

Contents

From the Editor: Crisis in ASL Land	1
Analysis: A Breezeless Day (AP3)	1
A Mathematical Minefield	5
Favorite Scenarios: Mike Seningen	7
The Rules Clinic	9
Player Profile: David Hailey	6
AAR: Red Barricades CGII	7
State of the Club, 1998	10
Bounding Fire Corner	10
Club Notes	11
Club Ladder: As of 10-22-98	12
Player Aids: ASOP Part I	12
This Happened To Me...	13
Next Issue...	13

Crisis in ASL Land

As we all know by now, the Dotts sold Avalon Hill to Hasbro. And, naturally, everyone in the ASL universe is peering into his crystal ball, trying to figure out what the future holds. The predictions have ranged everywhere from "Nothing will change" to "Good-bye, ASL!" I personally believe that the rumors of ASL's demise are greatly exaggerated. For one thing, Curt Schilling, the Phillies' ace pitcher and a huge ASL fan, is negotiating with Hasbro, possibly to buy ASL (pure speculation at this point). Curt has requested that every ASLer send your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address to Brian Youse at bcyouse@erols.com and to Curt at gehrig38@erols.com. If you don't have e-mail, contact someone who does so they can send in your name for you. I presume Curt and Brian are trying to get an approximate headcount for the ASL market, as well as establishing a contact list so they can notify everyone when and if any deal goes through.

We have another great issue! We have another excellent scenario analysis from Matt, this time dealing with an Action Pack #1 scenario and including a bonus companion article about AT minefields. And with this issue, Sam Tyson joins the Banzai!! staff by providing the mapboard for this analysis. We have a player profile of David Hailey, Mike Seningen's favorite scenarios, and another installment of Mike's rules clinic. We also have the first installment of a Red Barricades campaign game AAR from the brothers Schwoebel. And, of course, all the usual club news, ladder, and WWII trivia. Enjoy!

Banzai!!

Mike Austin, Managing Editor

Analysis: A Breezeless Day (AP3)

By Matt Shostak

What an exciting looking scenario! It just about jumped out of Action Pack #1 when I first opened it. Hordes of second line SS, supported by the assault gun force from Hell, make a vicious attack on the American defenders in this picturesque part of the Western Front. They need that sledgehammer force, however, because their task is very difficult. They need to penetrate the American lines, seize the town at the far end of the board, and also exit a very large fraction of their force off the far end of the board to win. The Americans opposing them are nothing to sneeze at either. Three Jacksons and a couple of Shermans can make short work of those StuGs, if they can manage to avoid the Tigers. The American infantry doesn't have great morale, but they make up for it in firepower, and they even have a few mines laid out to keep the Germans cautious. Whichever side you wind up playing, the task looks daunting.

American advantages: 9-2 leader, Jacksons, HMGs

American disadvantages: Low morale, outnumbered

Sheesh, it looks tough for the Americans. They are about to be swarmed by troops with higher morale. They face a true juggernaut, and will find themselves hard pressed to stop it. They are, however, not without weapons of their own. They have the 9-2 leader and some good machine guns, and they also have three Jacksons. Perhaps their best hope is the difficulty of the Germans' task. With only 8.5 turns to cross the length of the board, seize the town, and exit more than half of their force, the Germans just might find these Americans troublesome indeed. The Jacksons, certainly, represent the gravest threat to German hopes. With a ROF of 2 and a base-to-kill number of 21 (AP) or 27 (APCR), the Jacksons can turn the StuGs and half-tracks to scrap in a hurry. But they are not invulnerable to return fire, being open-topped and having a frontal armor factor of only 8. An HMG nest directed by the 9-2 would have to be respected and feared by the enemy infantry. Overall, though, it's hard to imagine these defenders going toe-to-toe with their adversaries for very long without getting completely annihilated.

So what can the Americans do? Since they can't stand and fight, it seems that they should try to slow the Germans down. Yet they should be opportunistic, and jump all over any chances to destroy German units, particularly the AFBs. To win, the Germans must exit at least 70 VPs, not counting prisoners. Their at-start forces are worth 135 VPs, only 42 of which is infantry. Destroying 66 points will therefore win the game for the Americans, barring bizarre events like leader creation for the Germans. And the easiest way to accumulate those casualty points is to destroy German armor. The half-tracks alone are worth 30 points! If your opponent is a very aggressive attacker, you will probably get plenty of chances to destroy his armored forces, and if you play your cards right or are lucky enough, you may put him in a casualty point hole early. If he is more careful, however, you also

Q. What was Operation Titanic?

A. The code name for the Allied airborne deception tactics during the D-Day invasion.

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will have to be cautious. It seems to me that the side that wins the armor battle probably wins the game. Can you imagine the Americans winning if all their tanks are destroyed, while German StuGs and half-tracks roam freely about the board, supporting the Landers against the GIs? I didn't think so. Likewise, can you imagine the Germans winning if they foolishly get a Jagdtiger immobilized, lose half their StuGs and most of their half-tracks? Again, I didn't think so. It's not unreasonable to imagine that the Germans could have a Jagdtiger immobilized, the Flammhetzer recalled, and lose an 8-1, four squads, three StuGs, and four half-tracks. Assuming no crews survive, that's 65 points right there. So, in summary, the American plan will be to fight a delaying action, avoiding the Jagdtigers, while lighting up any other German armor if the opportunity arises.

Defender Setup

Because the Germans must take the board 42 town to win, it seems obvious that the Americans need to have a reasonably strong force wind up in the stone buildings in rows B-K. A respected opponent of mine advocates setting up strongly in this area and just daring the Germans to come at them. Those buildings are so far to the rear, however, that anyone setting up there will not see any action right away, and therefore will not be helping to stop the Germans either. So, I will set up with a different philosophy. The woods on the eastern side of the board look like good cover for a GI withdrawal to the town. They could set up toward the front to oppose the Germans, then fall back through the woods as the game progresses to wind up in the town for the endgame. Much easier said than done, but still a worthwhile idea. Board 43, with its many level 1 hills, has the feeling of wide open spaces. This area is risky for both sides, as any armor up here can see very long distances, so the side that gets the drop on the other will probably come out ahead. Let's look at a possible U.S. setup and make some comments.

All forces start the game concealed and foxholes and mines start HIP:

43O7L1	radio, 7-0 42M3: MMG, 6-6-6 boresight 42X4
43O8L1	9-2, .50cal, 6-6-6, HMG, 6-6-6 boresight 42Y8
42K5	MMG, 6-6-6 boresight 42U3
43P5	FXHL, BAZ45, 3-4-6
43O6	FXHL
42N4	FXHL, BAZ45, 3-4-6, 1 AT
42S7	8-0
42U5	6-6-6
42U8	6-6-6
42V5	BAZ45, 6-6-6
42V6	6-6-6
42V9	6-6-6
42W5	1 AT
42W8	1 AT
43M6	1 AT
43L0	1 AT
42N3	1 AT
42L1	CE Sherman, VCA 2, TCA 2 boresight 42W5
42M4	CE Jackson, VCA 2, TCA 2 boresight 42U1
43N6	CE Sherman, VCA 4, TCA 1 boresight 43W1
43N10	CE Jackson, VCA 5, TCA 2 boresight 42W5
43O9	CE Jackson, VCA 4, TCA 2 boresight 42U2

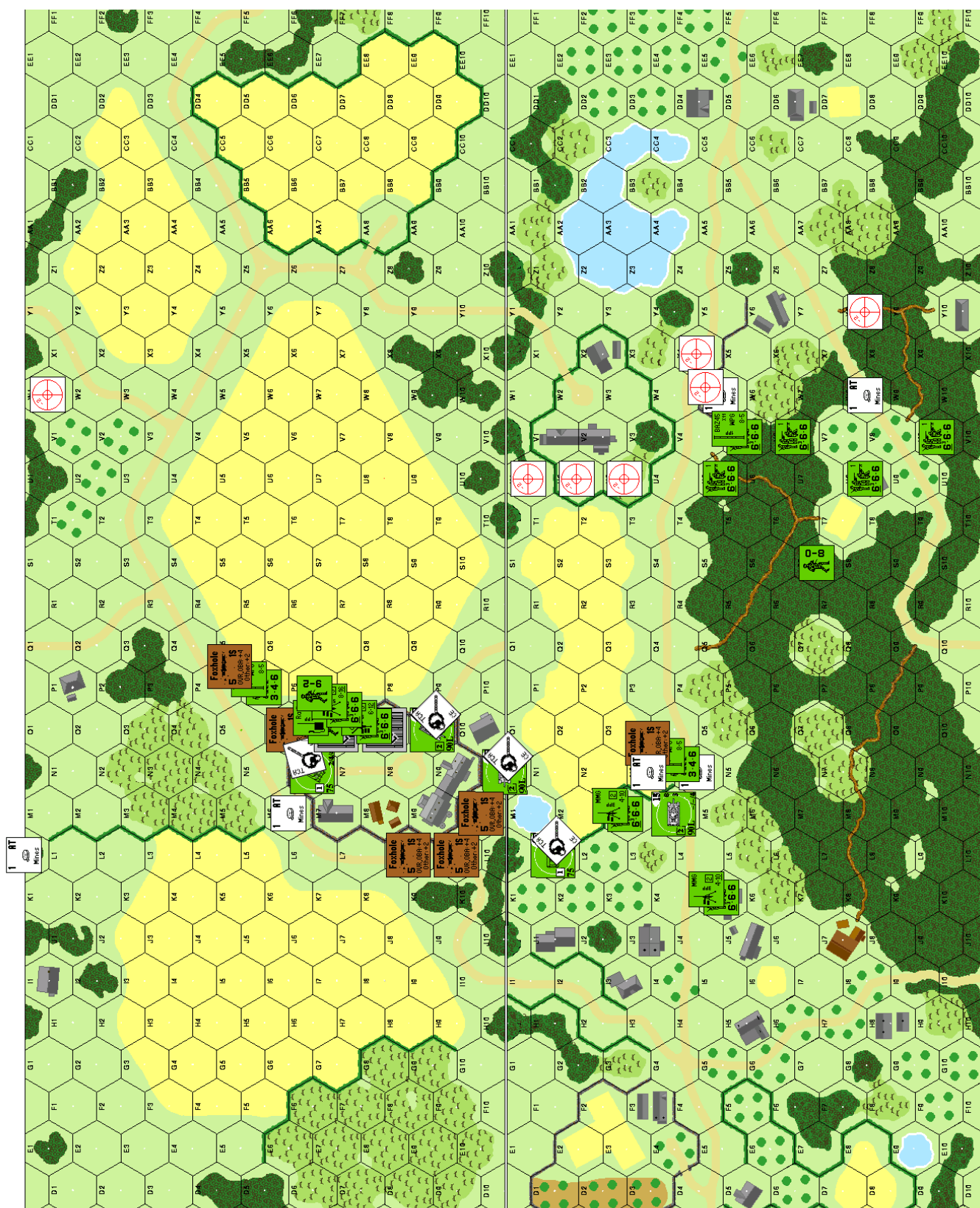
The 9-2 is in a rather obvious location, and it is unclear to me how long he can stay there. He ought to force any German AFVs

