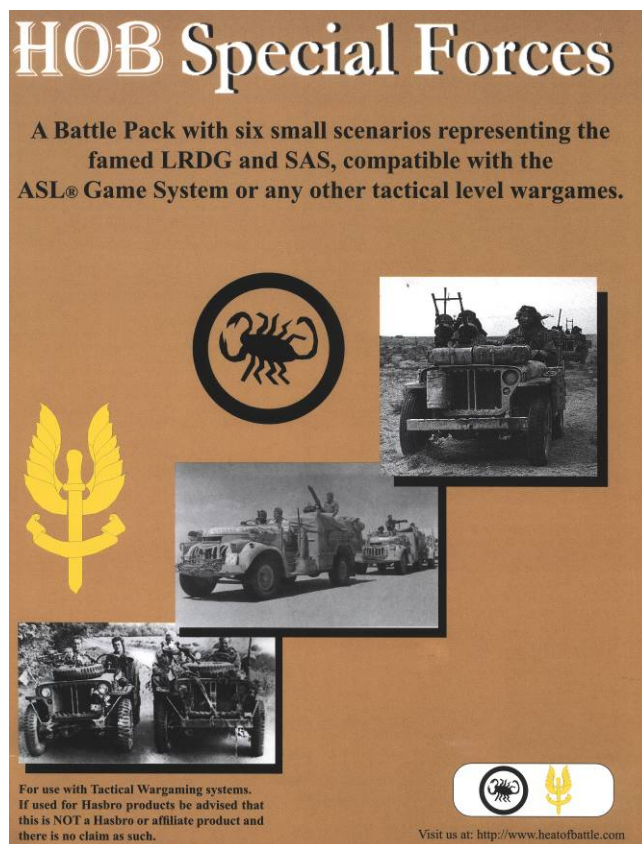
Six scenarios, a quarter sheet of new counters and two pages of historical rules make for a small but cute little piece of ASL chrome-rich esoterica. One for the purists maybe, but a lot of fun all the same. Possibly a little on the expensive side at \$34.00 domestic US, but if you like your ASL quirky and want to try scenarios with some armed reconnaissance and raider feel to them, then this one is a nice addition to the system.

Product Description

At first glance, HOB's *Special Forces* looks a little thin on the ground, consisting of two pages of rulebook additions to chapter H, three scenario cards with six scenarios, a quarter card of counters and the outer sleeve. The outside of the sleeve is decorated with pictures of calm, nonchalant

bearded and not so bearded blokes driving heavily armed trucks and jeeps - not surprising then that the focus of this pack is the SAS and their slightly less mythical brothers in arms, the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG).

The inside of the packet sleeve gives some abridged summary paragraphs on the various types of units introduced and their special capabilities, including LRDG and SAS leaders and crews, together with HOB's quite neat representation of the SAS' jeep operators, the HS-crew. However, this is also where some of the small but frustrating gremlins that periodically haunt HOB's products creep in again: the pictures for the SAS and LRDG counters were somehow swapped around, so while the text refers to the 1-2-8 LRDG crew, it actually shows the 2-2-8 SAS crew counter and vice versa - grrrr! It's only a small thing, but initially this can be a little bit annoying and confusing, especially as the text on the inside the front cover is the first thing you're likely to read! On the other side of the sleeve is a unit TOE for the SAS and LRDG for the entire war and their ASL equivalents; useful and pertinent information, but also includes some things in the SAS and LRDG notes that aren't stated elsewhere in the rules.



The Rules Pages - Unit Types

Instead of focusing on this one minor editing blip, I would recommend concentrating on the page and a quarter of

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chapter H special rules which govern employment of the new units HOB uses to represent these extremely specialized troops. I think these rules are a great representation of the small unit capabilities of these highly motivated warriors, but this may be a bit too chrome for others. As you'd expect, the SAS are all stealthy, elite, triple underlined etc., but they come in two flavors: the more standard 3-3-8 half-squads which represent 4-5 man raiding parties that were transported into battle in various theaters, often by the LRDG, and a 2-2-8 HS-crew (2-3 men strong) that drove and operated the flying jeeps found in the desert and in France (amongst other places). Note the 2-2-8 is considered as a crew *and* as a HS, the 3-3-8 is not.

Both of these units have smoke exponents of 1, and can fire 1PP weapons as if they were full squads so strap on those Bren guns and get those bad boys firing! Considering the second line and conscript nature of the troops these guys will typically be taking on, these are all powerful attributes and make these guys very deadly. Other fun tricks they receive are immunity to PAATC, a -2 CC value vs. vehicles when using gammon bombs (though with a slight risk to the user), the ability to direct and hence non-cover allied partisans, free use of captured SW and the ability to (almost) always to fanaticize or rout rather than surrender/go berserk.

