

Banzai!!

The Newsletter of the Austin ASL Club

Issue #2.5

June 1997

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

Club Notes and Ladder Standings

Player	Points	Record
Smith	1397	30-9
Shostak	1358	34-9
Seningen	1336	18-8
Lavan	1096	4-3
Kirk Woller	1062	16-24
Purnell	1045	9-5
Phelps	1038	1-0
Tom Woller	1037	1-0
Swantek	1024	4-5
Hailey	1022	9-8
Esparza	1015	3-2
Barry	1014	2-2
Hively	980	8-18
Dillard	980	1-3
Morgenthaler	978	0-1
Gerstenberg	977	8-16
O'Quin	966	5-8
Bonham	966	0-1
Fritz	963	2-3
Knatcher	909	0-4
Austin	905	0-3
Lester	879	0-5
Toreki	856	0-8
Milder	821	1-11

Recent Results

Lavan (Germ) def Hailey (Amer) in Jagdtiger, Jagdtiger
 Swantek (Russ) def Toreki (Germ) in Back to School
 Dillard (Amer) def Barry (Germ) in Strayer's Strays
 Smith (Amer) def Dillard (Germ) in Engineers as Infantry
 Smith (Amer) def Barry (Germ) in Silence that Gun
 Shostak (Amer) def Hively (Germ) in A Breezeless Day
 Smith (Amer) def Toreki (Germ) in March of the Mastodons
 Dillard (Germ) def Barry (Brit) in Gambit
 Smith (F Fr) def Dillard (Germ) in First Day at Diadem
 Barry (Germ) def Lester (Amer) in Gavin Take
 Shostak (Amer) def K Woller (Germ) in The Bridge at Cheneux
 Smith (Germ) def Toreki (Russ) in Preparing the Way
 Gerstenberg (Amer) def O'Quin (Germ) in Chapelle St. Anne
 K Woller (Brit) def Esparza (Germ) in Please Hurry

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

Austin's 5th Annual Club Tournament Set For June 20-22.

For the fifth year in a row, the Austin ASL Club will be running an ASL tournament, this time set for June 20-22 (Friday night – Sunday). The event will be held at the Georgetown Rec Center in Georgetown. If you have any questions about this tournament, please contact David Hailey at 512-869-1267.

This is an event that you will not want to miss. In the course of one weekend, you will get the chance to play a half dozen games or so, against a variety of players. How long would it take you to do that otherwise? Although the trophies are nice, the focus of the tournament is on fun, so it's a pretty laid back environment. It is a very friendly atmosphere and new players are welcome. The unique team aspect promotes camaraderie, and moreover, keeps interest levels high as players who are out of the running for individual honors still can have an influence on the team standings.

All club members are strongly encouraged to attend. If you want ASL to get better in the central Texas area, it is up to you to do something about it. Here is a golden opportunity. Most of the hard work is done for you, chiefly by David Hailey. All you have to do is show up and have fun. What could be easier? Start making plans now.

This is my last chance to rant and rave about it before the tournament starts. Please make every attempt to attend. Weanie excuses will be subject to sarcasm. I may even sic the Weekender on you.

Top Ten Things Likely to be Overheard at This Year's Tournament

1. Thanks, David, for all your hard work.
2. Only weanies roll in boxes; real men use a dice glass.
3. Sure, I'll take the Germans in *Soldiers of Destruction*.
4. Did you win or was it unbalanced?
5. That Danish motorcycle sidecar ATR is totally cool!
6. Shostak was right, this *is* more fun than stuffing my face while watching the idiot box all weekend.
7. That guy was better than his ladder record.
8. I don't care if I win or lose, as long as I win.
9. Let's see, that's a one minus two attack ... snake eyes! Yeee - oh! It cowers?
10. I love the sound of tinkling dice in the morning!

Scenario Analysis: Confusion Reigns

Matt Shostak

Recent issues of *Banzai* have taken a look at scenarios that might be of interest to beginning players, because of their content and their inclusion in modules that are readily accessible to the beginning player, such as *Beyond Valor*. In that spirit, I would like to take a look at this popular scenario from *Paratrooper*.