on the board 43 hills to remain buttoned up, and half-tracks will have to stay away from his fire. He shouldn't fear the Jagdtigers if they deplete their HE early, but if not, he might be stomped, so he should be prepared to relocate toward the town if necessary. He also supports the board 42 woods line somewhat, and even has a boresight over there in the hopes of snaring some infantry casualties. This 9-2 is supported by a bazooka team in front, and the 7-0 trying to call in OBA. The OBA can be used to put down a WP smoke screen to allow this group to escape toward the town when things start getting hairy, or it could be used offensively against infantry at the edge of the board 42 woods (or elsewhere in LOS), or against German armor, especially half-tracks if they expose themselves. The Sherman in 43N6 supports as well by hindering any German thrust along the outside, and can use its smoke to help the infantry escape if necessary. The AT mines are placed to make it impossible for German half-tracks to traverse all the way across board 43 without at least having to take a bog roll (for the hedge) or an attack (the mines). Mines are placed in 42W5 because it is such a good hull-down position for German armor. This hex is also boresighted by two US AFVs for the same reason. The mine factor in 42W8 is critical, because it may help prevent the Flammhetzer from running wild in the woods and burning a hole in the defense line for the ground pounders to exploit. Some players might prefer putting another mine factor in this area somewhere as extra defense against this weapon from hell. The other two mines guard an obvious approach to the village. There are 5 squads in a rough line near the edge of the board 42 woods. They are not as far forward as allowed, but that is because I think they would have trouble surviving there. Their job is to survive intact and make it back to the village, while delaying the Germans that will try to push through the woods. They are to make their last stand in the stone buildings of the village. This is a very difficult maneuver to perform, because in such situations, when it finally looks bad enough that you should pull out, you're probably a turn too late. The American AFVs will seek to make motion attempts and blow smoke if faced by Jagdtigers alone, but if they get good shots at a decent number of other German tank destroyers or half-tracks they will take them. So that's it. The basic philosophy of the defense is to slow the Germans down as much as possible while falling back on the village to make a final stand among its stone buildings, all the while being opportunistic in trying to cause maximum German casualties.

German advantages: Infantry numbers, Jagdtigers, Flammhetzer

German disadvantages: Difficult mission, ELR

I like what the designers have done here with the SS force. Just because a unit had the SS designation doesn't mean that it always fought with the ferocity we are used to seeing from ASL's standard 6-5-8 SS squads. In this case, the Germans have a very large number of squads, but these 4-4-7s are nowhere near their big brother 6-5-8s. Not only do they have lower firepower, range, and morale (on both sides of the counter), but they also have a low ELR. Their morale, however, is still considered underlined. The German task is very difficult because they must do two things to win. They must take the town at the far end of the board and also exit a lot of their force. Still, don't start feeling too sorry for the German player here. The Germans in this scenario have the tools to get the job done. The troops themselves, though not as tough as the vaunted 6-5-8s, still have a lot of fight in them, and they out-



number the Americans. Moreover, they are supported by one of the most impressive assault gun forces I have ever seen in an ASL scenario. Not only do they have a half dozen StuGs that can lob HE and smoke all over the place, but they also have two Jagdtiger behemoths that are simply “Kings of All They Survey,” and a Flammhetzer that is small, fast, tough (a bazooka can barely penetrate it frontally), and can really turn up the heat on the Americans. And let’s not forget all those half-tracks, which give the Germans a lot of tactical flexibility. Sure, the Germans have a tough job here. But to whom much is given, much is expected.

The prolific Mark Nixon likes to use a formula to calculate firepower, excluding one-shot weapons but taking ROF into account (see *The General*, Vol. 28, number 2, p. 21). He claims that an attacker usually needs about 62% of the available firepower to be successful. In *A Breezeless Day*, the Germans have 323.6 FP, compared to the Americans’ 240.8, for only about 57% of the total. It stands to reason then, that we must look for other factors to make up the difference. Several things come to mind. The infantry morale of the Germans is superior to that of the Americans, the Germans have a lot of smoke making capability, and their Jagdtigers are almost completely unstoppable. But how can the German player turn those capabilities to his advantage?

German Rules of Engagement

In a large scenario like this, it is a good idea to keep in mind a general plan for your attack, your “rules of engagement” so to speak, so you won’t easily be distracted from using your units to the best of their abilities. The Jagdtigers provide a perfect example of what I mean. These AFVs are so valuable to the Germans that they simply cannot be squandered. Not only do they represent 10 CVPs each if they can exit, but their guns are so powerful, and they are so hard to kill, that they are clearly the centerpieces of the German attack. Like losing a Queen in chess, losing these weapons will seriously hurt the German chances for victory. Therefore, a reasonable rule of engagement for them is to never take them within deliberate immobilization range (six hexes) of American ordnance. Because that is just about the only way the Americans can harm these beasts, why just hand them an opportunity?

Let’s try to sketch out some reasonable rules of engagement for the various German units in this scenario. To do so, let’s first take a more careful look at the victory conditions and board layout. Clearly, the Germans must exit a lot of points to win. Whenever that is the case, I immediately start looking at the armor, because killing armor is the quickest way to pile up CVPs. All the Americans need to do to win is accumulate 66 CVPs. As discussed in the American section, that is very attainable. It seems obvious, then, that the Germans must be careful with their AFVs. Naturally, they must be risked to help the attack along, but too much risk can lead the Germans down the slippery slope of CVP losses. In contrast, what is the hardest way to rack up casualty points? That would be double breaking squads, especially those on the attack. Face it, there probably won’t be that many German squads dying for failure to rout here. Some will die by double breaking, but each double break is only worth 1 CVP. Compare that to the 5 CVP lost each time a half-track goes up in flames. The Jacksons, with their 90Ls and 2 ROF, can do some serious damage to the German armor if the Germans are not careful. Even the Shermans, relatively undergunned with their 75s, can penetrate the StuGs. With all that said, we start to see some general rules of engagement take shape. The German infantry should lead the attack, because they are numerous, and it is difficult for the Amer-

icans to build up a lot of CVP by killing them. They can also perform the useful task of searching for mines in obvious places to help keep the armor alive longer. Of course, they must also press the American infantry as much as possible. The Jagdtigers, being nearly invulnerable, will also lead the attack. They will strive to seek out and destroy the American armor. With each American tank destroyed, the German armored force becomes more dangerous, and when all or nearly all of the American tanks are gone, the StuGs should be able to run wild. Until that time, the StuGs should be used relatively conservatively. They should try their utmost to avoid unfavorable confrontations with the American armor, while instead trying to support the German infantry against the American infantry. The Flammhetzer should be used aggressively to help burn out the American infantry, since bazookas pose little threat to it. Remember, however, that the low breakdown number of the flamethrower on the Hetzer means that if it is used aggressively, chances are that it will be recalled and therefore will not be able to exit. Because it represents 8 VPs, that is a trade-off, but I think the alternative, trying to keep the Flammhetzer alive by not using it, is not only distasteful, but also is foolish because it deprives the Germans of a very powerful weapon that they might need to crack the American defenses. Lastly, the half-tracks should be kept out of danger. They are simply too easy to kill, and they represent too many CVPs, to give the Americans any easy kills on them. Does that mean that they should be forgotten? Heck no! Keeping a few half-tracks in motion loaded with a few squads, behind the main attack and out of American line of sight, can be a useful threat. If and when an opening presents itself, these units can rush forward quickly into the American rear and cause a lot of grief to the U.S. player.

There are a few things the German player should remember. Don’t let the American set up his open-topped Jacksons in buildings (it’s illegal—B23.41 and A2.9). Remember that the German force is elite for ammunition depletion purposes, which means that the assault guns ought to be able to put smoke all over the board. Keep in mind your panzerfaust ability, even against infantry, which are vulnerable behind walls and in buildings such as the numerous houses of the village that you have to take. In total, 36 panzerfaust shots can be taken in this scenario. So there’s no need to be stingy with them.