The LRDG, as could only befit these deep recce and scout troops, share several of the characteristics of the SAS (stealthy, elite, smoke exponent, but no assault or spray fire bonus). They are much more lightly armed as 1-2-8 crews but have AFV crew characteristics; they are led by their own specialized leaders who can act like armor leaders (D3.4 applies), as well as act like infantry leaders, a recognition that many of the LRDG were recruited from the British armored forces. As crews, you will rarely see these guys, except when their transport is immobilized or they fail a MC. Due to their practice at escaping from overturning vehicles, the CS numbers on the transport of all these units is typically a healthy 6, though it is also red due to the extra petrol these vehicles normally carried.

The Rules Pages - Vehicle Types

The other page of rules that comes with the pack is a side and a half of vehicle descriptions to add into chapter H. This covers all the trucks that the two units used and covers a diverse flavor of classic jeeps and captured (but non-penalized) Italian cannone trucks, stuffed to the gills with automatic weapons. Most if not all have low ground pressure, and there is a series of special rules that modify the concealment and sighting TC that apply to these vehicles: they are able to go hull down on sand dunes, can gain HIP and concealment in scrub, and in a very neat piece of ultimate chrome, can repeat the same trick whilst in VBM next to a building! Almost all of them are easier to

extricate from bog, and carry 2 AT mines that the SAS can set and hide if they are out of LOS of units or use them as daisy chains, amongst other things.

Depending on their MG configurations, you can also remove a host of LMG and MMG from these various trucks to seriously augment your FP, and many configurations offer twin BMG or AAMG mounts that allow two *to hit* rolls; these guys are the ultimate in truck wreckers! For heavier fire support, they have an ATR version which progressed to a 37L Bofors version as the war progressed and tank armor thickened, which finally migrated to a twin 20L AA Breda gun for additional AA fire. The heavily armed SAS jeeps typically used in France have a special frontal armor characteristic of 0 and various mountings and covered arcs for bow and coaxial machine guns. All of this is nicely observed and a great representation into something quite playable; very chrome but quite fun!

The Counters

A quarter sheet of counters comes with the pack and these are of the usual high quality you'd expect from HOB. The color match to AH/MMP British counters is pretty good, although they are a little more yellow and have an obvious glossy sheen to them, but they will fit in nicely. The vehicle art is close to normal and all counters have a small "Heat of Battle" logo printed up one side of the counter. It is nice that the logo doesn't intrude on the artwork or counter information. Leader names are partly historical so you can play with some of the SAS celebs such as David Stirling and Paddy Mayne. Awesome job on this one!



The Scenarios

If I were to have one complaint I guess, it is that you only receive six scenarios. For \$34, I feel I would like to have had a couple more in the pack. What you do have though is

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a great representation of some of the typical actions that the SAS / LRDG were involved in, from deep penetrating night-time raids on airfields, through convoy beat ups in the desert, to ground assaults on isolated Aegean island garrisons. Summaries of these scenarios are provided below.



Scenario SF-1: Barce Beat Up

Boards 12 & 38, 6.5 turns, LRDG trucks with a 9-2 LRDG leader, night rules on a dark night, Italians (including L3s) and a mission to blow up things, especially planes and fuel trucks. The LRDG have to cause 50CVP of damage (planes are worth 5 each), but the Italians get some extremely light armor support to complicate things. The terrain is North African with all ponds, woods, marsh and brush being SSRed to scrub and all gullies are wadis. This one looks quite fun, but night rules will put many off. How many times do you get to do a full-fledged raid?

Scenario SF-2: Coup d'Mayne

Boards 26, 27, 28, 6 turns, SAS Jeep raid on a German desert convoy. Night rules are again in effect on a dark night and the Brits get to mine the road. This is the smaller, mobile battle version of Scenario 1 and will not take long to play. Both sides get instant win VC (death and destruction for the Brits, escapes for the Germans). Normally the SAS would slaughter the second liners and their trucks but the two armored cars make this a tougher test for Paddy Mayne and his crew. This one looks okay, but I like the funkiness of Scenario 1 more. The combination of desert and night will put most people off, I expect.

Scenario SF-3: Victorious or Dead

Half boards 9 and 10, 6.5 turns, 15 half-squad strong SAS assault force using the Greek SAS Sacred

Squadron (-1 CC vs. Germans and the option to go HtH) embarks on a hilltop assault of a castle and the 8.5 second line squads on the defense. All level 3 and 4 terrain is reduced to level 2 maximum by SSR. Orchard and woods are olive groves by SSR, and the Germans receive air support for a single turn. The SAS receive low ammo mortar support in this, but they are the beneficiaries of some interesting victory conditions; whereby for every increment of 6 CVP inflicted, the best German leader must pass a NTC, if he fails, the Germans surrender and the British instantly win. This is perhaps the best scenario in the pack for me as we will get to examine a lot of facets of the SAS' assault capabilities, with no real 'odd' playing conditions in effect. Nice effort this one.