Attraction: This scenario takes us to Ste. Mere Eglise at a pivotal moment in World War II. According to the prelude and aftermath, it takes place just after a fortuitous ambush by American paratrooper Waverly Wray, who had just killed the local German HQ staff. It's basic ASL, so players can concentrate on the mechanics of fire and movement with infantry, without being overwhelmed by the entire rulebook at once. Yet it still provides an interesting tactical problem for both sides. Although there is some bocage present, it doesn't have enough influence on the scenario to daunt a beginner from trying it out. The latest Internet record I consulted showed this one at 32-22 in favor of the Americans. This might prompt some players to consider giving the Germans the balance.

Notes: Read up on spotted fire (C9.3) and bocage (B9.5).

German Advantages: U.S. victory requirements, HMG

German Disadvantages: Restricted movement SSR, leadership, troop quality

Comments: To win, the U.S. must cause at least 12 Casualty Victory Points and at least twice as many as he loses. That comes out to killing 6 German squads while only losing 3 American squads. Thus the onus is on the American to attack and get ahead of the curve on casualties. This is not always easy, especially for beginning players. The doubled CVP for prisoners, however, must be taken into account. The Germans also have that HMG, which is the best machine gun on the board. Anyone who has ever been on the receiving end of a good string of luck from such a weapon can appreciate what it can do. It can cause casualties quickly, which can put the American behind. Although I don't list the other German machine guns as an advantage, it should be noted that altogether they can dish out 21FP, as compared to the 8FP represented by the two American MMGs. This advantage might be offset by the American mortars, but we'll discuss that later.

The Germans, however, have some serious disadvantages as well, two of which are meant to represent their confusion resulting from Wray's ambush. By SSR they are restricted to moving only as many Good Order MMC as the current turn number, plus the number of current Good Order German leaders. There is a caveat though: each such leader can exempt one MMC from this restriction if they begin the Movement Phase in the same location. The German player will have to pay careful attention to his setup to make sure he can move effectively. The German leadership is understandably not as good as that of the Americans in this scenario. They have only two leaders, the best being an 8-1, to cover 12 squads. The Americans, on the other hand, have a 9-2 and two other leaders for their 12 squads, a much-improved ratio.

It may seem strange with a German order of battle featuring first line squads to list troop quality as a disadvantage, but the Americans they are facing are superior. Each side gets twelve squads, but the Americans are equal or better in every category except range. They have a terrific smoke exponent of 3, they can use WP smoke grenades also, and their broken side morale is 8.

So what can the German do? The unusual movement SSR allows unbroken German troops to exit off the north edge without counting as casualty points. This probably causes light bulbs to go off over many players' heads. *Hey, if I can exit all but 11 points, the American just can't win, right?* Certainly that's an option to consider. After all, the SSR must be there for a reason. Thus it seems that the Germans have two choices of overall basic strategy in *Confusion Reigns*. They can play an "exit" strategy, or they can play a "duke it out" strategy. Perhaps some proper mixture of the two could also work, but let's consider only those two, and leave it as an exercise for the reader to analyze the pros and cons of a combination strategy.

First let's consider the exit strategy. The first impulse for the Germans might be to immediately try to run guys across board 4 toward the exit. But there's a lot of open ground out there, and American machine guns set up at level 2, plus their mortars, can reach them out there. Even at long range, an MMG directed by the 9-2 is capable of seriously hurting some German troops as they move. So to make this strategy effective, the German player will have to keep a careful eye on blind hexes, and use whatever cover there is to best advantage. Take special notice of how 24V3 affects LOS. Note that woods hexes are not a good place to be if the American mortars can reach them. The U.S. player can place spotters in clever level 2 locations on board 1 to see a large percentage of the woods hexes on the German escape route. Still, a "run like hell" strategy may indeed succeed in getting several German squads off the board safely. All it takes is a few gacked rolls by the American, and the Landersers can be on their way off the edge quickly. The movement restrictions, however, make it difficult to get a large number of troops off the board early in the game. Remember, on turn 1 a maximum of 5 German MMCs can move at all during the Movement Phase! Thus I think the Germans couldn't realistically exit many squads early in the game even if they wanted to. Moreover, each German squad exited gives the American player a boost too, since it makes it just a little bit easier to defeat the German forces still on board. Thus the best exit strategy may be one where the withdrawal is as orderly as possible, and not necessarily fast. Striving to keep each German squad in a position to support his comrades, while at the same time creeping toward the exit, might be the best plan. Hopefully as the scenario draws on, the increasing mobility of the Germans will generate more momentum and allow them to forge a victory at the north edge of the map. A fighting withdrawal is one of the most difficult military maneuvers. Unlike the Finns in the scenario by that name (*Fighting Withdrawal* was discussed in *Banzai* 2.2), the Germans here will find it more difficult to withdraw. Their position isn't as good, they have the inferior rather than the superior troops, and they have SSR-imposed movement restrictions. A player intimidated by all this might want to consider the other option, going toe-to-toe with the paratroopers.