Conclusion

This scenario just about has it all. Each side has powerful weapons at its disposal and a difficult job to perform. A few seldom seen weapons make an appearance, including Jacksons and Jagdtigers, and there’s even a little chrome in the form of possible Gyrostabilizers. When the battle is joined, there ought to be plenty of action, with smoke all over the place, a flamethrowing tank, artillery, bazookas, and, of course, plenty of bullets and high explosive and armor piercing shells whistling through the air. And you have a ringside seat. Isn’t this game great?

Q. Which country captured the greatest number of troops in one place at one time?

A. Germany. It captured more than 500,000 Russian troops at Kiev on September 16, 1941. (Soviet figures claim 527,000 captured while German files indicate over 660,000.)

A Mathematical Minefield

By Matt Shostak

[As a companion for the A Breezeless Day analysis, Matt has provided us with an excellent discussion of the ins and outs of AT minefields.—MA]

Say you're about to play a scenario, and you have five AT minefield factors to use. You are about to face an attack supported by at least five enemy AFVs. You are allowed to place up to five AT mine factors in a hex. How should you use the mines? Would it be better to put all five factors in one hex, or spread them out with one factor each in five different hexes? How about some compromise between the two, such as three factors in one hex and one factor each in two other hexes? As usual in ASL, the answer is "it depends on the situation."

First, let's review the rules about how AT mine attacks are carried out. When a vehicle enters or exits a minefield, a single die is rolled, and if the result is less than or equal to the number of minefield factors in the hex, the vehicle is attacked by the mines. The attack is resolved on the 36+ column of the IFT with no TEM. Against an AFV, a KIA eliminates it, while any other result is an immobilization. In essence, if the mine goes off, the vehicle is definitely harmed in some way. It is often the case that immobilizing a vehicle is just about as good as destroying it, so the real excitement lies in whether the mines will go off or not. Clearly, the more mine factors in a hex, the more likely an AFV will be harmed by them. So, is it simply true that it is always best to put as many mine factors as you can in a hex, and not spread them out? Again, it depends. Suppose you put all five factors from our stated example in one hex and succeed in eliminating an enemy AFV with them. How likely is it that your opponent will drive any of his other tanks over the minefield? Almost nil, I think, unless you're playing a scenario where he has no real choice but to go through a particular hex.

Perhaps we can come to a better understanding by studying several problems a little more systematically and using our math skills. We have to make some assumptions and state our given problems clearly. I think we can safely assume for our study that once an enemy discovers a minefield, he will not drive any of his other vehicles into it. Now, let's try to sketch out some problems and solve them mathematically.

Problem 1: What are the probabilities of a tank surviving completely unscathed when driving through (entering and exiting) a hex with two AT factors, as compared to driving through two hexes, each with one AT factor?

Solution: To survive a hex with two AT factors, the tank will be attacked twice, each time with a $1/3$ chance of being harmed. Put another way, on each attack the tank has a $2/3$ chance of surviving unscathed. The tank has to survive both attacks, so the chance of doing that is $2/3 \cdot 2/3 = 4/9 = .444$.

To survive a drive through two different mined hexes, each with one AT factor, the tank has to survive four different attacks, each with a $5/6$ chance of success (survival). That calculates to $5/6 \cdot 5/6 \cdot 5/6 \cdot 5/6 = 25/36 \cdot 25/36 = .482$.

So, in this case, the tank has a slightly better chance of surviving a drive through two different 1 AT hexes than it does a single 2 AT hex.

Problem 2: A hex with three AT factors, as compared to driving through three hexes, each with one AT factor?

Solution: One hex with 3 AT factors: $1/2 \cdot 1/2 = 1/4 = .25$. Three hexes each with 1 AT factor: $(25/36)^3 = .335$

Problem 3: A hex with four AT factors, as compared to driving through four hexes, each with 1 AT factor?

Solution: 1 hex with 4 AT factors: $1/3 \cdot 1/3 = 1/9 = .1111$. Four hexes each with 1 AT factor: $(25/36)^4 = .233$

Problem 4: A hex with 5 AT factors, as compared to driving through 5 hexes, each with 1 AT factor?

Solution: 1 hex with 5 AT factors: $1/6 \cdot 1/6 = 1/36 = .028$. Five hexes each with 1 AT factor: $(25/36)^5 = .162$

In each of the above cases, we see that a tank has a better chance of driving through a series of small minefields than a single densely packed one. This might seem a bit counterintuitive, but you can't argue with mathematics. Does this mean that one should always densely pack AT mines rather than spread them out? Hardly. Sure, you're much more likely to kill a tank with a densely packed minefield, but only if the tank actually enters the minefield. Certainly, the above examples assume that the tank will definitely enter the minefield. Our intuition tells us that, in most situations, we can't guarantee that an enemy tank will go somewhere, and that spreading our minefields out instead of densely packing them at least gives us a better chance of having an enemy tank enter a minefield in the first place. Can we simply say that by spreading five AT mine factors in five different hexes, we have a fivefold greater chance of an enemy tank entering a minefield than if we put all the factors into a single hex? That's an appealing idea, but one that we can't cover rigorously with calculation here, because each scenario is different. Terrain and scenario situation often dictate where enemy tanks will move, so that aspect is outside the scope of our study.

Still, our intuition tells us that spreading our mines out ought to have some beneficial effect. Again, assuming that once an enemy knows about a minefield he will drive no more vehicles through it, we know that the absolute most we can gain is one vehicle harmed if we pack all our mines in one hex. If we spread them out over two hexes, the most we can gain is two vehicles harmed. Over three hexes, the most is three, etc. Can't we do any mathematics to test our belief? Perhaps we can by formulating a slightly different problem. Here we look at the expected value of number of tanks harmed under various circumstances.

Problem 5: Assume the enemy has at least as many tanks as you have AT mine factors. Also assume that each hex you mine will be traversed (entered and exited) by a unique enemy tank. In other words, if you mine two hexes, each hex will be traversed by a different tank. What is the expected value of number of tanks harmed when you have two AT factors a) in one hex; b) spread over two hexes?

Solution: Looking in our old college probability textbook, we find the formula for expected value is:

$E(X) = \text{sum over all outcomes of } x \cdot p(x)$, where x is the value of that outcome and $p(x)$ is the probability of that outcome

Therefore, we have the following answers:

a) $E(X) = (\text{probability no tank harmed} \cdot \text{number of tanks harmed}) + (\text{probability 1 tank harmed} \cdot \text{number of tanks harmed}) = (.444 \cdot 0) + (.556 \cdot 1) = .556$

b) Here we have four possible outcomes because there are two possible outcomes for each hex, that the tank that drove through it either will be harmed or unharmed:

$E(X) = (\text{prob. no tank harmed in hex 1} \cdot \text{number of tanks harmed in hex 1}) + (\text{prob. 1 tank harmed in hex 1} \cdot \text{number of tanks harmed in hex 1}) + (\text{prob. no tank harmed in hex 2} \cdot \text{number of tanks harmed in hex 2}) + (\text{prob. 1 tank harmed in hex 2} \cdot \text{number of tanks harmed in hex 2})$

of tanks harmed in hex 2) + (prob. 1 tank harmed in hex 2 • number of tanks harmed in hex 2) = $(25/36 \cdot 0) + (11/36 \cdot 1) + (25/36 \cdot 0) + (11/36 \cdot 1) = .610$

So, assuming that each mined hex gets traversed by a different enemy tank, we see that we have a higher expected value of number of tanks harmed if we spread them out, which justifies our intuition somewhat.

Problem 6: Make the same assumptions as in Problem 5. Calculate the expected values for 3, 4, and 5 AT mine factors in a single hex versus spread out, 1 AT factor per hex.

Solution:

- 3 AT factors:

In one hex: $E(X) = (.25 \cdot 0) + (.75 \cdot 1) = .75$

Spread out: $E(X) = (11/36 \cdot 3) + (25/36 \cdot 0) = .916$

- 4 AT factors:

In one hex: $E(X) = (.1111 \cdot 0) + (.8889 \cdot 1) = .8889$

Spread out: $E(X) = (11/36 \cdot 4) = 1.222$

- 5 AT factors:

In one hex: $E(X) = .028 \cdot 0 + .972 \cdot 1 = .972$

Spread out: $E(X) = (11/36 \cdot 5) = 1.53$

Here we can really see the expected value rise as the number of AT factors rises. And spreading them out looks like it has a bigger payoff overall, which becomes more pronounced the more AT factors you have. This agrees well with our intuition. If we have five AT factors spread out, we could actually harm five tanks, although that is very unlikely. If we concentrate them all in one hex, the most we will harm is one.

I hope this little mathematical diversion has interested you. It certainly doesn't tell you definitively what you *must* do with your AT mines, because the problems had to be narrow in scope to assign values. Your tactics will still be situation dependent. If there is only one key hex that your opponent must traverse, then obviously it would be of value to mine it heavily. Such situations can occur when your opponent has to exit through a narrow area to win, or occupy a particular location. It can also occur when there is a particularly good spot for a tank, say a hullo down spot or a location with great LOS. However, if your opponent has many tanks and can roam all over the board with them, it might behoove you to spread your mines around. One last thing to bear in mind is that this discussion doesn't take into consideration the psychological effect of mines on an opponent. The mere presence of still-hidden mines can often keep some players overly cautious. Even a 1-factor minefield can strike panic into some players. We can't plug a player's emotions into these equations, but these calculations should still be of some value to you in determining your strategy the next time you use AT mines.

Player Profile: David Hailey

[As most of you know, David Hailey has performed above and beyond the call of duty the last four years organizing our annual ASL Team Tournament at the Georgetown Recreation Center. He is a 37-year old high school math teacher!—MA]

I bought my first wargame, *France 1940*, in 1976. Having been a game player from birth, I was soon spending every available dime on wargames, mostly AH and SPI titles. A friend bought SL when it came out. We played *Guard's Counterattack* a few times, but didn't care much for the game. When ASL came out, I had not been playing wargames much. When I saw the rules for this game

were going to be in a 3-ring binder, I imagined the commitment this game was going to receive and had to get on board.