Scenario SF-4: Watson's Wood

Two thirds of boards 34 & 39, 7 turns, 10 axis squads take on 6 SAS half-squads plus a couple of jeeps. Some major terrain changes are in effect by SSR (no hills, cliffs, marsh or bridges and the woods are all forests). This represents a carefully planned attempt by the Germans to eliminate a SAS patrol in the French forests; the SAS are all HIP to start with, but by setup, they are closely grouped and will suffer a single turn of 80mm OBA before they can try to escape. A lot of this scenario may come down to how effective the OBA is. If they are unscathed, the SAS look good to make their escape as the Germans are very average.

Scenario SF-5: Bushwhacking the Ambush

Half of board 16 only and 6.5 turns long, this is a scripted scenario where a stopped and immobilized wagon column with hidden German guns gets the drop on an SAS jeep raiding force. Instant VC will mean this will probably not go the distance. The Germans get a 37L AA gun and MMG to beat off 4 SAS jeeps. This scenario and Scenario 2 are the smallest ones in the pack and both could be dicey, but they are so quick you could flip sides and play them again. These are almost chess-like in their play as every unit is vital for both sides.

Scenario SF-6: The Three Companies

Board 9, 6.5 turns, wet and overcast so rain could play a part in this. We move to 1945 and the Alps and the SAS have brought together a mixed battle group of 2 Italian conscripts, 2.5 squads of escaped Russians and 4 SAS squads, all HIP, to conduct the ambush. They are trying to prevent an escape attempt by a small German column, which includes an armored car and a MkIVJ! To help the Allies, they have an American airborne 75*mm pack artillery piece. Instant win VC are in place for the Germans for escaping off the board, but they can also win by accumulating CVP. This is the other scenario I really like

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the looks of in the pack as the SAS will have a challenge coordinating the various elements of the ambush.

Final Thought

This is a very solid effort for those who like their chrome bright, shiny and very British. It earns a very healthy B++, and the inclusion of two more scenarios would have raised this to an A-. If you're more concerned with the size and possible diceyness of some of these contributions, then this pack probably isn't for you and rates more like a C+. I love it and want to give some of these a spin. It will be interesting to see how HOB's next promised effort in this area on the German Brandenburg regiment will turn out. Tea and biscuits, anyone?

2008 Texas Team Tournament



Rick Reinesch

The final details are getting wrapped up for this year's tournament. We had 42 players from all over the southern part of the US and from locations as far away as the DC area attending this year. We also had the welcome presence of several new faces: Arlen Vanek, Chris Kubick, Patrick Ireland, Chas Argent, Buck Karpowicz, Kevin Klausmeyer, and Robert Davila. Robert Davila is Jim Martin's son and played Starter Kit the entire weekend. He played a number of games and got a great taste for ASL. It sounds like he is so psyched that he wants to attend the Thunderbird Tournament up on Oklahoma City in November.

We also had the pleasure of hosting Chas Argent and Buck Karpowicz from the DC area. Chas was kind enough to bring a copy of AP4 to give away as a prize and also supplied a copy for folks to play a few scenarios out of. This was a real treat for those of us who had yet to receive our copies of AP4.

In the title match for the individual crown of the Texas Team Tournament, Jim Ferrell took back the title he lost the previous year to Matt Shostak in defeating Randy Shurtz in The Bears of St. Denis [SP148] to take home the coveted 10-3 Award. Randy was awarded the 9-2 Runner-up trophy dice glass.

Matt Shostak and Jim Martin took home the award as the top team in the tournament with a combined 10-2 record.

In mini-tournament play, Zeb's *Opening Assault* mini on Thursday was even more popular this year. The mini was won by Buck Karpowicz and Glenn Schools. The Texas

HEAT mini on Saturday was won by Roy Casagrande and Rob Burton.

The John Van Marter Sportsmanship Award went to Roy Connelly of Kansas this year. This is a recognition award that is based on nominations from the greater community and presented at the tournament to the individual who, win or lose, is the type of person whose attitude is such that you just want to play ASL with them again and again. Roy is certainly well deserving of the award.

Displaying a case of bipolar nature, Matt Shostak took both the Audie Murphy Award for the most snakes (32) and the Col. Klink for the most boxes (27) over the course of the tourney. Going into the final set of matches, Chas Argent had a 3 point lead in the Klink category. Chas got two, Matt had five. We had a tie. In a roll off for the ages, they both proceeded to roll until one of them rolled a twelve. After about 60 or 70 rolls, it finally happened for Matt.