Duking it out with the Americans has the advantage that it is a simple strategy, easily understood and played. The goal is clear: it's a fight of attrition, so cause as many American casualties as possible while limiting your own. It also works nicely with the German movement restrictions. There is less need to move men around if you're going to stand and fight. When considering this option, building U4 should stand out like a sore thumb. First of all, it's the best building within the German setup area. Moreover, it has multiple levels, is stone, and has several locations that can't be easily seen by the Americans until they move in close, perhaps all the way up to the U5-W4 tree line. Anyone getting that close could be hit by very heavy point blank fire. It is somewhere in here that the HMG and 8-1 should go. Moreover, several other squads should endeavor to get here to support them. It is here that a rate of fire weapon such as the German HMG or even MMG can cause significant American casualties by repeatedly hitting the same location. The S5 building is also a desirable place because it too is stone, and it supports the flank of the U4 building. It is outside the German setup area, however, and may therefore be difficult to reach. Still, it may be worthwhile to set up a squad nearby with the intention of getting into this building as soon as the opportunity arises. Note that the entire central woods mass in the W6 vicinity, plus the T6 and U6 buildings, constitutes decent cover, in addition to having excellent rout paths back into the U4 building. German troops set up here could delay the American frontal assault as long as possible, eventually falling back to the stone buildings where they will be joined by the heavy hitters, the HMG and MMG, for the last stand. Some troops should also be assigned the task of protecting the other flank, where the paratroopers might be tempted to use the cover of the bocage to circle around and get at the main position from the other side. This is more difficult, however, as many of the positions covering this flank are exposed and don't have very good rout paths. Many of the first locations one might consider are either woods which could be hit by American mortar fire, or bocage hexsides, which only offer cover from one side, allowing the American 9-2 kill stack to set up to shred them in the first Prep Fire Phase. Hex BB5 cannot be easily seen from level 2 locations in the American setup area, so it might be worth putting a sacrificial unit there to delay any American attempts to work around this flank. There just aren't many good choices here. Perhaps a unit in W3 could attempt to entrench, and thereby cover the backside of the U4 building.

Throughout the fight, the German would be well served to remember to try to cause casualties whenever possible. In other scenarios, simply breaking a unit is often all that you need to do to succeed, so once a unit is broken you direct your fire at other units. Here, however, it is important to inflict casualties on the U.S. With their broken side morale of 8, if they are left alone once broken they will probably be back in the fight relatively soon. So if you have a choice to shoot at a broken unit or an intact one, think twice. It may be more important to hit the broken one.

Don't forget that the Germans can fire panzerfausts at infantry if the target is in a building or behind a wall (C8.31).

American Advantages: leadership, troop quality

American Disadvantages: range

Comments: The Americans have one leader for every three squads, whereas the Germans have one for every six. In addition, the U.S. has a 9-2. The paratroopers are just great troops all around. They have great firepower, which also makes them very strong in CC. They have assault fire, spraying fire, underlined morale, a higher ELR, and a broken side morale of 8. The only thing lacking is their range, which actually means a German squad will have more firepower at 5-6 hexes. Where the Americans are really hurt is in heavy weapons. They only have two MMGs, which would still be at long range if they set up at level 2 on board 1 and try to reach out to board 4 at fleeing Germans. The only two other weapons they have that can reach board 4 immediately are their two 60mm mortars. These weapons will most likely have to use spotted fire to do so, thereby reducing their effectiveness somewhat because of the lowered rate of fire and To Hit penalty.