For two years, I read rules and tried to play solitaire. Then I taught a non-wargaming friend to play, but neither one of us had much of a clue. I finally found a tournament at A&M, Warcon '90. I placed second out of five! The guy that trounced me was none other than Gary Fortenberry. Through Gary I found Dallas-Con, SL Rallies and On All Fronts. I started playing PBM games, as many as 12 or 13 at a time. The obsession was growing. I began reading, writing, and playtesting for some of the amateur 'zines and AH. I worked on KGP II and SASL, but I guess the "Hailey Rule" is my claim to fame. The LOS article I wrote for Gary's ASLUG is my proudest ASL accomplishment (besides the +14, improbable, critical hit I rolled to beat Matt!).

Actually, because this seems to be an appropriate forum in which to brag, I'll spend a moment recounting the year 1992. The screen ripples out of focus, then returns to focus six years in the past... I went nuts about attending tournaments. Gary tried to attract some out-of-staters with TEXASL. Thirty-one came, and I won! I beat Louis Mehr of Houston in *Eastern Gate*. I won a small DallasCon tournament. Origins was in Dallas that summer, and I finished second out of 33, losing to Tom Slizewski in *Camp Nibewa*. I then went to ASLOK and had a respectable 4-2 record. I got to play Mike McGrath in *King of the Hill* and didn't lose too badly. ...the screen ripples again, returning to the present... It was a good year for ASL, but it almost cost me my marriage (a word of caution to the addicted).

Now that my obsession is in check, my PBM table is empty. (Mr. Lavan is having a tough time finding time to play as well.) I try to make a few meetings to get a FTF game in every now and then. I don't think my skill level is as high, but it could be the rising skill level in Austin. You guys are getting tough!

I'm happy that I can throw together our annual tournament. I've held it for the last four years, but let's remember it was Mike Seningen's brain child. I like to think it provides some continuity, along with Matt's outstanding efforts with the club, to keep our ASL community going strong. The ASL life in Austin has been great during the 90s.

Now we need to start working on the ASL Retirement Village!

Favorite non-ASL wargames: Blue and Gray quads, Ardennes.

Favorite non-wargames: Magic—The Gathering (I hear the snickers), SOM, Basketball.

Favorite computer games: Civilization II, X-Com, UFO Defense (ASLers should try it)

Reason I love ASL: The varied events—you never know what may happen next.

Nationality most suited to my playing style: Americans (rout and rally).

Q. Identify the two U.S. generals who actually directed traffic as the troops from Utah Beach began moving inland.

A. Major General Raymond Barton and Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, both of the 4th Division.

Favorite Scenarios: Mike Seningen

AAR: Red Barricades CGII

By Aaron and Matt Schwoebel

[This is the second installment of our Favorite Scenarios column. This column will generally follow the Player Profile columns in that whoever is the "Player" profiled in one issue has his favorite scenario list in the following issue. We profiled Mike Seningen last issue, so here is his list.—MA]

When I first saw that I would be surrendering a list of my favorite scenarios, I failed my PTC. I have been playing ASL so long, it seems that I cannot remember what my favorite scenarios are. There are just too many scenarios out there. My apologies up front to those scenarios my failing memory omits.

A shorter list would be those I didn't care for. But then I can't remember those names either. Many moons ago, DYO's were in vogue. Though they were often lopsided, the sheer enjoyment of trying to buy the ultimate force was quite a blast.

Okay, I've dodged the bullet long enough.... Shucking that mental pin counter, I'll force the brain to divulge a sampling of my more memorable scenarios:

- **Aces Over Eights (KE9)**—An interesting chess match between two potent, but fragile, armored forces with dual VC.
- **Acts of Defiance (A68)**—Probably on most people's list. A good combination of units. A few toys for both sides. A bit of attack and defense for both sides.
- **The Awakening of Spring (BB12)**—An intriguing problem of heavy armor vs. big guns and restrictive terrain guarding dual VC.
- **Smith & Weston (A53)**—A small elite American force tries to slow down an overwhelming Japanese column of infantry. The last few turns of Banzaii attack and limited cover make this a nail biter.
- **Parker's Last Stand (BdF2)**—A beautiful map, German infantry attacking from all sides across open-ground snow against a combined-arms American force. Great challenge.
- **Cibik's Ridge (AH67)**—Always a nail biter: tons of American FP set up HIP and a Japanese force that just keeps coming.
- **Rocket's Red Glare (G6)**—I love the challenge of dealing with the FlakPnZr—trying to take it out *or* keeping it alive.
- **White Tigers (A47)**—Japanese combined arms, lots of elite British holding a tenuous line in the pouring rain. There are even rice paddies to deal with in the late game!
- **Among the Ruins (AH21)**—6-6-6s on the attack against 8 morale troops, with time and numbers on your side. But Germans can make it hell on the Amis with all that FP and a hidden AA piece.
- **Valhalla Bound (A74)**—Five Panthers, and frankly that might not be enough. Both sides wield the finger of death in a nail biter, watch those LOSs.
- **Beyond the PAKFronts (ASLUG1)**—Hell, I've had my ass kicked twice and still not sure if I have a clue. Not many scenarios would fall under that category.

These are the few my feeble mind would yield. Fortunately, it takes no further effort to reveal my all-time favorite. I love any thing dealing with Red Barricades, but my first choice would be:

- **The Last Bid (RB5)**—What can I say? The best map in the system, the longest scenario, six months of rock-em, sock-em fun and it came down to a CC roll which I won.

[This is the first installment of an after action report of Aaron (Russian) and his brother, Matt (German), playing Red Barricades Campaign Game II. We hope the second and concluding installment will be in the next issue.—MA]

Russian Pre-Game Strategy (Aaron)

I don't remember exactly how we chose the sides we did; I've been reading a lot about Stalin's purges, and maybe I felt like the poor Russian people deserved some good Russian leadership (not that my brother sucks or anything). Matt and I have, of course, played a lot of scenarios against each other, and although he has played ASL for much less time (two years to my ten), he has quickly learned to avoid most of the novice mistakes, and we are pretty much an even match at this point. That being said, I relished the opportunity to play the defensive and suck him into a number of traps.

In the first day's scenario, you have to purchase reinforcements before you determine the actual strength of the OB-given "free" units. That is, I had to decide how many infantry companies to buy before I found out if my initial infantry companies were to be depleted or full-strength. I spent most of my CPP purchasing a SMG company (5-2-7s) and a HW platoon (MGs, 82mm MTRs). In addition, I purchased some extra fortification points and an 80+mm battalion mortar OBA. My rolls for the strength of units were fairly bad—all three rifle companies depleted. The leader rolls didn't go that well either; the quantity was very low (around 8 or 9 squads per leader, which is officially the average for DYO Russian, but printed scenarios tend to be around 4:1) but the quality of those leaders somewhat compensated for the small number.

I knew from the start that I couldn't defend the whole board very well. The early impression I had of Red Barricades deceived me. Although it is a big, long game, the actual counter density is not that high. Sections of front frequently have two or three hexes between squads, and stacking is infrequent. I intended to use the southern front for a counterattack. I set up four or five squads there, plus a couple of others with a leader and HMG set up HIP. With no dummy counters, I hoped that Matt would assign few units there and let me retake some rowhouses. In the large factory that I held, I put my 6-2-8 company. A SMG company went into the other factory, leaving the remaining rifle companies to guard the northern sector and setup a second line of defense in the center. If you are familiar with the RB map, you have no doubt noticed I ignored the far north. I intended to fall back from there and compress my front over time. However, I did leave Matt two nasty surprises there. First, I placed a pillbox facing north with a 76L. The pillbox was facing "sideways" from the front line, meaning that it could be easily outflanked, but it was guarded by infantry and I hoped it would prevent him from flanking me. Second, I put my killer stack on the first floor of the three-hex stone building in the north, fortified. It contained a 9-2 leader, two squads, and two HMGs. Any quick advances there would meet some heavy firepower. I saved my most devious surprises for the very center of the board. In X19 and X21, I put two Set DCs, with each to be detonated by a HIP 3-2-8 two hexes away. One of these half-squads was paired with a HIP 8-1 leader, making the TC required to detonate a Set DC even easier. These bad boys would go off at 36 firepower with a -3 TEM. I ended up buying few

dummy stacks, but I did have two more pillboxes with Guns in them in a second line of defense, and the maximum number of HIP squads. I also upgraded my booby trap capability. My principal hope for the first day was to avoid any major breakthroughs; I also intended to inflict some nasty losses with my HIP units and DCs.

German Strategy for Day One (Matt)

I spent my 17CPP on a Nebelwerfer OBA, 100mm OBA with offboard observer, 150mm SIG IB platoon, PSW 222 (L) platoon, and a SPW platoon of half-tracks. I divided the mapboard into four regions: North, Central, Factory, and South. I assigned a rifle company (4-6-7s) to each of the North and Central regions. The Factory and South regions each had a pioneer company (8-3-8s) plus part of the Sturm company (5-4-8s). I planned on assaulting the stone buildings of the South and the smaller factory. These units would then converge on the larger factory, which would also be the target for the Nebelwerfers. The Central region would be on the defensive, while I attacked in the North with assistance from PSW and SPW platoons (the SIG platoon was bought as a reserve to enter the next day).