But don't fret for Chas, for he didn't walk away empty-handed. Chas can lay claim to playing the most ASL over the weekend with the Major Johnson award. The final tallies came down to the wire. With almost 17,000 points generated, the difference between first and second place in the MJ running was a scant 133 points.

We had a great list of sponsors for this year, without whose assistance we could not offer such a fantastic drawing of prizes. I would especially like to recognize *Bunker Hill Games*, *Osprey Publishing*, and *Le Franc Tireur* as major sponsors for this year. Here is the full list:

- Armchair General
- Bounding Fire Productions
- Break Contact
- Dispatches From The Bunker
- East Side Gamers
- Fanatic Enterprises
- Friendly Fire
- Key Games
- Le Franc Tireur
- Lone Canuck Publishing
- Mark Pitcavage
- Michael Dorosh
- MultiMan Publishing
- Osprey Publishing
- SoCal ASL Group
- Stackpole Books
- The Gamers Armory

Please make sure to frequent these folks with your product orders and let them know that you appreciate their support of the Texas Team Tournament.

I would also like to recognize a number of folks that really stepped up to the plate to make this year's tournament an

enjoyable experience for all. They all did a fantastic job and I can't thank them enough.

Zeb Doyle for designing and running the Thursday mini
David Longstreet for pulling together the card deck
Bill Dorre for the great koozies
Glenn Schools for coordinating the trophies
John Hyler for setting up the tournament room

As soon as I get this article out of the way, I'll start the planning for next year. For all of the old and new faces, I hope to see you again next year. For those that have never been to our tournament, you don't know what you're missing. So with that, please make sure to mark your calendars, the 17th Annual Texas Team Tournament will be held June 25th-28th, 2009 again at the La Quinta Inn in Round Rock, Texas.

2008 Texas Team Tournament Results



Rick Reinesch

Here are the results and rankings from the 16th Annual Texas Team Tournament. Where players had the same score, I ranked based off of W/L percentage first, and then the W/L percentage of their opponents. So players with the same score who competed against stronger opponents would be ranked higher. Going from the basic requirement that you need four games to qualify for the individual awards, here is how folks finished.

1. James Ferrell
2. Randy Shurtz
3. Matt Shostak
4. Mike Seningen
5. Sam Tyson
6. James Martin
7. Zeb Doyle
8. Brian Roundhill
9. Jerry Simmons
10. Doyle Motes
11. Mike Denson
12. Scott Bell
13. Ed Beekman
14. Chas Argent
15. Chris Kubick
16. Mike Rose
17. Walter Eardley
18. Arlen Vanek
19. Eric Gerstenberg
20. Rick Reinesch
21. Gregg Parker

22. Roy Connelly
23. David Longstreet
24. John Hyler
25. Bill Dorre
26. Patrick Ireland

Ranking everyone regardless of the number of games played, here are the final standings.

Player Scores			
Player	Score	Wins	Losses
1. James Ferrell	5.0	5	0
2. Randy Shurtz	3.0*	4	1
*Runner-up in the Championship game			
3. Matt Shostak	5.0	6	1
4. Mike Seningen	4.0	5	1
5. Sam Tyson	3.0	4	1
6. James Martin	3.0	4	1
7. Zeb Doyle	3.0	4	1
8. Brian Roundhill	3.0	4	1
9. Roy Casagrande	2.0	2	0
10. Jerry Simmons	2.0	3	1
11. Doyle Motes	2.0	3	1
12. Mike Denson	2.0	3	1
13. Scott Bell	2.0	3	1
14. Jeff Toreki	1.0	1	0
15. Nick Drinkwater	1.0	2	1
16. Ed Beekman	1.0	3	2
17. Chas Argent	1.0	4	3
18. Chris Kubick	0.0	2	2
19. Matt Schwoebel	0.0	1	1
20. Mike Rose	0.0	2	2
21. Walter Eardley	0.0	2	2
22. Robert Davila	0.0	2	2
23. Arlen Vanek	-1.0	2	3
24. Allen King	-1.0	1	2
25. Glenn Schools	-1.0	1	2
26. Jack O'Quin	-1.0	1	2
27. Buck Karpowicz	-1.0	1	2
28. Dan Preston	1.0	1	2
29. John Farris	-1.0	1	2
30. Kevin Klausmeyer	-1.0	0	1
31. Kevin Kenneally	-1.0	0	1
32. Rob Burton	-1.0	0	1
33. Eric Gerstenberg	-2.0	1	3
34. Rick Reinesch	-2.0	1	3
35. Gregg Parker	-2.0	1	3
36. Roy Connelly	-3.0	1	4
37. Jeff Taylor	-3.0	0	3
38. Bud Garding	-3.0	0	3
39. David Longstreet	-4.0	1	5
40. John Hyler	-4.0	0	4