The Americans have to be prepared for a German attempt to escape the map. Thus I think it is imperative that they set up their MMGs and mortars to be able to hit board 4. This is most effectively accomplished by putting both MMGs with the 9-2 in a second level location with good lines of sight, say 1X2. The mortars should use spotted fire, with a spotter likewise set up in a good level 2 location, something like 1U2 for instance. Because of this need for spotters, the U.S. should probably deploy the maximum allowable number of squads at setup, two. This would allow two half squads to fire the mortars, using another half squad, or perhaps both other half squads, as spotters. These mortars should try to take full advantage of any Germans in woods hexes. Casualties can mount quickly due to their 2 ROF and airburst. If the Germans set up carefully to avoid woods and LOS from spotters, then the mortars can be used against other targets, perhaps hoping for critical hits against units in buildings.

Having the 9-2 direct both MMGs from level 2 somewhere might also prove important if the Germans bring both machine guns together under the direction of the 8-1 at the second level of 24V3. This position can be very dominant. But the 9-2 could direct fire at them and get an 8+1 shot with a 2 rate of fire, which could break them up. There is some risk though: if the Germans survive to shoot back, they might be dishing out 16+2 shots in return. Still, letting the German machine guns occupy this position unchallenged gives them a huge edge.

The rest of the Americans will have to attack. Some of the same principles apply regardless of which German game plan is being used. A flanking platoon armed with a bazooka or two toward the right side bocage area is probably a worthwhile investment. If the Germans are trying to get away, these guys can pursue them right on their heels to augment the long-range fire from their machine guns and mortars on board 1. If the Germans try to stand and fight, these flankers could pay huge dividends by working their way around to the other side of the U4 building, possibly providing some late-game encircling fire and interfering with rout paths. Remember that in the discussion of German setup considerations above, it was argued that this flank was most difficult for the Germans to defend. Therefore the U.S. should try to take advantage of this by inserting a platoon there.

The attack through the middle woods and village area will probably seem like pretty standard fare for most ASL players. The U.S. player would be

well served to remember the special capabilities of his units. Assault fire makes those 747s almost as dangerous in Advancing Fire as they are in Prep Fire. They have plenty of infantry smoke grenade (including WP) capability, so it should be used when called for. Because casualties are so critical to this game, it is probably wise to spread out, rather than form into stacks. There is no need to give the Germans the opportunity to hurt more than one unit on any given attack. Close Combat should favor the Americans strongly due to their great firepower rating. Lastly, don't forget the bazookas. Just because there are no tanks around does not make them useless. Germans in buildings or behind walls are eligible targets. Depending on how the scenario plays, the 9-2 and MMG units might eventually come down from their overwatch position to participate in the endgame. As the assault on the U4 building gets heated, American squads will break. It will be critical to have a leader positioned behind them in the woods area to round up the stragglers. Leading the attack from the front can be dangerous. Even the improved fire direction is probably not worth it. If the leader gets killed, it will be very hard to press the attack in the center as aggressively as might be required to win.

Lastly, having some units trying to flank into the village on the American left might prove worthwhile as well. But to flank on both sides and attack in the middle will start to spread your forces out pretty thinly. Careful allocation of resources will be critical, so consider whether you can afford to hit both flanks and the center. The choice is, ultimately, up to you.

For the Americans too it all comes down to causing casualties. Prisoners count double here, so think twice before invoking No Quarter. Have fun.

Good Night Sweet Prince

In this issue we find another treat from prolific scenario designer/writer Tim Hundsdoerfer. It's a cutting edge scenario too, featuring Danish motorcycle sidecars armed with 20LL ATRs. Tim playtested it and unleashed it on his local club at Jitter Fire, a small tournament in the Denver area, where it had a record of 4-3 in favor of the Germans. He has also provided us with vehicle and ordnance notes to accompany the scenario. I'm sure Tim would be very interested to hear your impressions of this scenario, so if you play it, write up an After Action Report for this newsletter. Thanks, Tim, for your kind efforts on our behalf.

For those with weak eyes among us, I'll just point out that the Danish 37L ATG has HE9 and M8 on the front, while the 20LL motorcycle sidecar has a ROF 3. Tim also asked me to point out that limbering and unlimbering is hazardous movement. This is in the rules (Ch. C), but it's worth mentioning anyway.

Tactics Tip

If you have a MMC that wants to fire a bazooka, panzerfaust, panzerschreck, PIAT, etc., do so *before* trying to fire their inherent firepower. If you do it in the opposite order, you may cower and therefore be unable to use the weapon.

Chas Ropes 'Em In

Kudos to Chas Smith, who has recruited new players Gary Dillard, Eric Barry, and Rodney Lester. We always need new blood in the club. Good job Chas!

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