Recap of November 11th

The Germans made quick initial progress in the first two turns, suffering almost no losses while flaming away all opposition. The rowhouses in the south fell almost instantly, and Russian hopes of a counterattack were quickly forgotten. However, the HIP HMG squad did kill a 9-2 German leader before being annihilated themselves. The smaller factory guarded by 5-2-7s also fell quickly, with only a few units escaping past the wall to a new defensive line. The Germans did not threaten the larger factory containing 6-2-8s, and mortar teams on the rooftops harassed German movement. Things started to bog down for the Germans around turn 3. First, flamethrowers started Xing themselves out of the action, with four of the six gone by turn 4. Second, one of the Set DCs went off in the center and scored a 4KIA, which rubble the building and blew a 4-6-7 and its HMG into unidentifiable pieces. Third, the killer stack was revealed in the north, getting a 36FP-3 shot that scored a 5KIA to kill a German squad.

Russian casualties, though, had been very heavy, perhaps 10 or more squads destroyed versus just a few Germans. Generally, German squads that broke soon rallied, with KIAs and fate inflicting the only permanent casualties. Meanwhile, Russian units were frequently overrun and eliminated. OBA played a checkered role; the Russian module rolled a 12 for a field phone contact, and the German Nebelwerfer battery dumped its load in the empty area behind German lines. However, the German 100+mm battery laid down harassing fire, impeding Russian movement and breaking a few units.

Turns 5 and 6 were relatively uneventful, as the German player made few concentrated attacks. The PSW platoon ran into problems with MGs and mortars, with one killed and two stunned. Another Set DC went off, killing a 4-6-7, an 8-1 leader, and a MMG. On Turn 6, German troops tried to storm the remaining factory, only to have the game end. One statistic of note: the Germans lost three leaders killed, while the Russians gained one—two created in CC or self-rally and one killed.

Stone locations: Germans gained 29 stone locations.

Casualties: Russians lost 37 CVP. Germans lost 24 CVP.

Germany victory.

Russian Strategy for Day Two (Aaron)

I felt that the first day went fairly well. No major breakthroughs, and the casualties were acceptable. However, nearly all the damage I inflicted was through “special” events: Set DCs, HIP machine guns, Fate, booby traps, snipers. My regular fire-power produced almost nothing. Units were broken here and there, but they quickly returned to the lines. On the defensive, maybe this is to be expected, but I was learning a new dynamic: in standard scenarios, it is often useful to break a unit for a few turns; in RB, you need to eliminate them.

With that in mind, I set forth two goals for my day two purchases. First, I wanted to develop a solid reserve area in the center, so that when my flanks collapsed, there would be units already there for protection. Therefore, I purchased a Guards Rifle company (4-5-8s) and set it up in a horseshoe pattern, cloaked in reserve (which costs fewer points, but the units cannot do anything until come upon). Second, I wanted to cause casualties. I spent 3 CPP on a Katyusha battery. Part of me wanted to get really nasty and buy TWO Katyusha batteries with preregistered hexes and blow a gigantic hole in the German lines, but I had an 80mm MTR battery left over and you cannot have more than two OBA modules active at a time. Rocket OBA is always inaccurate, so it could end up anywhere on the map, but I hoped that a perfect situation would appear wherein only the Germans could possibly get hit. I spent my remaining CPP on fortifications (HIP, ?s, mines, foxholes) and a platoon of two Dug-In T-60 M42s. The light tanks are not that deadly, but set up on board with ?s over them, I hoped that Matt would be frightened into thinking they were T-34s and waste valuable resources on them. I chose not to buy Set DCs, despite their previous effectiveness, because I figured I had already achieved my goal of slowing him down and making him paranoid.

My setup put great importance on the remaining factory: 6-2-8s and 4-2-6s inside, with mortar teams on the roof and a leader ready to call down the OBA with a preregistered hex nearby. If this proved to be a waste of effort, I thought the units could be sent elsewhere or could counterattack. Meanwhile, the southern flank was very weak, and if the German made a round-about flanking maneuver, my reserves would need to go there. Because there are no wooden buildings left, I hoped that some dummy counters, a pillbox, and a tank would discourage him. The center was in decent shape, with a pillbox, some heavy weapons, and a variety of infantry. The company of 4-5-8s set up cloaked in the last line of stone buildings in the center, which would be my eventual last stand area. In the north, I also had few resources committed (there just aren’t enough units to cover the board). I had some HIP machine guns and a couple of artillery pieces, plus the cloaked units turned inward if his flanking maneuver got too far.

I guessed that Matt would commit to infantry. His PSW/SPW platoons did almost nothing on day one, and, although tanks would likely fare much better, I figured he would be too intimidated by the terrain, AT guns, and so on, to buy Mark IVs.

If this day went well, maybe I could buy some Assault Engineers next day and counterattack. If it didn’t, I would buy purely infantry and force him into a battle of attrition.

German Strategy for Day Two (Matt)

The first day's attack was generally a success. I took several buildings in the South and the smaller factory. I also took a couple of buildings in the Central regions, but none in the North. The Nebelwerfers missed everything, the 100mm OBA did a little damage and restricted Russian movement, and the vehicles proved to be ineffective. That said, I was in good position to attack the larger factory from three sides.

A poor roll gave me 14 CPP for Day Two purchases. I bought a Sturm company (enter from offboard), an infantry gun platoon (depleted-only two 75*), and saved one CPP for day Three. The SIG IB platoon could setup onboard this day to help with the assault on the larger factory. I decided to use the PSWs and SPWs as a mobile reserve and defense against infiltrating sewer squads. The pioneer squads would concentrate their attack on the larger factory. A mix of Sturm and rifle squads would put pressure in the North and Central regions. The South would be defended by rifle squads. The Sturm company entering from offboard would reinforce the Central and Factory regions.

Recap of November 12th

(Dual Attack)

The first two turns centered around the German assault on the remaining (larger) factory. The Perimeter area allowed the Germans to set up adjacent to the factory on three different sides, and Russian units were quickly surrounded and killed or eliminated for failure to rout. Snipers and an 80mm OBA kept German assault guns and armored cars from achieving much, stunning a couple and recalling another. Meanwhile, the far south was completely quiet, and the north saw little action. Some action occurred early on in the center, with a Russian pillbox abandoned and German 75* INF guns opening up at short range from hidden building locations. On turn 3, Russian fortunes changed. A strong set of units had retreated to the east side of the factory, and from there controlled access points and avoided encirclement. They beat away defenders, killing an 8-3-8 squad and capturing a HMG and FT. The Russian sent reinforcements to the center to stabilize a possible German breakthrough (few Russian units set up there). The Russians called down a Katyusha concentration behind German lines, killing a 9-1 leader but causing no other damage.

The remaining turns centered around the remaining factory hexes. German attempts to capture the eastern side of 5-7 hexes were repeatedly beaten off, with the assistance of a 9-2 Russian leader. One of the two remaining German FTs was briefly captured, and then recaptured. The Germans finally made their way up to the rooftop, where they found an 82mm MTR and its spotting half-squad; two Russian half-squads routed away, but the crew and their broken MTR remained to provide a setup line for the next day. Other sectors included some occasional CCs attacks, but no real gains. As the day ended on Turn 6, several CCs needed to be resolved. The Russians, having nice rolls and slightly superior firepower, won almost all of these.

Stone locations: Germans gained 12 (13 added, 1 lost).

Casualties: Germans lost 35 CVP; Russians lost 27 CVP.

German Victory.

[We will pick up next time with day three. Aaron tells me that he and Matt plan to finish this CG in a holiday frenzy of ASL, so we can look forward to the conclusion in the January issue of Banzai!!—MA]

The Rules Clinic

By Mike Seningen

Welcome to the second installment of my rules column. Much to my surprise, there have been no corrections reported for the first installment.

Well, putting my valor on the line, I offer the readership a few more interesting rules anecdotes. First, I will start by plagiarizing the first sentence in rule F.1C. The rout rules are complicated enough, and many readers may not have read the North Africa rules carefully (as true rulesmaster Jack O'Quin showed me):



"F.1C ROUTING: In any scenario, a broken unit forced to rout but unable to reach a woods/building hex in that RtPh may rout to any terrain hex consistent with A10.51 but is not required to rout to the nearest woods/building hex."



A voluntarily routing leader may still advance. (A10.711)



A SMC may attempt recovery of a SW from a broken unit in the RPh. Remember that recovery occurs *before* Rally (ASOP 1.14b). Regardless of success, the recovering SMC, if normally allowed, may *not* attempt to rally any units (A10.7); however, a subsequent leader may. Further, a SMC, the same or another, may attempt recovery of a SW from any broken unit in the SMC's location during the MPh by expending 1MF in that location.



A unit that ambushes the enemy may withdraw before or *after* CC, but *before* MELEE occurs (A11.41).



A unit entering MELEE may choose to immediately attempt to Withdraw (A11.2). This could be useful to Advance through a melee location to gain some victory location, or advance through a location you could not normally move through due to enemy units.



Maximum range for inherent spraying fire is 3 hexes (A9.5).



A unit that does not have spraying fire capabilities may not combine its inherent FP with a spray fire attack (A9.5). Further, due to Mandatory FG restrictions (A7.55), any unit that is in the same location as any member of the preceding spraying fire FG may not fire at the same target unless ROF was retained by the first FG and is used in conjunction with the second FG.

Now, I have a couple of questions for you fearless Readers!

1. Are attacks from Aerial units vs. concealed units resolved as concealed if the ? is not moving in open ground? That is, is the attack subject to area fire (A7.23), or concealed target (C6.2)?

2. Does a ? unit which is automatically pinned by a Stuka's MG Point Attack (E7.403), and not by an IFT attack as a result of the attack, lose concealment?