41. Bill Dorre	-4.0	0	4
42. Patrick Ireland	-6.0	0	6

Major Johnson Scores

Player	MJ Total
Chas Argent	16670.25
Matt Shostak	16537.5
Chris Kubick	14068.25
John Hyler	13789.5
James Martin	11532.5
Jeff Taylor	9757.5
Brian Roundhill	9660.0
Arlen Vanek	9240.0
David Longstreet	8952.0
Mike Rose	8626.5
Ed Beekman	8418.9
James Ferrell	7845.0
Bud Garding	7704.25
Zeb Doyle	7614.9
Doyle Motes	7384.5
Roy Connelly	7348.25
Walter Eardley	6538.0
Sam Tyson	6387.0
Mike Seningen	5686.5
Gregg Parker	5657.5
Mike Denson	5310.0
Allen King	5215.0
Randy Shurtz	4787.5
Glenn Schools	4786.0
Nick Drinkwater	4302.45
Patrick Ireland	4235.0
Jerry Simmons	4226.0
Eric Gerstenberg	4058.75
Matt Schwoebel	4009.5
Rick Reinesch	3706.25
Buck Karpowicz	3408.0
Bill Dorre	3391.0
Jeff Toreki	2317.0
Dan Preston	2247.0
Scott Bell	2077.0
Robert Davila	2003.75
John Farris	1983.75
Jack O'Quin	1520.25
Roy Casagrande	288.0
Kevin Kenneally	282.0
Kevin Klausmeyer	227.25
Rob Burton	0.0

Team Scores

Team	Score	Wins	Losses
James Martin, Matt Shostak,	8.0	10	2
Mike Seningen, Ed Beekman,	5.0	8	3
Buck Karpowicz, James Ferrell,	4.0	6	2
Jerry Simmons, Scott Bell,	4.0	6	2
Sam Tyson, John Farris,	2.0	5	3
Glenn Schools, Zeb Doyle,	2.0	5	3
Brian Roundhill, Arlen Vanek,	2.0	6	4
CENTRAL TEXAS	1.29	36	25
Jack O'Quin, Chas Argent	1.0	5	4
Nick Drinkwater, Allen King,	0.0	3	3
Mike Rose, Norman Harman,	0.0	2	2
Doyle Motes, Rick Reinesch,	0.0	4	4
Mike Denson, Gregg Parker,	0.0	4	4
NORTH TEXAS	-0.22	18	19
Dan Preston, Robert Davila,	-1.0	3	4
HOUSTON	-2.0	7	12
Rob Burton, Kevin Klausmeyer,	-2.0	0	2
FOREIGNERS	-2.57	9	18
Walter Eardley, Roy Connelly,	-3.0	3	6
Jeff Toreki, Bill Dorre,	-3.0	1	4
David Longstreet, Chris Kubick,	-4.0	3	7
Matt Schwoebel, John Hyler,	-4.0	1	5
Jeff Taylor, Bud Garding,	-6.0	0	6
Eric Gerstenberg, Patrick Ireland,	-8.0	1	9

Player Profile: Jerry Simmons

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

Simmons: *I got introduced to gaming back in 1983 with a Spanish Civil War game back in Spain where I grew up. I played International Team games such as Jena, Austerlitz, Sicily43, Rommel, and AH titles like Air Force/Dauntless, Third Reich, Flat Top, Diplomacy, and of course Squad Leader. We also did the RPG thing with D&D, Paranoia, and Call of Cthulhu. When I returned to the States to join the Marine Corps I bought the ASLRB, BV, and Yanks but my gaming stopped completely. I browsed the rules on and off through the end of my enlistment, marriage, and university but didn't really play, though I continued to accumulate modules. In 2004 I attended the Tornado Alley event in Fort Worth and met up with the DFW guys, and finally started playing ASL.*

Banzai: When and how did you discover ASL?

JS: *I already played SL when I heard the news about ASL's release but didn't get my hands on it until I came back to the States in 1987.*

Banzai: What nationality do you enjoy playing the most?

JS: *I don't have a favorite nationality. I enjoy the different nationalities' characteristics and the flavor they provide to each scenario. With some nationalities you have to work harder to extract their every resource but that just adds to the challenge and enjoyment of the game.*

Banzai: How do you take your coffee?

JS: *I don't, never developed a taste for it. I am addicted to Diet Coke, however.*

Banzai: Describe your favorite kind of scenario. What kind of scenario do you find less enjoyable?