I claim the following answers: Question 1 = YES to first question, and area fire for IFT or C6.2 for To Hit; Question 2 = NO, but I also think the rulebook is quite vague in supplying a clear cut answer.

State of the Club, 1998**By Matt Shostak**

Each of the last two years, after our local tournament, I have given you my impressions of the state of our club. The third time makes it a tradition! Seriously, I think it is worth noting where we are and where we were, and examining possible avenues for improvement.

The size of the club has not changed dramatically, although we lost one of our most frequent gamers and all-around great guy Todd Hively to a career move that took him out of state. Todd, you will be missed. We can use our ladder as a guide to just how active the club has been. Since active status on our club ladder equates to having played a competitive game in the last six months, it tells us a little bit about how much our membership is playing. As of July, we have 22 active players and 11 inactive ones. Last year at about this time the numbers were 23 and 5 respectively. So it appears that we are pretty much treading water here. I think we'd all like to see those numbers increase, especially the number of active players. Keep recruiting!

There are many good things that we can brag about over the past year. I think we finally figured out a really good format for our club tournament every summer, which will make it more accessible and more enjoyable in the future. The fact that we have now run it 6 consecutive years speaks volumes about our staying power as a club. We have had members chipping in with a variety of things, such as the fantastic *Fanatic* club t-shirts done by Andy Milder, the beginnings of a true club web page begun by Sam Tyson, and a truly big-time project, the *Hell on Wheels* pack authored by Chas Smith and assisted by several members of the club. Mike Austin has drastically improved our newsletter, and it serves notice to the ASL community at large that the game has a strong presence in Austin. Lastly, we took a team of three to Wild West Fest IV and wrested the States Trophy away from two-time defending champ Oregon while compiling an impressive 17-5 overall record against some pretty good competition from around the country. These are all signs of a strong, energetic club.

The one area where I really think we have room for improvement is in membership and recruiting. As far as I'm concerned, we can never have enough members. That point is driven home with a vengeance every time we lose a valuable, active member of the club. It may not seem that we lose too many people, but I can easily name a half dozen solid players that have moved away over the years. It will continue to happen, so we need a strong club presence to ensure that we can recruit new members quickly and easily integrate them into our culture. Not only that, but we can improve the activity level of our existing members. We have far too many guys on our list who do not play often, but I'm sure they would all like to find a way to play on a regular basis somehow. That's what the phone list is for, guys! You are all creative, intelligent people—find a way. Don't be shy!

I think a few words need to be said about the recent buyout of Avalon Hill by Hasbro, because it has many ASLers understandably concerned about the future of their favorite game. I don't want to go into a lengthy discussion, but suffice it to say I am not overly worried. Even in the absolute worst case scenario (Hasbro discontinues ASL and won't sell it to anyone or produce any more modules), I am still confident that I will be able to play ASL as much as I want for the rest of my life. I already have so many scenarios that I could play one a day for several years without

repeating. I don't really need any more ASL products to continue having fun with ASL. Moreover, I think third party vendors would step in to fill the void as they did in 1994. But I honestly don't think the worst case scenario will happen. Most companies want to make money, and I can't see any way that shelving ASL completely would benefit Hasbro. I believe it will continue on in some form. At any rate, a good scare about the future of ASL might be good for us. If it does nothing else, it should underscore the importance of having a large, active group of opponents nearby to knock cardboard heads with—in other words, a strong club. Recruit! Get active! Play the game!

Let me close with some familiar pep talk themes. This is *your* club. It is only as good or as bad as you make it. Wanting the ASL scene in your community to remain strong and doing something about it are two different things. It's your choice—will your personal morale check come up boxcars, or will you roll snakes and battle harden?

Bounding Fire Corner**By Chas Smith**

[For those of you not yet aware of it, Capt. Chas Smith, our esteemed Fort Hood representative, is currently developing a scenario pack based on the exploits of the 2nd Armored Division in WWII. We are privileged to be able to playtest these fine scenarios. Chas wants to keep us up to date on the progress of the Bounding Fire Productions projects.—MA]

Playtesting for the *Hell on Wheels* project is going well. *Red-legs as Infantry* is ready, and *Trench Warfare* is getting played hard. The production date is still December, so please consider playing some of these scenarios in the *near* future. If you are interested in testing any of the scenarios, contact myself or Matt. For those of you who are currently working on stuff, thanks for your great effort. Long range plans include a *Hermann Goring Battle Pack* and a *Hurtgen Forest Historical Module*!

For anyone interested, the HOW pack includes three scenarios that require a new deluxe board. Rough copies of the board are available. All of these deluxe scenarios are ready for playtest now. Here are quick synopses of the deluxe scenarios:

A Perfect Match features the 2nd Recon of the 2nd Panzer versus the 2nd Recon of the 2nd Armored. Andy and Matt already had a playing of this that went down to the final CC. This could be a great scenario.

In *From Bad to Wurselen*, Germans attack Americans in the city mostly, and have to cause casualties, exit units, and take buildings. They are supported by Jagdpanthers while the Americans get Shermans. This one needs a couple of playings so I can assign an appropriate VP value for the Germans. This one feels solid—just a few more playings should do it.

In *The Narrow Front*, Americans attack Germans in an urban slugfest. Americans have great firepower as usual. Germans have dug-in Panthers in support. Both sides have OBA. This one needs several playings.

Again, to everyone who has tested so far, thanks for all the help. And special thanks goes to Sam Tyson for the great scenario card design and layout.

Club Notes

WWF Dispatch

By Matt Shostak

Denver, Co.—In a stunning show of ASL prowess, the Team Texas Fanatics won the states trophy at the Wild West Fest IV tournament this past weekend [August 20–23—MA].

The team showed incredible balance as Jeff Toreki (5-1), Mike Seningen (6-2), and Matt Shostak (6-2) compiled a combined 17-5 record to blast through the posers from Oregon, Colorado, Ohio, and a unified states team.

Defending champion Oregon was crushed in head-to-head competition, with only Dade Cariaga's narrow 1 CVP win over Mike Seningen in *Guns of Naro* salvaging any pride for team Oregon. They went 1-5 overall against the Texas Fanatics. "I still can't believe it," mumbled "Dazed" Cariaga, leader of the Berserk Commissars of Oregon, shaking his head. "Who are these guys?"

But insiders in the Texas program have been quietly pointing to this tournament for some time. The program has been undergoing a rejuvenation for the last couple of years. Rumor has it that the team has incredible depth, but they take very few to road games. In fact, lead scorer Chas Smith stayed behind due to military obligations. Of this newfound depth, the strapping 6'8" Toreki is a perfect example. Training in the Texas heat has toughened him up; he has learned that special kind of resolve required to pull victories seemingly out of thin air. In fact, Toreki's only loss of the weekend came on the last roll in CC. In several other games, the situation looked desperate but he pulled it out in the end.

Longtime veterans Seningen and Shostak, however, travelled somewhat different paths to their identical 6-2 records. Plagued by bad dice, many of Seningen's games came down to the very end, while Shostak managed to simply out roll a couple of his opponents. Both went down hard to 3-time singles champ Steve "Unbeatable" Pleva.

The pretenders from the opposing states could have sensed something was different this time if they had just been paying attention. There was an unusual calm in self-proclaimed Texas captain Shostak, who could barely be heard to raise his voice all weekend. Perhaps he knew something good was about to happen.

Still, it might get harder for these good looking, manly Texans. "They won't be able to sneak up on anyone next year" said Cariaga. "I'm going to play Shostak, Toreki, Seningen, and Smith and make sure they start 0-4!"

Biweekly Lunch Gathering!

Don't forget! Join us every other Friday at 1300 hours down at Pok-E-Jo's on 5th Street. Jeff Toreki sends out e-mail reminders, or call Matt to find out when the next get-together is scheduled.

T-Shirts!

Andy Milder still has about eight or nine of the great club T-shirts left. It is a quality black tee with the front and back sides of the Fanatic counter on the front and back of the shirt, respectively. The shirts are only \$9. You can reach Andy by phone at (512) 451-4806 or by e-mail at amilder@flash.net.

Fact: To confuse Japanese who were listening to USMC radio transmissions in the Pacific during the war, the Corps employed more than 300 Navajo-speaking American Indians as radio code talkers.

Club Meeting Recaps

By Matt Shostak
and Mike Austin

Chas Smith hosted the biggest recent club meeting at his place on Saturday, October 10. Eleven troops made the trip to Harker Heights—overcoming the weak intelligence data from Capt. Smith on how to get there—including Glen Gray from Dallas. Glen even picked up two club t-shirts for himself and his gaming buddy, Russell Mueller. Thanks, Glen!

Those of us who showed up early reconnoitered two small museums at Ft. Hood. During this mission, we encountered numerous interesting AFVs, including several Grants, Stuarts, and Shermans, along with some old antitank guns, troop carriers, and some more modern armor captured during the Gulf War. We rendezvoused back at the Smith garage at 1000 hours for serious practice maneuvers, bravely enduring the heat and humidity to refine our tactical procedures (i.e., we did some serious playtesting of Chas' HOW scenarios, without benefit of air conditioning).

Andy Milder led his Germans to 96 VP in *Bad to Wuerselen* against Kirk Woller. We need more playtest results to determine what the final German VP requirement should be. Jeff Toreki's Germans handed Matt's Americans their collective heads in *Inch by Inch* when they ran into the heart of his defense, anchored by a mighty 88. Jack O'Quin and Eric Gerstenberg played a spirited game of *Trench Warfare* that was called for time, but it looked like the Americans had a good chance to win on CP. Sam Tyson's Americans snatched a win from Mike Austin's Germans in a close game of *Redlegs as Infantry*. [I will never forget to use my inherent panzerfausts again!—MA] Meanwhile, Capt. Smith played two games simultaneously, due to the odd number of attendees, defeating Glen's Americans by one point in *Inch by Inch*, while losing to Mike Seningen's Amis in *Trench Warfare*.