JS: *My favorite is a combined arms, early to mid war, with multiple VC slugfest. The armor is not extremely deadly yet, and the multiple VC ensure that something is going on everywhere on the board. My least favorite is a static defense with no maneuvering and skulking as the only highlight.*

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

JS: *I do well with infantry actions, more on the defense than on the attack, and I'm starting to use AFVs better and getting the most out of them. I'd say one of my weaknesses is combined arms. Timing and mutual support is something I don't have down completely in order to maximize combined arms actions. The other is probably rules knowledge. That's something I'm trying to remedy this year by reading at least one rule or page a day, even those which I think I already know. I want to get rid of the "I've been playing that wrong for years" syndrome.*

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

JS: *The level of detail of the game system that provides the uniqueness of each nationality represented is one of the best aspects. Many nationalities have 4-4-7 squads but they are all different when their national characteristics are applied. Another great aspect of ASL is the quantity and variety of scenarios available that make it many games in one. The steep learning curve is probably the worst aspect*

of ASL. That's something that the SK modules are addressing, but ultimately the tome must be read.

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

JS: *I think 20 years is long enough to finish the game system. I want to see HP released!*

Banzai: What's your favorite game piece in ASL and why?

JS: *That would have to be the Hellcat. Don't get to use it very often but it's great to have that nimble machine zip through the battlefield, smack some unsuspecting AFV in the rear, and take off out of sight.*

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

JS: *In true Russian fashion, I'm going to have to go with the numbers. I'd rather try to swarm a couple of German AFVs that try to get close to any of them with the slow behemoth.*

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

JS: *Given similar numbers I'll take the better armored French. Even if it means having to use platoon movement, which I dislike immensely.*

Banzai: How do you like PTO scenarios?

JS: *PTO is a blast! I've played a few scenarios but still don't use the Japanese properly. If I attack with them, they're usually a bunch of half squads by the time they reach the VC area. Needless to say, caves are far into the distant future. But I'll get there.*

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

JS: *The worst has to be my game of "Under the Noel Trees" with Allen King during my first Austin tournament.*

It's close to the end game and my Germans have created this beautiful tunnel of smoke that's going to shelter them all the way out to victory. What I thought would be my first victory in a tournament, anyway. I rolled for weather and, of course, I got gusts. With no time for an alternative, I sent my Germans on a futile mad rush for the board edge. It wasn't pretty. Now, with many more games under my belt, that kind of crazy stuff is just part of the game. But that was my first memorable encounter with the dark side of the dice.

The craziest is probably when I discovered the Conscripts from Hell while playing "Yelnya Bridge" with Jim Ferrell. Those were the toughest conscripts I've ever seen. No matter how many times Jim's Germans shot at these conscripts, the worst result he could get was a Pin. The game resulted in my first win against Jim. I owe that to the Conscripts from Hell and the dice, I really didn't do anything.

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

JS: I want to work on my combined arms; getting the timing down and providing mutual support between my units. Gone are the days when my tanks left the infantry behind, but I'm not there yet.

Banzai: Is there an area you think is under-represented in ASL?

JS: I can't think of any area that I'd like to see covered that isn't already.

Banzai: Spanish Civil War scenarios: overrated or underrated?

JS: Underrated. I think the lack of heavy metal turns some people off that conflict. I hope to see an official module on it some day.

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

JS: The Axis Minors take extra work to get good mileage out of them, and force you to be more creative. I like the additional flavor provided by the new squads and toys from AoO.

Banzai: We've noticed that you've become very active in holding game days up in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. What

are some of the challenges for the DFW group, and what successes have you had? What's next for the DFW group?

JS: I took over hosting game days when John Hyler moved down south. I have plenty of room so it just made sense to meet at my house. Our average game day turnout is five players, but we've had as many as 11. And we want to increase that. We've had four recent additions to our ranks, but the population of the DFW area is more than six million so we know there are more ASL players nearby. We'll be putting up our own website soon in order to increase our visibility. If you live in the DFW area, we meet the second Saturday of every month. Come on over and expand your ASL horizons.

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

JS: Those just starting should definitely not worry about win/loss ratios for a long while. Enjoy the game and the great people you'll meet in cardboard combat, try different things and see what works, and try to hunt down the better players in your group/area for you will learn the best tricks from them. ASL clubs should get exposed through mailing lists, forums, and websites. Emphasize the fun factor of ASL; it's what it's all about. If you know of a game store in your area that carries ASL, post about your meetings there. If the store sells SK modules regularly, you know you have potential members nearby.

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

JS: Fun loving opponents are best. My games usually get interrupted by jokes, comments on the crazy stuff going on, and sometimes a little taunting. A player who's all business detracts from my enjoyment of the game.

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

JS: My worst run of luck is any average game I play. Seriously, I can't remember the last time I had a three shot or greater rate tear. I've called many a boxcar before rolling it. Best luck is probably a recent game of "Apples to Apples". A couple of my SS squads could make PFs appear on command (except one, every PF availability dr was a "1") and every PF shot hit, one being a critical hit. Stuarts and halftracks ablaze within two hexes of those squads. That VASL Twister dice bot gets crazy sometimes.

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

JS: *ASL is the only board game I play anymore. I enjoy Battle for Wesnoth on the computer from time to time. It's sort of like ASL but with Elves, Dwarfs, etc.*

Banzai: What are your other interests outside of gaming?

JS: *Currently reading "Island of Fire", listening to music of all kinds (80's heavy metal, classical, old Spanish techno), and extremely amateurish photography with cats as the usual subject.*

Banzai: Any final comments to wrap up?

JS: *I'd just like to thank all those who support and advance the hobby by producing, designing, or holding tournaments. You guys rock! Keep them coming.*

Favorite Scenarios

Scott Bell



It is with some reservation that I put together a list of my favorite scenarios, due to the fact that my play experience is significantly less than many of our club members. I have had very little opportunity to play any scenario more than once. I am amazed at some of our members' abilities to remember scenarios with great detail, even when they have not played them in some time.

For purposes of this article, I have decided to refine and concentrate my attention upon the type of scenarios that I enjoy the very most. My favorite scenarios (by a slim margin) tend to be ones that involve the German SS. Politics and philosophy aside; I have always been intrigued by their unique abilities and motivations as a fighting unit. Their historical and fanatical commitment to their unit and to each other is something that has always impressed me.

I tend to appreciate many of the scenario's that have been put out by *Heat of Battle*. One of my favorites is *One Eye to the West*, which is from the SSI & SSII Battle Packs. In this scenario, which takes place in 1945, the Russians must accumulate victory points by getting a large part of their force onto board 45, within a certain range of hexes. The Russians must cross at least one of two bridges and fight a retreating German force to that end. The Germans get relief near the end of the game, in the form of a Panther tank and a 9-2 commander. It is an exciting play.

A second favorite of mine is from that same battle pack, called *Ghost of Napoleon*. It is a cool title, and the game lives up to it. This one takes place in 1941, where the 2nd SS Panzer Division engages a Russian Siberian Rifle Division and elements of a reconnaissance and engineer battalion. The Germans' victory conditions center on control of building hexes, which they reach near the games end.

In conclusion, my preference for the SS scenarios is by the slimmest of margins, due to my interest in them as a fighting unit. I also tend (generally) to prefer early war scenarios, where tank killing abilities are not quite so advanced. For me, the tank is the queen of the battlefield, and I like to see it reign supreme.

This Happened to Me (Us)

Highs and Lows

I was playing Arlen Vanek in *With Tigers on Their Tail*. Arlen as the Hungarians had moved one of his Tigers to better position it to try to stem my Soviet tide. Seeing the chance, in my next movement phase, I quick zipped a T70 with its mighty 45L (10TK) into its rear hex and took a bounding fire shot. I took an APCR shot (A6), needing a modified 6TH. I got the APCR hit. The modified TK number was $10 + 3 + 1 = 14 - 8 = 6$. I managed to couple two decent rolls back-to-back and got the kill.

Later while playing Jeff Toreki in *VotG 12, Siberian Shockwave* I was the recipient of the "Toreki Moment". In one DF Phase, Jeff did the following: a stack of two squads, each with an ATR and a 9-1 heroic leader, were all sitting in a strategically located rubble hex. Each squad fired its ATR at my two reinforcing halftracks, needing something like a modified 5TH and modified 5TK. He killed both halftracks. The leader directed squad fire broke two more squads. This stack had just survived a 30+3 attack in the PFPh. Next, he opened up with his kill stack, three squads, HMG, MMG, & LMG, all led by a 10-3. The 10-3 was my creation, having battle hardened from a 10-2 in the same turn that my 10-2 wounded himself during a MC. It was that kind of game. Anyway, Jeff fired at a stack of three squads in a stone building, 24 even, and rolled snakes, 3KIA. The ROF shot went to the next hex of the building with another three squad stack, 12 even, with a 4 roll, 3MC. My three squads obligingly all broke. Jeff's next ROF shot was an 8 even, with a 5 roll, 2MC. My squads all broke again, now I had 3 HS in the hex. The next ROF shot was now just the HMG, shooting a 6 even, rolling a 6 lost ROF, 1MC. My half squads all broke again, empty hex. Sometime during all of this carnage, Jeff's sniper activated

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(1) and migrated to just where he would do the most damage, and whacked one of my leaders. The final tally: 2 halftracks KIA, 6 squads KIA, 2 broken squads and one leader KIA. Just another day in Stalingrad. – *John Hyler*