The excellent rations provided by Capt. Smith's quartermaster corps—barbecued chicken, hot dogs and hamburgers—ensured the troops were more than adequately fed. A great turnout really helped push along playtesting for Chas' Hell on Wheels Pack.

Two weeks later, serious maneuvers took place at Camp Seningen, resulting in another successful playtesting mission. Mike S. and Matt engaged in a marathon session of *In the Bag*, going until 0430 hours Saturday morning, then continuing at about 0800. Mike's Americans romped to a relatively easy victory. Aaron Schwoebel and Eric locked horns in a ladder game of *Scouts Out* on Friday night, with Eric's Germans prevailing. Brian Roundhill, a new member, showed up Saturday and took on Andy in *Redlegs as Infantry*, and his Germans made a good showing early. Andy stormed back, however, and the game came right down to the wire with the Germans taking the honors. Meanwhile, Chas defeated Aaron Schwoebel in a close game of *The Narrow Front*.

Intelligence reports indicate that a confrontation between Carl Kusch's Americans and Aaron Schwoebel's Germans in *Bad to Wuerselen* occurred at the Shostak outpost in the same general time frame. The information is sketchy, the only reliable data being that the Germans won.

The weekend after the meeting at Camp Seningen, the Shostak outpost saw more action. Brian Roundhill and Carl Kusch embroiled themselves in a close game of *The Narrow Front*, with Carl's Germans ultimately emerging victorious. Andy Milder took Matt on twice in *A Perfect Match*. The first game ended early when the Americans fell into a German trap and saw a single 50L antitank gun knock out a half-track with a leader and half squad, and four M8 armored cars. With Andy behind 42–0 on turn

2, both agreed to play it again to chalk up another playtest. This time, Andy gamely fought on, and it was nip and tuck the whole way. Skillful use of Bounding First Fire in the endgame probably made the difference, as Andy rescued an otherwise certainly dead M8 HMC and killed two German AFVs in the process. Matt countered with some last-turn heroics, but they fell just short when his 8-1 leader couldn't kill an M8 armored car in CC, needing to roll a 3 or less and coming up with a 4 instead. There were so many events that could have changed the outcome of this game that it is hard to count them all, and it kept swinging back and forth, ultimately coming down to the last CC roll. What a game!

Club Ladder: As of 10-22-98

The following tables list the ladder standings for active and inactive players and the results from recent Ladder games. Please report your ladder results to Matt Shostak.

Players who have not completed a Ladder game in the last six months are moved to the Inactive list. Matt keeps their records and scores, and they can return to active status at any time by completing and reporting a Ladder game.

Club Ladder for Active Players

Player	Points	Record
Chas Smith	1620	53-12
Matt Shostak	1574	66-19
Mike Seningen	1425	37-15
Jeff Toreki	1314	17-17
Tom Lavan	1133	5-3
Andy Milder	1057	13-25
David Hailey	1052	16-18
Bob Purnell	1047	12-9
Kirk Woller	1038	30-42
Eric Gerstenberg	1024	21-35
Jack O'Quin	1022	8-11
Greg Swantek	1018	7-8
Ed Mott	1008	1-3
Duane Blocker	967	0-1
Matt Scheffrahn	959	0-2
Aaron Schwoebel	942	2-6
Carl Kusch	925	4-10
Sam Tyson	915	2-10
Matt Schwoebel	915	1-4
Dave Morgenthaler	889	0-4
Jim Knatcher	849	0-8
Mike Austin	807	1-9

Club Ladder for Inactive Players

Player	Points	Record
John Phelps	1038	1-0
Tom Woller	1037	1-0
Todd Hively	993	9-22
Eric Barry	985	2-4
John Poole	985	0-1
Robert Esparza	982	3-3
Gary Dillard	980	1-3
Joel Bonham	966	0-1
George Fritz	963	2-3
Chuck Lemons	952	0-2
Rodney Lester	879	0-5

Recent Results

Winner	Versus	Scenario
Toreki (Brit)	K Woller (Germ)	in Cornered Tigers
(this game appears a bit out of order in this issue—it had been left out of a previous issue)		
K Woller (Amer)	Purnell (Germ)	Inhumane
Milder (Russ)	Scheffrahn (Germ)	The Commissar's House
Shostak (Germ)	Scheffrahn (Amer)	Trapped!
Shostak (Jap)	Gerstenberg (Amer)	Maggot Hill
Gerstenberg (Ital)	Milder (Eth)	The Golden Mountain
Tyson (Germ)	Morgenthaler (Dutch)	Piercing the Peel
Smith (Russ)	Mott (Germ)	Take the Chance
Smith (Nat)	Mott (Rep)	Italian Brothers
Milder (Germ)	Hailey (Fren)	Grossdeutschland's Doorknockers
K Woller (Amer)	Gerstenberg (Germ)	Death at Carentan
Toreki (Brit)	A Schwoebel (Germ)	Disengagement Under Fire
K Woller (Germ)	Gerstenberg (Russ)	Pavlov's House
Tyson (Germ)	Morgenthaler (Dutch)	Piercing the Peel
Gerstenberg (Germ)	A Schwoebel (Amer)	Scouts Out
Purnell (Amer)	K Woller (Germ)	Abandon Ship!
Swantek (Germ)	Tyson (Amer)	Ranger Stronghold

Player Aids: ASOP Part I

By Mike Austin

I don't know about you, but I get pretty frustrated at times with the ASLRB. I mean, in my day job as a technical writer, I spend a great deal of time studying how to best present written information for the fastest access and easiest comprehension. To my professional eye, the producers of the ASLRB flunk even the most basic tests of effective technical communication.

So, what can be done about this problem? Well, the Expanded Index, available in several forms on the Internet, helps a lot if you need to find a specific rule. And the complete Errata and Q&A is another necessary document for grognards and novices alike. For those of us fortunate enough to have a computer close to our ASL play space, you can even get both of these collections of data in Windows help files. Avalon Hill has even helped out some with the OBA flowchart that comes on the inside of the wrapper of the ASL Action Pack #1.

But is that enough? No, not by a long shot. One of my continuing projects is to find better ways to present ASL rules information. As part of my contribution to the ASL community, the next few issues of Banzai!! will contain player aids that I have either developed myself or found on the Internet. They will be appended to the newsletter on stand-alone pages so you can easily remove them (from the hard copy) or print them (from the Acrobat Reader file) to be included in your rule book.

If you have a player aid that you can recommend, send it to me and I'll include it in a future issue. If you have a suggestion for a player aid, but don't have the time, skill, or tools to develop it, send me the idea and I will work with you to put it together.

This issue's player aid is the first two pages of an enlarged and reformatted Advanced Sequence of Play. Try it out and let me know what you think.

This Happened To Me...

[In this section, we include anecdotes about the weird, unusual, or highly improbable things that happen while playing ASL. If you have such a tale to tell, send it in!—MA]

David Hailey tells us, "You'll need to get the name of the scenario from Matt, but I was the Brits vs. the Germans. The Germans had to move a certain number of VPs across a certain hexrow. I had an AT gun in the woods, buried in smoke, that had to rotate a couple of hexspines to fire at the last tank that could provide Matt with the win. And yes, it was the last turn. I rolled 1, 1 followed by a 1, and won the game. Needless to say, Matt was p-----."

Matt Shostak says, "It was *Another Tricky Day* from the TOT pack on rare vehicles. The +14 came from: +6 covered arc change, +4 smoke, +2 moving target, +1 small target, and +1 inexp. crew by SSR."

Next Issue...

- A scenario analysis of *With Flame and Shell* by Matt Shostak
- More after action reporting of the Schwoebels' *RB CGII*
- A player profile of Capt. Chas Smith
- David Hailey's favorite scenarios
- Club Meeting recaps
- Club Ladder

And much more!

Fact: Japan tried to build an atom bomb during the war and the Nazis agreed to help them. However, the Allied navies were able to prevent shipments of uranium from reaching Japan. Prime Minister Hideki Tojo reportedly ordered Toranosuke Kawashina, a former army colonel, to launch an atom bomb project in January 1943, because Tojo felt the war might be decided by atomic bombs. Germany actually sent two tons of uranium to Japan via U-boat but it was sunk before arriving. The top nuclear physicist on the Japanese project was Hideki Yukawa, who won the Nobel Prize in 1949 for his discoveries about the atom. His nuclear energy research had begun in 1941.

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We'd like to thank Rodney Kinney for his great work on VASL, Carl Fung for the VASL counter images, and Bruce Mansfield for the computer drawn maps for VASL. We use Carl's counter images and Bruce's maps with their permission.

This newsletter is distributed free of charge, but it does cost money to produce. The paper, color inkjet cartridges, and postage add up to about \$2.00 per hard copy. Donations to offset the production costs will be cheerfully accepted at:

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Advanced Sequence of Play (rev.)

As listed in the Advanced Sequence of Play (ASOP), each phase is usually broken down into three main parts (the START, DURING, and END) and several discrete Steps. In each Step Number (e.g., **1.11A**), the players involved are specified as **A** (ATTACKER), **D** (DEFENDER), or **B** (Both). The ASOP lists the official order of actions, even for those whose order is not given elsewhere (e.g., as per Steps 3.21A–3.22A, units that start the MPH berserk must move before non-berserk units); however, inconsequential violations of sequence should be tolerated in the spirit of good sportsmanship.