Kicking Them When They're Down

I was playing the Russians to Rob Burton's Germans in Under Murderous Fire. My dice rolls were doing noticeably better than Rob's, but I was playing conservatively as the gods that reside in little plastic cubes can sometimes turn evil on me. I had a 6-2-8 with a demo charge that did not have much to do due the success I was having with a pair of 4-5-8s and a HMG in a 2nd level building. Rob routed 2 broken squads and a leader off to themselves in a 1 hex building. I walked the 6-2-8 over to the building and blew them to smithereens. I know that I should have used that demo charge on a more optimal target, but most of the time when I try to place demo charges it ends up laying out in the open where my opponent can get it and use it against me. I'm looking forward to next year – *Glenn Schools*

It Looked Great at First

Playing Scott Bell in *Freeing the Roadway* from the FT pack, I crit-hit two 1st line squads, a 9-1 leader, and a hero. Scott rolled to see who takes the crit, and all four units tie with a roll of 4 fours. Wow! I figured the result on the IFT, using a 100mm shell, would be a 36-2. Considering that the average dice roll is 7, I could have expected to score a 3 KIA. And thus, that would have earned me between 3 to 4 CVP points out of 10 needed against the Brits for an automatic victory as per the victory conditions. So what happened when I rolled on the IFT? Drum roll please... I rolled a 12. A @\$%ing 12(!), which was a 2MC, and which Scott passed with only 2 units pinned. Go figure. – *Eric Gerstenberg*

Italians Are Awesome

I was in agony in *Agony at Arnautovo* and was really upset with myself for making dumb moves with my reinforcements, for which my opponent as the Russians, John Hyler, made me pay dearly. I nearly got half of these reinforcements killed, but fortunately most of them were "only" broken (including my vaunted 10-2 leader). I was almost ready to throw in the towel but thought I owed it to my tourney teammate to play it out a bit more. About a turn later, one of my half squads with a DC was overrun by a Russian T-34 to the tune of 12 down 1 on the IFT. On the resultant morale check, the feisty Italians battle hardened and even created a hero! Around the same time, a massive melee involving three full Russian squads against an Italian squad and an 8-1 leader finally ended in a hail of grenades, with no survivors on either side, due to a timely roll of

snake eyes on the Italian 1:4 attack. These events helped turn the tide in an Italian win. Moreover, I think it is the first and only time I've ever created an Italian hero. – *Matt Shostak*

Berserker Benefits

This wasn't at the tournament but was during a VASL League game. I was the Russians/Partisans in AP23 *Agony at Arnautovo*. A partisan squad had captured an Italian 75* ART and was covering the approaches to the bridge with it. There was an Italian squad on the other side of the bridge who was the obvious target. Needed a 4 to hit (+2 captured weapon, +2 non-qualified use) and of course I missed. I didn't want the Italians, who were also threatening from the east and south, to recapture the gun so I said I'm going to intensive fire since the worst that could happen, the gun breaking, was not an undesirable outcome. With a +6 modifier (same +4 as before and an additional +2 for intensive fire) the gun will be destroyed on an 8 or higher and malfunction on a 6 or 7. Rolled snakes. Broke the squad and kept the gun.

Same game, I had a MMG in a wooden building next to the woods the Italians were attacking through. I had a 3 MMC relay holding the line. One would be on the MMG, another a hex behind to take his place if he broke and a leader rallying the third behind him. During the Italian player turn, the squad manning the MMG broke but the Italians were pinned so they couldn't take the building. On my turn the back up half squad assault moved in and recovered the MMG. The Italians blasted away during Defensive Fire Phase and I roll snakes on the morale check. Being Russian, of course the half squad ends up berserk. Berserks can't Advance, I have a 10 morale no pin no cower MMG crew in a critical location during a crucial turn. It laughs off the 16 or 20 FP (+2) attack against it and returns fire with an 8 (+1) attack that breaks half the Italians. Alright, so he died my next turn in melee but it bought me enough time to rally my other squads and move them back onto the MMG. Who said going berserk is always bad? -- *Ed Beekman*

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Club Notes

Biweekly Lunch Gathering

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

Game Days

The Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas/Ft. Worth groups have remained active, hosting various gatherings for

club members to get together and knock cardboard heads. If you missed any of these you missed a lot of fun. It's like a tournament atmosphere for a day. The Austin group meets on the first Saturday of every month. The DFW group has been meeting on the second, and the San Antonio guys on the third Saturday of every month. To stay informed of upcoming club events, stop by our club website, www.texas-asl.com or better yet join our email group. You can post a message at central-texas-asl@yahoogroups.com or you can point your favorite browser to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/central-texas-asl> and take a look. For those still not connected, give Matt, Rick, or Sam a call for club information.

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Next Issue

- More articles about ASL
 - Player Profile
 - Favorite Scenarios
 - Club Meeting Recaps
- And much more!