†Sniper Attacks/Checks are possible during this phase (**A14.1**; **A14.4**; **E1.72**; **E1.76**; **G12.603**; **G14.261**; **RB SSR CG8**).

1. RALLY PHASE

Only one action (attempt) allowed per unit per RPh
[EXC: repairing > one SW/Gun (**A9.72**); leader rallying > one unit (**A10.7**)].

1.1 START of Rally Phase:

1.11A Roll for any provisional (SSR) reinforcements (including Air Support; **E7.2**)

Set up, offboard, all forces due to enter in this Player Turn (**A2.51–.52** {
DD tanks, **D16.8**;
Cloaking, **E1.41**;
Gliders, **E8.1**;
Parachutes, **E9.1–.11**;
LC, **G1.664/G14.23**})

1.12A Check for Wind Change (**B25.65** {
Blazing building collapse, **B25.66**;
NVR change, **E1.12**;
Civilian Interrogation, **E2.4**;
Fog level, **E3.312**;
Rain/Falling-Snow intensity, **E3.51/3.71**;
Dust, **F11.76–.77**;
Heavy Surf, **G13.448**;
If DYO, note also **G16.2** footnotes})

During Gusts (**B25.651**), remove Vehicle Dust (**F11.74**) and Dispersed SMOKE, then flip remaining SMOKE counters to Dispersed side [EXC to both: SMOKE in cave, **G11.8**].

1.13B May recombine Good Order HS if Good Order leader present, and/or Unarmed/Guard/Finn/Carrier HS without leader (**A1.32**).

May place/remove Animal-Pack counters in *initial* RPh of Game Turn (**G10.3**)
{Pack-TI; **G10.11**}.

May (un)load Animal-Pack Guns if halfway through (Un)packing Period (**G10.31**).

1.14B May attempt to Recover SW/Guns in same Location (**A4.44**; **G.5**)
{Ski-use dr, **E4.21**}.

Should the order of actions given in the body of the rules conflict with the ASOP, the latter takes precedence. All activities in the same Step may be conducted in any order unless stated otherwise. Certain mutually exclusive actions may be listed in the same Step despite the fact that they cannot be conducted by the same unit—and many restrictions normally applicable to the listed actions are left unmentioned; in both cases, the normal rules pertaining to such actions still apply.

1.2 DURING Rally Phase:

1.21A May (attempt to) Deploy Good Order squads if Good Order leader present, and/or Unarmed/Guards/Finns/Carrier-HS/ U.S.M.C. 7-6-8s without leader (**A1.31**; **G17.11**).

Infantry MMC may attempt to Scrounge abandoned vehicles or non-burning wrecks (**D10.5**); place Scrounged and TI markers.

1.22B May attempt to repair SW/Guns/vehicular-armament (**A9.72**; **A13.33**; **D3.7**).

May Transfer SW/Guns/Prisoners (**A4.431**; **A13.33**; **A20.5**; **D6.31**)
{Ski-use dr, **E4.21**}.

1.23B May attempt to Rally broken units (**A10.6**); those with Commissar-(**A25.222**)/Japanese-leader (**G1.41**) which fail to Rally are Replaced or eliminated.

First ATTACKER MMC Rally attempt (or first *two*, **RB SSR CG17**) may be Self-Rally/Field-Promotion (**A10.63**; **A18.11**).

1.24A Determine final Drop Point for each Para Wing, then place all Sticks (i.e., Parachutes, **E9.12**) onboard in Aerial Locations.

1.3 END of Rally Phase:

1.31B Roll for Shocked/UK AFV recuperation (**C7.42**); remove or flip marker/AFV as appropriate.

May/must remove DM markers from eligible broken units (**A10.62**).

2. PREP FIRE PHASE†

2.1 START of Prep Fire Phase:

2.11A Remove attacker's Dispersed SMOKE (checking for any Napalm terrain-Blaze/weapon-destruction, **G17.41**); then flip attacker's SMOKE counters to Dispersed side (**A24.4**).

Leaders/MMC/CE-AFV may attempt to fire Starshells (**E1.91–.921**).

Check for Vehicle Dust removal (**F11.77**).

2.12A May fire ordnance-SMOKE-(**C8.5–.51**)/MTR-IR-(**E1.91**; **E1.93–.932**), after designating Spotter (**C9.3**) if necessary; resolve ensuing WP NMC.

May fire MOL-Projectors (**O10.2**).

Check for ensuing Flames (**A24.32**; **O10.44**).

Place Prep Fire or Gunflash counters as required.

2.13A May attempt Radio Contact (C1.2; G.7) if necessary (C1.63; E12.77).

If successful, may (must, for FFE:C, C1.34) attempt (Sighting TC [E7.61] and) Battery Access (C1.21; G14.63); if successful, may place AR (C1.3) and either SR (C1.3-.31) or Pre-Reg. FFE/IR (C1.731/E1.931), or must place rocket AR and FFE (C1.9) or remove or replace FFE:C (C1.34-.343; G14.671).

2.14A May (must, for a Creeping Barrage FFE) Correct/Convert or Cancel SR/FFE (C1.33-.337; C1.35-.4; E12.73-.74; E12.76; E12.771) [EXC: rocket Correction is NA, C1.9]

2.15A May place OBA SMOKE-(C1.71; E12.51)/IR-(E1.91; E1.93-.932), resolving ensuing WP NMC (C1.71; C3.76; G14.65) and checking for ensuing Flames (A24.32).

Then resolve HE FFE (C1.5; C1.52-.56; G14.65), checking for shellhole/Flame/rubble creation (B2.1/B6.331/B25.13/B24.11/G13.7), wire/roadblock/pillbox removal (B26.52/B29.5/B30.92/G14.56), minefield/panji removal/reduction (B28.62/G9.72/G14.56), and sangar/trip-flare elimination (F8.41/G.8B).

Check for Column Disbandment (E11.533) and Reverse Slopes (G14.66-.661).

2.2 DURING Prep Fire Phase:

2.21A Infantry MMC may become TI and:

Mop Up (A12.153) {Casualties, A12.154}, or Attempt to entrench (A25.21; B27.11; F1B; G3.5; G13.3; G13.82), placing Labor counter if unsuccessful.

Infantry may make Kindling Attempts (B25.11; MMC requires leader who passes NTC); place Prep Fire counter on each unit involved.

2.22A May designate Spotters for MTRs that had no original Spotter (C9.3).

May fire non-Aerial, not-TI Good-Order-units/manned-and-functioning-weapons {Heavy AA fire, E7.52}, placing Prep Fire or Gunflash counters as required; both sides resolve attacks.

Infantry/Cavalry may declare Opportunity Fire; place Bounding Fire counters (A7.25).

Leader (/MMC/CE-AFV, if a Starshell/IR has been fired in *no* previous Player Turn) may attempt to fire Starshell (E1.921).

May destroy/malfunction/dismantle/reassemble SW/Guns (A9.73; A9.8).

2.23A May (un)limber Guns (C10.21; it and crew become TI if unlimbering).

2.3 END of Prep Fire Phase:

2.13A May change CA of Guns presently able to fire without using Intensive Fire (C3.22).

May designate/cancel AA mode of weapons that can/do thusly change CA (E7.5).

3. MOVEMENT PHASE†

The MPh Sequence of Play is expressed separately in terms of THE MPh and of each moving unit's (or stack's) MPh; i.e., each moving unit has a START, DURING and END to ITS MPh within the overall context of THE MPh—usually followed by the START of another unit's (or stack's) MPh. However, the MPh of all units that start THE MPh berserk must be completed before any non-berserk unit may start ITS MPh, and the MPh of all non-berserk units that start THE MPh on the ground (i.e., non-Aerial) must be completed before any Glider/Parachute may start ITS MPh.

3.1 START of THE MPh:

3.11A May designate new mortar Spotter for one eliminated or not in Good Order (C9.3)

3.12D Leaders/MMC/CE-AFV may attempt to fire Starshells (E1.91-.921)

3.13A Place all Gliders, blue-side up (i.e., in Aerial Locations), onboard in their ILH (E8.2)

3.2 START of ITS MPh:

3.21A Prepare to move any currently berserk unit/stack required to charge (A15.43); then go to Step 3.31A [EXC: if no such berserk unit can charge, go to Step 3.22A].

3.22A Prepare to move any Good-Order/Mobile ground unit/stack [EXC: pinned Infantry; A7.8] not marked with a Prep/Bounding Fire or TI counter (A4.1, D2.1).

May drop possession of SW/Guns (A4.43).

Best leader may make Freedom of Movement dr if Scenario Defender (E1.21).

Make Movement-(E1.53-.531)/Straying-(E1.53; G2.22; G3.21; G13.83) DR if necessary.

Infantry may declare

Double Time for two extra MF (A4.5; place CX counter), Assault Movement (A4.61),

Dash (A4.63),

Sewer entry (B8.4) or

Climbing (B11.41).

Infantry/Cavalry may declare

Human Wave (A13.62/A25.23/G18.61—

Banzai Charge if Japanese Infantry, G1.5) or

Swimming (E6) movement.

Dare-Death Infantry may declare berserk status (G18.6).

Cavalry (or Wagon) may declare Gallop for 8 (or 4) extra MF unless Cavalry/Horse (or Wagon) is CX (A13.36 or D12.4).

Remove vehicle's Motion counter if it will expend MP/MF.

Check for movement status:

Column-(E11.52)/

Convoy-(E11.2)/

Platoon-(D14.2).

Onboard radioless AFV that will use non-Platoon movement takes NTC (D14.23) unless Recalled.

Flail tank declares TB creation attempt in minefield hex it will enter (B28.7).

Boat/Non-Aground-LC in Heavy Surf makes any required (un)Beaching DR (G13.442/G13.4423).